

TORIAL LAPSES

s evidently been there recently found among ad. Our guess is that Bonney was curator

viewed the photograph nitely Joseph; none of re. These include the he Smithsonian, Alvin ansas State Historical of the F. M. Sargent, can be found. Therey believes that Sargent photographer. He had a painted backdrop; and indicates that they

the picture is Joseph's (Toma-Alwa-Winme), it ot holding their young d, then, that this could e this child died at age d to the Ponca Indian

inquiries about my oil ns which were painted ords, they are now on Powerhouse Gallery at Wenatchee, Washington. ings were exhibited at er the past years the the Delaware Art Cen-all at Bonners Ferry, seum, Spokane, Wash.; nia) Museum, and the angeles; at the Maryhill entennial for the signing at Walla Walla, and at Joseph Dam — all in

at the Rocky Reach been viewed by almost

DWENA L. ALCORN Pacoma, Washington



THE WEST: CRUCIBLE of the NEGRO

by Jean I. Castles

There were five primary colors on the palette of the West—reflected in the feathers of the brave, the white hat of the hero, the black hat of the villain, the sombrero of the vaquero and the pigtail of the railroad coolie.

The first color brushed on the canvas was red. Then came explorers, from Spain by way of Mexico and Florida. The white man was a latecomer, and proved to be a stayer. Gradually "terra incognita" disappeared from the map; the canvas, too, was being filled in. In time he added ribbons of steel to the color scheme, and "Celestials" to lay them.

The vast sea of grass nourished cattle instead of buffalo, mountains were moved in search for gold. The frontier followed the course of the sun and disappeared.

But long before this the Negro was making his mark in the West of the Indian.

The first blacks came as slaves with Spanish explorers in the 16th century. One of these was Estevanico, a Moroccan, stranded on the Texas coast with Cabeza de Vaca and two other Spaniards. They were the last survivors of a large expedition which landed at Tampa Bay in 1528.

The four men were captured and enslaved by Indians and traveled with them across the broad reaches of what later became Texas. On reaching New Spain seven years later, they caused great excitement with stories of rich cities they had heard of on their journey, the fabled Seven Cities of Cibola. Later, Coronado led an expedition into the heart of the continent to find them, and failed.

The slave, Estevanico, traveled north, too, and was the discoverer of New Mexico. He continued exploring until he was killed by Zuni Indians in 1593.



Another black slave, named York, became a part of American history over two and a half centuries later. York accompanied his master, William Clark, and Meriwether Lewis on their explorations across the North American continent, from St. Louis to the Pacific Ocean, in 1804-06.

To the Sioux, Mandan, Nez Perce and Flat-head Indians who met the explorers, York was an object of wonder, even more amazing than the "solid water" (mirrors) of the white men.

The "charcoal paint" that wouldn't rub off mystified them. Some tribes thought he had blackened himself to signal a great victory over enemies; others believed he was to be the honored guest at a scalp dance. A Charles M. Russell painting shows York in a Mandan lodge, standing tall before admiring red men.

In the years before the Civil War, the majority of Negroes in the West were slaves. Some were sold or traded for herds; others worked for their masters as cowboys. Excellent with horses, having done their kindergarten work as stable boys, they fitted into ranch life like centaurs. As slaves they were never given dangerous jobs, like breaking horses, because they were valuable property worth scarce cash. They accompanied their owners on some of the early cattle drives, to Louisiana in the 1840's and St. Louis in the 1850's.

When the Civil War ended, Negroes on ranches were among the first to experience



CIRCA 1870:
LETTER TO THE EDITOR

"We, the colored citizens of Helena, feeling desirous of showing our high appreciation of those God-like gifts granted to us by and through the passage of the 15th amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and knowing, as we do, that those rights which have been withheld from us, are now submerged and numbered with the things of the past, now thank God, is written and heralded to the wide world that we are free men and citizens of the United States — shorn of all those stigmatizing qualifications which have made us beasts. To-day, thank God, and the Congress of the United States, that we, the colored people of the United States, possess all those rights which God, in His infinite wisdom, conveyed and gave unto us.

Now, we, the citizens of Helena, in the Territory of Montana, in mass assembled, on the 14th of April, A.D. 1870, do, by these presents, declare our intentions of celebrating the ratification of the 15th amendment, on this 15th day of April, by the firing of thirty-two guns, from the hill and to the south of the city. Signed: BENJAMIN STONE, President; J. R. JOHNSON, Secretary.

HELENA DAILY HERALD
April 15, 1870

integration. They were judged more by the work they performed than by the color of their skin.

Some gathered enough wild cattle in the scrub thickets to run their own brand. Rustling — the long rope — was another good way to build a herd. The majority worked for white men, as cowboys, horse breakers, cooks on cattle drives up the Chisholm Trail to Abilene, to Dodge, along the Goodnight-Loving Trail to Fort Laramie, to Bozeman. There was no discrimination on the prairie. At day's end all hands were the same color — dust gray.

