HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE AMERICAN NEGRO IN AVIATION.

Perhaps one of the smallest national conventions of a year, was that of the National Airmen's Association of America. When this group gathered for its 1940 air conference the third week in August, in Chicago, Illinois, it marked the beginning of the second year of activity of the only national organisation of Negro flyers in the country.

In Chicago there seemed to be more interest and activity in the field of aviation and the progress was definitely far more advanced among members of the group than of those in any other center. The organisation had its beginning in February, 1939.

Ironically, the city which produced Bessie Coleman, Cornelius Coffey and John C. Robinson, all pioneers in the field of aviation among Negroes, got its inspiration for the formation of a national association of flyers, not from an airman, but from all of things, a newspaperman...Eddie W. Water, Jr., city editor of the Chicago Defender, and a Negro woman, Willa Beatrice Brown. (Time Magazine, 25 September 1939, National Affairs, "School for Willa", N.A.A., training progress).

The flyers may have been reticent in thinking up the idea, but they were certainly not lax in rolling up their sleeves and going to work to make a reality of the idea. And if there is any one person to whom more credit should be given for building up the N.A.A. than anyone else, it is Willa Brown, the nation's top Negro woman flyer. She was a veritable inexhaustible dynamo of energy. At first suggestion of the organisation, Willa Brown as its secretary carried on an extensive correspondence, whipping into workable form many ideas and suggestions made as to the purpose and program of the organization; working indefatigably to enlist members and create interest where there was none.
At the same time, she worked at a hundred office jobs, studied hard to advance herself in aviation, and devoted what other spare time and moments she could at Harlem Airport flying and exchanging experiences with other flyers.

To be sure, the N.A.A.A. was not the first organization of Negro flyers, nor is it the only one in existence today. Unfortunately no history of the Negro in aviation exists, and even now practically all that is known on the subject has been gathered by the association. This much, however, is true and factual, Negroes have been handicapped for at least two decades. One of the first Negroes to begin flying and who is still active is Dr. A. Porter Davis of Kansas City, one of the association's vice presidents and winner of the 1938 Dwight Green Trophy, given annually to the flyer or flyers voted by the association to have made the greatest contribution to aviation for the year.

The first Negro woman of record to become a licensed flyer was Beazie Coleman who was killed in an airplane crash in Florida in 1929. So great was the prejudice against Negroes flying in her day that she was forced to go to Europe for instructions.

Beazie Coleman and John C. Robinson (Robinson joined forces with the Ethiopian army and air force during the Italo-Ethiopian conflict) are perhaps responsible for inspiring more Negroes to fly than any other two persons.

It was Claude L. Barnett of the Negro Associated Press who sponsored John C. Robinson's trip to Ethiopia and return and kept the public informed through his press associations of progress of the conflict and the part that Robinson was taking. This was another major factor in creating Negro public interest in aviation.

Today, if there is any one man to whom Negro flyers can look to and remember for his guidance and inspiration in the field of aviation, it is...
Cannulus B. Coffey, the association's first president, who began his flying career twenty-one years ago with John C. Robinson.

In comparison between conditions today and yesterday for Negro flyers is needed to fully appreciate what men such as Davis, Coffey, Robinson, Foraythe, Anderson and women like Bessie Coleman, Janet Waters and Willa Brown went through to get their training.

"...I hate to think of the discouraging conditions under which I got my training," Coffey said regretfully at Harlem airport, (97th and Marlan Avenue, Chicago) one day while talking to a group of young enthusiastic students, in 1940, "...flying time was $25 an hour and white flight instructors were not concerned in the progress of Negro student pilots. Flying equipment was not as safe then as it is now, it was a hazardous undertaking. Instructions were not the science as they are now. Students were told what to do and learned more by the trial and error method, than by actual intelligent instructions. Any landing was considered good, if the pilot could walk away unhurt." The NA Civil Aeronautics Authority students listened intently as he concluded, "...today all a youngster needs is a willingness to learn and the physical attributes."

