



Lowndes County Historical Society: Valdosta Project Change Collection, 1997-2003

MS/181

1999-2000

Valdosta Project Change

January 1999

For this and additional works see: <https://vtext.valdosta.edu/xmlui/handle/10428/6499>

Recommended Citation:

Valdosta Project Change. "Valdosta Project Change Scrapbook, January 1999," Lowndes County Historical Society. Valdosta State University Archives and Special Collections, MS-181: Valdosta Project Change Collection, 1997-2003.

This item is free and open source. It is part of the *Valdosta Project Change Collection* at the [Lowndes County Historical Society](#) and was digitized by the Valdosta State University Archives and Special Collections. If you have any questions or concerns contact archives@valdosta.edu

Included Articles:

- 1/5- Rose to answer critics at Commission meeting- Staff reports
- 1/6- Black history month deserves a closer look- Charles Moore
- 1/7- Black farmers get deserving settlement- Scripps Howard Press
- 1/8- Souls of White folks- Mark George, Albuquerque NM
- 1/10- Food for thought- no author
- 1/14- Black farmers to finally get their due- Bill Maxwell
- 1/27- History Quiz: Georgia's past contributors- Charles Moore
- 1/28- Unfair advantage for Blacks? Hardly- Bill Maxwell

Tuesday, Jan. 5, 1999 — 5A

Rose to answer critics at Commission meeting

Staff reports

VALDOSTA — Representatives of the People's Tribunal, including the Rev. Floyd Rose, plan to go before the Lowndes County Commission at 4:30 p.m. Wednesday to answer questions and "answer his critics," according to a Tribunal press release provided to The Valdosta Daily Times Monday evening.

The purpose of the appearance is to clarify the Tribunal's Cooperative Reciprocity Program, according to the statement. Rose also plans to make public a "revised letter which is being mailed to the businesses which depend on black trade for their survival," according to the statement.

The statement continues, "Mr. Rose will be available to answer questions that the Commission may have regarding the morality of the program, and the allegations of extortion by 'anonymous businesses' and at least one commissioner.

"He hopes that those businessmen, who will be mostly affected by the program will also attend."

Black History Month Deserves A Closer Look

Next month is Black History Month. Do the activities planned for this month promote divisiveness?

Or do Black History Month activities highlight that part of American history which would otherwise never make it into any mainstream history book?

Unfortunately, I believe that both answers are correct.

Yes, some activities are divisive. And yes, some of the month's activities highlight those parts of American history which will never be published in any high school or college text book.

Why the divisiveness? Let me be frank.

There are many blacks, and an equal percentage of non blacks, who would prefer that Black History Month remains exclu-

sively - a controversial "black thang." This enables these types of "prejudiced and bigoted" people to keep their distance socially, politically and economically.

The sad thing about prejudice and bigotry is that they're often contagious and may unduly influence someone without his or her explicit approval. And explicit or not, the reason many black achievements haven't been placed in mainstream history books is because of bigotry.

This is why it's important for each of us, individually, to be fully aware of our own personal beliefs. And more importantly, how we act out our beliefs and how such action negatively affects others.

Of course, very few of us will ever really take the time to ponder how our actions impact others. Then too, some of us aren't selfish - or bigoted.

Several months ago, my good friend Edith Smith, who writes the Bookworm column for The

Valdosta Daily Times, reviewed a book titled: "Shout Because You're Free: The African American Ring Shout Tradition in Coastal Georgia."

The ring shout is the oldest-known surviving African American performance tradition in the country. The tradition combines call and-response singing, the percussion of a stick or broom on a wood floor and hand clapping and foot-tapping.

It's performed for the purpose of religious worship. First observed on the sea islands of South Carolina and Georgia during the Civil War, the tradition was presumed to have died out.

It was discovered as an active practice in 1980 in the Bolden community in McIntosh County, Ga., and once again came to the public's attention. Edith told me she'd love to see the ring shout performance in person.

It's too bad there are no plans to bring the performance to Lowndes County for Black His-

tory Month - or at any other time in the foreseeable future. Edith didn't have to do a book review about the ring shout.

She did it because the subject itself was interesting.

