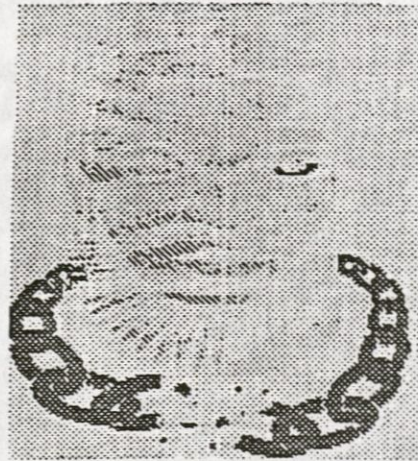


October 1995

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A PUBLICATION FOR
INTELLIGENT ACTIVISM

Education is good
especially when yoU've
learned how important interpretation
Can be. everyone hAs their own story.
do you believe one sTory? or do you confIure
your own? beyond the boundaries and into the
disturbing realm. can you haNdle it will you see it?

THE CATT'S OUT OF THE BAG: WAS SHE RACIST?
RACISM IN THE SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment which gave women the right to vote. Carrie Chapman Catt and her contemporaries Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton are synonymous with the feminist movement of the late 19th century. In fact one might state that these women were the pulse of the women's suffrage movement. In commemorating this anniversary and also in celebration of Catt who is also an Iowa State Alumna, ISU is dedicating the Old Botany building to her (to be known officially as Carrie Chapman Catt Hall) in the first week of October. Catt graduated from ISU in 1880 and was the valedictorian. She was a founder of the Iowa Suffrage Association, the League of Women voters and worked for the creation of the United Nations.

But it would not be truthful to paint these women as paragons of virtue and although they can be described as geniuses and intellectuals, they were also a product of their time. Though their names seem to represent equality and the fight for women's rights, one must take into account whose equality they were fighting for. It is a misrepresentation of facts to praise the work of Carrie Chapman Catt as "a glowing past", as stated on a brochure promoting the festivities. Glowing implies perfection and as she was human, Catt's record along with that of her fellow suffragists is somewhat tarnished.

At one point the feminist movement was the most fervent advocate of the abolitionist movement. The two movements supported and promoted each other's causes. From the white women suffragists' perspective, however, there seemed to be a conflict of interest between the two movements. One can always advocate equality for others but one always assumes that her equality is more justified and more of a cause than anyone else's. And although they sympathized with the cause of blacks, factors came into play which led the feminist movement to alienate the cause of the freedmen and women.

The ratification of the 15th Amendment in 1870 which prohibits the denial of the vote on the basis of "race color or previous condition of servitude" "guaranteed" black men the vote. The fact that the 14th Amendment did not extend to white women, caused the white feminists to re-evaluate their relationship with the freedmen (Andolsen 1). In response to the granting of votes to black men and other minorities, Catt described it as being done with "... ill-advised haste" and blaming these "...irresponsible citizens..." for these "perilous conditions" which "...have made the nation timid"(Andolsen 69). Evidently Catt seems to have forgotten that by the turn of the 20th century blacks had been a part of American society for 400 years and therefore enfranchising them at that time was not done in haste, but rather long overdue. Catt and her contemporaries were "distressingly silent about racial injustices" (Andolsen 32). So in spite of what the law dictated, many blacks were being stripped of their right to vote around the nation (sometimes through the use of sheer force and brutality). These citizens did not have a vote and therefore no impact on the political progress of the time: thus could not be held accountable for the condition in which the country was.

A group of suffragists, led by Stanton, decided to base the right of voting on one's educational background, this being an alienation of their platform of equality for all regardless of educational background. It was also a change of Stanton's ideology. When she advocated universal suffrage, she had held that education and not rule by the elite was the answer to political problems. Now Stanton expressed classist views because she wanted the enfranchisement of upper-class educated white women. She believed

strongly that they deserved it the most because she found most "black men ignorant and degraded" (Andolsen 8). She believed that as voters, and thus having political power, black men would be even more "tyrannical" than white men. However, black leaders such as Frederick Douglass and others had been backing the feminist movement from its start and they had proven to be more "progressive than their white counter parts" (Andolsen 8).

