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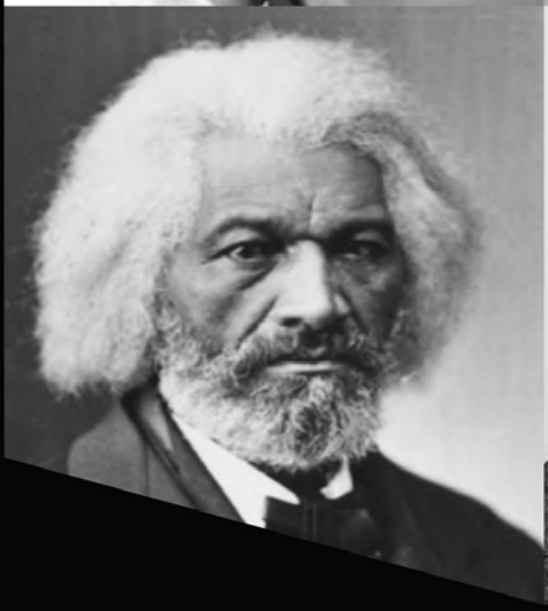

THE SILVER TRUMPET OF FREEDOM

Black Emancipators & Entrepreneurs

Edited by LAWRENCE W. REED

The Silver Trumpet of Freedom

Black Emancipators and Entrepreneurs

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1819 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 300
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The silver trumpet of freedom had roused my soul to eternal wakefulness. Freedom now appeared, to disappear no more forever. It was heard in every sound, and seen in every thing. It was ever present to torment me with a sense of my wretched condition. I saw nothing without seeing it, I heard nothing without hearing it, and felt nothing without feeling it. It looked from every star, it smiled in every calm, breathed in every wind, and moved in every storm.

— Frederick Douglass
Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass

Preface

From the steps of the iconic Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. on August 28, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered a speech that ranks as one of the most unforgettable and inspirational addresses in American history.

As it does for so many others, this line of Dr. King's resonates with me more than anything else from that remarkable day:

> I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

What a difference it would make in this troubled world if Dr. King's hope were to be fully achieved! Though we've made progress in this regard in many ways and places, we've regressed in others. We have much work to do.

I say this because too many people all over the world, America included, still focus on judging people by criteria *other* than character — and not just by skin color. It diminishes us as human beings when we do so, for character is ultimately more important than any other factor. It defines each of us. It's what we'll likely be remembered for more than anything else — and that's as it should be, because character results from our choices in life and not from some accident of nature.

Yet, every day you see people being judged by others according to their political views, their place of origin, their personal faith, the way they dress or wear their hair, their sexual orientation, the school they attended, or any number of other irrelevant, unavoidable or unrevealing criteria.

As I've written elsewhere (especially in my small book, *Are We Good Enough for Liberty?*), character is what decides almost everything in your life, from how you regard yourself to how you relate to others to whether or not you've added or subtracted from society as a whole by the time you're done on this earth. Why waste your life judging yourself or others by things that ultimately don't matter?

I think Dr. King would want Black History Month to be celebrated in ways that unite us rather than divide us. Though one race is the focus of the month, I believe he would want us to celebrate the best values and the highest character of those black men and women all people should be proud of. It's with that in mind that I've assembled this ebook anthology of 17 essays previously published by the Foundation for Economic Education.

This collection emphasizes eternal principles that should be celebrated in all months of the year, not only February: principles such as fairness, equality before the law, personal integrity, courage, and speaking truth to power, wealth creation and entrepreneurship, treating your fellow citizens with love and respect. Those principles, and surely a few others as well, are the very foundations of a free society.

Some of the chapters in this ebook convey these principles through the inspirational stories of black lives in American history; other chapters explain them by illuminating how free markets, private property, and responsible citizenship encourage solid, positive character. It is my hope that this book will encourage all men and women of good faith to put character first, just as Dr. King urged us to do decades ago.

— Lawrence W. Reed, President
Foundation for Economic Education
Atlanta, Georgia – February 2, 2018

Individualism Versus Racism

Anne Wortham

The Declaration of Independence of July 4, 1776, laid the foundation for a new society among men on grounds that each individual of right ought to be free to act on his own judgment, for his own goals, by his own choice. Human dignity, in other words, involves self-responsibility for life, liberty, and one's pursuit of happiness.

That essence of the Declaration of Independence is being subordinated and forgotten by today's black and white leaders of the Negro Revolution whose banner is "equality."

Let us recall what Abraham Lincoln said about this: "I protest against that counterfeit logic which concludes that because I do not want a black woman for a slave, I must necessarily want her for a wife. I need not have her for either; I can just leave her alone. In some respects she certainly is not my equal; but in her natural right to eat the bread she earns with her own hands without asking leave of anyone else, she is my equal, and equal to all others."

There can be no greater condition of equality among men than this. Anything less than this is slavery; and the direction in which the American people today are being led by civil rights leaders, in and out of government, tends toward slavery. A free man is not something emerged from a stew called society. The nature of a man's thoughts and actions, the life he lives, his concept of himself are the qualities of being human — the qualities of individuality, rather than the gray sameness of imposed equality.

The Constitution of the United States was designed to protect the rights of the individual against trespass by other individuals, or by government. But the original code made no provision for the abolition of slavery or recognition of the Negro as an individual. Section 9 of Article I denied to Congress power to prohibit the importation of slaves prior to 1808, and Section 2 of Article IV required the states to comply with the claims of lawful owners for the return of fugitive slaves. Based in part upon these provisions, the United States Supreme Court ruled in 1857 that Dred Scott — a Negro slave — did not acquire the rights of citizenship when taken into a free state.

A Civil War was waged before the Thirteenth Amendment cleared the Constitution of a serious contradiction and established that, if men are to live as men, they must be free to do so. The Reconstruction Era further clarified the extent to which states' rights could be practiced without interfering with the individual's human rights and without denying his civil rights. While these rights had been defined before, they had not been extended to Negroes.

The Constitution, as supplemented by the Bill of Rights and subsequent amendments, makes clear that the powers of the state governments as well as of the Federal government extend no further than needed for protection of the human and civil rights of the individual against encroachment by government and other individuals. Neither mentioned nor recognized are any "rights of society," society having no rights. By 1875, all questions concerning citizenship for Negroes in the United States, and their rights as individuals, were answered in the Constitution.

Solving the Problem Voluntarily

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the question before the people — all citizens, with inalienable rights as members of the human race — was this: How are we to live together? "In all things purely social we can be as separate as fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress," answered Negro leader, Booker T. Washington in 1895. The national consensus at the close of the nineteenth century was that black and white men should live separately; but such consensus did not empower governments to legislate how men should live or where each must sit, eat, dance, learn, and otherwise lead his life.

Nevertheless, the United States Supreme Court's separate-but-equal doctrine of 1896 had stood as law until 1954, when the Court reversed itself to the effect that henceforth men must live, sit, eat, dance, and learn in the same places. But the compulsory integration of the schools was no more required by the Constitution nor necessary for fulfillment of the human rights and civil rights of Negroes than had been the compulsory separation before 1954. Education is no more the business of the Federal government than is eating or dancing or the seating arrangement on a train or bus.

The Negro role in the civil rights movement gained impetus after the Supreme Court decision in 1954, and their main thrust was to the effect that Negroes had been deprived of their rights as a group. Scarcely anyone bothered to ask what rights inhere in groups or to stand in defense of the rights of the individual. It seems safe to say there were few individuals, if any, among the 210,000 marchers on Washington on August 28, 1963; and the net effect was a Congress and a nation made more race conscious than ever before. The resultant Civil Rights Act of 1964 elevated

the dubious principles of altruism, collectivism, and racism above life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

A Staggering Sense of Guilt

The brotherhood of selfless love espoused by Martin Luther King, Jr., has not left a situation of mutual respect among Negroes and whites but a nation staggered by a sense of guilt. Irresponsible leadership in the name of civil rights is conning a nation out of its incentives to productivity into sanctioning the undeserved, causing the freest people on earth to sacrifice that freedom for the compulsory equality of slaves.

Civil rights leaders and their followers stress self-sacrifice to the point that self-respect is made to seem a sin. To love and choose without discrimination displaces sound reasons among men to love or choose one person or thing above another. This strained and strange love of racist agitators provokes men to hate them more. They turn simple prejudices into acts of crazed violence — that they might passively endure and resist. They twist man's right to discriminate into an immorality, thrown at a nation as its major guilt. As virtuous victims, they demand freedom, equality, and respect for the pitiable little they have to offer, challenging the nation to redeem itself by redeeming them.

How goes the redemption? Look in the eyes of blacks and whites who are afraid to think, to judge, to discriminate, and you will see an uncertainty embedded in hatred. Negroes, who are told they have gained the respect and gratitude of society but who have no self-esteem, are frightened by a power of redemption which they secretly know they — as individuals — have not earned.

No rational, self-responsible individual relies upon the racism that plagues the nation. He does not beg for patronage, sympathy,

and smiles. Instead of asking that others grant him a living, he knows he has been born with an inalienable right to whatever life he is capable of earning, according to his own purpose, his own virtues, which others cannot give to him and cannot take away.

Student Demonstrations

It was inevitable that the youthful students of America would be drawn by their immaturity into the fight for civil rights. From the beginning of the collective movement, climaxed by the March on Washington, the racism of the nation was reflected by the young and selfless black and white youth of America.

White youths, in all sincerity, wanted to share the plight of their Negro counterpart. They had no "cause," so they made his cause their own. They evaded the real issue — that they did not know themselves — and transformed this ignorance into a feeling of guilt for being different from the Negro. In search of virtue, they marched and shouted, "Freedom Now," clenching a Negro's hand, entering restaurants with him where they knew he would not be served, scouting the countryside singing songs of deliverance for him.

Young Negroes joined their white counterparts, believing that any happiness to be achieved on earth must be achieved collectively; they had never been allowed to forget the collective misery of their forefathers. Lacking the individuality that can only come through earned self-esteem, they were content with the motives of the group. Personal motives? None.

Among black and white youth alike, their relationship with the group was primary when it should have been secondary. They hid behind the apron of a race, a church, a university, an SNCC, a CORE; and they claimed identities according to the characteristics

of such groups. They repeated to themselves what others said of them; their self-regard was the regard they thought others had for them; their self-esteem dependent upon the esteem of others; their achievements what others claimed to be achievements; their failures what others said were failures; their place in the world where others said it was. They had no standards of their own; and so these youths were misled. Their guilt was not in being black or white, but in being nothing, in seeking virtue in the impossible, encouraging one another simply to suffer and wave flags.

The fact is that within the context of our society, they will always be black or white; and by some persons they will be treated as such, regardless of laws, treaties, and proclamations to the contrary. But a more important truth that escaped those young persons is that they are human beings; that each has a life for which he is responsible; that this is what he holds in common with other human beings; that to live with one another in peace, each must first manage to live with himself.

Such were the "drummer boys" of America who led forth a nation, their elders following, in the revolutionary movement capped by the signing of the Civil Rights Act on July 2, 1964. This new law of the land deals with eleven basic aspects of what the nation's legislators call civil rights: voting, public accommodations, public (governmentally managed) facilities, school desegregation, the Federal Civil Rights Commission, nondiscriminatory use of Federal funds, equal employment opportunity, voting census, a Federal Community Relations Service, civil rights court procedures, and jury trials.

A careful study of the detailed provisions of these 11 titles under the Act may reveal some minor clarifications of points already covered by the Constitution and existing legislation, as in Title 1 on Voting and Title 10 on Court Procedures. But these

are hardly what the civil rights revolution was all about. For the most part, the major provisions of the new Act tend to arrogate powers to the Federal government, in the name of Civil Rights, that are none of the government's business because they have to do with regulation and control of what ought to be strictly private business relationships.

The overwhelming tendency of the Act is to deny the civil rights of producers — property owners — in favor of the wishes of those seeking something for nothing, making the Federal government the instrument of compulsion for the implementation of such injustice. Thus, the attempt to appease organized racists has invoked a condition of legislative enslavement on the entire nation — and it will take a police state to enforce this condition.

Anne Wortham is an associate professor of sociology at Illinois State University. She is a rare voice in the liberty movement — a scholar and rogue academic. She wrote her first piece for *The Freeman* in 1966.

This article was originally published January 1, 1966 and can now be found in FEE's **archives**.

McCoy, Reynolds, and Pelham: Black Entrepreneurs, Models Too Often Forgotten

Lawrence W. Reed

Since Black History Month was inaugurated in 1976, Americans have made special note each February of the achievements of black citizens. They've played important and often inspirational roles in shaping the country's history, from the days of slavery through Jim Crow to substantial, if not yet complete, political and social equality today.

It's understandable that in highlighting this important minority group, we heavily emphasize those men and women who escaped bondage or those in more recent decades who led the civil rights movement. In the case of the latter, we know the names well because they are so recent — **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** being foremost among them.

Frederick Douglass, the eloquent abolitionist and former slave, extolled the importance of constructive agitation when he declared in an 1857 speech,

> The whole history of the progress of human **liberty** shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims, have been born of earnest struggle. The conflict has been exciting, agitating, all-absorbing, and for the time being, putting all other tumults to silence. It must do this or it does nothing. If there is no struggle, there

> is no progress. Those who profess to favor **freedom**, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to, and you have found out the exact amount of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them; and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress.

Black history in America, however, isn't just about overcoming slavery and discrimination. It's also about the less-familiar names of black citizens who excelled at entrepreneurship, invention, and the creation of wealth. They are numerous and deserve greater recognition for their heroism.

Twenty years ago, my good friend and favorite historian, **Dr. Burton Folsom**, told me about three such people — Elijah McCoy, Fred Pelham, and Humphrey H. Reynolds.

The Real McCoy

McCoy was born in 1843 in Colchester in the province of Ontario, Canada, where his parents had settled as fugitives from slavery. The family returned to the United States five years later and settled in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Though poor as church mice, their hard work and thrifty habits eventually paid off. Elijah was sent to Scotland at age 15 to study mechanical engineering, and he returned afterward to work for the Michigan Central Railroad.

Locomotives at the time overheated easily, and trains were forced to stop often to apply oil to engine parts to reduce friction. McCoy invented a "lubricating cup" that applied the oil without the need to halt the journey. He secured a patent for it in 1872 and continued to improve the device for years thereafter.

"Others tried to imitate McCoy's invention, but he kept ahead of them with his superior engineering skills," **writes Folsom**. "His standard of quality was so high that to separate his lubricating cup from cheaper imitations it became known as 'the real McCoy,' which many believe to be the origin of the famous phrase. The grateful management of the Michigan Central promoted McCoy and honored him as a teacher and innovator for the railroad."

That 1872 patent was the first of 57 he picked up during a long and productive life. When he was 77, he earned one for an improved airbrake lubricator; at age 80, he patented a vehicle wheel tire. He founded the Elijah McCoy Manufacturing Company in Detroit in 1920 to produce and market his inventions and died in 1929 at the ripe old age of 86, a well-loved and celebrated achiever.

Making Trains Breathable

While McCoy improved the operation of locomotives at the front of the train, Humphrey H. Reynolds made the rail cars more comfortable in the back. Whether the locomotive burned coal or wood, the windows remained shut in the cars behind so the smoke wouldn't choke the passengers. On hot days, those cars could be unbearable.

In 1883, Reynolds invented a ventilator that permitted air to flow into passenger cars while keeping out the dust and soot. When the Pullman Company tried to grab the patent rights for

the idea, Reynolds successfully sued for $10,000 and won the right to profit from his invention.

Building Bridges

Another black man, Fred Pelham, not only built bridges to people metaphorically; he constructed real ones, too, all over Michigan. Some of them (like his unique "skew-arch bridge" in Dexter) are still standing more than a century since his untimely death in 1895 at age 37.

Pelham's parents were free blacks in Virginia who left that state in the 1850s on a quest for opportunity in Michigan. Fred excelled in mathematics and civil engineering at the University of Michigan, where he was president of his class in 1887 and the first black man to graduate with an engineering degree. He designed and built at least 18 bridges, known for their beauty and structural integrity.

The Great Men of Tuskegee

Booker T. Washington (1856–1915) is still reasonably well-known, but he fell out of favor with black leadership in the 1960s. That's when Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society" programs shifted the focus away from black entrepreneurship and ushered in government handouts. The message of Washington, who was born a slave, had always been what he called "self-help" through education, employment, and starting a business. He also stressed personal integrity. "Character," he said, "not circumstances, make the man."

Washington founded the Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) in Alabama to educate blacks to develop their talents for America's industrial society. Business enterprise would be the

ticket to progress, he felt. "More and more thoughtful students of the race problem," he said, "are beginning to see that business and industry constitute what we may call the strategic points in its solution."

Growing up in the 1950s and 1960s, I learned to admire George Washington Carver (1864–1943) as another great black achiever. A pioneering botanist and inventor, he devised techniques for replenishing depleted soils and popularized the peanut. He researched, experimented, and taught at the Tuskegee Institute for 47 years. *Time* magazine once dubbed him "the black Leonardo" because of his multiple talents. "When you do the common things in life in an uncommon way," he once advised, "you will command the attention of the world."

Carver was a gentle man of generous spirit, a committed Christian who urged peace, reconciliation, and forgiveness. "Fear of something is at the root of hate for others, and hate within will eventually destroy the hater," he cautioned. "Keep your thoughts free from hate, and you need have no fear from those who hate you." He's buried next to Booker T. Washington on the Tuskegee University campus.

Black Millionairesses

Let's not forget the women. Black entrepreneurship is not a province of one sex.

One of the earliest American examples was Clara Brown, born into slavery in 1800. Set free by her owner in the 1850s, she traveled throughout the West, opening one successful laundry business after another. She settled finally in Colorado and became the first black female businesswoman to cash in on the Gold Rush.

Have you seen the highly acclaimed 1989 film *Glory*, starring Matthew Broderick and Denzel Washington? It told the inspiring story of the 54th Massachusetts, the first regiment of all-black

soldiers to fight for the North in the Civil War. Though the movie never mentioned her by name, a black woman named Christiana Carteaux Bannister was a major financier of the regiment. An activist for the Underground Railroad, Bannister made her money as the "hair doctress" of Providence, Boston, and Worcester. She started and managed thriving beauty salons in all three New England cities.

As I wrote in a previous Real Heroes column, **Madam C.J. Walker** deserves recognition as the first black woman to become a millionaire entirely from her own efforts, not from an inheritance or from a wealthy husband. She turned a bad hair day into a thriving business selling a line of hair care products and cosmetic creams. Millions of black women were inspired by her example, and tens of thousands were directly empowered by working for the company she founded.

Motown Music

Record producer and songwriter Berry Gordy of Detroit provides us with a still-living example of a black entrepreneur whose work virtually everybody knows and loves, even if they don't recognize his name. He founded Motown Records in 1959. The artists he signed and promoted are legendary: Diana Ross and the Supremes, Marvin Gaye, the Temptations, the Four Tops, Gladys Knight & the Pips, the Commodores, the Jackson 5, and many more.

Gordy started his company in his small Detroit house, which is now a museum. Some years later, the city of Detroit passed an ordinance banning home-based businesses. What could have been a model for many poor-but-aspiring entrepreneurs in the Motor City — starting a business in your house when you don't yet have the capital to buy or rent a building — became almost impossible. That sad fact is undoubtedly one of many reasons for Detroit's long economic decline.

While the major media today seem to focus inordinately on blacks who are active in politics, academia, and "community organizing" of various forms, black entrepreneurship is alive and well, creating wealth for millions in America and beyond. Do an Internet search for "black entrepreneurs" and you'll find an abundance of names in virtually every industry. That speaks to a degree of economic progress that would have seemed unimaginable a century and a half ago.

So when Black History Month rolls around each February, let's remember — and celebrate — not only the speechmakers, but the wealth creators, too.

For further information, see:

- Andrew Bernstein's "**Black Innovators and Entrepreneurs Under Capitalism**"
- **Richard Ebeling on Thomas Sowell's** *Black Rednecks and White Liberals*
- George Leef on "**The Economics and Politics of Discrimination**"
- John Hood on "**Capitalism: Discrimination's Implacable Enemy**"
- Burton Folsom on "**The Liberty Tradition among Black Americans**"

Lawrence W. Reed is president of the Foundation for Economic Education and author of ***Real Heroes: Incredible True Stories of Courage, Character, and Conviction*** and ***Excuse Me, Professor: Challenging the Myths of Progressivism***. **Follow** on Twitter and **Like** on Facebook.

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The Liberty Tradition Among Black Americans: How Black Americans Made Progress after the Civil War

Burton W. Folsom

"Slavery and free institutions can never live peaceably together," Frederick Douglass observed. "Liberty . . . must either overthrow slavery, or be itself overthrown by slavery."

"Do Nothing with Us!"

Douglass, black America's most renowned spokesman, made this argument during the Civil War. But what about after the war? Was it proper for the government to intervene and assist blacks in overcoming centuries of bondage? Many black leaders today promote affirmative action, which gives racial preferences in hiring to black Americans. But that was not the thinking of Douglass and other black leaders, such as Booker T. Washington, after the Civil War.