The opportunity existing today for Negroes to receive flying instruction at government expense, is attributable directly to Ross P. Waters, the National Airmen's Association and the campaign it waged in cooperation with the Pittsburgh Courier, Chicago Defender, the late Robert L. Yann, Edgar O. Brown, Truman E. Gibson, Jr., James O. Evans, Marcus H. Bay, John W. Davis of West Virginia State College, Edward Jones of the Chicago Jones brothers, Horace C. Clayton, Kenneth Campbell, Harold Kingsley, the Hon. Dwight Green and Edward J. Kelly. They gave continued support, aid and advice. Made valuable contacts, changed viewpoints of many others who gave financial aid to further the group's efforts in attaining their objective of including Negroes.
government's aviation program, both civilian and military.

The history of the association is inextricably linked with the participation of the Negro in the C.A.A., program today. One month before Wind P. Waters suggested to Willa Brown about the formation of a national organization of Negro flyers, President Franklin D. Roosevelt on 15 January, outlined to Congress a national defense program. He stated that the..."the changing world conditions outside the American hemispheres made it imperative for the United States to take immediate steps for the protection of the liberties of its citizens."

There were three distinct phases of the plan: (a) $450,000,000 for new planes, antiaircraft artillery, sea coast defenses, and other new needs of the army; (b) $30,000,000 to create and strengthen navy bases, and additional navy airplanes; and (c) $20,000,000 for the training of civilian pilots.

The Civilian Pilots' Training program grew out of the third phase of the defense program. After obtaining information concerning the plans of the President, members of the National Airmen's Association felt an imperative need to get in on the ground floor.

In less than one week after the President's message had been heard, Cornelius Coffey wrote letters to President Roosevelt, Secretary of War Department, Robert E. Hindley of the C.A.A., Arthur W. Mitchell, Illinois Congressman, the late Senator J. Hamilton Lewis, Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune, asking their aid and contacts be directed toward a provision be made which would guarantee Negro participation in the pilot-training program.

The N.A.A.A., through the cooperation and aid of Edgar G. Brown, began plans for the goodwill flight from Chicago, Illinois to Washington D. C., in hopes of creating more attention on the Negro and his struggle in aviation, this plan was abandoned when the Committee on Military Affairs, United States Senate, held hearings 21 February 1933. Mr. Brown, then president...
the United Government Employees appeared as a representative of the N.A.A.A.

Speaking for Negro aviators, Mr. Brown expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to endorse the country's national program, and appealed to the Senate Committee and to Congress to give a chance to some of Negro Patriots.

"This," he said, "could be accomplished by the committee adding a provision which would afford a chance to all American youth regardless of race, creed, color or national origin. This essential phase of preparedness in training all the nation's manpower could be assured by another provision inserted under Section IV of H.R. 3763, giving power to the Secretary of War to specifically designate and authorize aircraft training schools."

Mr. Brown's statement was printed in the records of the Committee of Military Affairs, along with the list of Negro pilots who were registered with the N.A.A.A. Time Magazine issue of February 1930 carried an article on the subject and commended Mr. Brown on the way in which he handled his address to the committee. Edgar O. Brown was dubbed by then (Time Magazine) as ".....The Silver-Tongued Orator."

During the months of February and March the members of the N.A.A.A. kept in close contact with Edgar Brown and supplied technical data, information and background on their activities in the field of aviation.

Committees from the N.A.A.A. sat in conferences with senators and representatives from Chicago. The Negro press published week to week reports on the situation and gave editorial backing to the campaign. A constant stream of letters, telegrams and telephone calls was maintained with Senators and Representatives and others who could influence the program.

On March 1933, the first session of the Seventy-Eighth Congress inserted a clause in Section IV of H.R. Bill 3763 which reads "The Secretary of War
is hereby authorized,...to lend to accredited civilian aviation schools (6),
including at least one Negro school for the training of Negro air pilots,...".
The Act to Provide More Effectively for the National Defense was further
amended to read, "The Secretary of War is hereby authorized,...to lend to
accredited civilian aviation schools, one or more of which shall be designa-
ted by the O.K. for the training of any Negro air pilots,..."

Every bill that came before the House or Senate thereafter pertinent to
the training of aviation personnel, Edgar Brown watched closely. In the
civilian pilots training act of 1929 a provision was inserted,..."That none of
the benefits of training or programs shall be denied on account of race,
creed, color or national origin.