In February 1988, I wrote an article about Bessie Coleman for The Mohawk Flyer, the Griffiss Air Force Base, N.Y., weekly newspaper. Coleman, a black American, went to France in 1921 to earn her pilot's license because no flying school in America would accept her.

The following year, I wrote an article about Jacques Eugene Bullard, the first black pilot to fly in combat. Bullard was a native of Columbus, Ga., and flew briefly for the French during WWI.

I wrote the articles about Coleman and Bullard because, first, both individuals were fascinating.

Secondly, both were extraordinary pilots and nothing - in spite of any Black History Month activity - holds the atten-

tion of those who fly war planes more than stories about other special, one-of-a-kind pilots.

The positive responses I received from B-52 bomber and KC-135 tanker aircrews at Griffiss Air Force Base concerning the articles were overwhelming. Black History Month can't be used as a divisive issue if the planned activities aren't intended as a racial wedge.

On the other hand, there will always be those who will see a wedge where none exists. When February arrives, what will you see or do?

Will your views promote divisiveness or will you help to highlight those parts of Black History Month which have been permanently excluded from American history textbooks?

Or perhaps, you'll do nothing. Remember the old saying "If you're not part of the solution, then you must be part of the problem."

And with that, may your week be a problem-free one.



Charles Moore

Mailbox Post Columnist

THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

Jeff Heard
Publisher

Stephen T. Meadows
Managing Editor

Heard and Meadows join Juana Jordan, Brian Lawson and Edith Smith of *The Valdosta Daily Times* and Phil Martin of Valdosta on the newspaper's editorial board. "Our Opinions" are formed by that board.

▶ OTHER OPINIONS

Black farmers get deserving settlement

Just living, goes an old saying, is fierce difficulty. If you are trying to earn your livelihood as an independent farmer and if you are also black and dwell in the South, you can figure the difficulty is worse than fierce.

A problem for many black farmers for many years has been that the Department of Agriculture, operating through locally elected county panels called Farm Service Agencies, either denied black farmers loans that whites were getting, or gave loans much less than whites were receiving. Members of these panels in the South were often all-white, it is reported, and they expected loan recipients to be of the same race.

The department has now agreed to a settlement that could amount to several hundred million dollars or more. As many as 4,000 black farmers could be eligible for debt forgiveness and for payment of \$50,000 each or individually negotiated amounts. Not everything can be set aright, though, news accounts make clear. There are those who have lost their farms because they could not borrow money at a crucial time and will never recover them. There are wounds from mistreatment that will never wholly heal.

Racial discrimination has been ebbing in America for decades now, but it is not entirely eradicated by any means, and its consequences are very much with us. We can all do two things. We can try to make amends in situations such as that of the loan bias by people acting in the name of the Department of Agriculture, and we can vow to prevent racially based favoritism or deprivation in the future.

— *Scripps Howard News Service*

THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

Jeff Heard
Publisher

Stephen T. Meadows
Managing Editor

Heard and Meadows join Juana Jordan, Brian Lawson and Edith Smith of *The Valdosta Daily Times* and Phil Martin of Valdosta on the newspaper's editorial board. "Our Opinions" are formed by that board.

► YOUR OPINION

Souls of white folks

As a 35-year-old white Valdostan returning to spend time with friends and family, I am reminded about the depths of racism. Given recent events, I am writing to publicly express my disappointment in most of the white people of Valdosta, many of which are teachers, preachers, professors and others central to my life.

The recent death of Willie Williams Sr. is one more example of 400-plus years of ongoing white collective indifference and passive endorsement. It is also the peak of a racist iceberg that includes ongoing economic exploitation, the prison "industry," the exploitation of black students in local athletic programs, an ongoing educational dilemma, etc.

It is clear that "our" (whites) souls are in trouble when we are not outraged by Mr. Williams' brutal death, cheer local black athletes yet forget them when their careers are over; don't ask why people of color are chattel for the prison industry, declare for others that "race isn't a problem," claim a religious faith yet remain silent, don't commit to end racism (and all forms of injustice) regardless of what or how long it takes.