Douglass, for example, in a major speech given in April 1865, expressed a desire for liberty alone. When the war ended, some whites and blacks wanted freed slaves to have special land grants or extensive federal aid. Douglass, a former slave himself, favored

the later Civil Rights Bill of 1875, but shunned special privileges. "Everybody has asked the question. . . 'What shall we do with the Negro?' I have had but one answer from the beginning. Do nothing with us!"

Douglass used the metaphor of an apple tree to drive his point home. "If the apples will not remain on the tree of their own strength, . . . let them fall!. . . And if the Negro cannot stand on his own legs, let him fall also. All I ask is, give him a chance to stand on his own legs! Let him alone! . . . [Y]our interference is doing him a positive injury."

Finally, Douglass concluded, "If the Negro cannot live by the line of eternal justice, . . . the fault will not be yours. . . If you will only untie his hands, and give him a chance, I think he will live."

Douglass Is a Self-Made Man

Douglass knew much about rising and falling on his own merits. A fugitive slave, he fled northward and joined the antislavery movement in Massachusetts in 1841. He wrote an autobiography and edited the *North Star*, a newspaper promoting freedom for all blacks. Douglass was tall with a mass of hair, penetrating eyes, and a firm chin. Stubborn and principled, he was a captivating orator and spoke all over the United States before and after the Civil War. He was even appointed U.S. minister to Haiti in 1889.

Douglass was especially comfortable speaking before audiences committed to freedom of opportunity for blacks. Not surprisingly, therefore, he came to Michigan in the middle of the Civil War to speak at Hillsdale College, founded in 1844 as only the second integrated college in the nation. The college was somewhat depleted because most of the male students had enlisted in the Union army, which would ultimately win the war

and secure the freedom that Douglass had been promoting for over 20 years.

Passing on the Torch

When Douglass died in 1895, Booker T. Washington, founder of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, became the most prominent spokesman for black Americans. Like Douglass, Washington was born into slavery, and also like Douglass, he became a forceful writer and orator. In fact, Washington researched and published a biography of Douglass to promote their mutual ideas.

For example, Washington shared Douglass's belief that equal opportunity, not special privileges, was the recipe for success for blacks. Two years after Douglass's death, Washington also made the pilgrimage to Hillsdale College and spoke to the students about promoting in the black community "efficiency and ability, especially in practical living."

He elaborated on this idea in his 1901 book, *Up From Slavery*. "I believe," Washington insisted, "that my race will succeed in proportion as it learns to do a common thing in an uncommon manner; learns to do a thing so thoroughly that no one can improve upon what it has done; learns to make its services of indispensable value."

Fighting Back

What about discrimination — say, when a white employer uses his freedom to refuse to hire a black or to force him into segregated facilities? In such cases Washington sometimes argued for direct action. In 1894 he endorsed the blacks who boycotted newly segregated streetcars in Atlanta. In 1899 and 1900 he publicly opposed efforts by the states of Georgia and Louisiana

to disfranchise blacks. Washington insisted, "I do not favor the Negro's giving up anything which is fundamental and which has been guaranteed to him by the Constitution."

More often than not, however, Washington thought that trying to use the force of government to advance the black cause was not as effective as improving the race over time and making blacks indispensable to the American economy. He observed, "No man who continues to add something to the material, intellectual, and moral well-being of the place in which he lives is long left without proper reward. This is a great human law which cannot be permanently nullified." Put another way, Washington declared, "An inch of progress is worth more than a yard of complaint."

Thus when white racists used their freedom to discriminate against blacks, blacks needed to use their freedom to build factories, invent products, and grow crops to make themselves indispensable to economic progress in America. To Washington, that meant two courses of action.

National Negro Business League

First, he founded the National Negro Business League to bring together hundreds of black businessmen and inventors to share ideas and promote economic development. After some initial reluctance, Washington even used this forum to champion black businesswomen, such as hair-care entrepreneur Madam C. J. Walker, the first black female millionaire.

Second, Washington promoted more education for blacks. Education to Washington, especially industrial education that stressed manual labor as well as literary skill, was the means to producing future entrepreneurs, inventors, and teachers that

would expand the foundation of black achievement and make racial progress inevitable.

Tuskegee Institute was Washington's main focus, but he encouraged the various black schools and colleges that sprang up all around the nation. While only one black college existed before the Civil War, an average of more than one each year was created in the decades after the war.

What was the result of the emphasis on liberty, self-help, and education stressed by Douglass and Washington? Some black leaders, such as W. E. B. DuBois, criticized the slow and uneven progress, but in truth, black advancement was visible and compelling. Black literacy rates (age 10 and over) went from 20 percent in 1870 to 84 percent by 1930. That meant that in 1930 — in sharp contrast to 1870 — any honestly-administered literacy test for voting would disfranchise almost as many whites as blacks.

During these 60 years, black inventors came forth with dozens of major inventions: lubricating systems for train engines, ventilator screens to protect passengers on those trains, the traffic light, and hundreds of uses for the lowly peanut.

These advances slowly helped break down the stereotypes of blacks as illiterate and unskilled. Some of the evidence for change in attitude was symbolic. For example, Booker T. Washington, who had been the first black invited to the White House, became the first black to be honored on an American coin in 1946. The next year major league baseball was integrated; 12 years later all major league teams were integrated, and it was accomplished Booker T. Washington-style; without government interference or mandates.

As black Americans increasingly showed themselves to be educated and contributing parts of the American economy, racist

arguments broke down and public support for integration and voting rights began to increase. Change was not always steady or peaceful, but it did come. Douglass and Washington were its forerunners. Douglass said it best 140 years ago: "All I ask is, give him [the black American] a chance to stand on his own legs."

Burton Folsom, Jr. is a professor of history at Hillsdale College and author (with his wife, Anita) of *FDR Goes to War.* He is a member of the FEE **Faculty Network**.

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Booker T. Washington: Apostle of Freedom

Robert A. Peterson

"Political activity alone cannot make a man free. Back of the ballot, he must have property, industry, skill, economy, intelligence, and character."

These words were spoken by a man raised in slavery. Yet in this man's philosophy lies the key to freedom. His name: Booker T. Washington.

Born in 1856 in Franklin County, Virginia, Booker Taliaferro Washington spent his earliest years as a slave. Of his father he knew nothing. "I do not even know his name," wrote Washington in his Autobiography. "Whoever he was, I never heard of his taking the least interest in me or providing in any way for my rearing." Yet he harbored no grudges. "He was simply another unfortunate victim," wrote Washington, "of the institution which the Nation unhappily had engrafted upon it at that time."[1]

With Freedom Comes Responsibility

When emancipation came, it was like a plunge into cold water: refreshing but sobering. Washington sensed the implications of freedom even as a small boy. In his Autobiography he wrote: "The wild rejoicing on the part of the emancipated coloured people lasted but for a brief period, for I noticed that by the time they returned to their cabins there was a change in their feelings. The

great responsibility of being free, of having charge of themselves and their children, seemed to take possession of them. It was very much like suddenly turning a youth of ten or twelve years out into the world to provide for himself. In a few hours the great question with which the Anglo-Saxon race had been grappling for centuries had been thrown upon these people to be solved."[2] Washington early on recognized that freedom means responsibility as well as privilege.

Soon after emancipation, Washington and his family moved to Malden, West Virginia, where his stepfather worked in a salt furnace. Put to work beside his father, young Washington seemed destined for a life of drudgery. Yet he persuaded his parents to let him attend school before and after work. Following a regimen that would have killed someone with less determination, Washington seemed to run on adrenaline around the clock.

The Hampton Institute

Washington soon outgrew the school at Malden. Hearing of the Hampton Institute in Virginia, where blacks could work their way through school, he set out at the age of sixteen with only a few dollars in his pocket. When he arrived, the teacher told him to sweep the room. Characteristically, he swept it three times and dusted it four. As he later said: "I had the feeling that in a large measure my future depended upon the impression I made upon the teacher in the cleaning of that room."[3] In at least one aspect, it was a more accurate assessment than any Scholastic Aptitude Test or Graduate Record Examination: it revealed character. After the teacher inspected the room, she told Washington: "I guess you will do to enter this institution."

While at Hampton, Washington came into contact with a truly great man, Samuel T. Armstrong. Armstrong, a Northern general, dedicated himself to rebuilding the South through education when the war was over. Of him Washington wrote: "One might have removed from Hampton all the buildings, classrooms, teachers, and industries, and given the men and women there the opportunity of coming into daily contact with General Armstrong, and that alone would have been a liberal education. The older I grow, the more I am convinced that there is no education which one can get from books and costly apparatus that is equal to that which can be gotten from contact with great men and women. Instead of studying books so constantly, how I wish that our schools and colleges might learn to study men and things."[4] To pay his board, Washington worked as a janitor and a waiter. To fit himself for a trade, he studied masonry. So greatly did he impress the administration and trustees of Hampton that after graduation he was appointed as an instructor.

Meanwhile, at Tuskegee, Alabama, George Campbell, a white merchant, conceived the idea of a training school for blacks. When he wrote to Hampton for a suggestion for a principal, Booker T. Washington was recommended. Accepting the position, Washington arrived in Tuskegee only to find an old, worn-out field. The school itself was little more than a distant vision in Campbell's mind. But Washington caught that vision, and set to work laying the groundwork for what would become one of the nation's most unique schools.

Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute

Washington set up shop in a small church, sallying forth into the surrounding counties to look for prospective students. Eventually

30 students enrolled in Washington's Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute. Appropriately, the first term began on July 4, 1881. It was symbolic, for at Tuskegee poor blacks would get a chance to learn skills that would make them truly free — skills that would make them valuable members of the American economy. At Tuskegee, not only did every student study Western culture, every student had to work with his hands. "The individual who can do something that the world wants done will, in the end, make his way regardless of his race."[5]

During Tuskegee's formative years, Washington confronted deep-seated prejudice and misconceptions from both blacks and whites. Many whites felt that an educated Negro wouldn't work, while many blacks protested against making manual labor a part of the Institute program. Washington attacked these views by teaching that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem.

Private philanthropy made it possible for Washington to accept every student who came, regardless of whether he could pay. White citizens of Tuskegee made donations, as did poor blacks who lived in the area. As Washington's fame spread, and Tuskegee's along with it, some of the money from America's great captains of industry found its way to Tuskegee. Railroad magnate Collis P. Huntington gave over $50,000, while Andrew Carnegie donated enough to build a library, and later, a $600,000 gift. In making the latter gift, Carnegie wrote of Washington, "To me he seems one of the foremost of living men because his work is unique."[6]

The school was an unqualified success. As a pioneer of vocational education, Tuskegee paved the way for similar institutions for both blacks and whites. In 1908, Washington pointed out that "it was the Negro schools in large measure that pointed the way

to the value of this kind of education."[7] At each commencement, visitors were pleased and amazed to see the graduates go through their paces. "I have never seen a commencement like Tus-kegee's before," wrote Mary Church Terrell. "On the stage before our eyes students actually performed the work they had learned to do in school. They showed us how to build houses, how to paint them, how to estimate the cost of the necessary material and so on down the line."[8]

Soon other talented blacks began to gather around Booker T. Washington, including George Washington Carver. Calling his laboratory at Tuskegee "God's Little Workshop," Carver reduced the South's dependence on cotton, which depleted the soil, by finding over 300 uses for peanuts. Largely financed by the private sector, Carver's research gave a great boost to American agriculture.

Nonpolitical Solutions to the Problems of the South

In every area of life, Washington sought nonpolitical solutions to the problems of blacks and the South. Thus, instead of more Federal troops and more bureaucracy, Washington advocated private initiative. In his Autobiography he wrote:

> Though I was but a little more than a youth during the period of Reconstruction, I had the feeling that mistakes were being made, and that things would not remain in the condition that they were in then very long. I felt that the Reconstruction policy, so far as it related to my race, was in large measure on a false foundation, was artificial and forced. In many cases it seemed to me that the ignorance of my race was being used as a tool with which to punish the Southern white man by forcing the Negro into positions over the heads of

> the Southern whites. I felt that the Negro would be the one to suffer for this in the end. Besides, the general political agitation drew the attention of our people away from the more fundamental matters themselves in the industries at their doors and in securing property.[9]

So important was obtaining property in Washington's mind that he advocated property ownership rather than literacy as a test for the exercise of the franchise. Washington understood that without property, there could be no individual rights. Not black power, or white power, but "green power" — economic power — was the key to ending discrimination.

Washington had been tempted to enter political life, but reason eventually triumphed over expediency:

> The temptations to enter political life were so alluring that I came very near yielding to them at one time, but I was kept from doing so by the feeling that I would be helping in a more substantial way by assisting in the laying of the foundation of the race through a generous education of the hand, head, and heart. I saw colored men who were members of the state legislature, and county officers, who, in some cases, could not read or write, and whose morals were as weak as their education.[10]

This is not to say that Washington did not believe in political activity, for over the years he was instrumental in getting blacks appointed to important posts, including William H. Lewis as Assistant Attorney General and Robert Terrell as a municipal judge.[11] But he believed and acted upon the principle that no great movement can be effected from the top down, that it must be built up from the ground floor. Before national victories could be won, victories had to be won at the grass roots.

This was the philosophy that Washington espoused when he was asked to speak at the Atlanta Exposition in 1895, the first time a black leader had been invited to speak to a large group of whites in the Deep South. Washington urged blacks to "cast down your bucket where you are" in agriculture, mechanics, and other fields, "and get to work." He then told the white audience: "In all things that are social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential for mutual purposes."[12]

It is the combination of localism, ethnic variety, and individualism that helps to maintain freedom in America. Booker T. Washington understood this. Unfortunately, many other reformers have not.

Embodying the True Spirit of Capitalism

Washington came under attack from other black leaders, for his speech seemed patronizing. Actually, he had caught the true spirit of capitalism: service to one's fellowman. In the free market, he who serves the best generally will be successful.

In spite of his controversial Atlanta speech, Washington's fame continued to grow. Honors came from near and far. Theodore Roosevelt sought his advice, as did President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard, who presented him with the first degree awarded by that university to a Negro.

Washington's constant traveling and speaking added to an already overburdened schedule. His wife and associates begged him to slow down. His reply: "No — there is so much to do, and time is so short." It was even shorter than he thought. In November 1915, Booker T. Washington died of a heart attack at the age of 59. At his death, Tuskegee had over 60 buildings and an

endowment of nearly three million dollars. Both the school and the man were internationally famous.

Unfortunately, much of the foundation Booker T. Washington laid was to be undone by government intervention. Minimum wage laws have made it more difficult for blacks to find jobs.[13] Welfare programs have mitigated against the most important economic unit in society — the family. And affirmative action programs have often served to increase white animosity toward blacks.[14]

Despite these setbacks, the example of Booker T. Washington still remains. His achievements show that it is possible for someone — no matter what his race — to come "up from slavery" and become a truly free man. As Washington put it: "Each one should remember there is a chance for him, and the more difficulties he has to overcome, the greater can be his success."[15] May he still inspire us today.

Notes

1. Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery* (New York: Airmont Edition, 1967), pp. 15–16.

2. lbid., p. 26.

3. lbid., p. 43.

4. Ibid., p. 44.

5. lbid., p. 99.

6. Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the Making of America* (New York: Macmillan Pub. Co., 1964, 1969). p. 166.

7. Washington, quoted in *Quarles*, p. 167.

8. Mary Church Terrell, quoted in *Quarles*. pp. 166–167.

9. Washington, quoted in Michael R. Lowman, et. al., *Heritage of Freedom* (Pensacola, Fla.: Beka Book Publications, 1982), p. 317.

10. lbid., p. 318.

11. *Quarles*, p. 171.

12. Washington. quoted in Russell L. Adams. *Great Negroes: Past and Present* (Chicago: Afro-Am Publishing Co. 1984), p. 137.

13. Walter E. Williams. *Youth and Minority Unemployment* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1977), p. 14.

14. Thomas Sowell, *Ethnic America* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Pub., 1981), p. 223.

15. O. K. Armstrong, "Apostle of Goodwill," in *Great Lives, Great Deeds* (Pleasantville, New York: The Reader's Digest Association, 1964), p. 291.

Mr. Peterson is headmaster at the Pilgrim Academy in Egg Harbor City, New Jersey. He is the author of In His Majesty's Service (Huntington House).

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Harriet Tubman: She Never Lost A Passenger

Lawrence W. Reed

When the day arrives that a woman's image adorns Federal Reserve currency for the first time, it might well be that of Harriet Tubman. She's reportedly on the short list. It may, however, be a dubious honor to appear on something that declines so regularly in value. Without a doubt, this woman would impart more esteem to the bill than the bill would to her. Her value is far more solid and enduring.

Slavery was once ubiquitous in the world — and even intellectually respectable. That began to change in the late 18th century, first in Britain, which **ended its slave trade in 1807** and liberated the enslaved throughout its jurisdiction in 1834. Before the 13th Amendment abolished slavery in America in 1865, American blacks risked everything attempting to escape from their masters, who sometimes pursued them all the way to the Canadian border. Tubman, herself a fugitive slave, became the most renowned "conductor" on the Underground Railroad, a network of trails for escapees from the antebellum South to the North. As many as 100,000 slaves risked life and limb traveling its routes. It was the most dangerous "railroad" in the world.

Born Araminta Harriet Ross in 1820 in Maryland, Tubman survived the brutalities of bondage for 29 years. Three of her sisters had been sold to distant plantation owners. She herself carried scars for her entire life from frequent whippings. Once, when she refused to restrain a runaway slave, she was bashed in the head

with a two-pound weight, causing lifelong pain, migraines, and "buzzing" in her ears. She bolted for freedom in 1849, making her way to the neighboring free state of Pennsylvania and its city of brotherly love, Philadelphia.

"I had crossed the line of which I had so long been dreaming," she later wrote.

> I was free; but there was no one to welcome me to the land of freedom. I was a stranger in a strange land, and my home after all was down in the old cabin quarter, with the old folks and my brothers and sisters. But to this solemn resolution I came: I was free, and they should be free also; I would make a home for them in the North, and the Lord helping me, I would bring them all there. Oh, how I prayed then, lying all alone on the cold damp ground! 'Oh, dear Lord', I said. I haven't got no friend but you. Come to my help Lord, for I'm in trouble! Oh, Lord! You've been with me in six troubles, don't desert me in the seventh!

Tubman bravely ventured 13 times back into slave states to personally escort at least 70 escapees to Northern states and to Canada. "I was the conductor of the Underground Railroad for eight years," she famously recounted, "and I can say what most conductors can't say: I never ran my train off the track and I never lost a passenger." Those passengers included her aging parents, her three brothers, their wives, and many of their children.

Working for the Union Army as a cook and nurse during the Civil War, Tubman morphed quickly into an armed scout and spy. She became the war's first woman to lead an armed expedition when she guided the Combahee River Raid, an expedition that liberated more than 700 slaves in South Carolina.

For her service to the government — tending to newly-freed slaves, scouting into enemy territory, and nursing wounded soldiers — she was treated shamefully and shabbily. She was

denied compensation and didn't receive a pension for her war duties until 1899. She took in boarders and worked long hours at odd jobs to make ends meet.

In an August 1868 letter to Tubman, famous abolitionist and former slave Frederick Douglass paid tribute to her heroism:

> Most that I have done and suffered in the service of our cause has been in public, and I have received much encouragement at every step of the way. You, on the other hand, have labored in a private way. I have wrought in the day — you in the night. I have had the applause of the crowd and the satisfaction that comes of being approved by the multitude, while the most that you have done has been witnessed by a few trembling, scarred, and foot-sore bondmen and women, whom you have led out of the house of bondage, and whose heartfelt "God bless you" has been your only reward. The midnight sky and the silent stars have been the witnesses of your devotion to freedom and of your heroism.

Tubman spent her last decades caring for others, especially the sick and aged. She often spoke publicly on behalf of women's right to vote. For relief from that head injury mentioned earlier, she endured brain surgery in Boston in the late 1890s. She refused anesthesia, preferring instead simply to bite down on a bullet. In her words, the surgeon "sawed open my skull, and raised it up, and now it feels more comfortable." She died in 1913 at the age of 91 — a real hero to the very end.

In 2014, an asteroid was named for Tubman. In my book, that beats a Federal Reserve note hands down.

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The Reincarnation of Jim Crow

Clint Bolick

In its preoccupation with quotas, set-asides forced busing, and other forms of social engineering, the contemporary civil rights establishment has ignored one of the most pervasive and debilitating deprivations of civil rights today — state-imposed barriers to entrepreneurial opportunities.

Such barriers take the forms of state-imposed business monopolies and occupational licensing laws. In many cases, such laws are an enduring relic of the Jim Crow era. Though they are no longer overtly racist, their effects are largely the same: they exclude from competition those outside the economic mainstream, primarily blacks and other minorities.

The quest to eradicate artificial barriers to economic opportunities occupied a central focus of the civil rights movement between 1866 and 1964 and was a principal motivation for civil rights legislation both at the beginning and end of that period. The movement's leaders — from William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass to Booker T. Washington and Martin Luther King — recognized that such barriers were inconsistent with the natural law foundations of America's doctrinal commitment to civil rights.