The first Kentucky Derby was run in 1875. The winner, Aristides, was ridden by a Negro, Oliver Lewis.

A year later, Isaiah Dorman, a Negro employed as a civilian interpreter by the Seventh Cavalry Quartermaster, was numbered among the Custer dead at the Little Big Horn. He was known to the Indians who killed him in the Reno fight across the river. They called him "Teat." He was mourned by a Santee Sioux woman, his widow.

The Indians had great respect for the black men who fought them. In 1866, Congress passed an act authorizing regiments of Negro troops for the United States Army — two of cavalry and four of infantry. The soldiers of

the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry, ex-slaves for the most part, were called many things — most of them uncomplimentary — by the whites they protected from Laredo in Texas to Fort Totten in the Dakotas, from Fort Leavenworth in Kansas to Fort Verde in Apache country.

Buffalo Soldiers, the nickname they were proud of, was what the Indians called them. The buffalo was sacred to the Indians, and for them to give its name to these soldiers who were dark like buffalo and had its wiry, tight-curl'd hair, was a great honor.

The troopers are dead now, along with the Indians they fought and the settlers they protected. Their role in the winning of the West is seldom limned in TV Westerns and movies, but it is preserved in the paintings of Frederic Remington hanging in museums around the world.

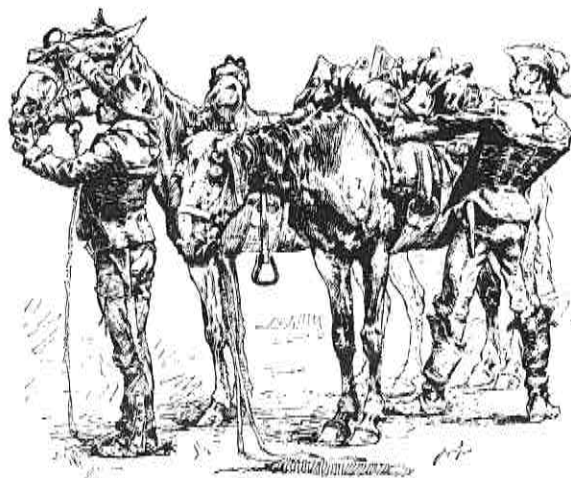
They weren't all heroes, of course. Many earned the black hat of the villain with their guns. Among them were Cherokee Bill, who died at the end of a rope at Fort Smith, Arkansas; Edmund Campbell, sentenced to hang by Judge Parker; George Moss, killer of the rancher who caught him rustling.

Ned Huddleston spent his early days as a free man stealing horses, graduated to cattle, and eventually had a ranch of his own. Ben Hodges arrived in Dodge with a trail herd and almost succeeded in obtaining title to a large chunk of range as the claimant of an old Spanish land grant.

In the West former slaves and sons of ex-slaves found dignity. Early in this century cowboy Bill Pickett "invented" the teeth-to-nose style of bulldogging. He rode for the Miller Brothers 101 Ranch as a hand and rodeo star, performing his specialty in Chicago, New York and London. Henry Clay, another 101 cowboy, worked with Will Rogers when he was honing his rope artistry.

Negroes left big tracks in the West as soldiers, cowboys, mountain men, Army scouts, killers, confidence men, explorers, rustlers, cooks, and horse breakers.

The trail being taken by today's blacks in America was broken for them by several generations of slaves and free men who left them a heritage to be proud of.



Remington

Illustrations used in this article are by Frederic Remington. The Negro trooper pictured on page 83 is vignett'd from *LEARNING THE SIGN LANGUAGE*, printed in *Century Magazine* in April, 1889. Opposite page is *CAPTAIN DODGE'S TROOPERS TO THE RESCUE*, published in *Century Magazine* in October, 1891. Above is *SADDLE UP*, printed in *Harper's Weekly* in September, 1884.

ABOUT JEAN CASTLES

Jean I. Castles is known as "that Western nut" in the ABC Television Network's Press Information office in Hollywood, where she is the copy chief. Born in Chicago and raised in nearby Evanston, she is a graduate of Grinnell College, Iowa. Following service as a WAC in World War II (Europe), she worked in the publicity department of CBS in Hollywood. Recalled to active duty during the Korean war when "they scraped the bottom of the barrel," Jean spent six more years in the Army, stateside and Japan. "Tired of having to wear a hat at all times," she left the service in 1957 and has been with ABC-TV ever since.

Jean Castles has been a regular visitor to Montana and Wyoming since 1952, but didn't become seriously immersed in Western history until about eight years ago, when she read Mari Sandoz's "Crazy Horse." In the past five years she has spent a week of her vacation in Helena each year doing "freelance" research in the library of the Montana Historical Society.

Western Americana is a working hobby with Jean, one she has been able to use in her job. She disclaims, however, any responsibility for the content of the Westerns on the air. She would much rather, she says, live in Montana or Wyoming and vacation in Lotusland, but so far has had to settle for the reverse.