The Role Of The Negro Press In The Celebration Of Negro History Week

By VIVIAN T. FONTANILLA

MANY OF US have long thought of Negro history as a matter of dealing with the earliest contributions of the race toward the building of civilization. While we are not losing cognizance of Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Benjamin Banneker, Booker T. Washington and several other race leaders, yet we, today, have contemporaries who are exerting influence on life today as well as on our posterity. The press through its newspapers and periodicals records much information long before it is compiled for textbooks.

We have come to rely on the press for historical reference and biographical material. Daily, weekly or monthly readers are provided with an opportunity to develop race pride and an appreciation of what the Negro is doing today.

Each week many of our papers carry graphic stories and well-written accounts of racial accomplishments. We read of personal positions for the first time in history. This is true in many spheres of activity such as political, business, civic, theatrical, and many others. We read of the duties they are expected to perform, and the responsibilities that go with the positions.

THE HISTORICAL RECORD

In many instances we find those in such positions will remain indefinitely or soon transfer to a higher branch or a better field. All such data goes to make up the historical record and enables us to know what is happening now and not three or four years later when we happen to “run across” a book with the collected information.

There are fraternal groups which cite the Race’s progress from year to year, and if the press should fail to elaborate on the individuals and institutions who are in the limelight where could such information be found?

Here at the Journal and Guide we maintain a file of such stories and it is a pleasure to cooperate with various requests along those lines. Such inquiries, into what we may have on Dr. Ralph Bunche, Dr. Percy L. Julian, Thurgood Marshall, and other present-day national and world leaders serve to show the value of the press in supplying ready information.

MATERIAL UNLIMITED

In the second place the abundance of biographical material that papers as well as periodicals offer is unlimited. Such is achieved only by representing the readers benefit by it. So often one of the schools or colleges, or churches is headed by some per-