Before the Committee on Naval Affairs, of the United States Senate,
Edgar Brown again represented the National Airmen's Association, endorsed the
national defense bill and sought a special plank to give Negro pilots training
in the U. S. Navy. His request was printed in the proceedings of the Committee
on Naval Affairs, along with the names of top ranking Negro pilots, C. Alfred
Anderson and Cornelius Coffey.

Members of the N.A.A.A. realized that even though Negro colleges were
designated as places to train Negro pilots, they would go for naught unless
a sufficient number of young men and women manifested an interest in learning
to fly. The previously proposed goodwill flight was focused back into the
attention of the association. In order to stimulate a greater interest, it
was planned; in addition to a flight to Washington, the trip would be ex-
tended to visit Negro colleges and universities on a 5,000 mile air tour.

Dr. L. White, vice-president and Chasney A. Spencer, business manager of
the association were selected by the organization for the flight. They
visited the capital on the 15th day of May, 1899, accompanied by Edgar Brown.
and conferred with several government officials: Senator James Slattery, successor to the late James Hamilton Lewis, Congressman Everett McKinley Dirksen, all of Illinois, Senator Murray Thomas of Oklahoma, Representative Ernest O'Neill of Kentucky, Senator C. Wayland Brooks of Illinois and Senator Harry S. Truman of Missouri. These men promised their support and showed a keen interest in the flyer's mission and objective. They made good their promise by leading the fight for the federal law authorizing the first participation of the Negro youth in the nation's air training program and the inclusion of the Negro in the Army Air Forces Corps, (which is active and now a part of the regular Army, Lockbourne Air Force Base, Columbus, Ohio, (Groveport, Ohio)).

Spencer and White also carried a scroll from Mayor Edward J. Kelly of Chicago to Mayor LaGuardia of New York. They visited several schools and contributed their part in creating the good will of national heads, public interest and the inspiration and interest of the Negro youth.

During the conference, Senators Truman and Thomas stated to the flyers, "... your presence and purpose has and will do more to create interest than could have been aroused in any other way."

As important as securing the designation of places to train Negro flyers, was the obtaining a special dispensing of funds to guarantee the execution of the program. When Congress failed to earmark $1,000,000 to be appropriated in June, 1939 for the special training of Negro pilots. The N.A.A.A. went to the bat again with bigger and better support than ever before. The action was reversed and in a letter the association was notified that Congress had definitely appropriated and set aside $1,000,000 for training Negro civil air pilots in colleges located nearby modern airports and at flying schools for five percent of those without previous college training.
During the battle conducted throughout the session of Congress to prevent the exclusion of Negro pilots from the several aviation programs of the government, no earmarking of funds was secured in the Navy training bill, although stipulations were written to safe guard against discrimination.

The civilian training program was the key to avenues of the inclusion of the Negro into the United States Air Forces. In April 1941 applications were accepted for cadet training of Negro military personnel. The training base was set up at the Tuskegee training field, Tuskegee, Alabama, later known as T.A.A.F. The personnel was drawn from all parts of the country, many were "washed" out, in primary or basic training periods, others failed to advance in the advanced flight instructions, but when the first class completed and received their commissions as second lieutenants in the United States Army Air Force, it was a reward and accomplishment that members of the National Armen's Association had struggled for hard and long. As each cadet's name was called and he stepped forward to receive his diploma, he represented the finest fact of the product and a credit to the purpose.

The 99th Pursuit Squadron and its achievements of courage and honor in the defense of democracy, became a part of American history. The record of the Negro in the U.S.A.F overseas is recognized equality as in that of the white flyer. Records from the archives of the U.S.A.F, Washington, D.C. make both contributions a part of American history and a sustaining credit to the cause of peace, democracy, and brotherhood to all ranking.

The Air Force Times, (published weekly by the Army Times Publishing Company, Washington, D.C.) in its 2 April 1949 edition states in an article headlined, "Segregation in Air Force to be Ended Soon" and continues in the article following, "The U.S.A.F is about ready to put into effect an Air Force-wide nonsegregation policy. Mr. W. Stuart Sydington, Secretary of the Air Force, it was learned on excellent authority, informed the Study Committee.
weak, that the NSAF will soon go ahead with its plan to classify and assign
Negroes to NSAF units in exactly the same manner as any other type of personnel.
The Fay Committee was appointed by the President to find a means of granting
equal opportunity and treatment in the armed forces."

