

# 100 Yrs. Of Progress, But Not In Spelling

Boo-boos are the order of the day at the Century of Negro Progress Exposition now at McCormick Place.

Footsore and heartsick after a tour of the exposition floor, one concludes that the exposition management never learned to spell or to read.

Arctic explorer Matthew A. Henson is correctly presented in one display, but 50 feet away, one finds a blurb on him which reads: "Matthew A. Henderson, Arctic explorer. The first recorded human to reach the North Pole, placed the flag of the U.S. at the world. (sic)"

Nearby a billboard declares: "Many writers found the Negro a subject . . . and lists: "Carl Van Vechkten (should be

Vechten), Paul Grcern (Green), Steven Vincent Bennet (Stephen Vincent Benet)."

The word "Negro" is written with a small "n" at least three times in th exhibits.

Leslie Pinkney Hill is described as "First negro (sic) to receive Phi Beta Kappa by Howard University, president of Chaney Institute, Philadelphia."

The institute which Phi Beta Kappa Hill founded is Cheney Institute, and he is probably whirling in his grave.

W. E. B. Du Bois, great historian and author, is listed as the author of numerous books and monographs "dealing with the negro (sic). Organized the

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# 100 Years Of Progress?

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Niagara Movement" (should be Niagara).

Nearby, a display reports that "as early as 1787, the Manumission Society of New York opened free schools for negro (sic) children."

In the medical history section, a card says Dr. James Durham had a "large practice among Negroes (sic) and whites."

Dr. Du Bois and Carter Woodson are listed as PhDs, sans period. Below a chart, which indicates that Negroes are 93 per cent literate, the exposition says: "Negro education in the South was supplemented through the monies available from the philanthropic funds and foundations established by people who's humanitarian interest . . ." (people whose).

In a section on movie actors, a display says: "Flickers with sound brought to the screen many new faces, Hattie McDaniels, Nina May McKinney."

Photos of the two actresses are correctly identified as Hattie McDaniels and Nina Mae McKinney, but the incorrect card is there, too.

On opening night, this reporter, in company with friends, found a number of these spelling errors and informed exposition director Alton A. Davis. On my second trip, Mr. Davis thanked me for "what you did." I assume, therefore that the corrected identifications above are due to my note to him, but I cannot understand why the original error still stands.

A large photograph has been made and is on display of an excerpt from the World Book Encyclopedia listing on "chemurgy." The excerpt says, "William Jay Hale, American organic chemist, often called 'the father of chemurgy.'" Six feet away in a companion display on George Washington Carver, the Negro chemist is called "pioneer of agriculture research and 'Father of Chemurgy.'" Chemurgy seems in no danger of illegitimacy.

The state of Illinois has an outstanding display of oil paintings specially commissioned for the exposition. A number of the name plates contained spelling errors, however, a fresh white card now correctly lists the subject and artist by each painting. Yet, the incorrect name plates still stand:

Leaders of culture listed include RICHARD RIGHT (sic) (Wright).

George Coleman Poage is described as first to "compete in revied Olympics (should be revived)."

Lincoln - Douglass Debate should read Douglas.

Sojourner Truth is an "abou-tionist" instead of abolitionist.

So it goes: Quin instead of Quinn; Slyaeater instead of Sylvester Britton, De Fleuryville instead of de Fleurville, "recieve" instead of receive. New cards tacked to the wall by the paintings do not obliterate the unfortunate impression given by the still intact and incorrect name plates under each painting.

The Exposition floor is also interesting from the point of

view of choice of displays. . . Apparently, any large firm was welcome to exhibit products if it wished, and there are telephones from past to present, and a giant International Harvester combine. While some slight mention is made of Negroes in the early days of these companies, what does the latest in Princess phones have to do with Negro progress?

The International Brotherhood of Teamsters has a truly lavish display. Average cost of displays in the exposition was \$30 per square foot. The Teamster contribution covers 1,500 square feet. Teamster spokesmen on the floor said their costs were well below average, but even if theirs was only one third the average, their total display cost would be well over \$15,000. While it mentions Negro unionists, the display is largely a glorification of Teamster president James Hoffa and the union's policies.

The city of Chicago has an impressive display of large size photos of outstanding Negro Chicagoans but nothing of comparable impact has been done on such national figures as Ralph Bunche, Marian Anderson, Thurgood Marshall, etc.

There is only one brief mention of Bunche, and no photo or portrait of him in the exposition. There is no mention of Marshall, Judge William Hastie or such contemporary leaders as Roy Wilkins, Whitney Young, James Farmer, etc. One hopes Dr. Martin Luther King, who came to Chicago to inspect the Exposition last week, did not hope to see some mention of himself. If he did it was a vain hope, as his name is nowhere mentioned. James Baldwin is merely listed as one of a number of Negro authors. Composer Ulysses Kay is not listed at all.

All the above is true, and yet there are at least four photos of Booker T. Washington. Admittedly the Exposition is oriented toward past history, but it's billed out front as "A Century of Negro Progress."

If Thurgood Marshall and Martin King aren't a part of Negro progress, who is?

Obviously a lot of money was spent in the displays even as they stand now, so the exposition management can't cry "poor mouth." Some business firms gave as much as \$20,000 each, and the exposition treasury is said to be in excess of \$150,000.

Too bad nobody saw fit to spend some of it on a historian.