

Yankee Steve's Column
for the Week of February 17, 2011

Maya Angelou and the Medal of Freedom

Marguerite Ann Johnson married a Greek sailor. This explains her name change. Now she is Maya Angelou [1928-]. She remarried but the Greek name stuck.

Yesterday Angelou received the highest honor awarded to civilians, the Presidential Medal of **Freedom**. Ms. Angelou, a poet, joined a long list of worthies. The criterion is "an especially meritorious contribution to the security or national interests of the United States, world peace, cultural or other significant public or private endeavors."

Of course the recipients of this award must be approved by the president. That being the case, the two Michelle's, Malkin (writer) and Bachmann (politician) will never receive our nation's highest award, not while Barack Obama is president.

I have to ask, where was the African-American Thomas Sowell when the medals were being handed out? Maybe Obama does not like him. Not to fret Thomas, being left off the list of recipients while Obama is president can only mean that you understand the true definition of freedom.

I am told that Angelou's religion has played a role in her life and that she is a Christian. I even hear that she has criticized Oprah Winfrey for espousing agnosticism which would, to use Angelou's words, make her "the most famous agnostic in the world."

As outspoken as she is on this point I would not suggest that Ms Angelou's Christianity has not cost her anything. She is by no means a Christina Rossetti who was passed over as poet laureate in England because of her devotion to Christ. As a matter of fact religion in the black community can prove to be a plus. This is why Obama connected with a prominent church in Chicago. With his eyes on the Illinois senate he got religion.

Oh How We Refuse to Forget

On receiving her award Ms Angelou said that she received it in the name of "every slave ever brought to America from 1619 to 1865." I would have preferred that she receive the award in the name of all those white boys who fought in the battle of Antietam Creek, whose spirited fighting inspired a hesitant Lincoln to issue The Emancipation Proclamation. It was apparent that they were not only fighting to preserve the union, but to bring about the end of slavery.

Am I wrong in thinking that Ms Angelou is that kind of black person who can't put race out of her mind? People like that are black before female, black before American, and black before Christian. Can such people ever really be emancipated?

These people feed off public television. If you were to delete the subject of race from its programming, a significant portion of PBS would go off the air. I believe the people at PBS would be disappointed if racial problems were finally resolved because with each shuffle of the deck, they seem to look for the race card. To listen to PBS you might think that General U. S. Grant had just taken command of the Army of the Potomac.

Oh How We Refuse to Remember

Many blacks in America are not open to the idea that white people have also suffered from the slave trade than blacks.

For centuries the Barbary pirates, Muslims every one, made a respectable living out of capturing Caucasians in Europe and then transporting them to the Barbary Coast that runs along North Africa for some 1,500 miles. There they were kept in misery and sold to the highest bidders for work in fields, mines, and galley ships. A few fortunate slaves were redeemed by their families.

Vice Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson [1758-1805] spoke out , “My blood boils that I cannot chastise these pirates . . . Never let us talk about the cruelty of the African-slave trade while we permit such a horrid war.”

How horrid was it? Historian Paul Johnson [1928-] wrote, “Crucifixion, the bastinado, impalement, and castration were routine . . . Torture was used to obtain conversions to Islam: ‘turning Turk’ as Western sailors called it.” [Trivia: Johnson was a Presidential Medal winner during George W. Bush’s term.]

Where was William Wilberforce, the selfless Victorian who spearheaded the British to outlaw slavery in 1807? Apparently to grab his attention you had to be black. To all the thousands upon thousands of white people that for centuries had been kidnapped from their cities, villages, and hamlets around Europe, who dared to be Christians, Wilberforce took little notice. This is what Johnson called his “double standard.”

More people were taken from their homes in Europe and enslaved by Barbary Pirates than were taken from Africa and brought to America. Maybe Wilberforce was like many liberals who are ashamed of being white, who seem to believe that white people should be punished just because of their pale skin color.

Barbary Pirates grabbed hold of the wrong white folks, an American merchant brigantine. They took to their lair in Tripoli, a sailing crew who were proud to be called Americans, who had recently fought a long and bloody war just so they could determine their own destiny. Would such people cough up tribute money? Not hardly!

The sea scoundrels heard from President Thomas Jefferson, “Millions for defense not one cent for tribute!”

The year was 1805. For two years prior the Barbary Pirates had shown that they were truce breakers, thieves, and liars who justified their criminal actions on the grounds that if you were not believers in the Prophet Mohammad that it was the Muslims' duty to plunder and enslave infidels.

An American detachment marched from Egypt to Tripoli. The rest you know. We hear about this every time the Marines sing their anthem.

In 1816, the English also made a move. In one of the great battles ever recorded in history Lord Exmouth - with assistance from the Dutch - sailed into the port city of Algiers which was the best fortified port city in the world at that time.

The odds were in the favor of the Pirates, but the victory was won by the Brits. Other battles followed in which the American navy, and not for the last time, shined. Finally the traffickers who profited from human suffering were routed.

English living on the Isle of Mann, Greeks along the Aegean, and Spaniards in Andalusia could rest easy knowing that their daughters would not be sent to a Turkish seraglio or their sons to plantations, diamond mines, or galley ships.

Get Out your Pen, Maya!

Could she possibly write a poem in a way that might truly be able to emancipate blacks who believe that whites, with few exceptions, are merciless. You know who I mean, blacks like "comedian" Chris Rock who recently said that the Tea Party is made up entirely of white racists. He may realize his remarks are patently false, but perhaps he speaks that way because it is what he wants to believe it. If Rock were to find out that he is mistaken about those whom he often refers to as "crackers," it would mean that he has been at fault for the ill will he has directed toward the white community.

To all my Tea Party friends who feel the sting of an unjust remark made by a Hollywood jerk, I can only say - Remember Antietam!

Ever yours,

Steve Cakouros

oldlineconservative.com