The civil rights movement has shifted its focus from equality of opportunity to forced equality in result.

But during the past 25 years, the civil rights movement has shifted its focus from equality of opportunity to forced equality in result. In the process, it has transformed the concept of civil rights from those fundamental natural rights we all share equally as Americans into special burdens for some and benefits for others.

What these revisionists have forgotten is that the civil rights movement have always been about securing for individuals the right to control their own destinies. By advocating government-coerced proportional representation instead of the market, the civil rights establishment denigrates the very mechanism by which countless generations have earned a share of the American Dream. In effect, this establishment is consigning a vast portion of its purported constituency to a perpetual state of dependency and despair.

A reinvigorated civil rights movement, drawing upon the lessons of history and the natural law principles of fundamental individual rights and equality under the law, ought to dedicate itself to eradicating those barriers that artificially separate individuals from opportunities. In so doing, such a movement will eliminate the final impediments to a real, lasting emancipation.

These issues are not new. Following the Civil War and the abolition of slavery, plantation owners were faced with a desperate labor shortage. The intense competition for labor resulted in a 600 percent increase in crop shares for black tenant workers between 1865 and 1875.

Southern leaders tried persuasion and peer pressure to limit black wages and opportunities, but such efforts were insufficient to counteract market forces. Whereupon, the former slaveholders turned to the coercive apparatus of the state to accomplish what they could not in a free market. "We must have a black code," Southern theorist George Fitzhugh urged in 1868, to restore the

natural order of "masters and slaves." He explained, "We do not mean by slavery such as that which has been recently abolished, but some sort of subordination of the inferior race that will compel them to labor, whilst it protects their rights and provides for their wants." Couched in these benevolent terms, Fitzhugh's prescription was surely the earliest form of what has come to be known in recent years as "benign discrimination," the implicit premises of which reveal it, like all forms of racism, to be anything but benign.

Black Codes

Proceeding from these mutually reinforcing premises of inferiority and paternalism, Southern legislatures moved swiftly to restore as closely as practicable the feudal society that existed before the war. Eight states passed Black Codes between 1865 and 1867, extinguishing labor opportunities through a variety of legal restrictions.

Typical of the Codes was South Carolina's requirement that any "person of color" must obtain a license to engage in the "business of an artisan, mechanic, or shop-keeper, or any other trade, employment or business." The licenses cost $100, certainly a staggering sum for an ex-slave in 1865. Moreover, the licenses were valid only for one year; they required a showing of skill, fitness, good moral character, and an existing practice or apprenticeship; and they could be revoked upon any complaint of abuse.

Servile labor supply was ensured, quarantined from competitive market influences by state action.

Recognizing that these state laws were nullifying the gains of abolition, the radical Republicans in Congress acted to protect the economic rights of the freed slaves. They passed the Civil Rights

Act of 1866, which established that all citizens "have the same right [to] make and enforce contracts, . . . to inherit, purchase, lease, sell, hold, and convey real and personal property, and to full and equal benefit of all laws [for] the security of persons and property, . . . any law . . . to the contrary notwithstanding."

This economic bill of rights was vetoed by President Andrew Johnson, but Congress overrode his veto. Johnson warned that the Act was unconstitutional since it purported to regulate state affairs, leading Congress to constitutionalize the Act through the 14th Amendment. In addition to guaranteeing "due process" and "equal protection" under law, the Amendment provided that "[n]o State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States" — such as those protected by the Civil Rights Act.

This great promise of the 14th Amendment was never fully realized, however. The massive corruption of the Grant Administration, the disputed election of 1876 which led to the removal of Federal troops from the South, and the death of the great abolitionist leaders all contributed to the shift in national focus away from the plight of blacks in the South.

The Slaughter-House Cases

But the death knell for economic liberty as a component of civil rights was sounded by the Supreme Court in the Slaughter-House Cases in 1872, which read the "privileges or immunities" clause out of the 14th Amendment in much the same way as the equal protection clause was nullified by the Court in Plessy v. Ferguson twenty-four years later. Plessy was eventually overturned in Brown v. Board of Education, while Slaughter-House remains on the books today — yet its renunciation of economic liberty is no

less profound a violation of fundamental civil rights than was the pernicious "separate but equal" doctrine.

Slaughter-House involved a challenge to a Louisiana law that established a slaughterhouse monopoly and prohibited competition in that trade. The law was challenged by a group of butchers who asserted their liberty under the 14th Amendment to engage in a profession free from arbitrary or unequal state laws. But the Court upheld the law by a 5–4 decision that rendered the "privileges or immunities" clause a dead letter.

Justice Stephen J. Field denounced the decision, "for by it the fight of free labor, one of the most imprescriptible rights of man, is violated."

This was regulation of economic activity so stifling as to make the Black Codes seem mild by comparison.

Another dissenter, Justice Noah H. Swayne, expressed the "hope that the consequences to follow may prove less serious and far-reaching than the minority fear they will be." His fears proved prescient, however, as the Court's abdication of its constitutional duty opened the floodgates for state regulation of economic activity so stifling and pervasive as to make the Black Codes seem mild by comparison.

Jim Crow Laws

Unencumbered by constitutional restraints, the Southern legislatures passed the Jim Crow laws, an elaborate and interwoven tapestry of social and economic restrictions that destroyed the ability of blacks to improve their condition. In particular, four principal varieties of laws were adopted to restrict mobility and frustrate competition. The so-called "contract enforcement" laws strictly limited the times during which laborers could seek new

employment. Vagrancy laws discouraged mobility by making it unlawful to be unemployed. "Emigrant-agent" laws restricted the activities of labor recruiters.

And "convict leasing" laws created a system of "debt peonage," by which blacks who were imprisoned for debts were furnished to employers who would assume their obligations until the debts were repaid.

The Jim Crow laws thus represented a transparent device to assure a servile and inexpensive supply of labor, relegating blacks to a separate, subordinate caste. The lesson of Jim Crow, as Professor Jennifer Roback concluded in her study of market interferences during that period, is that "government, not private individuals . . . must be restrained in order to allow disfavored minorities to make substantial economic progress."

It took the better part of a century for the civil rights movement — holding tenaciously to the natural rights underpinnings of the traditional American civil rights vision — to convince the nation to make good on its basic commitment to equality under the law.

A major thrust of the civil rights movement's traditional program, from Booker T. Washington's emphasis on economic self-sufficiency to the demands for equal opportunity following World War II, was to gain for blacks the right to compete freely for their share of the American Dream. Morris Abram, the former vice-chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, explains that the movement's leaders understood that "removing all barriers to the exercise of an individual's ability to participate in a free market system is the best possible way to promote justice." Such efforts reached their pinnacle in the golden decade for civil rights, spanning from the Brown decision in 1954 to the adoption of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

But in some respects, the movement did not go far enough. Laws that were racist either overtly or in their intent were struck down, but barriers to entrepreneurial opportunities that had the same effect remained in place — indeed, they proliferated dramatically. Traditionally, newcomers to America had been free to apply their skills and ingenuity to virtually any profession or business — a hallmark of America's free market system. But for today's "economic newcomers" — blacks, Hispanics, and immigrants — these traditional mechanisms for entry into the mainstream are often foreclosed by the state.

George Mason University economics professor Walter Williams explains that "black handicaps resulting from centuries of slavery, followed by years of gross denials of constitutional rights, have been reinforced by government laws . . . that govern economic activity." The laws are not discriminatory in the sense that they are aimed specifically at blacks. But they are discriminatory in the sense that they deny full opportunity for the most disadvantaged Americans, among whom blacks are disproportionately represented.

Such economic regulations implicate civil rights in two ways: Where they arbitrarily restrict an individual's ability to engage in a business or vocation, they constitute an infringement of the fundamental individual liberty that is the essence of civil rights. And where they limit competition in the market to a certain number or group, they violate the principle of equality under the law.

More than ever before, government at every level is violating civil rights by erecting barriers to free participation in the market, denying to many outside the economic mainstream the ability to compete that is every American's birthright. The two principal types of barriers are occupational licensing laws, the modern

equivalent of those enacted in the Black Codes; and government-imposed business monopolies, successors to the type of monopoly upheld in the Slaughter-House Cases.

Occupational licensing laws regulate entry into a large number of occupations, covering fully 10 percent of the labor force. California alone licenses 178 different occupations. Licensing laws are typically sought by members of the affected profession, ostensibly to protect public welfare and safety, but in reality to limit competition. Such laws often limit entry into occupations with only the most peripheral impact on public health or safety, such as auctioneers, photographers, pool cleaners, and taxidermists.

And even where a legitimate justification may exist for some regulation, licensing laws are commonly crafted so broadly or arbitrarily as to go well beyond such objectives, thereby restricting supply rather than ensuring competency. Moreover, the laws are often enforced by the affected industry itself, with the coercive apparatus of the state at its disposal: Using "grandfather clauses" — another favorite device of the Jim Crow era — to protect incumbents against the arbitrary new legal requirements.

These laws are devastating to blacks and other minorities. A case in point is licensing requirements for beauticians and cosmetologists in Missouri, recounted by Dr. Williams in *The State Against Blacks*. As a threshold requirement, the state requires 1,220 hours of formal training or 2,440 hours of apprenticeship under an approved cosmetologist. Thereafter, prospective beauticians and cosmetologists must pass both a practical and written examination. The latter tests not only knowledge related to the profession, but such esoteric concerns as the chemical composition of bones.

In a recent examination, Dr. Williams reports, black candidates passed the performance portion, demonstrating

their competency to practice their profession, at the same rate as whites. As for the written component, however, blacks comprised only 3 percent of those who passed but 21 percent of those who failed. Thus, a vastly disproportionate number of black beauticians and cosmetologists were disqualified for no apparent reason from pursuing occupations for which they were demonstrably qualified. Similar deprivations of individual liberty are visited wherever an arbitrary licensing law stands in the path of business opportunities.

The Ridiculousness of State-Imposed Monopolies

Likewise, state-imposed monopolies needlessly frustrate the ambitions of would-be entrepreneurs in businesses running the gamut from hot-dog pushcarts to cable television companies. Perhaps the most flagrant species of such protectionist legislation is taxicab franchising, which in cities across the nation stifles opportunities to begin climbing the rungs of the economic ladder through a low-capital business.

A few examples illustrate this phenomenon. In Washington, D.C., the taxicab market has a virtually open entry, with only safety and insurance requirements and a $25 annual fee required to start a business. Accordingly, the market provides substantial entry-level business opportunities for blacks and immigrants, with the result that 70 percent of all Washington cabs are owned by blacks.

But this is the exception to the rule. In New York City, for instance, a "medallion" is required to own a cab, and none have been issued since World War II. As a result, the "market" value of medallions has risen to $100,000 — totally precluding taxicab

ownership as a viable entry-level entrepreneurial opportunity. In Philadelphia, meanwhile, taxicab licenses are issued by the Public Utilities Commission for only $20 — but only upon a showing of "public convenience and necessity," which is routinely contested by industry lawyers retained solely for that purpose. Thus, the real cost of a transferable license on the market turns out to be approximately $20,000.

The impact of taxicab franchising on opportunities is staggering. While nearly two thousand blacks own cabs in Washington, for instance, only 14 blacks own cabs in Philadelphia. Instead, blacks in New York, Philadelphia, and most other cities work as employees for other people, thus diminishing prospects for economic advancement. Moreover, the artificial limits on market entry translate into higher prices and fewer cabs, the burdens of which are most heavily borne by ghetto consumers.

All of the interests asserted in defense of occupational licensing and state-imposed business monopolies can be served in ways far less devastating to individual opportunities. Consistent with a proper understanding of civil fights, governmental entities should be compelled to pursue less harmful alternatives.

Methods of challenging barriers to economic liberty are limited only by the imaginations of their architects. One possibility is to press for a federal Economic Liberty Civil Rights Act that would forbid state and local governments from arbitrarily restricting entrepreneurial opportunities. Another is to challenge such barriers in the courts as violations of civil rights, with the ultimate goal of erasing the Slaughter-House Cases from American jurisprudence and restoring judicial protection for economic liberty.

Other modern deprivations of civil rights also demand attention. The monopoly of the public educational system, for

example, disparages educational liberty in a manner particularly devastating to minorities and the poor, who have no other alternatives. The vicious cycle of poverty and despair, fueled by our welfare system, is yet another example of government depriving individuals of the right to control their own destinies.

Advocates of individual liberty can refashion the terms of the civil rights debate by exposing these types of government programs and policies as deprivations of civil rights. Such an effort will restore vigor to the traditional meaning of civil rights — and the natural law principles undergirding those rights — upon which America's moral claim is staked.

Appointed in January 2016, Clint Bolick is a Justice on the Supreme Court of Arizona. Previously, he served as Vice President for Litigation at the Goldwater Institute, President of the Alliance for School Choice, and co-founder of the Institute for Justice. Clint is a 2006 recipient of the Bradley Prize, author of multiple books on topics from immigration to school choice, and regularly appears in and on nationally syndicated television shows, newspapers, and magazines.

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Capitalism: Discrimination's Implacable Enemy

John Hood

Do racial minorities, women, and other groups need the government to protect them against prejudice and discrimination? To hear some prominent social commentators tell it, American business has a shameful record on social equality. Corporate boards lack significant minority representation.

Minority consumers are underserved, and minority and female workers are underpaid. Minorities and women can't get financing to start their own businesses. "In most fields, there is a level beyond which people of color cannot rise," said Stephen Carter, the well-known author and law professor.[1] Similar complaints about the economic prospects of women have been popularized in recent years by such authors as Susan Faludi and Gloria Steinem.

This picture of the private sector as an arena of continued discrimination, inequality, and despair for everyone in society except white men is often repeated, presumed accurate by reporters and politicians, used to defend government affirmative action programs — and completely wrong. Not only is there great news to report for the economic accomplishments and prospects of previously downtrodden groups in America, but this good

news is due almost totally to the triumph of commercial values over alternative values that have in the past put fear, racism, and insularity ahead of business success and profit.

The cornucopia of good news about social equality and American business overflows with little-noticed facts about our recent economic past. For example:

- American women were forming small businesses at twice the rate of men in the early 1990s. Businesses owned by women now employ more people than do all the firms in the Fortune 500 combined.[2] If the trends of the 1980s and early 1990s continue, women will own half of all U.S. businesses by the year 2000.[3] Similarly, the number of businesses owned by members of racial and ethnic minorities more than doubled from 1982 to 1994.[4]
- Before the Second World War, only 5 percent of American blacks had middle-class incomes. Today, the figure is about 60 percent.[5] From 1981 to 1991, the total income of blacks grew 38 percent, faster than the growth rate for the incomes of the white population. Almost half of all black households own their own homes.[6]
- Measured correctly, there is no evidence of significant discrimination in bank lending against prospective minority homebuyers.[7]
- Among full-time, college-educated workers, about the same percentage of blacks and whites have executive, administrative, or managerial jobs.[8]

Naturally, racial stereotypes, invidious discrimination, and animus still exist in America. But it is important to understand the role profit-seeking businesses play in combating these lingering problems. For corporate managers, excluding potential

workers or customers because of race, gender, or other group characteristics means sacrificing future productivity and sales. It simply stands to reason that the wider you cast your net for employees or consumers, the better off you will be. To do anything less is to fail in your responsibility to the owners or shareholders.

Gary Becker, Nobel laureate in economics and a professor at the University of Chicago, pointed out the anti-discrimination effect of free enterprise in 1957, and has been restating his conclusion ever since. The key, he says, is competition. Screening out job applicants because of their group means reducing the chances of hiring the best worker, who may well go to work for a competing firm.

Similarly, screening out whole groups of consumers means giving up sales to competitors. "Competition forces people to face costs, and therefore reduce the amount of discrimination when compared with monopolistic situations," Becker said.[9] So racism and discrimination are, over time, much more likely to persist in monopolistic institutions (like governments themselves) rather than in businesses.

Indeed, one might argue that without the largely unconscious pressure of the business sector on social attitudes, there would be a great deal more racism and social inequality.

For governments, charged with protecting societies from their external or internal enemies, loyalty to one's group and the distrust of others is a virtue. It maximizes the physical safety of the society and protects its land from encroachment. But for traders the greatest rewards lie in trusting strangers, who are the source of new products and new ideas. That means seeking out and embracing people who are different from you — the more different they are, the more likely they are to have something of value to you. The social benefits of trade — of breaking down

barriers between groups in the interest of mutual economic gain — have been enjoyed by every group in American society. Past immigrants, recent immigrants, racial minorities, religious minorities, and many others have sought and obtained in the marketplace what they did not have and could not achieve through politics or social activism.

Race, Gender, and Entrepreneurship

As mentioned, the number of businesses owned by racial minorities and women has been increasing rapidly in recent decades. Not only has the number of firms grown, but their share in the national economy has, too. Just from 1991 to 1995, for example, the combined revenue of the *Black Enterprise* 100 for industrial/service companies and auto dealers grew by 63 percent to $11.7 billion.[10] A third of the roughly 6.5 million enterprises with fewer than 500 employees were owned or controlled by women in 1994.[11]

Entrepreneurship has been a traditional route out of poverty for American minority groups of all sorts. Jewish, Greek, Cuban, and Japanese immigrants, for example, overcame prejudice and social barriers by entering occupations and markets ignored by native-born Americans, making themselves indispensable to the growth and development of the economy. As generations of immigrants gained economic success, their children and grandchildren pursued higher education, befriended and married individuals outside of their own groups, and gradually obtained social tolerance and acceptance.[12]

Even within the artificially restricted markets left to them by Jim Crow segregation, some American blacks of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were able to find opportunities for

economic success. Arthur G. Gaston was born in 1892 in a log cabin his grandparents, former slaves, built in rural Marengo County, Alabama.

After the early death of her husband, Gaston's mother moved to Birmingham in 1900 to be a cook for A.B. and Minnie Loveman, founders of what would later become the state's largest department store chain. Young Gaston, an admirer of Booker T. Washington, worked a number of odd jobs, including selling subscriptions for the local black newspaper.

Later, he moved to Mobile and became a bellhop. After serving in the army during World War I, Gaston came home and took a job at the Tennessee Coal and Iron Co. Always looking for opportunities, he began selling box lunches (prepared by his mother) and peanuts and lending money to workers at the TCI plant. He started a burial society for the workers, too, which eventually acquired a mortuary and became Smith and Gaston Funeral Directors. In 1932, the burial society was incorporated as Booker T. Washington Insurance Co.[13]

New ventures followed. Gaston started a business college for black clerical workers in 1939, bought a cemetery in 1947, opened the Gaston Motel in 1954, and started the Citizens Federal Savings Bank in 1957 to lend money to blacks excluded from lending markets by segregation. Active in the civil rights movement and numerous civic and community organizations, Gaston kept adding to his business holdings during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, buying radio stations and opening his own construction company. In 1994, *Black Enterprise* named A.G. Gaston, then 102 years old, as the magazine's Entrepreneur of the Century. In Gaston's view, his business success has enabled him to advance the cause of racial equality just as his hero Booker T. Washington had predicted. "Money has no color," Gaston said. "If you can

build a better mousetrap, it won't matter whether you're black or white, people will buy it."[14]

Color-Blind Customers and Employers

The entrepreneurial explosion among women and members of minorities in the past few years has demonstrated that consumers, both households and businesses, will generally buy from anyone who can supply a high-quality product or service at a low price. The same might be said about American employers, who have discovered that businesses that want to compete effectively cannot afford to discriminate against workers because of race, sex, or other such characteristics. Indeed, having a workforce of people who meet high standards of quality and performance and bring differing backgrounds and perspectives to their jobs is often a recipe for success.

Vigorous political debates about such subjects as affirmative action and comparable worth obscure what is actually occurring in the American economy today: the gradual elimination of discriminatory hiring and firing practices, as well as rising levels of compensation and respect for minority and female workers.

According to economist Howard R. Bloch of George Mason University, 70 to 85 percent of observed differences in income and employment among American racial and ethnic groups disappear when you adjust the numbers for factors such as age, education, and experience. "That's been shown by studies dating back to the mid 1960s," Bloch said. "And you can't even be sure that the residual gap is due to discrimination. It could be due to factors we haven't controlled for."[15]

In measurements of accumulated household wealth, as contrasted with annual income, minorities have also made

tremendous gains. A Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis study in 1989 found that observed differences between whites and minorities were no longer statistically significant once age and education were taken into account. "Members of minority groups are typically younger than whites, and therefore have had less time to accumulate assets," noted the author, John C. Weicher of the Hudson Institute.[16]

Similarly, apparent pay gaps between men and women don't prove the lack of "equal pay for equal work," as many critics allege. June O'Neal, head of the Congressional Budget Office, noted that when earnings comparisons are restricted to men and women with similar experience and life situations, the differences are small, particularly among today's young people.