Anna Howard Shaw, another strong feminist responded to the 15th Amendment as follows "Never before in the history of the world have men made former slaves the political masters of their former mistresses!" (Andolsen 15). Catt echoed the sentiment asserting that women will remember the fact that "men fresh from slavery were given the vote long before women suffrage was permitted" (Andolsen 36). These are not words spoken from women who perceive blacks as being their equals: in fact they seem to scream classism and racism. And how were they supposed to understand the "enfranchisement" of blacks before them? Blacks were seen socially as their inferiors. It is only reasonable that they become outraged at what appeared to be the political superiority of black males.

The suffragist movement was not receiving the kind of support that they needed in the South due to the strong bond that linked them with the Abolitionist movement. It was crucial that they obtain support for their fight from the South even if it meant condoning or even practicing racism. The National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), of which Catt was a member and later president, held a convention in Georgia. Susan B. Anthony asked Frederick Douglass not to attend this convention because of her fear that white Southerners would lose interest in her cause if there was a sign of "equality between white women and blacks" (Andolsen 12). Furthermore, in response to an article in the *Times-Democrat* which alleged that the woman's suffrage movement advocated "social equality" between the races, NAWSA in 1903 declared that "the association had no official view on the question of equality for black Americans!" (emphasis added, Andolsen 14). And to add insult to injury, when the Northeastern Federation of Women's Clubs, a black women's group in 1919, submitted an application to NAWSA, Catt tried to persuade them to withdraw their application because their admission would conflict with attracting the vote of southern Congressmen for the woman suffrage amendment (Andolsen 16).

It seems fair to say in this instance that the suffragists were caught between a rock and a hard place. Should they advocate equality and the vote for all and accomplish neither? Or should they contradict their platform

and sacrifice the cause of blacks in order to achieve their goal? If they had chosen to advocate both causes together, the 19th amendment might not have been ratified in 1920; as a result of this possibility they chose the shortcut.

Generally most do not associate white supremacy with the suffragist movement. At that time however, with feelings of hate and intolerance directed towards ethnic minorities, the suffragists either had to join the band wagon or lose perspective supporters. And so in the name of their cause, these suffragists lowered themselves to the level of bigots in an effort to attract support.

"In 1919 Carrie Chapman Catt suggested that woman suffrage would be an acceptable means to maintain Anglo-Saxon political dominance" (Andolsen 25). She stated "white supremacy would be strengthened not weakened by woman suffrage," to appease the Southerners. Catt assured whites in states such as Mississippi and South Carolina that methods that have been used to disenfranchise black men (such as literacy tests and poll tax) would be applied to black women as well (Andolsen 26). Catt can also be seen as a racist because of her decision to exclude black women from public parades and gatherings and even "supported congressional provisions which would have barred black women from suffrage" (Caraway 245). Not only did Catt oppose the blacks in general obtaining the vote, but she implied that she would support those lawful and unlawful tactics to disenfranchise black women. This brings into play an interesting argument about the suffragist movement. For whom were they fighting anyhow? If one says all women, then how could a feminist leader advocate the disenfranchisement of another woman, regardless of her race? If one says that they had to sacrifice the plight of black men in order to assure their rights as women, one must specify that it was always white women for whom Catt and others struggled.

Both Catt and Stanton argued that white supremacy could maintain control with the enfranchisement of white women to outweigh "pauperism, ignorance and degradation" as Stanton stated in reply to blacks and immigrants receiving the vote and not white women (Andolsen 26). Catt painted a picture of immigrants and blacks as being "prone to corruption" (Andolsen 29). She also made a connection between the disenfranchisement of blacks and the appearance that the "Negro vote was purchasable." Instead of bringing to light issues which showed the oppression of black men and women, these champions of women's rights "made comparisons to men which were demeaning to black men." They made references to minorities using demeaning names such as "...Sambo and Hans and Yung Tung" (Andolsen 31-32). They referred to minorities as being the low order and white men as being the "best order." Although Catt claimed to sympathize with American Indians she did not want them to get the vote

that was denied to white women. They were after all "murdering scalping warrior(s)" (Andolsen 33). She also believed Native Americans to be as close to barbarism as one can get and incapable of rational thought (Andolsen 32-33).

"Purple is to Lavender as Womanism is to Feminism"

---Alice Walker---

Do not be dazzled by the notion that their struggle for equality had the black woman in mind.