I encourage and challenge white Valdostans to break with tradition, step up and get involved (in a way that does not dictate to others what "they" need to do). Our souls lie in the balance.

Mark George
Albuquerque, N.M.

Community

Food for thought



Paul Leavy/The Valdosta Daily Times

Laverne Rome, far right, helps Bobbie Lester and Dr. Diane Richardson in getting barbecue plates ready for Derek Lane, left, and his three children and niece during Project Changes's PASS (Parents Assuring Student Success) fund raiser. The event was held Friday afternoon at Sam's Club to raise money for books and supplies for the program designed to help at risk students achieve in school.

Black farmers to finally get their due

If my grandfather were alive, he would feel a huge sense of vindication. He would be one of as many as 2,000 African-American farmers poised to finally receive a small measure of fairness from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Unfortunately, Benjamin Maxwell died in the early 1970s, long before agricultural money-lenders in Washington or elsewhere saw black farmers as people with real faces deserving of loans to grow their crops and raise their livestock. Unable to borrow from the local USDA office in Lake County, as did his white counterparts, my grandfather lost his farm two years before his death.

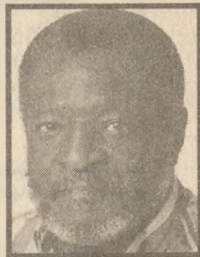
Today — as one indication of why the majority of blacks still support President Clinton — the USDA, under the president's urging, has agreed under a consent decree to pay as much as \$300-million to settle a lawsuit filed in 1997 by the National Black Farmers Association on behalf of its approximately 14,000 members. More tax dollars may have to be paid for claims going back 15 years.

John Boyd, president of the National Black Farmers Association and owner of a tobacco and egg farm in Baskerville, Va., said, during a telephone interview, that black farmers who have current discrimination cases or who file affidavits of bias and identify specific people at the USDA who denied them loans will qualify for \$50,000 tax-free and will have their USDA loans forgiven. Boyd said that the average indebtedness of black farmers is

between \$75,000 and \$150,000.

Many black farms would be viable today if President Reagan, in another of his many cynical, anti-black moves, had not abolished the USDA's Office of Civil Rights in 1983. This agency was the only official one with which minority farmers — most of them black and Southern — could lodge legitimate complaints. Reagan's action caused hundreds of farmers, many whose land had been in their families nearly a century, to forfeit their property and go into bankruptcy because their skin was black. Like his black peers in Southside Virginia, Boyd, too, has been the victim of blatant racism. "I tried for nine years to get a farm-operating loan," he said. "Right here in Chase City, the county farm supervisor threw my application in the trash. He told me that the program was out of money. When the investigator asked him why he loaned money to only two black farms, he called black farmers lazy. Black farmers can't afford to be lazy."

In 1995, Clinton began restoring the USDA Office of Civil Rights, meeting with Boyd and other black farmers and ordering Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman to expedite reforms. For his part, Glickman



Bill Maxwell

Columnist

made the effort a personal crusade.

"I believe what is happening to black farmers . . . is a moral crisis . . . that we all have an obligation to help resolve," he said last summer to doubting delegates attending the annual convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Glickman has been good to his word. He lobbied the Republican-led Congress, asking conservatives to set aside politics and promptly compensate black farmers. Soon afterward, a federal judge ruled that they are a legitimately injured class and should be compensated.

Although hundreds of farmers will be helped if the litigation stays on track, Boyd and other leaders worry that the USDA has failed to punish those who clearly discriminated against an entire class.

Now, taxpayers must, in turn, dole out hundreds of millions of dollars to repair the damage done by racists, many opposed to affirmative action, who will not be punished.

"For those who want to see us reach as a nation toward racial reconciliation, we need to look no further than the plight of black farmers," Glickman said. "At a time when many believe that civil rights issues are less black and white than gray, the issue of black land loss stands in stark moral contrast."

Bill Maxwell is a columnist and editorial writer for the St. Petersburg Times. E-mail maxwell@sptimes.com. Distributed by Scripps Howard News Service.

History Quiz: Georgia's Past Contributors

Did you like trivia questions? If you do, then you'll love this week's column.

