

Off the RECORD

By LEE BLACKWELL

EDITOR'S NOTE: Howard Pulley, photojournalist for the Defender Publications, has found some interesting views about a character we're all familiar with . . . Uncle Tom. While assigned to Memphis, Pulley wrote the following article.

THE LIFE SPAN OF UNCLE TOM

By Howard Pulley

They say that it's wonderful to grow old gracefully, but it's even better to grow old with respect. Somehow that doesn't apply to the modern uncle Toms of the southland. The Toms grow more with a cycle of respect than a factor of age.

Throughout the Southland the Negro is launching a battle for equality that will armour itself with the respect and dignity of other races that dwell within the boundaries of the United States. Yet, in contrast we will find that army of brown nuts, that give a seemingly thanks for the sorrowful plight that the Negro is in . . . these soldiers we easily call uncle Toms.

In all normal belief one would feel that the era of uncle Toms had long passed the stage of survival. As true as it should be, we still find ourselves surrounded by the uncle Toms that plague our very hopes of full and just citizenship.

How has this character lived for nearly a hundred years, stopping to the brink of par below gutter against his own-people? Simple, the modern Negro has as a running partner a modern uncle Tom. This chic and well-to-do uncle Tom is a far contrast to his earlier days of Tomism.

We find today's uncle Tom not stooping and bowing to the white man as was the procedure of years past. He is far more crafty than that. Today he is the bulk of our Southern leadership. This leadership is one of great demand by the Negroes who need some type of general to call the commands of battle.

The battlefield never travels any further than the length of a pocketbook of the scale of a favor from the white man. He will quickly sellout the interest of his people or cut their throats to gain a favor that will aid him personally.

Smart is the word for this modern uncle Tom. Smart and without reverence to the cause that so many of his people look to him to give. All failures are laid on the shoulders of another individual. This type of action keeps him in the graces of the Negro he has so wrongly cheated.

Coming soon throughout the southland, there will be a giant step taken by the Negro followers of this two-faced leader. This step will wipe his face from the race that is truly grateful to say "I am a Negro."

I hope that sometime in the future we will read on the headstone of uncle Tom. "Here lies the end of an era past, but to be remembered, for another day and time yet to come he may walk again . . . let's keep him buried now that he's dead.