So before you go out and lay a brick or join a rally for a cause you thought you knew about and understood, take a moment and educate your self because everything can have "a glowing past" depending on who is presenting it. Just as ignorance of the law does not exempt you from punishment, ignorance of the facts should not allow you to be misinformed. A fight for equality for all should be just that... for all. Equality period. From Choice one can gain power. But in order to choose you must be informed. It all leads back to education...Information IS power.

-- F. Selassie --

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How often do you diverge from the system's answers and go find out whether you truly are educated?

Words should not stir you to act. If they do, your dedication will fade. True dedication comes from strong hard-core feelings from within your being. Where does your dedication lie? Think about it.

THE GREAT SCHISM

During the operation of slavery many societal relationships came into interaction with one another. By using the division of labor and the white man's institutionalized social scale America created deeply rooted schism along with the lines of gender and race. These definite schisms in America have not only kept African-Americans from assimilating but have also put African-American women at opposing ends on various issues. For instance, the morality and sexuality of African-American women, the unity amongst women on child protection and the differences of oppression have placed black and white women in a contentious relationship. With a social scale so corrupt and polluted with the vice of white supremacy, black and white women are in active disagreement on these issues.

The use of the white man's patriarchal scale and his equated worth of each gender and race has created a conditioned pedestal for his white spouse. Therefore, when black and white women discuss the topic of sexual morality their opinions contradict each other because of the different social planes that they exist on. White women throughout history have generally felt that it was impossible for a black woman to have morality because they were beastly, untamed, animals. This train-of-thought is also carried into the discussion of sexuality for it was inconceivable for a black woman to have sexual morality because she was by nature a sexual being that

deserved to be sexually exploited and molested. White and black men have used this mephitic reasoning of black women and placed a barrier to separate and define their patriarchal positions. This image or hidden narrative is astonishing because black women worked harder, nourished more young and possessed more divination than all other social classes combined.

"Ar'n't I a women," exclaimed Ms. Sojourner Truth at a women's suffrage forum held in the early 1900's. But this statement has an underlining meaning for many other black women that questioned their confrontation with sexism and racism with a sense naturalism and integrity. One issue that they felt would grip the compassion of white women would be the protection and welfare of the children. Black women eagerly sought the title of womanhood but they felt that the title of motherhood would be granted to them when in the presence of children. Unfortunately, the implantation of the white man's societal hierarchy would hinder the black woman's search for compassion and unity with their white counter part . White society saw the black women at fault for getting pregnant: therefore, why should they care or show sorrow for a black women's child?

Non-recognition of the difference within oppression of black women to white women is the main reason why there are two illogical issues existing in today's society is due to the . The "master" and Euro-society have stripped African-American women of self-pride, dignity and being. Meanwhile white women were not actually given these qualities, instead she was presented with a comparison on what black women are and what white women are not. The only

true distinction of white woman's oppression is the modernization of it. The raping and beating of an African-American woman by a white male is just as psychologically detrimental as the white man's orders that white women to obey to. Therefore, the oppression of Black women and white women is the same and the only real difference is the presentation of it.

-- quick1 --

HEAVY D'S song "Black Coffee" doesn't simply refer to Black Women. Expansion of your mind enables you see that "black coffee, no sugar no cream" is a very strong woman. Too overwhelming for some. Do you like that? Can you do it?

-- legere --

Negrophila

Introductions... they call me CoolRon and you won't hear me complain. I have preferences for nicknames that I will share as soon as they're copy written (they're that good). I'm from (or as we say on the east coast , "Um frum") West Philadelphia, PA. "The city of brotherly love", the Quakers called it before they ran for the suburbs when the brothers started killing each other. I talk about Philly with great pride being due to:

- the Dr. J connection.
- the Boyz Eleven (II) Men connection.
- the fact that black folks from (frum) Philly are a rarity out here.
- the fact that the poorest, most dangerous neighborhood in Philly is predominantly white(!)

The most interesting fact about me is that I am a confessed Negrophile (for lack of a better term), a lover of all things black or African/African-American origin. Regardless of region, upbringing, social class, personal philosophy, religion, or lack of religion, if it's black I'm open. From the strictest militant to the most blatant sell out, the most "ghetto", "bourgeois", or "country", even white folks who think they're black get nathan' but love from me. Alas a voice arises from the Peanut Gallery, "This rampant pro-black sentiment must include a rampant anti-white sentiment...right ? Whatever happened to diversity?" Not that it matters, but to dispel any inevitable controversy, I strongly believe that in the grand love scheme of things, God and 'hood comes before God and country. I will try my best to approach each of my articles from this position. I'm always open for topic suggestions here are two to be on the look out for in future Uhuru's.