For more than a decade, I have been employed by the federal government as a civilian employee and as a soldier. However, a greater portion of this period was served under the War Department, United States Air Force, under the Department of Defense of the Air Force, United States Air Force, at Patterson Field, Fairfield, Ohio and Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio.

Prior to Executive Order 8802, which was issued 25 June 1941 and received at Wright Field 5 July 1941, there were no non-white employees employed by or under the Command except those in menial capacities, such as custodial workers and laborers, this being an accepted employment practice.

The Order was directed to the Commanding Officer and read as follows:

"Subject: Discrimination because of Race, Creed, Color or National Origin.

1. Attention is invited to the Executive Order of the President, dated 25 June 1941, No. 8802, Copy Attached.

2. In all Defense Contracts hereafter negotiated and in all Defense Contracts entered into as a result of invitations for bids hereafter issued, the following provision will be included:

The Contractor, in performing the work required by this contract, shall not discriminate against any worker because of Race, Creed, Color or National Origin.

3. All invitations for bids hereafter issued for Defense Contracts will contain a statement that any contract entered into pursuant to the invitation will contain the provision indicated in paragraph 2 above.

4. It is desired that the Instructions contained in paragraphs 2 and 3 above be immediately communicated by radio or wire, to all contracting agencies operating under your jurisdiction. The Adjutant General is being requested to take similar action with respect to contracting agencies operating under the jurisdiction of Corps Area and Department Commanders.

By direction of the Under Secretary of War, Frank T. Bullock, Major General Corps, Assistant to the Director of Purchasing and Contracts."
Executive Order Number 8802, Dated June 25, 1941, (6/25/41).

Reaffirming policy of full participation in the Defense Program by all persons, regardless of Race, Creed, Color or National Origin, and directing certain action in furtherance of said policy whereas it is the policy of the United States to encourage full participation in the National Defense Program by all citizens of the United States, regardless of Race, Creed, Color, or National Origin, in the firm belief that the Democratic way of life within the Nation can be defended successfully only with the help and support of all groups within its borders and whereas there is evidence that available and needed workers have been barred from employment in industries engaged in Defense production solely because of considerations of Race, Creed, Color, or National Origin, to the detriment of Workers' morale and of National unity—Now, therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the Statutes, and as a prerequisite to the successful conduct of our national defense production effort, I do hereby reaffirm the policy of the United States that there shall be no discrimination in the Employment of workers in Defense Industries or Government because of Race, Creed, Color, or National Origin, and I do hereby declare that it is the duty of employers and of Labor Organizations in furtherance of said policy and of this Order, to provide for the full and equitable participation of all workers in Defense Industries, without discrimination because of Race, Creed, Color, or National Origin:

1. All departments and agencies of the Government of the United States concerned with vocational and training programs under the provisions of Executive Order 8802 for defense production shall take special measures appropriate to assure that such programs are administered without discrimination because of Race, Creed, Color, or National Origin.
2. All Contracting Agencies of the Government of the United States shall include in all defense contracts hereafter negotiated by them a provision of obligating the contractor not to discriminate against any worker because of Race, Creed, Color, or National Origin.

3. There is established in the Office of Production Management a Committee on Fair Employment Practice, Executive Order No. 9944, which shall consist of a Chairman and four other members to be appointed by the President. The Chairman and members of the Committee shall serve as such without compensation but shall be entitled to actual and necessary transportation, subsistence and other expenses incidental to performance of their duties. The Committee shall receive and investigate complaints of discrimination in violation of the provisions of this Order and shall take appropriate steps to redress grievances which it finds to be valid. The Committee shall also recommend to the several departments and agencies of the government of the United States and to the President all measures which may be deemed by it necessary or proper to effectuate the provisions of this Order. Franklin D. Roosevelt, the White House.