Among people 27 to 33 who have never had a child, the earnings of women are close to 98 percent of men's.[17] Even for broader groups of men and women, today's pay gaps mostly reflect the impact of such factors as women's shorter average working week and women's choice of careers that allow for greater flexibility should they wish to bear and rear children later on. Full-time working women also have, on average, less work experience than comparable males, again affecting their value to firms and thus their compensation.[18]

Progress toward more equal treatment of workers began long before the state and federal governments passed laws governing hiring. Thomas Sowell, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and the author of numerous books on affirmative action, notes that the number of blacks in higher-paying, professional occupations was increasing rapidly *before* the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.[19] Several studies have found that the convergence of economic opportunities for blacks and whites, and men and women, began before World War II.[20] Harvard economist Richard Freeman

has found that blacks and whites with similar backgrounds and education had essentially achieved pay equity by 1969.[21]

Many explanations for the pay convergence among American workers lie in the social changes wrought by an innovative business sector. Technological innovation in our economy, for example, has not only made us all collectively better off but also had the side effect of promoting greater pay equality.

The substitution of machinery for human labor has reduced the value of physical strength and increased the value of mental acuity and social skills — which are distributed more evenly between sexes. At the same time, labor-saving devices in the home have given married women more freedom to pursue education and employment. Household chores that previously consumed hours of tedious work are now performed in whole or in part by electrical appliances or by outside contractors.[22] The result has been a revolution in time and family responsibility that is difficult to overstate.

If the logic of business success works against unfair and capricious treatment of workers on the basis of race or sex, then it virtually mandates that companies with the desire to maximize revenue not discriminate against potential customers. The fact that some businesses have done so, and continue to do so, reflects only that they are run by people who put their own personal biases above profit. Flagstar Cos., Inc., which operates Denny's and Hardee's restaurants throughout the south and west, is clearly not one of these businesses, despite some well-publicized cases of discrimination in the early 1990s.

In 1991, reports began to trickle in to Flagstar CEO Jerry Richardson of racial discrimination at some of his Denny's restaurants in California. Some black customers charged that they were denied service, while others said they were forced to

prepay for food unlike white customers. Richardson immediately fired managers who had discriminated, apologized to offended customers, and instituted programs to train managers and workers with respect to racism. In a restaurant chain with thousands of employees across many states, it would have been impossible not to inadvertently hire some racists. The key issue was how company management saw its responsibility to correct problems as they arose. "It makes no sense that we would condone racism," said Richardson. "Denny's needs all the customers it can get."[23]

The Redlining Controversy

The efforts of corporations to cultivate regular customers among minority groups has been largely obscured in the public mind by the lingering controversy over "redlining" by banks, insurers, real estate agents, and similar types of businesses. Discussion of redlining is complicated by the fact that historically, some lenders and insurers were clearly willing to forgo the business of blacks and others to reinforce a social consensus of segregation in their communities. But this despicable — and economically unwise — practice would seem to be extremely rare today, despite incessant claims by activists and the media that redlining remains the rule.

The problem is that studies purporting to show discrimination in bank lending or insurance focus almost exclusively on rejection rates for loans and policies. These rejection rates often do, indeed, differ significantly among racial groups in studies. But these studies ignore many important factors that provide a more plausible explanation for the apparent disparity than does racism.[24] Sometimes the studies promoted so widely by the mass media, like the celebrated 1992 Federal Reserve Board of Boston study purporting to show higher black rejection rates than those

of whites with similar incomes, are simply invalid; that study contained transcription and mathematical errors, inappropriate generalizations, and the skewing of average results by a few exceptional cases.[25]

Ironically, higher rejection rates are often found for those very institutions, including minority-owned banks, that are trying to extend credit in inner-city and minority neighborhoods, since banks in predominantly white areas are more likely to receive applicants from a smaller, more select group of minorities with better-than-average financial resources, work histories, or business prospects. When a bank opens a branch in a minority community, it will necessarily reject more minority applications than before.[26]

It is the personal characteristics of loan applicants — the items in their financial history likely to communicate to potential lenders the likelihood that their loans will be repaid — that explain virtually all racial or ethnic disparities. The most important measure of discrimination is not rejection rates, which are affected by a host of racially neutral factors, but instead the rates at which customers of different races or communities default on their loans.

If households or businesses in black areas tend to default at lower rates than those in white areas, that would be evidence of discrimination, since blacks would seem to have to meet higher credit standards than whites do to get loans. On the other hand, if the default rates of blacks are higher, that would suggest discrimination in favor of them. In reality, the available evidence on default rates suggests that there is no significant difference between households and businesses of predominantly white and predominantly minority communities, suggesting that the latter are not being "redlined."[27] Other studies that have tried to identify

actual racial discrimination by interviewing loan applicants have often failed to find any significant evidence of it.[28]

It is important to understand the role of profit-seeking business in eliminating disparities in income and economic opportunity that are based on racism and sexism. For groups kept from realizing the American dream by the prejudices and failures of the past, the best hope for progress in the future is an economy populated with companies whose managers put performance and profitability first.

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25. Stan Liebowitz, "A Study That Deserves No Credit," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 1, 1993, p. A14.; see also Joseph Blalock, "Testing Fair Lending," *Savings and Community Banker*, June 1994, pp. 44–48.

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John Hood is a former president of the John Locke Foundation, a state policy think tank in North Carolina, and author of *The Heroic Enterprise: Business and the Common Good* (Free Press).

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Black Maverick: T. R. M. Howard's Fight for Civil Rights and Economic Power

George C. Leef, David Beito, and Linda Royster

Black Maverick is the only biography of Dr. Theodore Roosevelt Mason Howard, whose remarkable life (1908–1976) combined entrepreneurship, medical practice, civil-rights activism against segregation, philanthropy, and high living. He was an irrepressible but flawed character, a man on the make who grew up under Jim Crow and took advantage of the few opportunities such a system of repression left open. He then used his wealth and persuasive abilities to combat the system. Howard proved that freedom and capitalism were powerful weapons that could be used against bigotry.

For blacks living in Kentucky early in the twentieth century, life was mostly on the Hobbesian model — nasty, brutish, and short. Segregation limited the work available to blacks largely to exhausting physical labor. They lived under the constant threat of violence by the Ku Klux Klan against those who "got out of their place." While growing up, Howard heard stories about lynchings and Klan raids against black towns; he also heard that the intended victims had sometimes bought guns and defended themselves. That was one of the lessons young Howard learned well: Later in life, he was usually armed.

One profession open to blacks was medicine, although they were expected to serve "their own kind" in the South. A well-known white doctor who knew Howard as a young man sensed his interest in medicine and decided to help him. The first step was to enroll the 16-year-old Howard in a junior college in Alabama run by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. After graduating, Howard enrolled in another Adventist school, Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, where he was the sole black student. His grades were only fair, but he distinguished himself in public speaking, winning a national oratory contest in 1930 before a mostly white audience.

The next step for Howard was the College of Medical Evangelists in Loma Linda, California, where he began medical studies in 1931. He also got involved in politics, civil-rights activism, and even journalism, writing columns for the leading black newspaper in the state. A frequent theme of his was the importance for blacks to enter business and teach their children the virtues of thrift and self-reliance. Howard found great inspiration in the philosophy of Booker T. Washington, and while he did not oppose FDR and his New Deal, he was skeptical that it would do anything to help blacks. He advised blacks to follow the example of the Japanese in California and succeed on their own without looking to politics for assistance.

After receiving his medical degree Howard first went to a decaying public hospital in St. Louis, where he developed an excellent reputation as a surgeon. His big break came in 1941, when he was invited to become chief surgeon at a black hospital being built in the all-black town of Mound Bayou, Mississippi, by a fraternal organization. Under Howard's direction, the hospital grew and provided quality medical care to its members. Howard's self-help philosophy dovetailed with that of the fraternal order. Soon it was selling insurance to members; for an annual premium of only $8.40, they were entitled to up to 31 days of hospital care. The response among poor blacks in the area was overwhelming.

They had excellent medical insurance long before such insurance became common, and without any government involvement.

Howard shrewdly invested much of his salary in area businesses and soon was one of the wealthiest black men in the South. In the years to come, he used some of that wealth to aid the fight against segregation. In the early 1950s, for example, he was instrumental in a boycott of filling stations that refused to allow black customers to use the restrooms. That boycott caused the major national gasoline companies to change policies and insist that their franchisees no longer discriminate. They didn't want the bad publicity and loss of customers. Howard understood that under capitalism, profits usually trump prejudices.

After the infamous murder of a black teenager, Emmett Till, in 1955, Howard threw resources into an attempt to bring Till's killers to justice. Unfortunately, he couldn't overcome the segregationist-dominated legal system, and the defendants, guilty beyond doubt, went free.

The Beitos have written a timely and enlightening book. Howard was a fascinating man, and his belief that free enterprise offers poor people (of all races) the path to success needs to be trumpeted as loudly as ever. America today is torn by counterproductive governmental "affirmative action" policies such as quotas for "minority-owned" contractors and racial preferences in college admissions. The book's subtext is that what government needs to do to help poor people and minorities is to get out of their way.

George Leef is the former book review editor of *The Freeman*. He is director of research at the John W. Pope Center for Higher Education Policy.

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Frederick Douglass: Heroic Orator for Liberty

Jim Powell

Frederick Douglass made himself the most compelling witness to the evils of slavery and prejudice.

He suffered as his master broke up his family. He endured whippings and beatings. In the antebellum South, it was illegal to teach slaves how to read and write, but Douglass learned anyway, and he secretly educated other slaves. After he escaped to freedom, he tirelessly addressed antislavery meetings throughout the North and the British Isles for more than two decades. When it became clear that the Civil War was only a bloody benchmark in the struggle, he spearheaded the protest against Northern prejudice and Southern states that subverted the newly won civil liberties of blacks.

Douglass embraced the ideal of equal freedom. He supported women's suffrage, saying "we hold woman to be justly entitled to all we claim for man." He urged toleration for persecuted immigrants — "I know of no rights of race superior to the rights of humanity." Overseas, he joined the great Daniel O'Connell in demanding Irish freedom, and he shared lecture platforms with Richard Cobden and John Bright, speaking out for free trade.

Douglass believed that private property, competitive enterprise, and self-help are essential for human progress. "Property," he wrote, "will produce for us the only condition upon which any

people can rise to the dignity of genuine manhood. . . . Knowledge, wisdom, culture, refinement, manners, are all founded on work and the wealth which work brings . . . . Without money, there's no leisure, without leisure no thought, without thought no progress."

Critics considered Douglass stubborn, arrogant, and overly sensitive to slights, but he earned respect from friends of freedom. For years he appeared on lecture platforms with William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips, leading lights of the antislavery movement. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* author Harriet Beecher Stowe praised Douglass. He impressed essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson, who declared: "Here is Man; and if you have man, black or white is an insignificance."

Mark Twain was proud to count Douglass as a friend. John Bright contributed money to help buy his freedom. "He saw it all, lived it all, and overcame it all," exulted black self-help pioneer Booker T. Washington.

An American observer recalled Douglass's presence as a speaker: "He was more than six feet in height, and his majestic form, as he rose to speak, straight as an arrow, muscular, yet lithe and graceful, his flashing eye, and more than all, his voice, that rivaled Webster's in its richness, and in the depth and sonorousness of its cadences, made up such an ideal of an orator as the listeners never forgot."

Individualist feminist Elizabeth Cady Stanton saw how, at a Boston antislavery meeting, "with wit, satire, and indignation [Douglass] graphically described the bitterness of slavery and the humiliation of subjection to those who, in all human virtues and powers, were inferior to himself. . . . Around him sat the great antislavery orators of the day, earnestly watching the effect of his eloquence on that immense audience, that laughed and wept by turns, completely carried away by the wondrous gifts of his

pathos and humor . . . all the other speakers seemed tame after Frederick Douglass . . . [he] stood there like an African prince, majestic in his wrath."

Born into Slavery

Frederick Douglass was born Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey sometime in February 1818 — slave births weren't recorded — on a plantation along Maryland's eastern shore, near Easton. He didn't know who his father was, though he became convinced his father must have been a white man. His mother, Harriet Bailey, was a slave, and consequently all her children were condemned to be slaves. Frederick was soon separated from her. "I never saw my mother, to know her as such, more than four or five times in my life," Frederick recalled, "and each of these times was very short in duration, and at night."

His mother died when he was seven. "I was not allowed to be present during her illness, at her death, or burial," he noted. "She was long gone before I knew anything about it." He added: "I never think of this terrible interference of slavery with my infantile affections without feelings to which I can give no adequate expression."

Frederick was taken to the mansion of Edward Lloyd, who was a former Maryland governor and U.S. senator, and among the richest men in the South. Lloyd owned a number of farms, each managed by an overseer. Frederick remembered how one overseer, Austin Gore, was whipping a slave named Denby. When Denby tried to escape into a stream, Gore shot him dead — and got away with it. Killing a slave, or any colored person, in Talbot County, Maryland, Frederick explained, is not treated

as a crime. On another occasion, Frederick saw his aunt Hester mercilessly beaten.

In November 1826, young Frederick was assigned to Thomas Auld, who sent him to his brother Hugh in Baltimore. Hugh and his wife, Sophia, didn't own any other slaves. She read to the child from the Bible, and he noticed the connection between marks on the page and the words she spoke. She began teaching him the alphabet. When her husband learned about this he was outraged. As Frederick later recalled, Hugh Auld snarled that "If you learn him how to read, he'll want to know how to write; and this accomplished, he'll be running away with himself."

Young Frederick learned more on the streets of Baltimore: "when I met with any boy who I knew could write, I would tell him I could write as well as he. The next word would be, 'I don't believe you. Let me see you try it.' I would then make the letters which I had been so fortunate as to learn, and ask him to beat that. In this way I got a good many lessons in writing, which it is quite possible I should never have gotten in any other way. During this time, my copy-book was the board fence, brick wall, and pavement; my pen and ink was a lump of chalk. With these, I learned mainly how to write."

When Frederick was 12, he heard his friends read from a collection of great speeches, assigned in school. He took 50 cents that he had hoarded, went to Knight's Bookstore, and bought his own copy of *The Columbian Orator*. Compiled by Caleb Bingham, it first appeared in 1797 and went through many editions. It offered great speeches by Marcus Tullius Cicero, William Pitt the Elder, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, and Charles James Fox, among others.

"Alone, behind the shipyard wall," reported biographer William McFeely,

> Frederick Bailey read aloud. Laboriously, studiously, at first, then fluently, melodically, he recited great speeches. With *The Columbian Orator* in his hand, with the words of great speakers coming from his mouth, he was rehearsing. He was readying the sounds — and meanings — of words of his own that he would one day write. He had the whole world before him. He was Cato before the Roman senate, Pitt before Parliament defending American liberty, Sheridan arguing for Catholic emancipation, Washington bidding his officers farewell.

The book included a "Dialogue between Master and Slave," in which the slave tells the master he wants not kindness but liberty. There was also a short play, "Slave in Barbary," where the ruler Hamet declares: "Let it be remembered, there is no luxury so exquisite as the exercise of humanity, and no post so honourable as his, who defends the rights of man."

"The silver trump of freedom had roused my soul to eternal wakefulness," Frederick recounted. "Freedom now appeared, to disappear no more forever. It was heard in every sound, and seen in everything. It was ever present to torment me with a sense of my wretched condition. I saw nothing without seeing it, I heard nothing without hearing it, and felt nothing without feeling it. It looked from every star, it smiled in every calm, breathed in every wind, and moved in every storm."

In March 1832, Thomas Auld decided he needed Frederick, and had him returned to Auld's place in St. Michaels, Maryland. Auld discovered that the taste of freedom in Baltimore had a pernicious effect on the young man and that harsh discipline was called for. Accordingly, in January 1833, Frederick was hired out as a field hand to Edward Covey, a small tenant farmer nearby.

Covey was an intensely religious man known to be ruthlessly cruel to slaves.

For instance, after Frederick lost control of some draft animals, Covey "went to a large gum-tree, and with his axe cut three large switches, and, after trimming them up neatly with his pocket-knife, he ordered me to take off my clothes. I made him no answer, but stood with my clothes on. He repeated the order. I still made him no answer, nor did I move to strip myself. Upon this he rushed at me with the fierceness of a tiger, tore off my clothes, and lashed me till he had worn out his switches. . . "

Covey attacked him on another occasion, but this time Frederick fought back. He kicked Covey's cousin, who tried to intervene. Covey ordered other slaves to subdue Frederick but they affected ignorance. The young slave prevailed with his powerful arms and indomitable spirit. During the six months that he remained with Covey, he wasn't whipped again.

Education for Freedom

He resolved to be free, and he did what he could to nourish the spirit of freedom in others. At the house of a free black man, he educated some 40 slaves with his *Columbian Orator* and a copy of *Webster's Spelling Book*, which he apparently had acquired from a friend. "These dear souls came not to Sabbath school because it was popular to do so, nor did I teach them because it was reputable to be thus engaged," he wrote. "Every moment they spent in that school, they were liable to be taken up, and given thirty-nine lashes. They came because they wished to learn. Their minds had been starved by their cruel masters. They had been shut up in mental darkness. . . . The work of instructing my

dear fellow-slaves was the sweetest engagement with which I was ever blessed."

In April 1836, Frederick Bailey and four other slaves plotted their escape, but the men were betrayed. They were dragged behind horses some 15 miles to the Easton jail. Frederick was considered a dangerous influence on a plantation, and Thomas Auld decided that he should be turned back over to his brother Hugh in Baltimore.

Frederick got a job in Gardiner's shipyard as an apprentice caulker, but white workers resented the presence of a black man. Four attacked him, bashing him with fists, a brick, and a heavy metal bar. Somehow he stumbled home. Hugh Auld went to the local magistrate's office, outraged at this assault on his personal property, but the magistrate insisted it was impossible to press charges against the assailants: "I cannot move in this matter except upon the oath of white witnesses."

In the spring of 1838, Thomas Auld came to Baltimore on business, and 20-year-old Frederick boldly proposed a deal: "let him be free to hire himself out, he would buy his own tools, he would pay his own room and board, and he would remit some of his pay — $3 per week."

The answer was no. Two months later, Frederick proposed the same deal to Hugh Auld who — unaware his brother had nixed it — concluded that approval might help keep the restless young man from running away. This arrangement, Frederick acknowledged, "was decidedly in my master's favor. . . . I found it a hard bargain. But, hard as it was, I thought it better than the old mode of getting along. It was a step towards freedom to be allowed to bear the responsibilities of a freeman, and I was determined to hold on upon it."

Frederick Bailey focused single-mindedly on making money. Buying his freedom, were Thomas Auld willing to sell, might cost $1,000. If he ran away, he had to get black-market "free papers," which every free black was required to carry to prove the bearer wasn't a slave.

During his spare time, he joined the East Baltimore Mental Improvement Society, an association of free black caulkers. They gathered to sharpen their intellect by conducting debates. Perhaps more important, he learned much about living on one's own — and escaping to freedom.

Meanwhile, he met Anna Murray, a free black woman whose parents reportedly had been freed before her birth. She was about five years older than he and worked as a domestic servant in Baltimore. Although she was illiterate, she was probably the one who encouraged him to play the violin. This became a cherished pastime throughout his life, and he especially loved Handel, Haydn, and Mozart.

In August 1838, Hugh Auld demanded that Frederick move back where he could be watched and that he remit all his earnings. Anna reportedly raised money for her companion's escape by selling a featherbed. Since he had worked around the Baltimore docks, he could talk like a sailor, and he decided to escape dressed like a sailor — a red shirt, a flat-topped sailor's hat, and a handkerchief around his neck.

Escape

On September 3, 1838, he boarded a crowded northbound train, and when the conductor asked for his free papers, he replied: "No sir, I never carry my free papers to sea with me." He presented seaman's papers (used by American sailors when traveling

overseas), borrowed from a retired free black sailor. Apparently impressed by the American eagle at the top, the conductor didn't notice that the papers described someone else.

At Havre de Grace, Frederick boarded a ferry that crossed the Susquehanna River. He encountered a Baltimore acquaintance who wanted to know what he was doing, but got out of that conversation quickly. On the other side of the river, while boarding another northbound train, he saw two more acquaintances who would have recognized him as a slave, but luckily nothing happened. A steamship took him to Philadelphia.

He didn't linger. He boarded a ferry, a night train, and another ferry for New York, where he would be more likely to elude slave-hunters. As an extra precaution, he adopted the name Johnson. He exulted: "A free state around me, and a free earth under my feet! What a moment was this to me! A whole year was pressed into a single day. A new world burst upon my agitated vision."

Anna joined him in New York, and they were married. He met with an abolitionist named David Ruggles, who advised him that it wasn't safe to remain in New York because of all the slave-hunters. Ruggles recommended that Frederick, as a skilled caulker, should be able to quickly find a job in New Bedford, Massachusetts, where a lot of ships were being built for the whaling industry. New Bedford had some 12,000 people, a black community, and a significant contingent of antislavery Quakers.

Frederick marveled at the prosperity in New Bedford. "I had very strangely supposed, while in slavery, that few of the comforts, and scarcely any of the luxuries, of life were enjoyed at the north, compared with what were enjoyed by slaveholders of the south. I probably came to this conclusion from the fact that northern people owned no slaves. I supposed that they were about upon a level with the non-slaveholding population of the south. I

knew *they* were exceedingly poor, and I had been accustomed to regard their poverty as the necessary consequence of their being non-slaveholders. I had somehow imbibed the opinion that, in the absence of slaves, there could be no wealth, and very little refinement . . ."

