

John Hanson—the first Black president?

By **OLAYEMI ODESANYA (age 10)**
Special to the AmNews

George Washington was really the eighth president of the United States!

Some historians say John Hanson was the first president of United States of America and that George Washington was not the first president.

In fact, the first president of the United States was John Hanson from 1781 to 1782. He was one of the great men who is forgotten in history. Some people do not want the world to know about the Moor John Hanson. Some people say he was not Black and speak about a white John Hanson. But this John Hanson, who lived from April 13, 1715 to November 22, 1783, was Black. Records say that his grandfather was an enslaved African who was able to buy his freedom and own his own land.

The new country was actually formed on March 1, 1781, with the adoption of the Articles of Confederation. This was before the Constitution. No one had been president, and the role was not well defined. Hanson's actions in office would set precedent for all future presi-

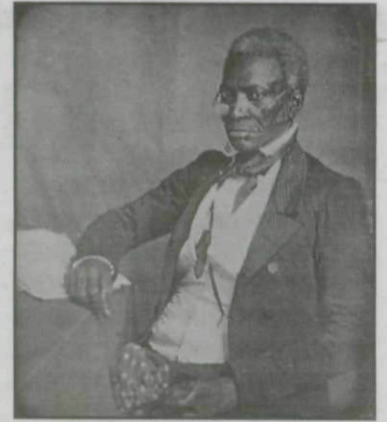
dents. As troops threatened to overthrow the new government and crown Washington as king, all the members of Congress ran for their lives, leaving Hanson as the only man left running the government. Congress, including Washington, chose John Hanson unanimously. So in November 1781, Hanson became the first president of Congress. As

stated in the Articles of Confederation, Hanson was elected for a one-year term. In that year, he managed to keep the troops calm and at the same time, hold the nation together. Had he failed, the new government would have collapsed and the world would have been talking about a King Washington.

Although ignored by many

historians, Hanson's achievements are still a fact. He declared that the fourth Thursday of every November would be known as Thanksgiving Day. Hanson sent 800 pounds of sterling silver through his brother, Samuel Hanson, to George Washington to provide the troops with shoes. President Hanson also established

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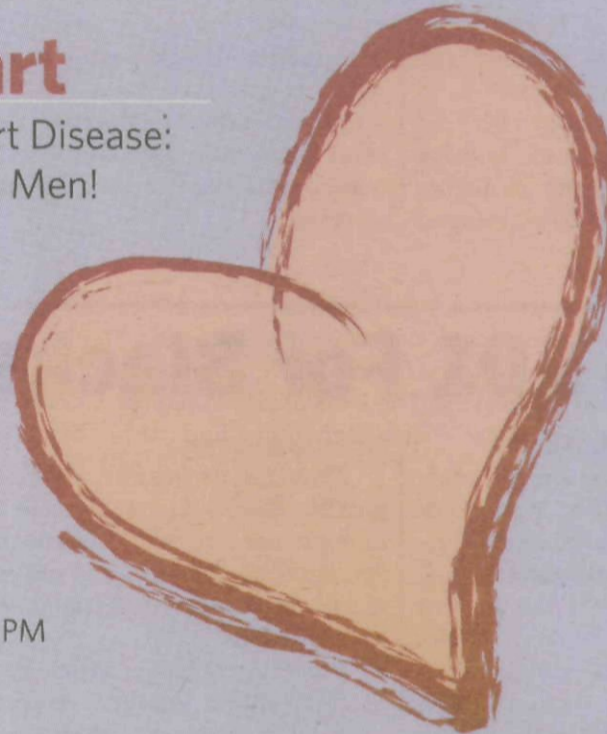
John Hanson

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Obama

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Recovery.gov promises to provide more information on the distribution of funding by federal agencies. "In order to give small businesses and Americans across the country a chance to apply for recovery dollars to create and save jobs, some funding may not be distributed until this summer."

Reports indicate that half the money must be allocated and spent within 120 days. The other half must be spent by September 2010, just about the time many economists believe the money will begin to have an

impact on the economy.

The nation's educators should be pleased by the large portion set aside for education and training. How the act will take effect is one of several frequently asked questions that appear on recovery.gov.

"Very soon, the different agencies—such as the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Energy—will decide who will receive award grants and contracts," the site explains. "Sometimes the money will go to a state government; other times, the funds will go directly to a school, hospital, contractor or other organization. Agencies will then

deliver that information to the recovery.gov team. We will subsequently make the information available on recovery.gov, and you will be able to track where the money is going."

Americans also want to know how much of the money will actually reach their communities. "Until the funding is distributed by the federal government to states and local governments, and eventually to your community, we won't be able to determine exactly where all of the funding will go," the site indicates.

The act is more than a thousand pages long, and there are accusations that very few mem-

bers of Congress have actually read it, though no doubt they went to the sections of greatest interest to them.

There are many pundits and experts who contend that the package is not enough to get the economy up and running again. Others believe it's too much. No Republicans in the House approved the bill, with only some senators crossing over to support Obama's plan.

"Until they restore the nation's industrial base and dramatically cut the military budget, this county will remain in a state of economic decline," said noted activist James Haughton.

History

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to His Hanging" is owned by the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

Feb. 23, 1868—W.E.B. DuBois is born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

1965—Constance Baker Motley is elected Manhattan Borough president.

Feb. 24, 1864—Rebecca Lee becomes the first Black woman to receive an M.D.

Feb. 25, 1870—Sen. Hiram Revels from Mississippi becomes the first Black person elected to the U.S. Senate.

Feb. 26, 1926—Carter G. Woodson announces "Negro History Week."