In the early fall of 1941 the late General E. S. Hesterbrook requested that the full practice of Executive Order 9944 be immediately initiated at the Command. As a result, the rapid employment of Negro employees was seen. Soon, because of the increase in the number of Negro employees and the need for utilization of manpower to the fullest extent, a program for easing racial tension became necessary for two reasons:

1. Because the white workers felt that they had wasted rights in certain types of employment.

2. Negro personnel felt that they were not being utilized in types of positions commensurate with their skills and qualifications. After a careful analyzing of the mounting complaints and grievances within the Command among supervisors and employees and administrators and from persons from
surrounding communities, plans were made to solve the problem.

a. An educational program of civilian training was instituted.

b. Employees were given a thorough orientation in overall employment practices and policies as set forth by the Command. As an example, information was disseminated among the employees through bulletins and posters placed on bulletin boards throughout the Command. Supervisors were instructed not to segregate workers according to racial groups but to assign workers side by side according to skill and qualifications wherever possible, cafeterias, rest rooms, and all facilities were placed at the disposal of all employees on an equal basis.

c. An employee relations program was established on an experimental basis. One of the phases of the experimental employee relations program which was very helpful and successful in solving racial problems was the employment of counselors without racial or religious discrimination. These counselors had many and varied duties:

1. To interpret and instruct the employee of his rights and privileges under Civil Service.

2. To help the employee evaluate his training and experience in terms of a specific job or position.

3. To help the Negro employee adjust himself to the problems caused by the transition from a domestic type of work to the industrial pattern of employment.

4. To remove suspicion and distrust between management and employees because of the lack of confidence not only on the part of management due to widespread propaganda and the conception due to the lack of precedent in accepting
Negro as industrial material (this practice was largely exercised within the surrounding community) but was on the part of the Negro employee caused by the suspicion and fear that he did not receive equitable consideration in his pioneer attempt to serve the national defense effort.

5. To enlist the aid of various civic organizations in cultivating better understanding of the program and the difficulties involved in attempting solutions of racial tension under war-time conditions. To also coordinate whenever possible with these organizations to abolish racial discrimination wherever reported to be found.

6. To function in a liaison capacity for the Command in its contact with other federal agencies on operational problems encountered in employment of Negro personnel for the purpose of exchanging ideas and workable solutions experienced in handling racial problems.

Much credit must be given to the Negro press and its understanding of the problems encountered and the educational program with which it greatly assisted, particularly the Pittsburgh Courier and its staff of well-trained writers who on many occasions in their efforts to present factual conditions through their news releases, reduced the majority of the friction. Their visits also resulted in widespread dissemination of the many constructive features in the program of integration and many beneficial gains and contacts were maintained for the good of all concerned, thereby setting forth a program of tolerance, good will and understanding not only for the local community but for the national scope as well. This program increased until as of 1 March 1944 in comparison with 1 March 1941, from one tenth of one percent to 23.9 per cent. The program of integration had been well and
federal employees were serving the Command regardless of race, creed, color, or national origin, based solely upon their skills and qualifications—custodial, clerical, mechanical, professional, engineers, draftsmen, chemists, scientists, guards, and many other classifications. Executive Order #6282 was followed by revised orders at the close of World War II on 8 October 1947 and 26 September 1948 by Executive Order #9080 with Interim Procedures governing fair employment practices.

At the beginning of the National Defense Program and during the latter part of 1941 and the early part of 1942, Negro and white employees were brought into Wright Field from all parts of the country, and by its geographical location—being situated near the border state boundaries of the Mason and Dixon line—there were many and varied cross sections of opinions among the applicants, employees, and supervisors. The lack of education basically was the source of much discontent and confusion. However, the Negro was the most confused of all, though it may be noted that the Negro who had had the equal opportunity in education and training under a non-segregated pattern made a quicker and easier adjustment to the entire situation than did those of segregated facilities.
A type of educational and orientation talk made to all new employees of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base prior to work assignment. These talks have been presented from 1942 to the present time and have proven highly effective.

Prejudices and Human Relations

I have been assigned the mission of talking and discussing with the supervisory and operating levels on the subject of "Prejudices and Human Relations." The subject is not intended to offend or embarrass anyone, but to enlighten open minds, therefore perfecting our operations of Personnel Management and Employee Utilization into a continued program of understanding and unity.

Racial and religious prejudices result from ignorance and insecurity. Prejudices are un-Christian, un-American, and dangerous to democracy. We are all members of minority groups which have been segregated at one time or another.

Once prejudice is used against any group it spreads to other groups. Prejudice makes all of us poorer economically and robs us of the potential contribution of minorities. It diverts attention from the real issues and prevents us from finding solutions to our problems. It means disunity and endangers world peace. Practically all of us have certain types of prejudices, such as tastes of food, bow ties, purple shirts and other meaningless things. These types of prejudices are normal and harmless. But to have a prejudice against a person because of his nationality, religion, color or race can do plenty of damage to our American or world security.