I've devised a 10 question trivia quiz just for your amusement. The quiz focuses on blacks in American history.

There, however, is a twist. This quiz is all about individuals who were native-born Georgians.

And no, the names of Martin Luther King Jr., and Justice Clarence Thomas of the U.S. Supreme Court won't be on this quiz. I realize that both are famous sons of Georgia and have earned their places in American history, but in fairness to trivia fanatics everywhere, I didn't want this week's quiz to be too easy.

Whether you're a trivia expert or novice, can you answer any of the following trivia questions?:

1. First black American to pilot an airplane in combat.

2. Surname was Poole, son of a Baptist preacher who established Chicago as the national headquarters for his controversial religious organization.

3. Former slave who was the first black to graduate from the U.S. Military Academy.

4. First black governor in American history.

5. Founder and editor of a nationally known African American newspaper in Chicago in 1905. By 1929, the paper's circulation was over 250,000.

6. Founder and president of the Citizens and Southern Bank and Trust Company in Philadelphia,



Charles Moore
Mailbox Post Columnist

Pa.

7. Elected president of Wilberforce University, Ohio, in 1908.

8. First Catholic bishop of African descent in the United States.

9. Head of the department and professor of health services at the Harvard University School of Public Health.

10. Hall of Fame football player who was the National Football League's "Rookie of the Year" in 1957.

If you answered all 10 questions correctly, then you're either a walking encyclopedia, one of the most knowledgeable people of all time or personally witnessed each event first-hand.

If you answered over half the questions on the quiz, consider yourself an authority and expert on the subject of African American history. If you didn't answer any of the questions correctly, don't be upset because, after all, it was only a quiz and not an intelligence test.

It's now time for the best part of this week's trivia quiz — the answers. I hope you didn't think I would leave you "hanging."

1. Born in Columbus, Eugene Bullard was the first black American to fly an airplane in combat. He flew for France during World War I where he also fought as a member of the French Foreign Legion.

2. Elijah Muhammad, born in Sandersville, was leader of the Nation of Islam. He preached the dual philosophies of independence and self-reliance.

3. Henry O. Flipper is buried in Thomasville, his hometown. After graduating from West Point in 1877, Flipper was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant and

served with the 10th Cavalry at Ft. Sill, Okla.

4. Born free in Georgia, Pinckney Benton Stewart Pinchback, briefly served as acting governor of Louisiana during the Reconstruction Era. He was elected as a Louisiana state senator and lieutenant governor. He was elected to the United States Senate in 1873, but was not permitted to take his seat.

5. Robert S. Abbott was born on St. Simons, off the Georgia coast. He attended Hampton Institute and earned his law degree from Kent College in Chicago. The name of his newspaper was "The Chicago Defender."

6. In 1866, Richard Robert Wright Sr., and his mother walked 200 miles from their home in Cuthbert to Atlanta to enroll young Richard in a school operated by the American Missionary Association. In addition to starting his own bank, he was also the founder of Savannah State College in 1891.

7. Born a slave in Macon, William Saunders Scarborough learned to read and write at the age of 6. He forged passes for his fellow slaves and later became an expert in Latin and Greek before becoming president of Wilberforce University.

8. James Augustine Healy, born in Macon, presided over the diocese of Maine and New Hampshire for 25 years. He graduated from Holy Cross in 1849 and studied at the St. Sulpice Seminary in Paris. His brother, Patrick Healy, was president of Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., from 1872 to 1883.

9. Before Harvard, Alonzo Smythe Yerby of Augusta became

Moore continued on page 14

Moore Continued From Page 4

executive director of medical services for the New York Department of Health and medical administrator of the Welfare Department in 1960. He also served as commissioner of the New York City Department of Hospitals in 1965.

10. James Nathaniel Brown was

born on St. Simons Island. After graduating from Syracuse University, Jim Brown went on to stardom in the National Football League as one of the most prolific running backs in the history of the game.

If you are a trivia lover (and have a twisted sense of humor),

challenge those who believe history is boring to take this week's quiz.

To really make it interesting, after asking the questions, don't give the answers — even if they beg.

And with that, please don't allow your week to be a boring one.

