Our Liberian Connection: From Dynasty to Destiny
All true Nuwaubians are aware of the Liberian citizenship and Diplomatic status of our Master Teacher, H.E. Dr. Malachi Z. York and his ancestry of African descent linking him to the tribes of West Africa (pre Continental drift), yet few of us know anything about our historical connection with Liberia which stems back before the 1500’s, and can be traced to the Dynastic Era. It is much greater than the easily accessible, deeply rooted negation of heinous shackles of bondage and unconscionable iniquities perpetrated on our ancestors by the United States Government.

Who are the Ad-Bassa Tribe of Liberia? Do you know that in the United States’ efforts to rid themselves of the reprehensible quagmire created by enslaving the African, they sought to return all free African slaves back to Africa; most, of whom, were sent to Liberia? Is H.E. Dr. Malachi Z. York’s citizenship Liberian or Ghanaian? This article is intended to enlighten, as well as, give pertinent background outformation that will answer these questions and others, and help us to better perceive the history of Liberia and our connection to Liberians, a people who settled Liberia in droves with a history spanning more than a thousand years, and who after being brought over in chains are still, until this very day, struggling to cast off the nasty stench of past bonds.

Today, Liberia has dusted itself off and brushed off most of the putridity, elected new leadership who vow to recover its social fabric and economic stability, and is well on its way to regaining the, thus far, unfulfilled dream of unity and peace.

**Who Are the Ad-Bassas (Bassa)?**

Liberian history started 5,000 years ago with settlements beginning around 3,000 B.C. officially; Liberia has five major ethnic groups. Unofficially, there are eighteen tribes and fifteen political subdivisions called counties. Ad-Bassa or Bassa is one of the largest tribes in Liberia.
Ta Harko, Xa Bako, and Xe Biko were Ad-Bassa’s leaders during the 25th Dynasty of Khemit (Egypt). Napatan and Meroit marked the two periods of the Kingdom of Kush. For 1,000 years, Kush determined the history and culture of the Nile Valley from the First Cataract to beyond Khartum. This powerful group called themselves Ad-Bassa and controlled the whole kingdom of Khemit.

The fall from power in 1588 split the Bassas into many sects, some dispersed to the Kasal Congo, Togo, Senegal, Sierra-Leone, Guinea, Nigeria, Cameroon, and of course, Liberia.

We Napatans are the Bassa people of Liberia, West Africa, and get our name from Bah (father) and Sooh (stone), a man who began a movement upward toward Kush which was similar to the prosperity of North America today. Baah Sooh is said to have been a chief and businessman. The Ad-Bassas were a resourceful people developing a strong culture with a writing system. The kingdom lasted three centuries along side neighboring kingdoms of Borna, Hausa, and Yoruba.

Ad-Bassas migration took them through Ethiopia where they established empires with other ethnic groups. Ethiopia has the distinction and bragging rights of having the first hominoid skeleton of a Kenyan woman, whom they named Lucy. Lucy, found in Ethiopia, lived approximately three million years ago and was discovered in 1974 A.D. at Hadar in the Awash Valley. Ardi, a male hominoid located in 1994 A.D., lived 4.4 million years ago making it the earliest known hominoid. They are the original little people of Africa called Pygmies or Ptahites establishing them as the oldest humans on the planet. New-Beings or Nubian race, of Ptahite origin, are the direct seed of the wooly-haired Ptahite or Pygmies, the original people who evolved from the water nineteen million years ago.

Now we are spread out all over this planet. We are the misplaced, misinformed, unclaimed lost seed mentioned in their Bibles. Of all the countries in existence, who came looking for its people and claimed those of African descent without question? None other than Liberia. We are Ptahites, Nuwaupians, Tama-Reans,
Khamis, Napatans and Ad-Bassas and Liberia was and still is our nation. (For more on the Ad Bassas, go to our Blacklight newsletter archives)

Is H.E. Dr. Malachi Z. York’s citizenship in Ghana or Liberia?

Dr. York has said repeatedly that he is a Liberian citizen of the Ad-Bassa Tribe. In oral accounts historical writers Abayomi Karnaga, Dr. A. Doris Banks, and Basil Davidson agree that the Ad-Bassa probably originated in Sudan which, by the way, is where Dr. York was born. The Sudanese had dark skin and were known and admired for their flourishing commerce, culture, and civilization.