We all inherit characteristics such as the color of our skin and the shape of our head. But we do not inherit our prejudices. When we are born, we have only the capacity to develop love, hate and the other human emotions. When we learn to like or dislike, love or hate, depends on our experiences in our home, in our school, in our neighborhood; and the affect these these
periences have upon us. The language we learn, our religion, ideas, feelings and attitudes, our manners and prejudices—all these come from our environment. We absorb prejudices unconsciously.

By the time we have grown up, we already have pictures in our minds of many people with whom we have had little or no contact. We have stereotyped pictures of the Jew or Scot as stingy and money mad; the Negro as lazy, stupid, happy-go-lucky, prone to sin, vile and shiftless; the Irish as hot-tempered, drinking, whisky-loving; the oriental as slinking, mysterious and dope addict; the Italian or Latin as gangster, racketeer or cold-blooded, murderous; the Indian as unscrupulous, crafty and treacherous; and the French as care-free, sex obsessed degenerate; the English as ruthless, exploiting and selfish; it is wrong to generalize about any group.

Ignorance and fear breed hate. Primitive tribes usually feared and therefore hated the neighboring tribe because they did not know them. Unenlightened people today have that same fear and suspicion of the unknown. Only when we have lived and worked among people of different races, cultures and backgrounds, and learned to know them, can we really overcome these primitive fears. It is only natural and human to be curious about things or people about whom we know very little. Curiosity is wholesome, when it leads a man to investigate honestly the thing that arouses his curiosity, he often finds something new and interesting. Then he does not make the effort to look honestly into the thing that first called forth curiosity, however, when, instead, he lets the matter dwell and go unanswered, he closes his mind to healthy thinking, and trouble begins. Curiosity gives way to suspicion—suspicion quickly converts itself to fear—and fear grows into hate! One fears the things he suspects, and hates that which makes him afraid.

Prejudices develop, too, from a feeling of insecurity or frustration. We may feel uncertain about our ability or prestige. We may feel insecure in...
our job or our social position. To strengthen our own confidence and feeling of self-importance, we often search for someone to look down upon as inferior or some group to blame for our failure and misfortune. That is why there is more prejudice in time of social stress and economic depression. Prejudice brings insecurity and insecure people begin looking around for someone or some group on which they can pin blame. Insecurity breeds prejudice and rumor fosters it!

Let's cover a brief sketch of world history of prejudice. In the days of the Roman, Christians were blamed for all the troubles of the Roman Empire—including the burning of Rome—and for many years were persecuted. Christians, in turn, have persecuted Jews. During the "Black Death" in the Middle Ages, when bubonic plague killed off one-fourth of Europe's population, responsibility was laid to the Jews, who were shut out of society, tortured and oppressed, even though Jews were dying off as rapidly as Christians. In Spain, Inquisitionists rode on horseback through the streets, beating and burning people until they confessed and converted to Christianity. In the eighteenth century, a large colony of French Huguenots lived in England. They were accused of being dirty, of depriving the Englishmen of their jobs, and reducing their wages. A flood of pamphlets issued against these Huguenots was reprinted a hundred years later with the word "Jew" substituted for "Huguenot." In the late 1930's Hitler's Germany, the Nazis began by persecuting the Jews, but eventually they turned upon Catholics, Protestants, Gypsies, Poles, and the entire world.

I don't think we could stop here without reviewing some of the shameful pages of American history and its persecution. Many of our early settlers who came here to escape religious prejudices and persecution, denied religious
freedom to others. Massachusetts expelled dissenters like Roger Williams, 
while in Salem hysterical witch hunts were pursued. In one colony or another, 
Catholics, Quakers, Jews, Lutherans, Moravians, Presbyterians, Baptists, 
Deists and Atheists were deprived of political and religious rights. Flogged 
or burned at stake, tortured, imprisoned, driven into the wilderness and forced 
to suffer many and varied untold and unbelievable agonies.