- The Umpteenth Article on Interracial Dating
- Extreme Sports and Cruci-Fiction
- YOU ARE NOT CUTE or Delusions of Grandeur

Being a columnist for a newspaper for black folks on a predominantly white campus, a main concern is the airing of dirty laundry, or the delicate belief that some things are better left unsaid or kept beyond closed doors. My response is simple, within these pages it's all about justice, read JUST US. I'm Ouuuuuuuuuuuuutttt!

(Please send all correspondence to wokfuss@iastate.edu.)

-- Ronald N. Clark --

SOIL

Be strong, all of you open minds out there. I know it's hard. The pressure here is immense. Color is one of the first things that registers in our brain.

I've been accused of many things. I'm not African. I'm not Black. In essence, I don't know my roots. Well, it is true that many people in college--no, many people in the larger expanse of Earth spend their lives trying to achieve the highest level of self-realization. Part of

that quest involves accepting and nurturing your roots. Some people have a harder time with that because they look so much like the majority. And this doesn't just refer to the whites. I am also speaking of the Blacks. Even African Americans can get caught up in this messed up rapids of cultural confusion that we call the United States of America. Many of us realize it is quite the tumbling journey. Society doesn't ease the turmoil. In fact it is the uniformity that is created in society that is one large column in Social Building. Conform. Different is not as good. But you can't conform color my friends. Try as hard as you want to run from it -- you must acknowledge it. Sun-bake as often as you like, bleach as pale as you desire. You'll hear it whispered over your shoulder as you walk up the stairwell. You'll dream it the night before your important presentation.

I can't dig up my roots and replant them. The soil doesn't have the right nutrients to sustain my life. So I know where I come from. My problem isn't with my roots. It's with the soil.

-- legere --

I AM CALLED BITTER. ALTHOUGH I PROTEST, SHE REPEATS HER
CLAIM: YOU ARE BITTER

ROOTS

The Red Oaks in California amaze me. The strength in them. One would think to be strong, the tree's roots would drain all nutrients from soil, eliminating all chances for neighboring trees. To be stable, however, the oak has an expansive roots system, branching out under the ground, within the soil. Environment is so vital. It nurtures. But the balance also comes from something within the trees -- something that allows them to not dominate. The Red Oaks root system is entangled with other tree roots. It has grown into the others such that you can't distinguish one individual from the other. So problems that arise aren't just from the soil. A tree dominates in any soil. There's an excessive quality that determines the survival of

bushes and other trees. This phenomenal struggle occurs in all environments. Some trees are so tiny, stunted -- others ... well, they're not so tiny. That's nature so that's natural.. But we are one realm beyond nature. We reason. We can control that excessive, if need be.

-- legere --

Saints with Forked Tongues

Other famous icons of American history are guilty of the same crime that Carrie Chapman Catt is guilty of. For instance-

George Washington and Thomas Jefferson owned slaves, and I have heard that they were 'humane masters'. AmeriKKKa's rendition of slavery was known to be particularly vicious, and they practiced it, so how can they be called humane? If it is humane to preside over brutal whippings and beatings, then I guess it fits them. But last time I checked, we were still using the same dictionary.

After the Buffalo Soldiers saved his life on San Juan Hill in the Spanish American War, Theodore Roosevelt, after initially calling them "the best breed of Yankee", doubled back and said they were "peculiarly dependent on their white officers" and, on top of all that, cowardly. It's on paper, y'all, look it up (Gatewood, "Black Americans and the White Man's Burden"). They should have let the Spanish massacre him and his 'Rough Riders'.

If Abraham Lincoln had his way, we would still be living under Jim Crow. Not only did his Emancipation Proclamation not free people living in border states (i.e. Kentucky and Maryland), he advocated not abolishing slavery until 1900. Imagine that! If trends remained the same, the Voting Rights Act would have been written in 2000, if at all. In fact, if Lincoln could have saved the Union without freeing anyone, he would have done it (he said so).

In my opinion, these individuals, while doing noteworthy and beneficial things, don't deserve to be canonized. Yes, they were products of their times, but since they took part in the greatest continuous evil in history, that puts them on par with David Duke, George Wallace, Pat Buchanan and any member of the Simi Valley jury.

