

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

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MANY OF US have long thought of Negro history as a matter dealing with the earliest contributions of the race toward the building of civilization. While we are not losing cognizance of Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglas, Benjamin Banneker, Booker T. Washington and several other race leaders, yet we want to be aware of the 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We have come to rely on the press for historical reference and biographical material.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 reading affords an excellent 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 persons filling 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 research and study, and we readers benefit by it. So often one of the schools or colleges, or churches is headed by some per-

son we may know too little about. If we look back at the installation of such persons we will find a running account of his or her life. There again we have our insight into the times of the individual and contributing factors to his or her success.

When we assemble a number of biographical accounts from some of our leading newspapers and magazines and compare them with some of the text accounts of earlier leaders, we can appreciate thoroughly the obstacles we have overcome and are continuing to battle. In other words, with such source material at hand we can improve our minds vastly by such comparative study. We can readily see why we should study Negro history, and why we should rate the press as a dynamic force in the enrichment of the study.

History is made everyday. The

press records it. We grow by it. And so, it is important that we recognize WORTH and QUALITY when we have it used as we know it to be through our press. If, for the next six months you were to compile data on racial achievements you would find that you would have a wealth of material that would serve leaders in many fields of service, as well as the child in the classroom. Thus we would be better informed Negro history students.

## THE TIMES SPEAKS

On February 25, 1949, THE NEW YORK TIMES carried an editorial that seems to project a real meaning to this week that is set aside for racial study.

In part it contains this thought: "... It will only be when we have learned more of the history of Africa that we will be able to say truthfully who was weak and who was strong in moral courage and fortitude. Negro History Week can be used among students as a stimulus to more scholarship. Among average people it can widen the range of cultural contacts and narrow the abyss of racial intolerance."