> In the afternoon of the day when I reached New Bedford, I visited the wharves to take a view of the shipping. Here I found myself surrounded with the strongest proofs of wealth. Lying at the wharves, and riding in the stream, I saw many ships of the finest model, in the best order, and of the largest size. Upon the right and left, I was walled in by granite warehouses of the widest dimensions, stowed to their utmost capacity with the necessaries and comforts of life. Added to this, almost everybody seemed to be at work, but noiselessly so, compared with what I had been accustomed to in Baltimore. . . . I heard no deep oaths or horrid curses on the laborer. I saw no whipping of men; but all seemed to go smoothly on. Every man appeared to understand his work, and went at it with a sober yet cheerful earnestness, which betokened the deep interest which he felt in what he was doing, as well as a sense of his own dignity as a man. To me this looked exceedingly strange. From the wharves I strolled around and over the town, gazing with wonder and admiration at the splendid churches, beautiful dwellings, and finely-cultivated gardens; evincing an amount of wealth, comfort, taste, and refinement, such as I had never seen in any part of slaveholding Maryland.

A New Life

Until the couple found their own lodgings, they stayed with black caterers Mary and Nathan Johnson. Frederick reported

that Nathan read more newspapers, better understood the moral, religious, and political character of the nation "than nine tenths of the slaveholders in Talbot county, Maryland. Yet Mr. Johnson was a working man. His hands were hardened by toil, and not his alone, but those also of Mrs. Johnson. I found the colored people much more spirited than I had supposed they would be. I found among them a determination to protect each other from the blood-thirsty kidnapper, at all hazards." Nathan suggested that since so many blacks were named Johnson, Frederick Bailey ought to adopt something different — like Douglas, the name of a Scottish lord in Walter Scott's poem *The Lady of the Lake*. He did, adding an extra "s" for more individuality.

Douglass tried to earn a living as a skilled caulker at $2 per day, but white shipyard workers announced they would leave the job site if he were hired. He had to settle for $1-per-day jobs like shoveling coal, sawing wood, hauling garbage, and cleaning ships. Eventually he landed a steady job at a Quaker-owned whale-oil refinery.

He and Anna attended the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. The minister, Thomas James, was active in the antislavery movement and editor of a twice-monthly publication called *The Rights of Man*. James was impressed with his new parishioner and the articulate Douglass became a lay preacher. On March 12, 1839, he rose at a church meeting and delivered a speech denouncing proposals that blacks be shipped back to Africa. He insisted blacks should be free here in America. His remarks were stirring enough to be mentioned in *The Liberator*, the radical antislavery newspaper that William Lloyd Garrison had published weekly since January 1831. At an antislavery meeting attended mostly by whites, James encouraged Douglass to tell his personal story.

In April, Garrison himself appeared at New Bedford's Mechanics Hall, addressing blacks as well as whites. The son of an impecunious Massachusetts sea captain who disappeared when he was three, Garrison had started his career as a printer, and in 1828 pioneering abolitionist Benjamin Lundy won him over to the antislavery movement. Garrison helped launch the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society (1831) and the New England Anti-Slavery Society (1831), and he joined with antislavery crusaders in New York and Philadelphia to establish the American Anti-Slavery Society (1833). His goal: immediate abolition. He opposed political action since he considered the Constitution to be hopelessly compromised by slavery. He was committed to a nonviolent strategy of moral suasion. He favored expelling slave states from the Union. Although he became unpopular for hammering clergymen who defended slavery, he was an intensely religious man. He insisted that slavery was an abomination that violated the higher law of morality. That April night, he thundered, "NO COMPROMISE WITH SLAVERY! NO UNION WITH SLAVEHOLDERS!" Douglass decided he, too, must be an orator against slavery.

Speaking Out Against Slavery

Later that year, Douglass appeared before the Bristol County Anti-Slavery Society to talk about his experiences as a slave. Among those attending was William C. Coffin, a bank bookkeeper and member of the Coffin clan from Nantucket — a hotbed of the abolitionist movement. Coffin invited Douglass to speak at a big Nantucket gathering of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, starting the next day. Garrison and his compatriot Wendell Phillips would be there.

Phillips, tall, slim, and Harvard-trained, had been a Boston lawyer. In 1837, a proslavery mob murdered an abolitionist printer, and Phillips committed his life to abolition. He soon emerged as the most powerful antislavery orator. He used plain language and spoke with quiet intensity. He was a skilled debater who, without taking any notes, could reply point by point to a complex presentation. John Bright exclaimed that there was no orator superior to him who spoke the English language. A Boston journalist called Phillips the "anti-slavery Cicero."

When it was Douglass's turn to speak, recalled Garrison, "He came forward to the platform with a hesitancy and embarrassment. After apologizing for his ignorance, and reminding the audience that slavery was a poor school for the human intellect and heart, he proceeded to narrate some of the facts in his own history as a slave, and in the course of his speech gave utterance to many noble thoughts and thrilling reflections. . . . As soon as he had taken his seat, filled with hope and admiration, I rose, and declared that Patrick Henry, of revolutionary fame, never made a speech more eloquent in the cause of liberty. . . "

Douglass was asked to become a salaried speaker for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society on a three-month trial basis. It was tough going because most Northerners were either uninterested in slavery or considered abolitionists as troublemakers. In many Northern towns, a black speaker wasn't welcome. But Douglass inspired people with his oratory. He entertained by mimicking Northern hypocrites and Southern slaveholders. He engaged hecklers.

He joined Garrison, Phillips, Stephen S. Foster, and Charles Lenox Remond, speaking wherever a couple dozen people could be gathered. The most controversial speaking combination mixed races and sexes: Douglass, radical Abby Kelley, and white

orthopedic surgeon Erasmus Hudson. Altogether, Douglass appeared in some 60 towns throughout Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. Train travel with other antislavery speakers was difficult, because conductors often ordered him to the "Negro car" — and when he refused, he was thrown off the train.

Many times, there was violence. In Indiana, hecklers threw eggs and stones at the speakers. A mob went after Douglass, shouting vile epithets. One assailant broke Douglass's right hand with a club. Douglass might have been killed had it not been for the intervention of his white compatriot William White. Later Douglas wrote to White: I shall never forget how like two very brothers we were ready to dare, do, and even die for each other.

Increasingly, he spoke out on racial prejudice as well as slavery. "Prejudice against color is stronger north than south," he observed, "it hangs around my neck like a heavy weight." Douglass was such a hit that in 1842 the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society retained him as a regular agent. He delivered over 100 speeches a year, and he became a valued contributor to *The Liberator*.

His first autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (June 1845), helped secure his fame. It was written as an antislavery tract, with details of his escape left out to protect others. Published by the Anti-Slavery Office, Boston, the book included a letter by Phillips and a preface by Garrison. Douglass, wrote Garrison, offers a "union of head and heart, which is indispensable to an enlightenment of the heads and a winning of the hearts of others." Soon there were three European editions, and total sales reportedly reached 30,000 within five years.

Time Abroad

Douglass seemed like a natural to help turn Europeans against the South, thus isolating it in the international community. On August 16, 1845, he left Boston aboard the Cunard steamer *Cambria*. Denied a cabin, however, he went steerage — the most humble accommodations. The speaking tour began in Ireland, and Douglass was horrified at Irish poverty, which was worse than anything he had experienced. At a gathering of some 20,000 people, he shared the lecture platform with Daniel O'Connell, the legendary orator for Irish emancipation. He was moved when Irishmen dubbed him the "Black O'Connell of the United States." Douglass realized that blacks weren't the only ones struggling to be free.

One million Irish died of starvation following the failure of the potato crop that year, and Douglass joined cool-headed free trade agitator Richard Cobden and his compatriot John Bright, a passionate speaker. The threesome traveled from town to town, demanding immediate repeal of the corn laws (grain tariffs), so desperate people could buy cheap food. Douglass was welcomed at London's Free-Trade Club, and he cherished his times as a welcome guest at the house of Mr. Bright in Rochdale ". . . treated as a friend and brother among his brothers and sisters."

Garrison arrived, and he and Douglass resumed the antislavery crusade, addressing audiences in Scotland, England, and Wales. They dramatized the evils of American slavery, attacked clergymen who supported slavery, called on people to cut off ties with the slaveholding South, and asked for contributions.

Meanwhile, Douglass learned that Thomas Auld had sold him to Hugh Auld, and that Hugh was determined to have him captured when he returned to the United States. Since Douglass

had become a key player in the abolitionist movement, his friends thought it best to purchase his freedom. The agreed-on price was £50. John Bright kicked off the fund-raising with a £50 check. The rest came quickly, and Hugh Auld received $711.60. Douglass was legally free on December 12, 1845. Most abolitionists criticized the move for seeming to sanction the buying and selling of human beings, but Garrison thought it made sense. Douglass sailed for the United States on April 4, 1847. He returned with considerable prestige, having enlarged his vision, proven himself in a strange land, and won acclaim from famous freedom fighters.

The Compromise of 1850

Unfortunately, all the speaking out seemed to have little impact on government policy. Proslavery forces controlled the federal government. James K. Polk had been elected president in 1844, and he launched the Mexican War, which was viewed by Douglass and other abolitionists as a scheme for expanding slavery. In 1848, Polk was succeeded by Zachary Taylor, the slave-owning hero of the Mexican War. Kentucky Senator Henry Clay forged the notorious Compromise of 1850, which specified that the federal government would enforce slavery where it was already established, that California would join the Union as a free state, and that Utah and New Mexico could become slave states later.

The Compromise included a tougher Fugitive Slave Act, requiring federal law enforcement officials to help return runaway slaves. During the next decade, there were 81 fugitive slave cases under this law. It inflamed northern opinion as nothing before, and Garrison, Phillips, Douglass, and other anti-slavery speakers made the most of the situation. The American Anti-Slavery Society grew to some 2,000 local societies with over 200,000 members.

As William McFeely noted, "Those who wanted to hear no more of the slavery question slowly came to realize that nothing would ever silence these antislavery people. They would keep up their agitation, against all odds, until — finally — slavery was ended."

Increasing numbers of people helped the Underground Railroad. Eleven northern states — all except Ohio and Indiana — made it illegal to return a runaway slave. Disobeying the Fugitive Slave Law became a patriotic thing to do. Reportedly, a slave could go from a border state to Canada within 48 hours. Many a runaway slave showed up at Douglass's three-story Rochester, New York, home, and his family took care of them until they could go the seven miles to Charlotte and catch a steamer across Lake Ontario to Canada. Douglass knew Harriet Tubman, the black woman who became famous for making 19 trips down South and escorting some 300 slaves to freedom. Most escapes occurred during the winter when there was less supervision on plantations, and Douglass tirelessly raised money to provide the destitute runaways with warm clothing and food.

Douglass and Garrison, however, began to move apart because Douglass was determined to be his own man, while Garrison believed his organization should lead the antislavery movement. Douglass continued to refine his speaking technique, despite Garrison's concern that audiences would doubt "you were ever a slave." He came to believe in all peaceful means against slavery, including political action. After all, the number of antislavery Congressmen increased during the 1840s.

Douglass talked about starting his own antislavery newspaper, an idea bitterly opposed by Garrison's people. On December 3, 1847, with $4,000 raised from his speaking tour in the British Isles, Douglass published the first issue of *North Star*. He was to

keep it going for 17 years. He traveled constantly, speaking against slavery and urging people to subscribe.

On July 19–20, 1848, he spoke at the Seneca Falls convention that Elizabeth Cady Stanton had organized to promote women's rights. Douglass was the only male present who supported women's suffrage — 32 men and 68 women attended. He agreed that wives should, if they wished, be able to earn their own money; that widows, like widowers, should be able to serve as legal guardians of their children; that women, like men, should be able to own property, inherit property, and administer estates.

More and more, Douglass became convinced he must plunge into political action. In a speech delivered July 5, 1852 — considered by some to be the greatest antislavery oration — he defended the Constitution: "interpreted as it *ought* to be interpreted, the Constitution is a GLORIOUS LIBERTY DOCUMENT."

By this time, Douglass and Garrison had split for good, although Douglass never publicly mentioned the break. Garrison's people carped about how Douglass was selfish and temperamental. Douglass's friend Harriet Beecher Stowe, who had electrified the antislavery movement with her 1852 bestseller *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, wrote Garrison in an unsuccessful effort at reconciliation: "Why is he any more to be called an apostate for having spoken ill-tempered things of former friends than they for having spoken severely and cruelly as they have of him . . . where is this work of excommunication to end? Is there but one true anti-slavery church and all others infidels?"

Douglass's second autobiography, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, was published in 1855. He expanded his story about slavery, offered his firsthand view of the antislavery movement, and affirmed his confidence that it would triumph.

The Fight Continues

The personal costs of Douglass's antislavery campaign were high. He spent hardly any time at home. He missed seeing his five children growing up. Douglass's wife, Anna, resented being left alone to tend the children and earn extra money.

But Douglass was in the thick of fast-moving events. In the notorious *Dred Scott* decision, March 6, 1857, Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger B. Taney ruled that neither a slave, nor a former slave, nor a descendant of slaves could become a U.S. citizen. He further ruled that Congress couldn't outlaw slavery in new U.S. territories.

The political situation seemed desperate enough that Douglass was willing to hear any ideas that might help the fight against slavery. In 1858, the former Massachusetts tanner John Brown was at Douglass's Rochester home, working on his idea for stirring a slave insurrection and forming a black state in the Appalachian Mountains. Douglass reportedly provided financial support. He respected Brown as a man who had courageously led dozens of Missouri slaves to freedom and fought to keep Kansas free.

But Brown abandoned the idea of a black state as he planned a raid on a federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. The idea was to capture arms and distribute them to slaves. Douglass warned this was suicidal — there were only about 5,000 blacks versus 100,000 whites in the region. On October 16, 1859, Brown and 22 followers seized the arsenal, but they were captured by Robert E. Lee's marines.

Douglass became implicated after investigators found his correspondence among Brown's papers, and the order went out to arrest him. He fled to Canada and then to England and Scotland where, conveniently, he was already booked for a lecture tour.

Brown was hanged on December 2, 1859. Three months later, when Douglass was in Glasgow, he got word that his 10-year-old daughter Annie had died, and he resolved to go home. He cautiously took an indirect route, to Maine, Montreal, and then Rochester. About this time, he got lucky. There was a backlash of public outrage against slavery, and Congress feared that further hangings would make more martyrs. Accordingly, it closed the John Brown affair. Within just a few months, Douglass's association with John Brown had gone from a big liability to a badge of honor.

Douglass spoke forcefully for Republican presidential candidate Abraham Lincoln, but he was shocked to discover that large numbers of Northerners blamed abolitionists for the crisis of the Union. At a December 3, 1860, Boston rally, Douglass found himself in a riot as Unionists fought abolitionists. Then after the April 1861 firing on Fort Sumter, which marked the beginning of the Civil War, President Lincoln made clear this was a struggle to preserve the Union, not to abolish slavery. Lincoln's policy was that runaway slaves must be returned to their masters. Lincoln overruled General John C. Frémont, who had emancipated slaves in Missouri.

Douglass demanded "the unrestricted and complete Emancipation of every slave in the United States whether claimed by loyal or disloyal masters. This is the lesson of the Hour." On January 1, 1863, Lincoln issued an Emancipation Proclamation saying that slaves were liberated in rebellious states — which he obviously didn't control. The Proclamation didn't free slaves in the North. But Douglass hailed it because it made the abolition of slavery a war aim.

Alas, Douglass was swept away by war fever like almost everybody else. Although he didn't enlist himself, he delivered

speeches encouraging black men to join the Union army. Douglass's aim was to help win the war and gain respect for blacks. But Douglass's efforts backfired to some extent when, during riots against military conscription, angry whites blamed blacks for starting the Civil War. While the North welcomed black volunteers into segregated fighting units like the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Volunteers, blacks were paid less than whites and weren't promoted into the ranks of noncommissioned officers.

Especially after his cordial White House meeting with President Lincoln, Douglass became a Republican booster, but war casualties soared with no end in sight, generating pressures to compromise. As another presidential election year approached, there was talk about a negotiated peace that would let the South maintain slavery. Lincoln's likely Democratic opponent, General George McClellan, promised he wouldn't end slavery in rebel states. Douglass countered: "no war but an Abolition war; no peace but an Abolition peace; liberty for all, chains for none; the black man a soldier in war; a laborer in peace; a voter at the South as well as at the North; America his permanent home, and all Americans his fellow-countrymen."

War's End

The Civil War ended on April 9, 1865, and five days later Lincoln was assassinated. Douglass certainly admired Lincoln but acknowledged: "He was ready to execute all the supposed constitutional guaranties of the United States Constitution in favor of the slave system anywhere inside the slave States. He was willing to pursue, recapture, and send back the fugitive slave to his master, and to suppress a slave rising for liberty, though his guilty

master were already in arms against the Government. The race to which we belong were not the special objects of his consideration."

With slavery abolished, Garrison as well as many others in the antislavery movement considered their work done. But Douglass focused on what had always been his long-term goal: to help blacks achieve their human potential and live in harmony with whites.

How to achieve these things? There weren't any good choices. War-weary Northerners didn't want to hear about the problems of blacks. Embittered Southerners were determined to get their revenge. Douglass hoped for federal action, but Andrew Johnson, who had succeeded Lincoln as president, did nothing while white Southerners reasserted their power over blacks. They enacted Black Codes that effectively denied blacks their civil rights. For example: Mississippi specified that blacks could not live in a particular place or hold a job unless they got a (white-controlled) government license which could be revoked at any time. Johnson told blacks they should prove they had the right to be free.

Douglass set his sights on getting blacks the vote, so they could establish a political presence — blacks were denied the vote in Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and several western states. He took leave of his family once more and crisscrossed the country. His rallying cry: "They gave us the bullet to save themselves; they will yet give the ballot to save themselves."

But it became politically impossible to push for giving both blacks and women the vote at the same time, and feminists refused to support black suffrage if women weren't part of the deal. Things got nasty with Susan B. Anthony, among others, taking swipes at the intelligence of black men. Douglass's view: "While the negro is mobbed, beaten, shot, stabbed, hanged, burnt and is the target of all that is malignant in the North and all that is murderous in

the South, his claims may be preferred by me without exposing in any wise myself to the imputation of narrowness or meanness toward the cause of woman." Immediately after the March 30, 1870, adoption of the Fifteenth Amendment, granting blacks the right to vote, Douglass urged a new campaign for female suffrage.

Douglass hitched himself to the Republican Party during the long sunset of his career, because the Democratic Party was committed to undoing black gains. He campaigned for Republican presidential candidates, and for his trouble he was named to inconsequential posts — Marshal in the District of Columbia, Recorder of Deeds and Consul-General to Haiti. He hoped to influence government policy but didn't. His posts provided some cover for Republican presidents who sold out blacks in the South. On October 15, 1883, eight out of nine Republican Supreme Court justices ruled that state legislatures had jurisdiction over civil rights, affirming the triumph of white supremacy in the South.

There was an open season on blacks. They were excluded from white labor unions. Terrorist groups like the Pale Faces, Knights of the White Camelia and, of course, the Ku Klux Klan, burned black homes, schools, and churches. Blacks were lynched, and neither state nor federal governments did much, if anything.

It was through his private efforts, not any political connections, that Douglass fought these evils. "A white man has but to blacken his face and commit a crime, to have some negro lynched in his stead," he protested. "An abandoned woman has only to start the cry that she has been insulted by a black man, to have him arrested and summarily murdered by the mob. Frightened and tortured by his captors, confused into telling crooked stories about his whereabouts at the time when the alleged crime was committed and the death penalty is at once inflicted, though his story may be but the incoherency of ignorance or distraction caused by terror."

The problem, he insisted, is "whether the American people have loyalty enough, honor enough, patriotism enough, to live up to their Constitution. . . . We Negroes love our country. We fought for it. We ask only that we be treated as well as those who fought against it."

Douglass rejected the thought that one class must rule over another. He pleaded: "Let the nation try justice and the problem will be solved."

Douglass returned to his theme of self-help. The question now is, will the black man do as much now for his master (himself) as he used to do for his old master? He encouraged black parents: "Educate your sons and daughters, send them to school . . . into mechanical trades; press them into blacksmith-shops, the wheelwright-shops, the cooper-shops, and the tailor-shops. . . . Trades are important. Wherever a man may be thrown by misfortune, if he have in his hands a useful trade, he is useful to his fellow-men, and will be esteemed accordingly . . ."

In 1881, he published *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*. He provided more details about his experience as a slave, revealed (for the first time) how he escaped and offered his comments on the Civil War and subsequent events. His concern was that Americans should never forget the evils of slavery. Douglass issued an expanded edition of the book in 1892.

