

# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY  
MONTH: MARKING A CENTURY  
OF ACHIEVEMENT AND STRUG-  
GLE

**HON. WILLIAM J. COYNE**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 21, 1995*

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join in this year's celebration of African-American History Month which provides an opportunity to consider the theme of "Reflections on 1895: Douglass, DuBois, Washington."

The 100 years since 1895 have been marked by some of the greatest advancements in the struggle for civil rights for the African-American community. An ability to look into the past reveals clear markers of significant progress in the status of African-American within the political, economic, and cultural life of the United States. A review of our Nation's past also leads us to identify certain heroic individuals who made a unique and lasting contribution to the great march forward toward equal rights for all Americans, regardless of color.

Individuals like Frederick Douglass, William Edward Burghardt DuBois, and Booker T. Washington are clearly outstanding heroic figures in the struggle for African-American dignity. What is less clear to many Americans is the fact that their lives were characterized by both triumphs and setbacks. The great strides they made on behalf of African-American civil rights did not always follow straight lines.

What is important to stress, however, is the fact that these three great African-Americans remain focused with their "eyes on the prize" even during periods of great challenge. The example they provide of commitment and perseverance is one that should continue to inspire African-Americans and Americans of all colors who are dedicated to the idea of equality.

The year 1895 marked a period of reconstruction and reaction in our Nation's history when African-Americans faced new oppression and violence. Hopes for the attainment of African-American civil and economic rights were being shattered by a resurgent racism no longer constrained by leadership from the Federal Government. An environment of violent oppression existed which was characterized by nightriders and lynchings. Legalized oppression took the form of poll taxes and Jim Crow segregation laws. Efforts by white political groups to deny African-Americans their civil rights would be given the sanction of the U.S. Supreme Court 1 year later in the 1896 Plessy versus Ferguson decision upholding the principle of separate but equal.

The year 1895 also marked the passing of Frederick Douglass who was an outstanding leader of the highest rank in the abolitionist movement. Frederick Douglass, who was born in slavery, dedicated his life to ending slavery and then securing the full legal rights of freed African-Americans. He confronted the harshest reality of his time—a brutal and dehumanizing

slave system—with an unending commitment to winning freedom for all African-Americans.

Frederick Douglass was a man of his time but he was not constrained by the attitudes and expectations of his time. He spoke boldly in the cause of abolition to both Presidents and slaveowners. He challenged all Americans to stand by the promises made with adoption of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Frederick Douglass passed away in 1895 after a long lifetime in which he could still see both uncorrected injustices and signs of dramatic progress.

W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington both benefited from the legacy of Frederick Douglass but would make their own distinct contributions to African-American history. W.E.B. DuBois chose to take up the challenge of securing full political rights that had been left behind by Frederick Douglass. Booker T. Washington advocated setting aside political rights as a primary agenda so that full attention could be focused on achieving economic standing for African-Americans. They shared, however, a commitment to addressing the realities faced by African-Americans in 1895 and dedicated their lives to changing the times in which they lived.

Booker T. Washington was already well recognized as an African-American leader and founder of the Tuskegee Institute in 1895 when he gave a landmark speech at the Atlanta Exposition. He was an advocate of a ruralist agenda for African-Americans that steered clear of political activism in favor of economic attainments. Booker T. Washington believed that African-Americans could best secure a position in American society through industrial education and vocational training. While this position was controversial among many African-Americans, Booker T. Washington's views were instrumental in shaping relations among white Americans and African-Americans in the decades immediately following 1895.

In 1895, W.E.B. DuBois became the first African-American to receive a Ph.D. degree from Harvard University. He embarked on a lifelong commitment to using his writings and public remarks to advance the political liberties of fellow African-Americans. His many books and articles served to document the violence and injustice experienced by African-Americans. This work served to focus attention on the status of African-Americans to challenge the injustice of the system in which they lived.

Dr. DuBois emerged as a political leader in the tradition of Frederick Douglass and played a central role in the establishment of the NAACP. He helped to convince a generation of African-Americans that Booker T. Washington's vision of economic sufficiency would not be adequate to secure a proper respect for African-Americans as U.S. citizens. Dr. DuBois provided a new focus on political action that would bear its fruits in the civil rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's.

The lives of Douglass, DuBois, and Washington were characterized by over 70 years collectively of commitment to the advancement of African-Americans. The passing of Fred-

erick Douglass in 1895 marked a time when succeeding African-American leaders like Washington and DuBois would take on in turn the mantle of leadership. These were men who responded to political realities and provided the vital leadership necessary to create a new realities that advanced the standing of African-Americans in our society.

Mr. Speaker, 100 years ago in 1895, the United States looked to the leadership of individuals like Douglass, DuBois, and Washington at a time when reaction and retreat characterized the attitude of many white Americans toward their fellow African-American citizens. Today, we also have leaders in the African-American community who are ready to confront the forces of reaction and retreat wherever they may be found. The men and women active in the civil rights movement today have a right to be proud of the accomplishments of leaders like Douglas, DuBois, and Washington.

It is my hope that African-Americans will also be inspired by the example of Douglass, DuBois, and Washington as a new generation continues to work for the equality and civil liberties that should be available to all Americans.

TRIBUTE TO COL. AARON BANK

**HON. RON PACKARD**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 21, 1995*

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a military legend, 92-year-old Col. Aaron Bank of San Clemente, CA. Heralded as the father of the Green Berets, Colonel Bank was instrumental in developing one of this country's most respected and renowned military divisions.

As a member of a small group of senior officers in the Department of the Army, Colonel Bank recognized the need for an unconventional warfare organization within the framework of the U.S. Army. His unique military vision and experience earned him the role as commander of the first special forces group in the history of the U.S. Army.

Colonel Bank translated the concept of a U.S. Army unconventional warfare organization into a practical reality. This elite fighting force represents some of the bravest, toughest, most resourceful, accomplished men in the world. Colonel Bank led the charge in organizing one of the most prestigious special force organizations in the world. He truly is the father of the Green Berets.

His unique, daring military experiences span the globe and history: executing operations within the French resistance; the three-man guerrilla team air-dropped behind enemy lines to pave the way for the Allied invasion; an incredible secret plot to capture Hitler; his remarkable meeting with Ho Chi Minh in Indochina. Colonel Bank was instrumental in

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