One speculation is that the confusion may lie with the Gola Tribe (from the Mel ethnic group) who were influenced by the Ancient Empire of Ghana. They were heavily involved in the judicial and land-surveying aspects of Ghana. Some were Islamic and others continued to worship their own ancestral gods that they believed in.

The Golas were involved in three wars with Islamic factions. After losing the third war, they were forced into Sierra Leone. Their continued battles and pursuits by the Mende, Gbande, and Loma forced them to once again retreat. They eventually settled in Liberia where the Dei (a Bassa sect) was already established.

So, it was the Gola Tribe who had the Ghanaian connection, not the Ad-Bassas and perhaps the misconception or misinformation, whether intentional or not, as to the ancestry and citizenship of Dr. York came about as a result of the fact that both tribes were closely associated, in that, although they spoke different languages, they had common terms used by each other. In other words, together, they were able to communicate and overstand each other. Thus, all tribes, including these two, were closely connected and this may be why and how the misinformation began. The Gola, not the Ad-Bassa, was the tribe associated with Ghana. Ad-Bassa is a part of the Kwa ethnic group that migrated from Cote
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D’Ivoire to Liberia during the 1500’s. Ad-Bassas are also referred to as the Kwa speakers because they originated the Kwa writing system which is also spoken in Ghana. (Refer to Blacklight news article, "Is it Sudan or Liberia or Ghana?” in the archives for specifics)

Why Were Africans Exploited?

Africans were plentiful and easily obtainable for cheap labor, labor necessary for the economic growth and development of the United States, thus, the creation of the slave trade which was not only sanctioned but continued by the Constitutional Convention. Many sympathizers, especially Quakers, commiserated with the slaves and spoke out against their detestable treatment, but their voices fell on the death ears of the Founding Fathers of the Constitution until 1808 when the chattel slave trade was legally abolished by the Congressional legislation; however, other types of slave trade still flourished even after the Civil War.

What Were the Dangers of Allowing Free Slaves to Remain in the US?

Slaves determination to escape the system, by any means, resulted in dangerous revolts, run aways, suicides, slaves poisoning their masters, insurrections, the Underground Railroad, etc. Also, because of news of a slave revolt in Santo Domingo Islands in 1791 led by the Breda under the theme, “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity”, slave-owners were afraid of more of the same here in the United States. The situation became so volatile that the controversy as to whether or not slaves should be freed and accorded the rights of citizenship, remain enslaved, or colonized to some distant far away land seldom left the ideology of the country’s leaders.

What most people don’t know or remember is that there were Negroes already here before slavery, who were free and engaging in business entrepreneurial activities. After the influx of Africans, however, laws were passed limiting the activities all slaves, including the slaves who were already free. Many others,
especially in the South, had to gain freedom through actions of their masters, the local community, and gratitude for military service, or instructions from their masters’ wills to free all slaves upon their deaths. Some slaves actually purchased their own freedom. Others were given freedom only if they agreed to go back to Africa.

There was one other major and dangerous problem—most free African Americans wanted to remain in the land they had built. They felt badly about leaving their still enslaved brothers in the hands of their malicious masters, and most sought to continue living in the states to help free them through the democratic processes of the newly adopted constitution or other means. Slaveholders hoped that removing the free slaves would strengthen slavery as the enslaved would have no support from their free brethren to wreak havoc or gain freedom.

Who Were Instrumental in Finding a Location for the Colony?

Some report that Reverend Samuel Hopkins first conceived the idea of an African colony in 1773 on the West Coast of the US primarily for the expansion of Christianity. His idea failed as a result of a lack of resources and land grant by the US. In 1816, the United States appointed a committee to assist the federal government in the location of an appropriate land outside the states for their emigration.

Paul Cuffee, a free African-American merchant, navigator, and colonist favored colonization and planned a voyage to Africa to locate a desirable region and gather information for leaders of the colonization movement. He visited the African coast twice and had planned to transport 2,000 free slaves. Unfortunately, in 1817 he died before he could complete his mission. His ventures led to the forming of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color in the United States. He was well respected and later recognized by the society for his zeal and devotion to the cause of his fellow African-Americans.
Others, like Dr. Eli Ayres and Naval officer, Lieutenant Robert Stockton attempted to find and purchase appropriate lands. They met with resistance from local leaders, but some say they were persuaded by gun point and a supply of weapons and rum valued at $300.00. This and other attempts proved unsuccessful, but the society eventually established a settlement named Christopolis. It was renamed Monrovia after the United States President James Monroe, who along with other officials, endorsed the Colonization Society. Afterwards Maryland, Virginia, Mississippi, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania all established colonies in Liberia. The colony as a whole was named Liberia (the free land).

