Entry on Marcus Garvey

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Garvey had been best friends in Jamaica, while Jacques Garvey stated that she did not know Ashwood until she moved to America. Either way, Jacques served as Ashwood's bridesmaid on the latter's marriage to Garvey just two and a half years before her own marriage to him in 1922. The two women remained enemies throughout their lives.

It was between 1924 and 1927, the period, significantly, when her husband was in prison, that Jacques Garvey edited the Women's page in the Negro World, titled "Our Women and What They Think." The title was misleading, as Jacques Garvey wrote much of the page herself while continually pleading with her readers to contribute their poems, stories, and political pieces. The page allowed Jacques Garvey to articulate her burgeoning feminism and draw attention to the liberation struggles of black women across the world. Her editorials are generally regarded as her most important intellectual contribution.

Jacques Garvey campaigned for the Pan-African cause throughout her life. Returning to Jamaica with her husband following his deportation, Jacques Garvey supported her husband's establishment of a UNIA branch in London. She gave birth to a son, Marcus, in 1930 and another son, Julius Winston, in 1933. Marcus Garvey relocated to London in 1935, while Amy Jacques Garvey remained in Jamaica with her two sons. Jacques Garvey continued to promote Garveyism and her husband's legacy after his death in 1940. In addition to editing a second volume of Garvey's Philosophy and Opinions in 1967, Jacques Garvey continued to write and publish in Pan-African magazines and in the 1940s actively supported the People's National Party in Jamaica. She died in 1973, disillusioned with postindependence Jamaican politics but still promoting Garvey's legacy.

Kate Dossett

See also: Garvey, Marcus; Jamaica, Women's Role in; Pan-Africanism; Universal Negro Improvement Association, The

References

Garvey, Marcus (1887–1940)

Marcus Garvey was a Jamaican-born black cultural nationalist and the founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and the Black Star Line, a shipping firm. Marcus Garvey was born in St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica, on August 17, 1887. He grew up in a decaying environment and peasant economy marked by poverty, hurricanes, and weak family bonds of affection. In the British colonial school that he attended until just the sixth grade, Garvey was exposed to racial separation and prejudice, which influenced his consciousness. At the age of sixteen he became an apprentice printer in Kingston, Jamaica. There, he became impressed with the power of oratory and developed an interest in political organization and struggle. During the Jamaican printers' strike of 1907, he was blacklisted and fired for being the only foreman who supported the workers.

Following the vast emigration of Jamaicans to South America and Europe in the 1910s, Garvey arrived in Britain in 1912.
African American leaders such as W. E. B. Du Bois and A. Philip Randolph to help him fund his projects, Garvey continued to give public lectures, at which he was often booed. The catalyst of Garvey's political fame in North America was the violence that blacks faced in northern cities during the early twentieth century. Following the migration of thousands of African Americans from the South during World War I, poor northern whites felt greater hostility toward newly arrived black migrants whom they were taught to perceive as the cause of their predicament of low wages or unemployment and poor living conditions. From these circumstances emerged a white racism that resulted in a deadly riot in East St. Louis on July 2, 1917. Angry white mobs attacked defenseless black migrants whom they accused of taking their jobs in the city's industrial plants. The riot ended after thirty-nine blacks and nine whites were killed. Garvey intervened promptly by denouncing the massacre as part of "America's continuous round of oppression of black people who for three hundred years had given their life blood to help build the republic" (Levine, 1993, p. 118).

Garvey's activism in the United States was curtailed as J. Edgar Hoover led a campaign accusing him for mail fraud. In January 1922 Garvey and three of his associates were arrested and, in February, were indicted "on twelve counts of fraudulent use of the mails to sell Black Star stocks" (Levine, 1993, p. 134). Garvey was tried in June 1923 and was imprisoned until December 1927, when he was deported as an undesirable alien. On June 10, 1940, Garvey passed away at his West Kensington residence in London.

Babacar M'baye
Gates Jr., Henry Louis (1950–)

Henry Louis Gates Jr. is the Chair and the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor of the Department of African and African American Studies at Harvard University and also the director of the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research. As such, he is one of the most influential writers and thinkers concerning “race” in contemporary America. Indeed, Time magazine considered Gates to be one of America’s most influential people, placing him within the top twenty-five.

Born in the quiet mill town of Piedmont, West Virginia, Gates demonstrated an academic prowess that was to be exercised during his candidature at Yale. Graduating summa cum laude in 1973 in the field of history, he was to return briefly to Yale as an assistant professor in both the English and African American Studies departments after completing his PhD in English at Cambridge University on a Mellon Fellowship.

Gates’s scholarship has always been premised on a deep interest in his own family’s genealogy and history. The descendant of slaves exported from Africa to America, Gates has made it clear that he feels an immense loss at not being able to trace his genealogy through an African history that defines so much of his personal identity. In his PBS documentary, Wonders of the African World (1999), Gates explains how this inherited distance from Africa and African history came at the hands of America’s Eurocentric ideological imperative. Since the European tradition was considered the only significant contributor to America’s intellectual cultural life—a point that Gates critiques in his well-known revision of the “white” canon of literature, Black Literature and Literary Theory (1984)—many academic disciplines exhibited an unacknowledged Eurocentricism that, at worst, manifested itself as a kind of institutionalized racism. So it was that such unmediated racism in the academy resulted in generations of Americans being taught erroneously that history began for the African American only with the first footfall of African slaves on the soil of the New World.

To ask what lay before the artificial historical marker of the first slave ship, or to want to understand the kind of history that Africa offers the African American, is to join the project of recovery that has dominated Gates’s professional and private life. For Gates’s personal interest in recovering his own family’s history translates into the grander act of reclaiming the production of history from the marginalizing and impoverishing dictums of Eurocentric thought. It is perhaps for this reason—of exposing the artificiality of historical markers while also...