The Cambridge Guide to African American History

RAYMOND GAVINS

Duke University

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Richard M. Nixon (1974). Voting age to impeach, she stated: "My faith in the Constitution is whole, it is complete, it is total" (The New York Times, January 18, 1996).

Further Reading

JORDAN, MICHAEL J.
PRO BASKETBALL PLAYER

Born: February 17, 1963, Brooklyn, NY
Education: Laney High School, Wilmington, NC, 1981; University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, athletic scholarship, 1981-84

The National Basketball Association (NBA) represents the model of its game; it recruits basketball players from all over the world. Basketball is played professionally in more than twenty countries. Consisting of twenty-nine US and Canadian teams, the NBA is basketball's premier professional league.

Many analysts rank Jordan, who is destined for the NBA Hall of Fame, as the best player in league history. Epitome of athleticism and skill on the court, a peerless competitor and winner, he remains a global sports and cultural icon. To his fans, he was Superman, "Last Shot," or "Air Jordan." He earned $70.1 million from commercial endorsements in 1994 alone. In the wake of his father's death that year, he left the Chicago Bulls to play baseball for the Chicago White Sox's farm team. But he rejoined the Bulls (1995), which led to their sixth NBA Championship (1998) and his fifth season and sixth final Most Valuable Player awards.

Jordan became co-owner of the Washington Wizards in 2000. Also a part-time player, he donated his salary to victims of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Yet the Wizards did not make the playoffs, fueling criticism of him; he soon resigned.

Further Reading

JOURNALISM

More than 133 years elapsed between New York-based Freedom's Journal (1827) and the freedom struggles of the 1960s. Indeed, from slavery to desegregation, African-American journalists were drum majors for justice. The civil rights movement gained publicity in the national press, but this gain had costs. Large black newspapers (such as Chicago Defender, New York Amsterdam News, Baltimore Afro-American, and Pittsburgh Courier) saw a serious decline in circulation. Their news agency, the Associated Negro Press, declined too. Black journalism survived, if mostly through religious, fraternal, academic, and local venues. The owners not only revitalized the National Newspaper Publishers Association (1940) but also launched the National Association of Black Journalists in 1975.

White magazines, newspapers, radio and television networks, in the meantime, gradually hired black journalists. One of the older reporters to accompany Life photojournalist Gordon Parks in breaking barriers was Malvin R. Goode (1908-95). Since 1948 he had been with the Pittsburgh Courier and co-anchor at a black radio station. Joining ABC in 1962, he became the first African American television network reporter and an inductee to the National Association of Radio and TV News Directors. Parks and Goode reported on the southern freedom movement.

As it fueled demands for racial integration in newsrooms, some younger blacks achieved distinction. Among them was Charlayne Hunter-Gault (b. 1942), a South Carolinian. When she and Hamilton E. Holmes (1942-95) breached the University of Georgia's color line in 1961, the National Guard had to quell a race riot. After graduate study at Washington University, Hunter-Gault joined the staff of Trans-Action and was an evening anchor at WRC-TV in Washington, DC. She covered the metro news for the New York Times from 1968 and the MacNeil Lehrer Report from 1978. She went to South Africa as chief of National Public Radio's African Bureau in 1997.

Black reporters struggled with a sense of racial isolation. Pamela Newkirk held positions at four news organizations in a single decade and co-won a Pulitzer Prize for spot reports at New York Newsday. Still, she quit in 1993 because "I felt constricted by the narrow scope... of reporting on African Americans. I found that our sensibilities, attitudes and experiences were often viewed with skepticism or alarm, and were left out." It is estimated that 550 "journalists of color" were recruited by major news...
organizations between 1994 and 2009; however, 400 of them resigned. Thus the Freedom Forum, which sponsors media centers at Columbia and Vanderbilt universities, “pledged $5 million toward increasing newsroom diversity” (The Washington Post, September 24, 2000).

[See also Film; Television.]

Further Reading


JOURNEY OF RECONCILIATION (1947)

After the Supreme Court outlawed segregation on interstate buses in Morgan v. Virginia (1946), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) organized a bus ride from Washington, DC into the Upper South to test compliance. The riders consisted of sixteen men (eight white and eight black), including co-organizer Bayard Rustin. Twelve were pacifists. All occupied front seats and rode in biracial pairs. Churches, colleges, and NAACP chapters held rallies along the route.

CORE challenged southern Jim Crow. Clearly, states and localities did not comply with the Morgan decision. Riders incurred twelve arrests for violating separate seat laws. Four were arrested in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where one suffered a serious beating and two received death threats. A local white minister arranged their bail and safe passage to Greensboro. A court later convicted them and they served a month on the state chain gang. CORE's journey prefigured the Freedom Rides of 1961.

[See also Freedom Rides.]

Further Reading


Just, Ernest E. BIOLOGIST AND EDUCATOR

Born: August 14, 1883, Charleston, SC
Education: Dartmouth College, B.S. magna cum laude, 1907, University of Chicago, Ph.D. magna cum laude, 1916
Died: October 27, 1941, Washington, DC

Just rose from humble beginnings in the segregated South to become an internationally recognized and respected scientist. He was a wunderkind. Finishing Dartmouth College with high honors, he taught at Howard University for more than thirty years. In 1911 he helped Howard men to organize Omega Psi Phi, a black fraternity. Earning his doctorate, he pursued research on the fertilization in marine animal eggs. His book, The Biology of the Cell Surface (1939), largely established experimental embryology.

Just clearly challenged the limits of Jim Crow. Though he declared that blacks should study and excel in science for its discipline and objectivity, he understood that they would do so in a racist society. Thus he found opportunities to teach and write in Europe where white racism seemed less pervasive. Still, Howard's deans chafed at his frequent leaves of absence between 1929 and 1940. Philanthropic foundations eagerly supported his European work and authorities in Nazi-occupied France once detained him. He returned home, resumed teaching, and had begun to mend fences at Howard before his illness and untimely death. One colleague said that "an element of tragedy ran through all Just's scientific career due to the limitations imposed by being a Negro in America" (Manning, 1983, p. 329).

Reference


Further Reading