Feb. 27, 1942—Charlayne Hunter-Gault is born, the first Black woman to graduate from the University of Georgia and a famed journalist.

Feb. 28, 1932—Richard Spikes patents and invents the automatic gear shift.

Families

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without charge.

Of the 250 that are currently at the detention camp, some are being unlawfully detained and many others are seeking habeas claims, according to ACLU and the Center for Constitutional Rights.

Jean Krasno, an adjunct professor of international relations at City College and an associate of the Colin Powell Center, said, "We have to maintain a sense of moral leadership in the world. If we are seen as a country that

violates domestic law and [does] not allow [detainees] to be charged or face their accuser," we are going against rule of law.

She said it was a good thing that the camp will close.

President Obama's act, she said, "fixes the moral standing in the rest of the world because [America's] reputation worldwide had been damaged" by the allegations that have come out of Guantanamo.

The debate is now centered on whether the detainees will be allowed trials in federal court instead of military tribunals; where will the

detainees who are still at Guantanamo will be sent once the detention center is closed within one year; and what will happen to prisoners who are found guilty enter the United States jails.

Wizner, who once observed a military commission at Guantanamo, called it a "kangaroo court." The military commission allowed hearsay and appeared to be "a trial to sustain the conviction of the accused," he said.

Most advocates want the detainees to be tried in federal court because they say there is more transparency there.

"Some people are entering

their eighth year and cannot last longer in those windowless boxes," Emi Maclean, staff attorney for The Center for Constitutional Rights told the *Amsterdam News*.

Maclean, who wants the detainees to be tried in federal court, said the detainees are "real people who are affected" by the decisions that the Obama administration is implementing. She said she wants to see justice and democracy implemented with respect to the handling of Guantanamo detainees.

"I represent the individuals," she said.

Dispute

(Continued from Page 3)

between the rows of dancers, who were mostly women, with a half dozen adolescents and half dozen males," said Edalio Galarza, a drummer and minister who played for the class for the past two years.

The young teens began to shout, shoot and shadow box. It was like they were playing offence as they dribbled the ball on the court, he said.

It "became arcane, chaotic and crazy. It was the most insane thing that I have ever seen," said Galarza, 54.

Malloy wrote a letter to the

CEO of the Children's Aid Society, which he believes contributed to the cancellation of the class by Wayne Dawson, director of the Milbank site.

Dawson would not accept phone calls from the *Amsterdam News*.

Malloy said that he felt "compelled" to write the letter of complaint because the incident went unresolved by the director.

The letter demanded that the center apologize to the dance members, "reinstate the dance class" and reprimand the employee and center's director for their behavior.

Sandra Morales-Tavares, an assistant division director with

the Children's Aid Society, told the *Amsterdam News* that a teen was standing on the side waiting for the class to end when a ball he was holding accidentally fell out of his hand and hit a dancer.

She continued to explain that the dance class did not leave the gymnasium in a timely manner and that the class was ultimately cancelled because Malloy did not come to three sessions after the incident.

But dance class members said the center is "lying to cover their butts."

Malloy said he was involved in ongoing meetings with Dawson, Morales-Tavares and the

employee, who he said instructed the teens to "take the court over." In response to his absence from the last three sessions of the class, he said that he was not going to continue the class until the issue was resolved.

Morales-Tavares told the *Amsterdam News* that the center apologized for the unfortunate incident and offered Malloy another time and day, stating that Friday nights are such a "high peak time for teens and the community." She also said that the time slot would now be "repurposed" with "focused activity."

The Harambee Dance Co., Inc. was created in 1992 in

Charleston, South Carolina, and relocated to New York City in 1996.

Malloy conducts drum therapy with individuals who suffer from mental illnesses and specifically sets aside time for volunteer outlets in and around the community. His wife, the dance instructor, is a registered nurse and the majority of class participants are professionals.

These people are scarifying their own time to give back to the community, said Kyra Johnson, a 27-year-old math teacher. "Most dance classes in the city you have to pay for. This is something that they enjoy doing."

Education

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served in our society and critically in need of a college Education and degree. College-level learning serves to decrease anti-social behaviors and increases self-efficacy," advocates Jackie Ross, principal author of "Education from the Inside, Out."

"The policy of most states and the federal government of locking up thousands of people each year, some for disproportionately long sentences, some for the second

and third time, does little to reduce crime and often leads to hazardous conditions of confinement," explained Robert Gangi, executive director of the Correctional Association of New York.

Gangi is a regular visitor to correctional facilities in New York and he asserted, "Our report points government leaders and concerned citizens in a different direction, making the case for the positive value of in-prison college programs."

The report cited "the improved behavior of inmates participating in

classes results in a substantially safer environment within correctional facilities." In the study "Changing Minds," researchers found that college programs served as a "positive management tool" at Bedford Hills.

An officer interviewed for the report stated, "We don't have to worry about the fighting within the facility. College gives them something else to occupy their time and their minds."

The report concludes with specific recommendations for New York policymakers: restore and expand public

funding for college programs in prison, primarily by lifting the ban on inmate eligibility for Tuition Assistance Program grants; expand access to higher education opportunities for post-incarcerated people as a means of supporting successful reentry into society; and require the New York Parole Board to consider participation in college programs as a qualifying indicator for parole release.

Please contact the Correctional Association at (212) 254-5700 for a full copy of the report.

Hanson

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the first Treasury Department, the first Foreign Affairs Department and the first secretary of war.

The other seven presidents after John Hanson were:

Elias Boudinot
Thomas Mifflin
Richard Henry Lee
John Hancock
Nathan Gorman
Arthur St. Clair
Cyrus Griffin

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