Douglass's last years brought much sadness. He had launched a newspaper, the *New National Era*, but it failed and cost him $10,000. His grown children were all dependent on him for financial support. His wife, Anna, died on August 4, 1882. Two years later, he married a white abolitionist, Helen Pitts, antagonizing both blacks and whites.

After arsonists torched his beloved Rochester home, Douglass moved to a 20-room white frame house on 23 acres across the

Anacostia River from Washington, D.C. The place had once been owned by Robert E. Lee. Called Cedar Hill, it included a library and a music room where Douglass could play his violin.

On February 20, 1895, he attended a Washington, D.C., rally for women's rights. When he finished dinner that night, he rose from his chair, then collapsed and died. There was a private funeral service at his home, and the casket was moved to the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church where tremendous crowds, including thousands of children, paid their respects. After another service at Rochester's Central Church, he was buried in Mount Home Cemetery near his daughter and his first wife.

More than anyone else, Douglass put a human face on the horrors of American slavery. He helped convince millions that it must be abolished. He courageously spoke out against the subversion of civil rights. He expressed generous sympathy for all who were oppressed. He urged people to help themselves and fulfill their destiny. He longed for the day when men and women, blacks, whites, and everyone else could live in peace.

Jim Powell, senior fellow at the Cato Institute, is an expert in the history of liberty. He has lectured in England, Germany, Japan, Argentina and Brazil as well as at Harvard, Stanford and other universities across the United States. He has written for the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Esquire*, *Audacity/American Heritage* and other publications, and is author of six books.

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Roberto Clemente: "I Learned the Right Way to Live"

Lawrence W. Reed

In both Puerto Rico and Pittsburgh, more than four decades after his untimely death at the age of 38, the name of Roberto Clemente brings a smile to almost every face.

Clemente is number 21 in this series — the very number on the jersey he wore during all 18 seasons he played for the Pittsburgh Pirates, from 1955 to 1972.

He was one of the greatest right fielders in baseball history. He could run, hit, and throw better than almost anybody who ever played the game. Black and Puerto Rican by birth, he transcended race, nationality, and culture to become American Major League Baseball's first Latino superstar.

Growing up in western Pennsylvania in the 1960s, I heard his name every day, always wrapped in glowing admiration. He had so much talent and character that Pulitzer Prize–winning author David Maraniss could write a 400-page biography of him, *Clemente: The Passion and Grace of Baseball's Last Hero*.

The youngest of seven siblings, Roberto Enrique Clemente Walker (in Spanish, the last name is the maternal family name) was born in 1934 in Carolina, Puerto Rico. As a young boy, he worked in the sugar cane fields with his father. "I learned the right way to live from my parents," he said years later.

> I never heard any hate in my house. I never heard my father say a mean word to my mother, or my mother to my father, either. During the war, when food was hard to get, my parents fed their children first and they ate what was left. They always thought of us.

The Clementes were poor in material wealth, but over time, the riches of a loving family opened many doors for the children.

Roberto showed an early love of baseball, easily the island's favorite sport. The Brooklyn Dodgers offered the 20-year-old a contract in 1954, but his stint with them was brief. He was picked up a year later by the manager of the Pittsburgh Pirates — none other than the legendary Branch Rickey, who a few years before had enabled Jackie Robinson to break the color barrier by signing him to the Dodgers as Major League Baseball's first black player. Rickey, a devout Christian, was devoid of prejudice and reveled in giving every good person a chance. He once told an interviewer,

> All men anthropologically come from the same source, with the same potentials, and must have equality in chance and opportunity. And that is so right, I think, that posterity will look back upon what we are doing today in our domestic issues here. They will look back upon it, I think, with incredulity and they'll wonder what the issue was all about. I really think so. It's solved in baseball. It'll be solved educationally. It'll be solved everywhere in the course of time.

Maybe Rickey also knew that discrimination rarely pays in the marketplace. An owner or manager who passes up the chance to hire a winner becomes a loser to competitors who will do it instead. Both Jackie Robinson and Roberto Clemente made their teams proud and their owners financially well-off because they were great players.

Clemente donned the Pirate uniform in 1955 at a very inauspicious moment in the team's history. Calvin Coolidge was president the last time the Pirates had won a world championship. That was in 1925. By the 1950s, the team was written off and joked about routinely. Going to Pittsburgh seemed like a one-way ticket to the cellar.

As a black Hispanic whose English was barely passable, Clemente faced daunting personal obstacles as well. A car accident caused by a drunk driver in his rookie year left him with lower-back pain that plagued him for the rest of his life. Baseball was a sport in which players were expected to be pillars of stoicism, never speaking of anything but their prowess. Sports writers never wanted to hear a player complain about how he felt, but when they asked Clemente that question, the Puerto Rican would tell them honestly, giving rise to the exaggerated claim that he was a hypochondriac.

Pirates executive Danny Murtaugh explained, "He was such a truthful man it backfired on him sometimes. If you asked him if his shoulder hurt, he'd say 'Yes, it does.' Then he'd go out and throw a guy out at the plate. That's how he got the hypochondriac label."

Clemente played hard, all the time, whether he hurt or not. It was a matter of pride. "When I put on my uniform, I feel I am the proudest man on earth," he said the year before he died. "The players should pay the people to come and see us play." On another occasion, he told an audience,

> Why you think I play this game? I play to win. Competition is the thing. I want to play on a winning team. I don't want to play for sixth place. I like to play for all the marbles, where every game means something. I like to play for real, not for fun.

While at spring training with the Pirates in Florida, Clemente would occasionally see and hear the ugly face of anti-Latino and anti-black prejudice. It later prompted him to sympathize openly with the nascent civil rights movement, but he never let prejudice compromise his professionalism or his charitable attitude toward other good people, least of all the disadvantaged. "I don't believe in color," he said.

He spent considerable free time volunteering as a baseball coach and mentor to young boys in the barrios back in Puerto Rico. During the winter of 1958–59, he even joined the **United States Marine Corps Reserve**, spending his six-month active duty in the Carolinas and Washington, DC.

Thanks to Clemente and other great players like Bill Mazeroski, the Pirates' fortunes began to look up in the late '50s. In 1958, they scored their first winning season in a decade. Two years later, they were the National League champions. The Pirates entered the 1960 World Series as the underdogs against the American League victors, the New York Yankees, who boasted big names in their ranks like Yogi Berra, Roger Maris, and Mickey Mantle. In the ninth inning of game seven, the world of baseball was stunned when Mazeroski slammed a home run and the Pirates won the game 10 to 9. World champs for the first time since almost a decade before Clemente was born, the Pirates earned back the esteem that had evaded them for so long.

Throughout the 1960s, Roberto Clemente's fame grew as his abilities awed fans year after year. He was a National League **All-Star** every season he played after 1960 but for one, 1968. He won the National League's **Golden Glove Award** for outfielder every season from 1961 on. He won the National League **batting title** four times — in 1961, 1964, 1965, and 1967 — and won the Most Valuable Player Award in 1966, hitting .317 with 29 home runs

and 119 RBIs. In 1967, he belted out 23 home runs, batted in 110 runs, and logged a career high .357 batting average.

This phenomenal athlete could be philosophical at times and even elegant in his accented English:

> If we have respect for our fathers and we have respect for our children, we will have a better life. I watched on TV when America sent men to the moon, and there were a lot of people whose names weren't given who helped make it possible. You don't have the names of those who run the computers and other things. But they worked together and this is why you have to have . . . Chinese, American, Jewish, black and white, people working side by side. This is what you have to do to make this a better life. When you can give opportunity to everybody, we won't have to wait to die to get to heaven. We are going to have heaven on earth.

The Pirates' next shot at a World Series came in 1971. After beating the San Francisco Giants for the National League pennant, they faced the Baltimore Orioles, the defending champions. In seven games once again, the Pirates won the series. Clemente, at 37 years of age, batted a stunning .414 average and hit a home run in the final deciding game. No one could refute that he richly deserved to be named the 1971 World Series MVP, and so he was.

A few months later, in accepting yet another important award, Clemente delivered these memorable lines:

> Accomplishment is something you cannot buy. If you have a chance and don't make the most of it, you are wasting your time on this earth. It is not what you do in baseball or sports, but how hard you try. Win or lose, I try my best.

On September 30, 1972 — a month and a half after his 38th birthday — Clemente reached a milestone with his 3,000th hit

of his major league career. To this day, only 28 other players in baseball history have exceeded that number of hits in a major league lifetime. It was the last at-bat of his career during a regular season. There would be no 1973 season for the superstar from Puerto Rico.

At 12:29 a.m., just two days before Christmas in 1972, the capital of Nicaragua was struck by a massive, magnitude 6.2 earthquake. In a country where Clemente had close friends and which he had visited just three weeks before, the casualty figures were heart wrenching: 6,000 killed, 20,000 injured, and more than a quarter-million homeless. In Puerto Rico, Roberto Clemente watched the early reports on television with his family, just long enough to know he had to act.

Helping the needy came naturally to Clemente, and he had done it personally, frequently, and often quietly for years. Within hours of the quake, he gathered medical and other relief supplies. He organized flights to carry them to Managua. Distressingly, he learned that the supplies taken by the first three flights were diverted by corrupt officials of the Nicaraguan government. In anger, and determined to personally see that the material went where it was intended, he boarded the fourth flight himself but it never made it. Mechanical trouble forced the plane into the sea on New Year's Eve, 1972. Clemente's body was never found. He left behind his beloved wife Vera and three boys, all under the age of seven.

In a special election on March 30, 1973, the **Baseball Writers' Association of America** voted to waive the stipulated waiting period and posthumously elected Roberto Clemente into the Baseball Hall of Fame. Twenty-six years later, he was ranked number 20 on *The Sporting News*'s list of the 100 Greatest Baseball

Players of all time. He was the highest-ranking Latin American and Caribbean player on the list.

Another baseball great, fellow Pirate **Willie Stargell wrote this of Clemente in his own 1984 autobiography**:

> I especially respected and admired Clemente, who later became one of my best friends. Roberto was superhuman on the ball field. He played right field with the grace and style of a ballet dancer. His agility and strength enabled him to perform plays some fans thought to be impossible. But he was also an intensely fierce warrior who played each game as if it were his last.

Roberto Clemente. All these years later, the thought of him still brings a smile, and some tears as well, to the faces of many people, including me.

For further information, see:

- David Maraniss's biography, *Clemente: The Passion and Grace of Baseball's Last Hero*
- The Clemente family's biography: *Clemente: The True Legacy of an Undying Hero*
- DVD: *American Experience: Roberto Clemente*
- Paul Robert Walker's biography, *Pride of Puerto Rico: The Life of Roberto Clemente*
- **David Thomas Roberts's piano composition, "Roberto Clemente" (YouTube)**
- Martin Espada's **"The Greatest Forgotten Home Run of All Time"**

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Jesse Owens: "Character Makes the Difference When It's Close"

Lawrence W. Reed

James Cleveland "Jesse" Owens famously won four gold medals, all at the 1936 games in Berlin, Germany. But in the hearts of Americans who know their Olympic history, this African American man did more than win races: he struggled against racism.

At the time of Owens's death in 1980 at age 66, President Jimmy Carter paid this tribute to him:

> Perhaps no athlete better symbolized the human struggle against tyranny, poverty, and racial bigotry. His personal triumphs as a world-class athlete and record holder were the prelude to a career devoted to helping others. His work with young athletes, as an unofficial ambassador overseas, and a spokesman for freedom are a rich legacy to his fellow Americans.

Carter's words were especially fitting in light of an unfortunate fact in Owens's life: unforgivably, a previous American president had given him the brush-off.

Born in Alabama in 1913, James Owens, at the age of nine, moved with his family to the town in Ohio that bore his middle name, Cleveland. His first school teacher there asked him his name. With a deep Southern twang, he replied "J.C. Owens." She

heard "Jesse," so that's what she wrote down. The name stuck for the next 57 years.

Jesse could run like the wind and jump like a kangaroo. He broke junior high school records in the high jump and the broad jump. In high school, he won every major track event in which he competed, tying or breaking world records in the 100-yard and 220-yard dashes and setting a new world record in the broad jump. Universities showered him with scholarship offers, but he turned them all down and chose Ohio State, which wasn't extending track scholarships at the time.

Imagine it. You come from a relatively poor family. You could go to any number of colleges for next to nothing, but you pick one you have to pay for. At 21, you have a wife to support as well. So what do you do? If you are Jesse Owens, you work your way through school as a gas station attendant, a waiter, an all-night elevator operator, a library assistant, even a page in the Ohio legislature. Owens worked, studied, practiced on the field, and set more records in track during his years at OSU.

The biography at **JesseOwens.com** tells the stunning story that unfolded in 1935:

> Jesse gave the world a preview of things to come in Berlin while at the Big Ten Championships in Ann Arbor on May 25, 1935, [where] he set three world records and tied a fourth, all in a span of about 45 minutes. Jesse was uncertain as to whether he would be able to participate at all, as he was suffering from a sore back as a result of a fall down a flight of stairs. He convinced his coach to allow him to run the 100-yard dash as a test for his back, and amazingly he recorded an official time of 9.4 seconds, once again tying the world record. Despite the pain, he then went on to participate in three other events, setting a world record in each event. In a span of 45 minutes, Jesse accomplished what many

> experts still feel is the greatest athletic feat in history — setting three world records and tying a fourth in four grueling track and field events.

Ohio wasn't the Deep South, but in the mid-1930s, it wasn't a paradise of racial equality, either. OSU required Owens and other black athletes to live together off campus. They had to order carryout or eat at "black-only" restaurants and stay in segregated hotels when traveling with the team.

The eyes of the world were focused on Berlin in early August 1936. Five years earlier and before the Nazis came to power, the German capital had been selected as the site for the summer 1936 Olympic games. An effort to boycott them because of Hitler's racism fizzled. It would be a few more years before events convinced the world of the socialist dictator's evil intentions. Jesse Owens entered the competition with Americans thrilled at his prospects but wondering how Hitler would react if "Aryan superiority" fell short of his expectations.

Jesse didn't go to Berlin with a political axe to grind. "I wanted no part of politics," he said. "And I wasn't in Berlin to compete against any one athlete. The purpose of the Olympics, anyway, was to do your best. As I'd learned long ago . . . the only victory that counts is the one over yourself."

If, a hundred years from now, only one name is remembered among those who competed at the Berlin games, it will surely be that of Jesse Owens.

Owens won the 100-meter sprint, the long jump, the 200-meter sprint, and the 4 x 100 sprint relay. In the process, he became the first American to claim four gold medals in a single Olympiad. Owens waved at Hitler and Hitler waved back, but the nasty little paper-hanger expressed his annoyance privately to fellow Nazi

Albert Speer. He opined that blacks should never be allowed to compete in the games again.

A side story of Owens's Berlin experience was the friendship he made with a German competitor named Lutz Long. A decent man by any measure, Long exhibited no racial animosity and even offered tips to Owens that the American found helpful during the games. Of Long, Owens would later tell an interviewer,

> It took a lot of courage for him to befriend me in front of Hitler. . . . You can melt down all the medals and cups I have and they wouldn't be a plating on the 24-karat friendship I felt for Lutz Long at that moment. Hitler must have gone crazy watching us embrace. The sad part of the story is I never saw Long again. He was killed in World War II.

Back home, ticker tape parades feted Owens in New York City and Cleveland. Hundreds of thousands of Americans came out to cheer him. Letters, phone calls, and telegrams streamed in from around the world to congratulate him. From one important man, however, no word of recognition ever came. As Owens later put it, "Hitler didn't snub me; it was our president who snubbed me. The president didn't even send a telegram."

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, leader of a major political party with deep roots in racism, couldn't bring himself to utter a word of support, which may have been a factor in Owens's decision to campaign for Republican Alf Landon in the 1936 presidential election. FDR invited all the white US Olympians to the White House, but not Jesse.

"It all goes so fast, and character makes the difference when it's close," Owens once said about athletic competition. He could have taught FDR a few lessons in character, but the president never gave him the chance. Owens wouldn't be invited to the

White House for almost 20 years — not until Dwight Eisenhower named him "Ambassador of Sports" in 1955.

Life after the Olympics wasn't always kind to Jesse Owens. When he wanted to earn money from commercial endorsements, athletic officials yanked his amateur status. Then the commercial offers dried up. He was forced to file for bankruptcy. He felt the sting of racial discrimination again. But for the last 30 years of his life, until he died in 1980 of lung cancer, he found helping underprivileged teenagers to be even more personally satisfying than his Olympic gold medals.

For further information, see:

- Jeremy Schaap's *Triumph: The Untold Story of Jesse Owens and Hitler's Olympics*
- David Clay Large's *Nazi Games: The Olympics of 1936*

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Althea Gibson: A Winning Attitude

Lawrence W. Reed

Baseless prejudice sooner or later meets its match when it runs into raw talent and indomitable willpower. Jackie Robinson proved it in baseball, as did **Joe Louis** in boxing and **Jesse Owens** in track.

In the world of tennis, the biggest winner of note was a black woman named Althea Gibson. Life's victories don't always go to the stronger or faster woman, to paraphrase an old adage, but Gibson demonstrated that sooner or later, the woman who wins is the one who thinks she can.

Gibson was three years old in 1930 when her family moved from a sharecropper's shack on a cotton farm in South Carolina to New York City's Harlem in search of a better life. At her elementary public school (with the uninspiring moniker, "PS 136"), playing hooky was her first love. "School was too confining and boring to be worthy of more than cameo appearances," according to her biographers Francis Clayton Gray and Yanick Rice Lamb in *Born to Win*.

The Beaumont Country Club in Texas let her play its course but refused to permit her to use the clubhouse or the bathrooms.

When she wasn't fidgeting in the classroom, Gibson was exploring the Big Apple — riding the subway, shooting hoops, sneaking into movie theaters, and beating the pants off anybody

who dared to play her at ping-pong. At the age of 12 in 1939, she was New York City's female table tennis champion, and tennis on the big courts beckoned. Her Harlem neighbors went door to door, raising donations in dimes, quarters, and the occasional dollar to pay for her membership and tennis lessons at the Cosmopolitan Tennis Club. Within a year, she won her first tournament, the New York State Championship of the American Tennis Association (ATA).

All through the 1940s, Gibson won title after title. "I knew that I was an unusual, talented girl, through the grace of God," she later wrote when reflecting on this period. "I didn't need to prove that to myself. I only wanted to prove it to my opponents."

Off the court, she was both cocky and gracious, never overbearing or condescending. On the court, she was fiercely competitive. Her bulldog determination and her athletic, five-foot-eleven frame intimidated opponents right from the start of a match.

The ATA gave Gibson ample opportunity to prove her prowess among black tennis players, but it was a limited market. Tennis was a segregated sport at the time; indeed, the ATA itself was expressly organized for blacks who were denied the right to play in the US National Championship competitions (now the US Open). That changed in 1950, largely due to the courage of another woman, Alice Marble.

Having won 18 Grand Slam championships, Marble was the best white female tennis player in the world. Her opinion on anything could make headlines. In 1950, *World Tennis* magazine published a letter in which Marble challenged the US Tennis Association for its discriminatory practices, specifically for not inviting Althea Gibson to play at its famous Forest Hills championship matches in New York City:

> If tennis is a game for ladies and gentlemen, it's also time we acted a little more like gentlepeople and less like sanctimonious hypocrites. If Althea Gibson represents a challenge to the present crop of women players, it's only fair that they should meet that challenge on the courts.

Marble declared that if Gibson wasn't given the opportunity to compete, "then there is an uneradicable mark against a game to which I have devoted most of my life, and I would be bitterly ashamed."

Gibson's invitation soon arrived, making her the first black player (male or female) to play at Forest Hills in the sport's national championships. It was her 23rd birthday. Though she lost in the second round to Louise Brough, the reigning Wimbledon champ and former US National victor, her involvement generated immense international media attention. Journalist Lester Rodney wrote,

> No Negro player, man or woman, has ever set foot on one of these courts. In many ways, it is even a tougher personal Jim Crow–busting assignment than was Jackie Robinson's when he first stepped out of the Brooklyn Dodgers dugout.

The next six years were peppered with achievements and notoriety for Althea Gibson:

- In 1951, Gibson won her first international title, the Caribbean Championships in Jamaica, and a few months later, she became the first black to play at Wimbledon.
- In 1952, she was ranked seventh nationally by the US Tennis Association.

- In 1953, she graduated from Florida A&M and began teaching physical education at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri.
- In 1955, she toured Asia as a goodwill ambassador, playing in exhibition matches and earning widespread admiration.
- In 1956, she became the first black athlete to win a Grand Slam singles championship, the French Open; before the year was out, she also won the Wimbledon doubles championship, the Italian national championship, and the Asian championship.

But as Gibson said herself, 1957 was the tops. In July, she won the world singles championship at Wimbledon and became the first black to take the title in the tournament's eight-decade history.

Queen Elizabeth personally presented the trophy to an awestruck Gibson. "Shaking hands with the Queen of England," she said, "was a long way from being forced to sit in the colored section of the bus."

In addition to the top spot in singles at Wimbledon that year, Gibson walked away as the doubles champion, too, for the second year in a row. When she returned to America, she became the second black American (the first being Jesse Owens) honored by a ticker tape parade down Broadway in New York City, with more than a hundred thousand people cheering their approval.