In 1819, Congress passed the Slave Trade Act authorizing the return of all captured Africans back to Africa and to provide for them; most settled in Liberia. By 1830, the colony had settled 1,420 free slaves. Eventually about 12,000 made their new homes in Liberia.

Did Life Improve for the Africans After Returning to Africa?

William Nesbit, a colonist, after spending four months in Liberia in 1854 attacked the American Colonization Society and its practices. Below is a list of only a handful of practices that fell upon the free slaves upon their arrival in Liberia.
1. Imprisonment for debt law
2. Public sale of a debtor to the highest bidder
3. The public whipping-post was a common way to punish offenders to wipe out their crimes because there was only one jail in Monrovia.
4. Government ruled by one tyrannical ruler while pretending to be a republic with laws and constitution copied from the United States
5. All offices appointed by the president rather than elected, some appointees were illiterate.
6. Slavery was far worse than the US or anywhere in the universe. Even slaves owned slaves.
7. Had only rice and casaba (winter melons) to eat, but no meat unless they caught a monkey, snake, crocodile, lizard, or rat.
8. Forced to anglicize their names for educational and employment opportunities

9. After six months, he was on his own, cut off from the society with no resources or employment except paddling a canoe for 25 cents a day.

Nesbit, after interviewing many of the inhabitants of the United States colony of Liberia, concluded that it was far better to have been enslaved in the US than in Liberia and America would have to pay for what they had done to these unsuspecting people. “Every dog has his day,” he grimaced, and Americans would surely have theirs for these shameful atrocities cast upon the Africans who still did not feel the freedom they anticipated and remained enslaved for a brief period in their new United States colony of Liberia.

**Liberians Gain Independence from the United States**

In 1846, Americo-Liberian colonists (as they were called) voted in favor of independence. In 1847, July 26, The Liberian Declaration of Independence was adopted and signed charging the US with injustices which caused their immigration and asked to be recognized as an independent and sovereign country; the constitution was ratified and the first elections were held in 1848. The first dark skinned president, Edward James Monroe was assassinated in 1871 by a group of mulattos led by Joseph Jenkins Roberts, the first elected president. Afterwards, Liberia accepted immigrants to increase the republic’s population, asserted limited control over the inland region, founded the True Whig Party, removed one president from office for taking out a high-interest British bank loan, survived war with the Grebo people with US help, and resolved its dispute with France.

In the 1900’s, this is what Liberians survived: a military coup which ended the first republic, executions of officials as various factions fought for control, civil war caused by Charles Taylor and his followers who overthrew Samuel Doe, the coup leader, negotiated a peace treaty between Liberia’s warring, sects, and rice riots.
responsible for the death of one student and millions of dollars of property damage.

In 1997 Charles Taylor was elected president of the third Liberian republic and was responsible for the appointment of H.E. Dr. Malachi Z. York to the status of Consul General on December 15, 1999. Dr. York’s status is still honored and recognized today under H.E. President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the first woman to hold the presidential office in Liberia.

What Are the Conditions in Liberia Today?

President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf took office in 2006 after there had been 25 years of war and mayhem, no electricity or running water, 80% unemployment, and 90% illiteracy. Now, many conditions have improved under her watch, but Liberians continue to struggle. Despite numerous assassination threats, she has already reduced corruption, built international support and is encouraging private investment. President Johnson-Sirleaf has vowed to put Liberia on “a course of renewal and I hope I’ll have enough time to get this started. If I don’t, others will carry it on,” she assured.

Well stated and may I interject as a women myself, “It’s our time and strong, courageous, and righteous women will always get the job done especially with strong male warriors at our side,” this being a directive espoused by our leader himself, H.E. Dr. Malachi Z. York.

Liberia had one of the most stable democracies and prosperous economies in Africa, that is, before it was officially named Liberia and after the influx of the Americo-Liberians up until the military coup in 1980, and their dream is to recapture that image and catapult it into the future. As of the day of this writing, October 12, 2011, ballots were still being counted to determine Liberia’s future leadership.

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