Odaro,

---Shango---

**So I realize the power I give. So I stop giving you that power. Now
you become worried. As you should. But it does not mean I
want to fight. Recognize my potential too. No recognize
my energy and step aside. Because it will span great
expanses. Will I control it? FOCUS it. Laser
cuts deep. Can I control it?
- legere -**

Faces

Everyday when I ride my bike to class I seem to see a new face. I always greet a sister or a brother with a "hello" or "wassup". I usually get a response and sometimes a spontaneous conversation. This makes me feel good. It lets me know that most of us are aware of how few of us there are here at ISU. There are some, a small minority, that do not speak back or appear to be offended when you speak to them. Why is this? Is it's because you don't know the person? If so, your wrong. You know what it feels like to not know a lot of people. You know what it's like to be in a huge lecture hall, feeling like a black pebble in a vast white sea. When people stare at you, or walk of pins and needles when your around, you know that person that you just ignored. Next time as you walk along doing your thing, look around. When you see an unknown black face go over and get the name that goes with it. You'll leave feeling less alone, more confident.

-- Omar X --

Why Don't You Know

Why don't you know my beautiful Queen you listen to people say
these awful things of you and you believe them Don't you know you
are beautiful because I know you are the beauty of Miss America
and the knowledge of a wise education that's you my Queen
Much Love

--- Charles D. Wright---

What you feel sometimes can't explain it. Strength
and dedication and truth are discovered when
you uncover some of the why s.

-- legere--

NON FICTION

The following poem is based on a true story. Names have been eliminated to
protect the innocent, in spite of the fact that there are no innocents involved.
Having said that...

Boy Meets Girl.
Boy hollars at Girl for a while.
Boy and Girl become close friends.
Boy wants to get mo' intimate with Girl.
Girl is rather busy, says perhaps down the road.
Boy respects this and chills. (Patience is a Virtue).
Enter Ol'Boy from Girl's past. (Enter a skeleton in the closet).
Girl abandons Boy for Ol'Boy.
Boy is bitter.
Boy tries to rekindle a lil' sumpin' sumpin'.
Girl ain't havin it, neither is Ol'Boy (surprise surprise).
Boy gets over it, he knows their hearts pump Kool-Aid.
Boy introduces Girl to his "Clique".
Girl gets hit by a "train".
Too bad.
So sad.
The bad guys win (again).

Moral: Don't be a Boy. Don't be a Girl. Don't be what girl turned out to be.

-----El Kabong

Director of Programs

I would like to take this time to introduce myself to those not familiar with me. My name is Marva Sumlin. I am a junior seeking undergrad degrees in Journalism and History, with a minor in African American Studies. After I have obtained my degrees, I plan to further my education with a masters in education administration, which I will take back home to the Detroit Public School system. My long term goal is to create and produce educational documentaries on African American History.

For the 1995- '96 year, I have been appointed the Director of Programs of Black Student Alliance. This is a position that I take very seriously. My goal as Director of Programs is to effectively serve you through the creation and organization of educational, spiritual, political and social programs. However, this goal can only be accomplished through a system of accountability. Seventy-five percent of my goal can be achieved by my works alone, but that other twenty-five comes from you. I can either assume what type of programs it is you want to see, or I can know what programs it is you want organized. The only way to know is if you communicate it to me. I can only be held accountable for the things that I know. If there is no communication, there is no accountability. So for the 1995 - 1996 school year I challenge you to check me!!

Please send comments for the Uhuru to the Black Student Alliance office in Memorial Union in care of President Kyie Pierce.

“He who does not act according as he thinks, thinks incompletely”
--- Guyau---

Priorities

- ¥ The BSA Talent Show takes it to the stage October 21.
The deadline for entries is September 29. For further info.
contact Ronald Clark @ 294-1497
- ¥ The Big Eight Conference will be held February 15 -18 at Kansas
State University.
- ¥ The Million Man March will be held October 16 in Washington
D.C.
Black graduate students are currently organizing transportation &
lodging.
- ¥ The BCC Board of Directors will be selected on October 2 at 8:00 in
the pioneer room of the MU.
- ¥ The Minority Support Groups ,the BSA will celebrate a
Masquerade
Party on October 29.
- ¥ YOU HAVE A MASS / MCAG / MAIN MEETING TO GO TO !!! Ask
around your residence association for details.

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