Later in 1957, Gibson won the Nationals. Then, in 1958, she successfully defended her Wimbledon and United States titles while also emerging victorious at the Australian Open, giving her no less than three of the four Grand Slam titles in professional tennis. Both in 1957 and in 1958, Althea Gibson was the number one–ranked woman tennis player in the world. Honored as "Female Athlete of the Year" by the Associated Press in both

years, she also became the first black woman to appear on the covers of *Sports Illustrated* and *Time* magazines.

After retiring from the sport in 1958, Gibson released her own album, "Althea Gibson Sings," and wrote an autobiography. She even toured with the Harlem Globetrotters, exhibiting her tennis skills during halftime, and earned additional income as a "community relations representative" for a Brooklyn bakery.

Gibson took up golf in 1964, at age 37. She joined the Ladies Professional Golf Association as the only female black golf pro. Racism confronted her when the Beaumont Country Club in Texas let her play its course but refused to permit her to use the clubhouse or the bathrooms. She took it in stride by simply avoiding such places thereafter. "I don't want to go where I'm not wanted," she said. "I'm trying to be a good golfer, I have enough problems as it is." Beaumont eventually abandoned its color barrier.

"I always wanted to be somebody," Gibson wrote in her autobiography. "If I made it, it's half because I was game enough to take a lot of punishment along the way and half because there were a lot of people who cared enough to help me."

A dozen years before she died at age 76 in 2003, Gibson summed up her lifelong winning attitude with these words: "The loser always has an excuse; the winner always has a program. The loser says it may be possible, but it's difficult; the winner says it may be difficult, but it's possible."

For further information, see:

- Gray and Lamb's biography, *Born To Win: The Authorized Biography of Althea Gibson*

- **An eight-minute video on Gibson, "HerStory: The World's Greatest Female Athletes"**
- **Althea Gibson's 1958 appearance on the TV show,** *What's My Line?*
- **Althea Gibson singing, "I Can't Give You Anything but Love"**
- **The International Tennis Hall of Fame's tribute to Althea Gibson**
- Bruce Schoenfeld's *The Match: Althea Gibson & Angela Buxton*

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Joe Louis: Fighter on Many Fronts

Lawrence W. Reed

If you remember the famous 1938 fight for the world heavyweight boxing title between Detroit's Joe Louis and Germany's Max Schmeling, you've been around awhile. If you don't, there's a good chance you've heard about it from your father or grandfather. It was a rematch that Louis, known as the "Brown Bomber," won in just 124 seconds.

Joe Louis was a hero not only for who and what he fought and beat but also for maintaining his integrity along the way. He dealt personally with poverty and racism. He overcame a speech impediment and the loss of his father at an early age. He took on the best boxers of his day. He battled the Nazis. He crossed swords with the Internal Revenue Service. When he died at age 66 in 1981, he was widely revered as a champion of character and was beloved by good people of every color.

The grandson of slaves, Joe Louis Barrow was born in 1914 in Lafayette, Alabama. He barely spoke until he was in the second grade. At age 12, he moved with his mother, his stepdad, and his seven siblings to Detroit after a scare from the Ku Klux Klan. To his credit, Joe never viewed the racism of a few as indicative of the many. He judged men and women the way he wanted them to judge him: namely, by what Martin Luther King would call "the content of their character." In spite of his mother's desire

that he pursue either cabinetmaking or the violin, he showed an early penchant for pugilism. He dropped "Barrow" and became simply "Joe Louis" when he started competing in the ring as a teenager, apparently because he didn't want his mom to know he was boxing. She soon found out, as did the rest of the world.

The Great Depression was in full swing when Louis fought the first big match of his amateur career in 1932. He lost to a future Olympian. Undaunted, he went on to win all but 3 of his next 53 fights (43 were knockouts) and caught the attention of boxing promoters. He went pro in 1934.

One of the most famous dates in boxing history is June 22, 1937. That's when Louis went up against heavyweight titleholder James Braddock, knocking him out in the eighth round. Americans black and white stayed up all night across the country in celebration, but the joy was especially high in black communities. Here's how author Langston Hughes described it:

> Each time Joe Louis won a fight in those depression years, even before he became champion, thousands of black Americans on relief or W.P.A. and poor, would throng out into the streets all across the land to march and cheer and yell and cry because of Joe's one-man triumphs. No one else in the United States has ever had such an effect on Negro emotions — or on mine. I marched and cheered and yelled and cried, too.

Of 72 professional fights, Louis scored 57 knockouts and lost only three matches. For 12 years (1937–1949), he held the heavyweight championship. It was the longest stretch of winning titles in the sport's history. His closely-watched 1938 defeat of Max Schmeling embarrassed the Third Reich because it said to the world, "This Aryan superiority thing is nothing more than propaganda."

A month after Pearl Harbor, Louis enlisted in the US Army and went off for basic training to a segregated cavalry unit at Fort Riley, Kansas. The army used him to cheer up the troops by sending him some 20,000 miles for 96 boxing matches in front of two million soldiers. He was eventually given the Legion of Merit for his "incalculable contribution to the general morale." It was in the army that he befriended Jackie Robinson, the future major league baseball player. Louis persuaded a commanding officer to drop charges against Robinson for punching out a fellow soldier who called him the *N*-word.

Nobody who ever really knew Joe Louis, it seems, had an unkind word for him. Perhaps the worst ever said was actually spoken in jest, by fellow boxer Max Baer: "I define fear as standing across the ring from Joe Louis and knowing he wants to go home early."

A very different fight that Louis waged is less well known than his boxing. It was with the Internal Revenue Service. As we do in our day, Louis had to contend in his with a president whose fingers itched to get into the pockets of wealthy Americans. I first learned of this story from historian Burton Folsom, author of the superb book *New Deal or Raw Deal?*

In 1935, President Roosevelt pushed Congress to raise the top income tax rate to 79 percent, then later to 90 percent during and after World War II. In the war years, Joe Louis donated money to military charities, but the complicated tax laws wouldn't allow him to deduct those gifts. Although Louis saw almost none of the money he won in charity fights, the IRS credited the full amounts as taxable income paid to Louis. He had even voluntarily paid back to the city of Detroit all the money he and his family had received in welfare years before, but that counted for nothing with the feds.

Louis retired as heavyweight champion in 1949, but his tax debt was approaching $500,000. After an IRS ruling in 1950, the debt began accumulating interest each year. Louis felt compelled to come out of retirement in 1950 to fight Ezzard Charles, the new champion. After the fight, his mother begged him to stop but, he said, "she couldn't understand how much money I owed. . . . The government wanted their money, and I had to try to get it to them."

The next year, Louis fought Rocky Marciano and lost. The fight earned him $300,000. With a 90 percent tax rate on high incomes, what he had left was peanuts, but he gave it all to the government. When his mother died in 1953, the IRS swiped the $667 she left him in her will. With interest compounding, his debt by 1960 had soared to more than $1 million.

According to Folsom, "Louis refereed wrestling matches, made guest appearances on quiz shows and served as a greeter at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas — anything to bring in money" for the IRS.

The notorious mobster Frank Lucas (still living today at 85) was so disgusted with the IRS's treatment of Louis that he once paid a $50,000 tax lien against the boxer. Even Max Schmeling came to the rescue, assisting with money when Louis was alive and then paying funeral expenses when the boxer died in 1981.

You may not think of Louis in connection with the game of golf, but he made an impact there as well. Golf was his longtime, personal hobby. In 1952, he became the first black American to play at a PGA Tour event. Just as Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in baseball, Joe Louis broke it in golf. He cofounded The First Tee, a charity that introduces golf to underprivileged children. Today, his 68-year-old son, Joe Louis Barrow Jr., is the organization's CEO.

Joe Louis, a decorated army veteran and world-class athlete, remained a symbol of black achievement in spite of his tax troubles, which finally came to an end when the IRS settled and the US government — to which he had given so much — finally got off his back.

When Louis died, President Reagan waived the rules to allow him to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors. He was a man who fought on many fronts and emerged as a great example every time.

For further information, see:

- Randy Roberts's biography, *Joe Louis: Hard Times Man*
- Matt De La Peña's biography, *A Nation's Hope: The Story of Boxing Legend Joe Louis*
- *Joe Louis: America's Hero Betrayed* (DVD) — a superb documentary on the man and the ruthlessness of the IRS

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Berry Gordy Jr. and the Original "Black Label"

Larry Schweikart

Asked to identify prominent people in the music industry, most Americans will name musicians. A few may mention Phil Spector, Herb Alpert, Burt Bachrach, or Quincy Jones — producers, writers, and arrangers, not (essentially) performers. A true "music geek" may even name behind-the-scenes music gurus such as Clive Davis (founder of Arista Records) or Ahmet Ertegun (founder of Atlantic Records). Yet few musicians, songwriters, or performers have had as much impact on the American music industry as Berry Gordy Jr., founder of the original "black label," Motown Records.[1] His is an illustrative chapter in story of American entrepreneurship.

Gordy loved the music business and dreamt of writing and producing. A former Golden Gloves boxer, he was drafted during the Korean War, and when he returned to his native Detroit, he started Gordy's 3-D Record Mart to sell jazz records. But the store floundered: his customers wanted soul and blues. In 1955, after only two years, Gordy folded the business and took a job at Ford Motor Company's Lincoln division.

But he had not given up his dream. He got his break when a concession business run by his family at the Flame Show Bar introduced him to several top entertainers. The Flame Show featured the top black acts in Detroit, including Billie Holiday

and T-Bone Walker, and the club owner managed a young singer named Jackie Wilson. Gordy was invited to write some songs for Wilson, and he collaborated with Roquel "Billy" Davis to pen the hit "Lonely Teardrops."

Gordy soon met Raynoma Liles, who auditioned for backup singer in some of the acts Gordy had begun to produce. Raynoma (whom Gordy married) could write music, and this talent fit perfectly with Gordy's own freelancing songwriting style. In 1957 he produced "Reet Petite," also sung by Wilson, bringing still more ambitious acts to Gordy's doorstep. When a group called the "Matadors" was turned down by Wilson's manager, Gordy took it under his wing, changing its name to the "Miracles" and spotlighting its lead singer, William "Smokey" Robinson. Gordy was now wearing three hats, as manager, writer, and producer for the Miracles. He produced their minor hit "Got a Job" (an answer to the Silhouettes' "Get a Job") and the success of the Miracles, along with the songs Gordy wrote for Jackie Wilson, convinced him that he could make the leap to the next level: owning his own record label. In 1959, using $500 that his mother lent to him, Gordy formed Tamla Records and a publishing arm, Jobete Publishing. This was a significant move, because as any musician knows, the lion's share of the royalties goes to the publisher and writer, not the performer.

Gordy continued to write hits, including "Money (That's What I Want)," recorded by Barrett Strong. But finding that his little label could not efficiently distribute the records around the country, he signed a national production and distribution deal with United Artists. In 1960, Gordy converted the Tamla and Hitsville USA record labels into a new company, "Motown," from Detroit's "Motor Town" nickname. On the advice of Smokey Robinson, Motown began to distribute its own records that year,

bolstered by the success of Robinson and the Miracles' "Shop Around." By that time Detroit-based black talent started to beat on Gordy's door with regularity, and the artists produced by Motown started to gain acceptance in wider markets. Mary Wells, for example, achieved "crossover" into white markets with the classic "My Guy" (1964).

Some stars were literally right under Gordy's nose. His secretary, Martha Reeves, had a group called the "Vandellas," and she successfully lobbied Gordy to record the group. After proving their mettle by singing backup on a few Motown hits, "Martha and the Vandellas" was allowed to record solo, with results that, by that time, should not have shocked Gordy. Their songs "Heat Wave" and "Dancin' in the Streets" shot to the top of the charts.

Gordy realized, however, that blacks constituted only about 12 percent of the population in the United States, and even if he sold a record to every black adult, he could not make as much money as if he sold to only one-quarter of the white population. He therefore embarked on a risky and, in retrospect, brilliant strategy to "package" black Detroit acts in such a way that white audiences would buy their records. This was no mean feat. It could have backfired with his large black audiences, giving him a reputation for selling out. On the other hand, he faced a substantial hurdle in getting black artists on mainstream radio. Only a few years earlier, a white singer from Tupelo, Mississippi, Elvis Presley, had been denied airplay on some radio stations because he "sounded black." But Gordy realized that cultural differences had to be bridged from both directions. If whites were to embrace the less rigid structure of black rhythm and blues, the music had to be presented in a polished, sophisticated (and non-threatening) way. In short, Gordy's genius was that he presented black music in the

entertainment structure that white audiences were familiar, and comfortable, with.

Breaks New Ground

Gordy hired a choreographer, for example, to teach the groups how to move. Motown choreography, which eventually became a caricature of itself, nevertheless in its early years broke new ground in musical presentation. He also realized that his singers, most of whom were from poor inner-city neighborhoods, needed to be able to make a good showing in interviews to better promote their records. He hired elocution instructors and taught the artists proper English and social skills. Gordy dressed his acts in suits, tuxedos, or full dresses. If racists were going to complain that black music would pervert the nation's youth, they would have a hard time proving it by looking at the Motown stable of groups, whose members were well-dressed, articulate, and polished. This was more than a superficial remake. "We don't accept an artist easily," Gordy told a Detroit newspaper. "We look for character and integrity as well as talent, and this produces a big family-type organization."

Gordy demanded of his acts hard work, a straight life, and commitment to "the system," and in return he recognized that he owed them sound financial advice so they would not squander their money. Setting up a financial-counseling service, Gordy explained in 1962, "We try to help artists personally with their investment programs so that they don't wind up broke. We are very much concerned with the artist's welfare."[2]

Perhaps Gordy's most impressive barrier-breaking move was not his formatted choreography or his "packaging" of black acts, but his fundamental assault on the construction of black

blues itself. Knowing that traditional blues, as played by Muddy Waters, Blind Lemon Jefferson, and B. B. King would be a hard sell to white audiences, Gordy worked with Eddie Holland, Lamont Dozier, and Brian Holland (known as "Holland-Dozier-Holland" on the record labels) to transform the traditional 12-bar blues and 32-bar ballads into new, short strains that featured a repeated "hook," or catch phrase. The innovation can be heard in the Supremes' hit "Stop, in the Name of Love" and others.

Gordy's Motown Records cranked out many hits in the early-to-mid-1960s from the Temptations, the Supremes, Martha and the Vandellas, and the Four Tops, always keeping the records within a two- to two-and-a-half-minute time frame so that disc jockeys would play them.

Like other artists, Holland, Dozier, and Holland flourished in Gordy's Motown system, and yet they came to resent his control. The songwriters broke off in 1967 to form their own label. While they still produced a few minor hits, they never enjoyed the success they had at Motown — perhaps due in part to changes in musical taste by that time. They were not the first to leave: Gladys Knight and the Pips had left Motown after a huge hit, redoing Marvin Gaye's "I Heard It Through the Grapevine."

Motown suffered with the loss of artists and songwriters, and it fell into a two-year funk while Gordy struggled to find replacements. He found renewed life with a new band, the Jackson 5, who submitted to Gordy's "polishing" process in Los Angeles. After a year of preparation, the Jackson 5 released "I Want You Back," featuring the powerful and dynamic vocals of the youngest member of the family, Michael Jackson. Gordy realized that Michael had the strongest fan appeal, and during the time that the Jackson 5 continued to turn out the hits, Gordy groomed Michael for a solo career.

Gordy was correct in his assessment of Michael Jackson, but as had occurred with other Motown stars and songwriters, his tight grip alienated Michael and the group. In 1976 the Jackson 5 left Motown, renaming themselves the Jacksons, and not long after that, Michael Jackson changed the face of music history with his stunning albums, "Off the Wall" and "Thriller" (which was co-produced with Quincy Jones). Given the Gordy formula, it is unlikely Jackson ever would have created many of his masterpieces had he remained at Motown. But like so many others, including young Steveland Judkins (whom Gordy repackaged as "Little Stevie Wonder"), Michael Jackson owed his start to Gordy's genius.

Top Black-Owned Business

By the early 1970s, when *Black Enterprise* magazine labeled Motown the top black-owned business in America, Gordy had relocated many of his operations to Los Angeles. As he involved himself less in daily matters, Motown's hit-making reputation suffered. But with or without Gordy, Motown found that music itself had changed, developing a harder edge with the 1970s rock bands and the advent of the drug culture's psychedelic and "metal" music. Motown remained locked into a formula for groups, producing the Commodores, but the heyday of its creativity was gone, and further erosions of black dance music occurred when the "disco" scene made several white acts, such as the Bee Gees and K. C. and the Sunshine Band, into dance-music stars.

In 1988 Gordy sold Motown to MCA Records. He had literally changed the American music industry, introducing large numbers of suburban whites to "black" music and advancing the careers of many who now are honored in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame,

as is Gordy himself. Gordy became a victim of his own success, and like Henry Ford, the revolutionary finally turned into the old guard. But weep not for Berry Gordy Jr. In the process of creating Motown records, he became wealthy, started an empire, and gave America some of its best music moments.

For information on Motown, see:

- Dave Edwards and Mike Callahan, "The Motown Story."
- "Sweet Soul Music," in Thaddeus Wawro, *Radicals and Visionaries: Entrepreneurs Who Revolutionized the 20th Century* (Irvine, Calif.: Entrepreneur Press, 2000), pp. 154–57
- Larry Schweikart, *The Entrepreneurial Adventure: A History of Business in the United States* (Ft. Worth: Harcourt, 2000), pp. 398–99.
- Ken Barnard, "Berry Gordy Jr.-Detroit's Record King," *Detroit Free Press*, December 26, 1962.

Larry Earl Schweikart is an American historian and professor of history at the University of Dayton. He is the author of more than a dozen books; his best-known popular book is *A Patriot's History of the United States*.

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The Costs of Segregation to the Detroit Tigers

Burton W. Folsom

Many people know the remarkable and inspiring story of Jackie Robinson and how he endured racial insults to integrate major league baseball in 1947. In Robinson's first year alone he won the rookie-of-the-year award and led his Brooklyn Dodgers to the National League pennant.

But Robinson was only part of the integration story. What about those teams that refused to hire blacks, that insisted on following racist policies? What made them finally decide to integrate?

To answer these questions, it is useful to focus on the Detroit Tigers. While other major league teams were signing Satchel Paige, Willie Mays, Hank Aaron, and other black stars, the Detroit Tigers, under owner Walter Briggs, refused to hire any blacks. Wendell Smith, a black athlete and sportswriter, called Briggs "very prejudiced. He's the major league combination of Simon Legree and Adolf Hitler." Smith was no doubt exaggerating. However, the Tigers were indeed the next-to-last team in the major leagues to integrate (in 1958) — and only did so after Briggs had died.

Let's look at the results of Detroit's decision to avoid hiring blacks. Before baseball integrated, Detroit was a top team in the major leagues. Led by ace pitcher Hal Newhouser and sluggers

Hank Greenberg and Rudy York, the Tigers won the American League pennant in 1945. During each of the next two years, they finished in second place, clearly among the best teams in baseball.

The next year, 1948, the Cleveland Indians signed two outstanding black players: Larry Doby, a power-hitting outfielder, and Satchel Paige, possibly the greatest pitcher of his generation. The result was that Indians won the pennant by one game, and then, with seven key hits from Doby, they won the World Series. What's more, Cleveland set a major league record for attendance — 2.7 million fans bought tickets to watch the integrated team play.

The examples of Brooklyn and Cleveland gave the other teams something to ponder. They could continue to ignore black talent, but there would be a cost: fewer wins and fewer fans.

The Detroit Tigers learned this lesson the hard way. In 1948 the Tigers dropped from second to fifth place in the American League — and during the next ten years they would finish among the top three teams only once. In 1952 they wound up in last place in the American League, winning only 50 games and losing 104. No batter on the team hit higher than .284.

From 1945 to 1952, the Tigers had plunged from world champions to cellar dwellers, yet Walter Briggs still refused to sign a black player or develop any blacks in Detroit's minor-league system. The Tigers did bring up Al Kaline and Harvey Kuenn, two excellent white players, who both won batting titles in the 1950s. But their talents were wasted without a quality supporting cast that included talented blacks.

With Detroit in a tailspin, Walter Briggs died and the Briggs family sold the Tigers in 1956 to Fred Knorr, a Michigan man who was very different from Briggs. During the 1930s, while Briggs was enjoying segregated baseball in Detroit, Knorr was 100 miles west, graduating from Hillsdale College, the second

oldest campus in the United States to have an integrated student body. Knorr believed in integration on principle and soon helped contribute $75,000 to develop 17 black players in Detroit's minor-league system.

Knorr was killed in an accident in 1960, but his policy of integration was paying off, and the Tigers made a splendid comeback during the 1960s. They signed Willie Horton, a power-hitting outfielder, and Earl Wilson, a veteran pitcher who won 22 games in his first season as a Tiger. In 1968 Wilson, along with Denny McLain, was a mainstay of the Tiger pitching staff. Horton hit 36 home runs and was fourth in the league in batting average. The Tigers that year, after a long drought, went on to win the pennant and the World Series.