Unfair advantage for Blacks? Hardly

Ward Connerly, the wealthy, black California businessman and state Board of Regents member who led successful anti-affirmative action ballot initiatives in California and the state of Washington, said in November that he would play a wait-and-see game in deciding which locale to bring his campaign to next.

Well, he has picked Florida, and this is why:

First, our new governor is Jeb Bush, a born-and-bred Republican conservative who has signaled more than once that he opposes what he calls "quotas." Connerly believes that Bush, son of the president who nominated Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court — one of the most anti-black moves on the national level in a generation — might be willing to put his considerable weight behind such a ballot initiative for November 2000.

Second, Florida has become a Republican stronghold. For the first time since 1874, the GOP is in control of the Florida House, the Senate and the governorship. And, of course, recent polling shows a majority of Republicans favoring a Proposition 209-type initiative.

Shortly after he was elected in November, Bush, who campaigned as a "compassionate conservative," said that Connerly's crusade was "divisive" and that he wanted no part of it. Last week, however, Bush met privately with Connerly to discuss what the California businessman sees in Florida as a system rife with racial quotas, preferences and reverse discrimination. Specifically, Connerly claims that a study by the Lincoln Center shows that the state's major public medical and law schools discriminate against white applicants.

"Florida's a state that needs to be dealt with," Connerly told the St. Petersburg Times after meeting with Bush.

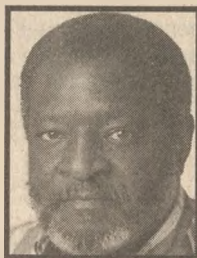
Connerly, a shameless hypocrite who made most of his millions grabbing contracts set aside for him and other well-placed minorities, came to

Tallahassee with whites from the state chapter of the Associated General Contractors, who claim — with straight faces — that white contractors are disproportionately losing business from the state because of blacks.

Bush's communications director, Cory Tilley, said that the governor reiterated that he would not "get involved in anything that would be divisive to the state." The ill will among African-Americans has surfaced already. In a comment to the Times, state Sen. Betty Holzendorf said this of Connerly: "He needs to take his little butt back to California where he came from and leave us the hell alone. Mr. Connerly is trying to polarize Florida. If he (leads a campaign here), then racism is back on the table."

State Democratic Party spokesman Tony Welch: "Mr. Connerly is a scary individual, very scary. Anything other than outright rejection is failing the black community in Florida."

If Bush does not want to get involved in this divisive issue, why did he meet — behind closed doors — with Connerly, who is hell-bent on reversing the clock on equal justice in Florida? Is Bush, who helped establish a charter school in mostly black Liberty City in Miami, saying things publicly to please Florida blacks and saying something else to Connerly and his ilk behind closed



Bill Maxwell

Columnist

doors? Tilley tried to assure a Times reporter that the governor remains his own man: "The governor would be open to some sort of ballot initiative if he's convinced there's a problem. But he's not convinced there's a problem."

Connerly and others tell the lie, for example, that blacks are overrunning the state's top public professional colleges.

Listen to the racial nonsense that Thomas Dye, a white Republican, told the Times:

"Florida's universities are hiding racial preferences in complex admissions processes that claim to be non-discriminatory yet deliberately result in different standards of acceptance ... based on the color of their skin. Being white and Hispanic is a disadvantage in the admissions process."

It is to laugh. Bush should visit our major campuses and try to find more than a handful of blacks. Go, for example, to Shands Hospital at the University of Florida in Gainesville. Sit in at UF's law school for a day and report back on the number of dark faces in the classrooms, governor. Speak with President John Lombardi. Ask him about the problem of freeloading, carpetbagging blacks at UF. Ask him about the university's quota system that shuts out whites and Hispanics.

Heck, even better, the governor can simply skip a few blocks from the Capitol to the campus of Florida State, visit a professional college and try to find those awful, undeserving blacks overpopulating the place. If Jeb Bush is the new man that he claims to be — the "compassionate conservative" — then he should repeat Holzendorf's admonition and send Connerly packing.

Bill Maxwell is a columnist and editorial writer for the St. Petersburg Times. His e-mail address is maxwell@sptimes.com.