In the nineteenth century earlier immigrant groups began to discriminate 
against the "newer" immigrants. Feeling ran high through rumors and mob 
psychology against the "invasion" of the Irish who arrived in large numbers 
after Ireland's potato famine of 1846. Riots broke out against them in 
Philadelphia, Boston, and New York. They were accused of introducing 
slums and crime, and of depriving Americans of jobs. In 1850, the "Know Nothing" 
Party was formed to fight the Irish and Catholic immigrants, and the party 
remained a political force until the Civil War. They and their prejudiced 
successors yelled about "the flood of immigration sweeping its millions of 
foreign Roman Catholics over the land." Eventually most of this discrimina-
tion was turned against later immigrant groups—the Poles, Italians, Slavs, 
and Jews.

What many of us seem to forget is that all of us are immigrants or the 
children of immigrants. Not one of us has a right to complain about "foreigners" 
unless he be the American Indian who complains. "Americanism," said Presi-
dent Franklin D. Roosevelt, "is not and never was a matter of race and 
ancestry. Americanism is a matter of the mind and heart."

While the democratic ideals expressed by the Founding Fathers, the 
Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution have not always been prac-
ticed, nevertheless the liberties and freedoms which we share and which bind 
this Nation together are one of the glorious Chapters in human history. As 
we have gone farther in the direction of equality of opportunities than have
the people of most other countries, and we are continuing our progress in that direction. Prejudices are not products of our way of life, we are making progress. Through the years there has been a sustained effort to abolish discrimination and prejudices which deny a person his fundamental rights as a citizen in a democracy. Discriminations and prejudices are not products of—but rather challenges to—the American way of life. And each of us has a personal responsibility to see to it that the American way of life prevails.

From the time of Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation to the present, laws have been passed to carry forward democratic principle “that all men are created.” When the Negroes were freed, ninety-seven (97) percent of them could neither read nor write. In 1940, according to the Federal Census, 10 out of every 20 Negroes could read and write. Many states have already moved far toward equalization of educational opportunity for Negroes and Whites.

A great advance was made in June 1941 when President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802 and declared: “It is the policy of the United States to encourage full participation in the National defense program by all citizens of the United States regardless of race, creed, color or National origin.” The order permitted no discrimination in employment sponsored by the Federal Government “because of race, creed, or National origin.”

On December 5, 1946 President Truman appointed a committee on Civil Rights. His instructions to the Committee included the following statement: “Freedom from fear is more fully realized in our country than in any other on the face of the earth. Yet all parts of our population are not equally free from fear. And from time to time, and in some places, this freedom has been gravely threatened. It was so after the last war, when organized groups fanned hatred and intolerance until, at times, mob action struck fear into the hearts of men and women because of their racial origin or religious beliefs.
Today freedom from fear and the democratic institutions which sustain it are again under attack. In some places, from time to time, the local enforcement of law and order has broken down, and individuals—sometimes ex-servicemen, even women—have been killed, maimed, or intimidated.

The preservation of civil liberties is a duty of every government—State, Federal, and local. Whenever the law-enforcement measures and the authority of Federal, State, and local governments are inadequate to discharge this primary function of government, these measures and this authority should be strengthened and improved."

In conclusion it is a known fact that the mistreatment of Mexicans in the United States echoes with distaste throughout North and South America; a race riot and mob violence provokes discussions and resentment in Africa, the Philippines, China and India. They are headlined in the newspapers and referred to over the radio stations of all Europe with disgust and as acts of uncivilized and degenerate people.

The story of America is proof that there are no "superior" or "inferior" people. Our country has been made great by the sweat, toil, labor and blood of white, black, brown and yellow people, who come from every land under the sun—people with names like Smith, Jones, Carnegie, Sikorsky, Roosevelt, Einstein, Garver, Douglas, Wong, Osher, Kelley, O'Healy—and thousands more. We know that World War II was fought and won by the men who built and are building America, who clear her forests, span her rivers, dig her coal, plow her fields, work her machines, the men who make America strong and free are men of every race, color, religion, and nationality.

Listen to the names at roll call or read those names from a casualty list, listed in the New York Times of 29 March 1945: Agostinelli...Cohan...Grunwald...Grebens...Ivanovski...Juslin...Marshall...Thoms...Warshinski...Have they not an invested right in America? Their future generations? Should they...
deprived of the right of equality in citizenship, economic security and full
protection of the law as they so live as law abiding self respecting human
beings? Are they inferior?