Lessons Learned

What lessons can we learn from Detroit's experience with segregation? First, as baseball expert Steve Sailer has noted, "competitive markets make irrational bigotry expensive — not impossible, but costly." In the 1950s Detroit could continue to field segregated teams, but only at a price. Joseph Bibb, a black sportswriter, said it well: "The white man wants money and color pays off."

The Boston Red Sox learned this lesson the hard way, too. In 1959, one year after Detroit, Boston became the last team in major league baseball to integrate. The Red Sox, like the Tigers, paid their price for segregation in the won-lost column. More specifically, in 1946, Boston won the American League pennant (with Detroit finishing second). From 1947 to 1951, with integration still slow, Boston never finished lower than third place in the American League. But they never finished higher than third place from

1952 to 1959, the year they finally integrated. During those bleak years, Boston manager Pinky Higgins, a native of Red Oak, Texas, insisted, "There'll be no niggers on this ball club as long as I have anything to say about it." No pennants either. Boston's superstar Ted Williams was the greatest hitter in baseball during the 1950s, but without roles for black players his Red Sox languished during that decade.

There is an economics lesson to learn here, too. The integration of baseball was a triumph of the free market. No government mandate forced Branch Rickey, the Dodgers' general manager, to sign Jackie Robinson. Self-interest, in the form of economic gain, was the key to integrating not just one team, but, within 12 years, all teams in the major leagues. Quotas and affirmative action were unnecessary and would have been counterproductive. When the baseball commissioner finally allowed open competition, some owners quickly wanted to hire black players — and soon after they did so, all teams voluntarily followed suit. Nobody forced anyone to do anything he didn't want to do.

One final point is that free markets in baseball provided black heroes to all Americans during the 1940s and 1950s. Whites all over Brooklyn cheered mightily for Jackie Robinson to clobber white pitchers, and for his black teammate, Don Newcombe, to strike out white hitters. After winning the 1948 World Series, Cleveland teammates Larry Doby and Steve Gromek, one black and the other white, were photographed in a spontaneous embrace. Racial barriers receded and sports became the entering wedge that helped make the revolution in race relations possible.

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Do Statistical Disparities between Races Prove Discrimination?

Walter E. Williams

George Orwell admonished, "Sometimes the first duty of intelligent men is the restatement of the obvious." That's what I want to do — talk about the obvious.

Law professors, courts, and social scientists have long held that gross statistical disparities between races are evidence of a pattern and practice of discrimination. Behind this vision is the notion that but for discrimination, we'd be distributed proportionately by race across socioeconomic characteristics such as income, education, occupations, and other outcomes.

There is no evidence from anywhere on earth or any time in human history which demonstrates that but for discrimination there would be proportional representation and absence of gross statistical disparities by race, sex, nationality, or any other human characteristic. Nonetheless, much of our thinking, laws, litigation, and public policy are based on proportionality being the norm. Let us acknowledge a few gross disparities and decide whether they represent what lawyers and judges call a "pattern and practice of discrimination," while at the same time thinking about what corrective action might be taken.

Jews are not even 1 percent of the world's population and only 3 percent of the U.S. population, but they are 20 percent

of the world's Nobel Prize winners and 39 percent of American Nobel winners. That's a gross statistical disparity. Is the Nobel committee discriminating in favor of Jews, or are Jews engaging in an educational conspiracy against the rest of us? By the way, during Germany's Weimar Republic, Jews were only 1 percent of the German population, but they were 10 percent of the country's doctors and dentists, 17 percent of its lawyers, and a large percentage of its scientific community. Jews won 27 percent of Nobel Prizes won by Germans.

The National Basketball Association in 2011 had nearly 80 percent black and 17 percent white players. But if that disparity is disconcerting, Asians are only 1 percent. Compounding this racial disparity, the highest-paid NBA players are black, and blacks have won Most Valuable Player 45 of the 57 times it has been awarded. Such a gross disparity works in reverse in the National Hockey League, where less than 3 percent of the players are black. Blacks are 66 percent of NFL and AFL professional football players. Among the 34 percent of other players, there's not a single Japanese player. But not to worry, according to the *Japan Times Online* (Jan. 17, 2012), "Dallas Cowboys scout Larry Dixon believes that as the world is getting smaller through globalization, there will one day be a Japanese player in the National Football League — though he can't guarantee when."

While black professional baseball players have fallen from 18 percent two decades ago to 8.8 percent today, there are gross disparities in achievement. Four out of the six highest career home-run totals were accumulated by black players, and each of the eight players who stole more than 100 bases in a season was black. Blacks who trace their ancestry to West Africa, including black Americans, hold more than 95 percent of the top times in sprinting.

How does one explain these gross sports disparities? Do they warrant the attention of the courts?

There are some other disparities that might bother the diversity people. For example, Asians routinely get the highest scores on the math portion of the SAT, while blacks get the lowest.

Then there are deadly racial/ethnic disparities. Vietnamese American women have an incidence rate of cervical cancer that is five times higher than that of Caucasian women. The rates of liver cancer among Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese populations are two to eleven times higher than that among Caucasians. Tay-Sachs disease is rare among populations other than Ashkenazi Jews (of European descent) and the Cajun population of southern Louisiana. The Pima Indians of Arizona have the highest known diabetes rates in the world. Prostate cancer is nearly twice as common among black men as it is among white men.

Then there's the issue of segregation. The *New York Times* "Room for Debate" section on May 21, 2012, led with, "Jim Crow is dead, segregation lives on. Is it time to bring back busing?" The Civil Rights Project of Harvard University in January 2003 declared that schools are racially segregated and becoming more so, adding, "Civil rights goals have not been accomplished. The country has been going backward toward greater segregation in all parts of the country for more than a decade." Six years later, the Civil Rights Project at UCLA reported that "schools in the United States are more segregated today than they have been in more than four decades."

Let's look at segregation. Casual observation of ice hockey games suggests that blacks' attendance is by no means proportional to their numbers in the general population. A similar observation can be made about black attendance at

operas, dressage performances, and wine tastings. The population statistics of South Dakota, Iowa, Maine, Montana, Wyoming, and Vermont show that not even one percent of their populations are black. On the other hand, in states such as Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, blacks are overrepresented in terms of their percentage in the general population.

Blacks are a bit over 50 percent of the Washington, D.C., population. Reagan National Airport serves the Washington, D.C., area. Like other airports, it has water fountains. At no time has the writer observed anything close to blacks being 50 percent of water fountain users. It is a wild guess, but I speculate that on any day, not more than 10 or 15 percent of the people at water fountains are black. Would anyone suggest that Reagan National Airport water fountains are racially segregated? Would we declare South Dakota, Iowa, Maine, Montana, Wyoming, and Vermont racially segregated? Are ice hockey games, operas, dressage performances, and wine tastings racially segregated? Moreover, would anyone propose busing blacks to South Dakota, Iowa, Maine, Montana, and Wyoming and whites from those states to Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi to achieve racial balance? What corrective action might be taken to achieve racial integration at ice hockey games, operas, dressage performances, and wine tastings?

A little reflection shows that people give the term "racial segregation" one meaning for water fountains, operas, and ice hockey games, and an entirely different meaning for schools. The sensible test to determine whether Reagan National Airport water fountains are segregated is to see whether a black is free to drink at any fountain. If the answer is affirmative, the fountains are not racially segregated even if no blacks drink at the fountains. The identical test should also be used for schools. Namely, if a

black student lives within a particular school district, is he free to attend a particular school? If so, the school is not segregated, even if not a single black attends. When an activity is not racially mixed today, a better term is "racially homogeneous," which does not mean segregated in the historic usage of the term.

I hope that the people who say schools are segregated won't make the same claim about water fountains, states, operas, and ice hockey games.

Summary

- There is no evidence from anywhere on earth or any time in human history which demonstrates that but for discrimination there would be proportional representation and absence of gross statistical disparities by race, sex, nationality, or any other human characteristic.
- Casual observation of ice hockey games suggests that blacks' attendance is by no means proportional to their numbers in the general population but that's not evidence of "discrimination."

Walter Williams has served on the faculty of George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, as John M. Olin Distinguished Professor of Economics since 1980. He is the author of more than 150 publications that have appeared in scholarly journals.

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The Brilliance of Thomas Sowell: A Tribute

Mark J. Perry

> Socialism, in general, has a record of failure so blatant that only an intellectual could ignore or evade it. —Thomas Sowell

After writing a weekly (sometimes semi-weekly) column for the last 25 years (here's an **archive of his columns back to 1998**), economist, scholar, author and national treasure Thomas Sowell made this announcement in his column today ("**Farewell**"):

> Even the best things come to an end. After enjoying a quarter of a century of writing this column for Creators Syndicate, I have decided to stop. Age 86 is well past the usual retirement age, so the question is not why I am quitting, but why I kept at it so long.

Here's a link to Thomas Sowell's second column today ("**Random Thoughts, Looking Back**"), here's some of the **reaction on Twitter and the Internet** to Sowell's retirement, here's Thomas Sowell's **webpage,** and here's his **Wikipedia entry**. Milton Friedman once said, "The word 'genius' is thrown around so much that it's becoming meaningless, but nevertheless I think Tom Sowell is close to being one."

In terms of both his *quantity* of work (at least **40 books** and **several thousand newspaper columns**) and the consistently

excellent and crystal-clear *quality* of his writing, I don't think any living free-market economist even comes close to matching Sowell's prolific record of writing about economics. And I don't think there is any writer today, economist or non-economist, who can match Thomas Sowell's "idea density" and his ability to consistently pack so much profound economic wisdom into a single sentence and a single paragraph.

Even at 86 years old, Thomas Sowell has remained intellectually active with his syndicated newspaper columns and the publication last year of his 40th book — **Wealth, Poverty and Politics: An International Perspective** — which was, amazingly, his *13th book in the last decade*! To honor Thomas Sowell's well-deserved retirement from writing his invaluable weekly column for the last quarter century, I present below some of my favorite quotations from Dr. Thomas Sowell (most were featured on a CD post in June on **Sowell's birthday**) and a bonus video of the great economist:

1. **Knowledge.** The cavemen had the same natural resources at their disposal as we have today, and the difference between their standard of living and ours is a difference between the knowledge they could bring to bear on those resources and the knowledge used today.

2. **Obamacare.** If we cannot afford to pay for doctors, hospitals and pharmaceutical drugs now, how can we afford to pay for doctors, hospitals and pharmaceutical drugs, in addition to a new federal bureaucracy to administer a government-run medical system?

3. **Economics vs. Politics I.** Economics and politics confront the same fundamental problem: What everyone wants adds up to more than there is. Market economies deal with this problem by confronting individuals with the costs of producing what they

want, and letting those individuals make their own trade-offs when presented with prices that convey those costs. That leads to self-rationing, in the light of each individual's own circumstances and preferences.

4. **Economics vs. Politics II.** The first lesson of economics is scarcity: There is never enough of anything to satisfy all those who want it. The first lesson of politics is to disregard the first lesson of economics.

Politics deals with the same problem by making promises that cannot be kept, or which can be kept only by creating other problems that cannot be acknowledged when the promises are made.

5. **Predicting the Future.** Economists are often asked to predict what the economy is going to do. But economic predictions require predicting what politicians are going to do — and nothing is more unpredictable.

6. **Politicians as Santa Claus.** The big question that seldom — if ever — gets asked in the mainstream media is whether these are a net increase in jobs. Since the only resources that the government has are the resources it takes from the private sector, using those resources to create jobs means reducing the resources available to create jobs in the private sector.

So long as most people do not look beyond superficial appearances, politicians can get away with playing Santa Claus on all sorts of issues, while leaving havoc in their wake — such as growing unemployment, despite all the jobs being "created."

7. **Health Insurance.** Whatever position people take on health care reform, there seems to be a bipartisan consensus — usually a sign of mushy thinking — that it is a good idea for the government to force insurance companies to insure people whom politicians want them to insure, and to insure them for things that

politicians think should be insured. Contrary to what politicians expect us to do, let's stop and think.

Why aren't insurance companies already insuring the people and the conditions that they are now going to be forced to cover? Because that means additional costs — and because the insurance companies don't think their customers are willing to pay those particular costs for those particular coverages.

It costs politicians nothing to mandate more insurance coverage for more people. But that doesn't mean that the costs vanish into thin air. It simply means that both buyers and sellers of insurance are forced to pay costs that neither of them wants to pay. But, because political rhetoric leaves out such grubby things as costs, it sounds like a great deal.

8. **Diversity.** If there is any place in the Guinness Book of World Records for words repeated the most often, over the most years, without one speck of evidence, "diversity" should be a prime candidate. Is diversity our strength? Or anybody's strength, anywhere in the world? Does Japan's homogeneous population cause the Japanese to suffer? Have the Balkans been blessed by their heterogeneity — or does the very word "Balkanization" remind us of centuries of strife, bloodshed and unspeakable atrocities, extending into our own times? Has Europe become a safer place after importing vast numbers of people from the Middle East, with cultures hostile to the fundamental values of Western civilization?

"When in Rome do as the Romans do" was once a common saying. Today, after generations in the West have been indoctrinated with the rhetoric of multiculturalism, the borders of Western nations on both sides of the Atlantic have been thrown open to people who think it is their prerogative to come

as refugees and tell the Romans what to do — and to assault those who don't knuckle under to foreign religious standards.

It has not been our diversity, but our ability to overcome the problems inherent in diversity, and to act together as Americans, that has been our strength.

9. **Greed.** Someone pointed out that blaming economic crises on "**greed**" is like blaming plane crashes on gravity. Certainly planes wouldn't crash if it wasn't for gravity. But when thousands of planes fly millions of miles every day without crashing, explaining why a particular plane crashed because of gravity gets you nowhere. Neither does talking about "**greed**," which is constant like gravity.

10. **The Anointed Ones.** In their haste to be wiser and nobler than others, the anointed have misconceived two basic issues. They seem to assume: 1) that they have more knowledge than the average member of the benighted, and 2) that this is the relevant comparison. The real comparison, however, is not between the knowledge possessed by the average member of the educated elite versus the average member of the general public, but rather the total direct knowledge brought to bear through social processes (the competition of the marketplace, social sorting, etc.), involving millions of people, versus the secondhand knowledge of generalities possessed by a smaller elite group.

The vision of the anointed is one in which ills as poverty, irresponsible sex, and crime derive primarily from 'society,' rather than from individual choices and behavior. To believe in personal responsibility would be to destroy the whole special role of the anointed, whose vision casts them in the role of rescuers of people treated unfairly by 'society.'

11. **There's No Free Red Tape/Obamacare.** Do you seriously believe that millions more people can be given medical care and

vast new bureaucracies created to administer payment for it, with no additional costs?

Just as there is no free lunch, **there is no free red tape.** Bureaucrats have to eat, just like everyone else, and they need a place to live and some other amenities. How do you suppose the price of medical care can go down when the costs of new government bureaucracies are added to the costs of the medical treatment itself?

And where are the extra doctors going to come from, to treat the millions of additional patients? Training more people to become doctors is not free. Politicians may ignore costs but ignoring those costs will not make them go away. With bureaucratically controlled medical care, you are going to need more doctors, just to treat a given number of patients, because time that is spent filling out government forms is time that is not spent treating patients. And doctors have the same 24 hours in the day as everybody else.

When you add more patients to more paperwork per patient, you are talking about still more costs. How can that lower medical costs? But although that may be impossible, politics is the art of the impossible. All it takes is rhetoric and a public that does not think beyond the rhetoric they hear.

12. **Helping the Poor.** It was Thomas Edison who brought us electricity, not the Sierra Club. It was the Wright brothers who got us off the ground, not the Federal Aviation Administration. It was Henry Ford who ended the isolation of millions of Americans by making the automobile affordable, not Ralph Nader.

Those who have helped the poor the most have not been those who have gone around loudly expressing "compassion" for the poor, but those who found ways to make industry more productive and distribution more efficient, so that the poor of

today can afford things that the affluent of yesterday could only dream about.

13. Income Mobility. Only by focusing on the income brackets, instead of the actual people moving between those brackets, have the intelligentsia been able to verbally create a "problem" for which a "solution" is necessary. They have created a powerful vision of "classes" with "disparities" and "inequities" in income, caused by "barriers" created by "society." But the routine rise of millions of people out of the lowest quintile over time makes a mockery of the "barriers" assumed by many, if not most, of the intelligentsia.

14. **"Giving Back."** All the high-flown talk about how people who are successful in business should "give back" to the community that created the things that facilitated their success is, again, something that sounds plausible to people who do not stop and think through what is being said. After years of dumbed-down education, that apparently includes a lot of people.

Take Obama's example of the business that benefits from being able to ship their products on roads that the government built. How does that create a need to "give back"? Did the taxpayers, including business taxpayers, not pay for that road when it was built? Why should they have to pay for it twice?

What about the workers that businesses hire, whose education is usually created in government-financed schools? The government doesn't have any wealth of its own, except what it takes from taxpayers, whether individuals or businesses. They have already paid for that education. It is not a gift that they have to "give back" by letting politicians take more of their money and freedom.

When businesses hire highly educated people, such as chemists or engineers, competition in the labor market forces them to pay higher salaries for people with longer years of valuable education.

That education is not a government gift to the employers. It is paid for while it is being created in schools and universities, and it is paid for in higher salaries when highly educated people are hired.

One of the tricks of professional magicians is to distract the audience's attention from what they are doing while they are creating an illusion of magic. Pious talk about "giving back" distracts our attention from the cold fact that politicians are taking away more and more of our money and our freedom.

15. **Government Assistance.** Do people who advocate special government programs for blacks realize that the federal government has had special programs for American Indians, including affirmative action, since the early 19th century — and that American Indians remain one of the few groups worse off than blacks?

16. **Statistical Disparities and Discrimination.** Many of us have been so brainwashed over the years — by sheer repetition, rather than by either logic or empirical tests — that statistical disparities are automatically taken to mean discrimination, whether between races, sexes or whatever. The plain fact that different individuals and groups make different choices is resolutely ignored, because it does not fit the prevailing preconceptions, or the crusades based on those preconceptions.

Women make different career choices than men, and wisely so, because men do not become mothers, and being a mother is not the same as being a father. And we can't make them the same by simply calling them both "parents" or saying that "the couple" is pregnant. Discrimination can certainly cause statistical disparities. But statistical disparities do not automatically mean discrimination.

17. **Black Lives Matter.** We keep hearing that "black lives matter," but they seem to matter only when that helps politicians

to get votes, or when that slogan helps demagogues demonize the police. The other 99% of black lives destroyed by people who are not police do not seem to attract nearly as much attention in the media. What about black success? Does that matter? Apparently not so much.

We have heard a lot about black students failing to meet academic standards. So you might think that it would be front-page news when some whole ghetto schools not only meet, but exceed, the academic standards of schools in more upscale communities. There are in fact whole chains of charter schools where black and Hispanic youngsters score well above the national average on tests.

If black success was considered half as newsworthy as black failures, such facts would be headline news — and people who have the real interests of black and other minority students at heart would be asking, "Wow! How can we get more kids into these charter schools?" But the teachers' unions are opposed to charter schools — and they give big bucks to politicians, who in turn put obstacles and restrictions on the expansion of charter schools. These include politicians like New York's "progressive" mayor Bill de Blasio, who poses as a friend of blacks by denigrating the police, standing alongside Al Sharpton.

18. **The Legacy of Slavery vs. the Legacy of Liberalism.** If we wanted to be serious about evidence, we might compare where blacks stood a hundred years after the end of slavery with where they stood after 30 years of the liberal welfare state. In other words, we could compare hard evidence on "the legacy of slavery" with hard evidence on the legacy of liberals.

Despite the grand myth that black economic progress began or accelerated with the passage of the civil rights laws and "war on poverty" programs of the 1960s, the cold fact is that the poverty rate among blacks fell from 87 percent in 1940 to 47 percent by 1960. This was before any of those programs began.

Over the next 20 years, the poverty rate among blacks fell another 18 percentage points, compared to the 40-point drop in the previous 20 years. This was the continuation of a previous economic trend, at a slower rate of progress, not the economic grand deliverance proclaimed by liberals and self-serving black "leaders."

Nearly a hundred years of the supposed "legacy of slavery" found most black children [78%] being raised in two-parent families in 1960. But thirty years after the liberal welfare state found the great majority of black children being raised by a single parent [66%]. Public housing projects in the first half of the 20th century were clean, safe places, where people slept outside on hot summer nights, when they were too poor to afford air conditioning. That was before admissions standards for public housing projects were lowered or abandoned, in the euphoria of liberal non-judgmental notions. And it was before the toxic message of victimhood was spread by liberals. We all know what hell holes public housing has become in our times. The same toxic message produced similar social results among lower-income people in England, despite an absence of a "legacy of slavery" there.

If we are to go by evidence of social retrogression, liberals have wreaked more havoc on blacks than the supposed "legacy of slavery" they talk about.

Mark J. Perry is a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and a professor of economics and finance at the University of Michigan's Flint campus.

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