

Achievements of Negroes

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THE fact that a colored man, Matt Henson, accompanied Commander Robert E. Peary practically to the North Pole on his recent expedition has caused a great deal of comment and discussion. This discussion leads me to remark that the people of America, I fear, do not realize to what an extent negroes have taken part in nearly every important event connected with the history and development of this country.

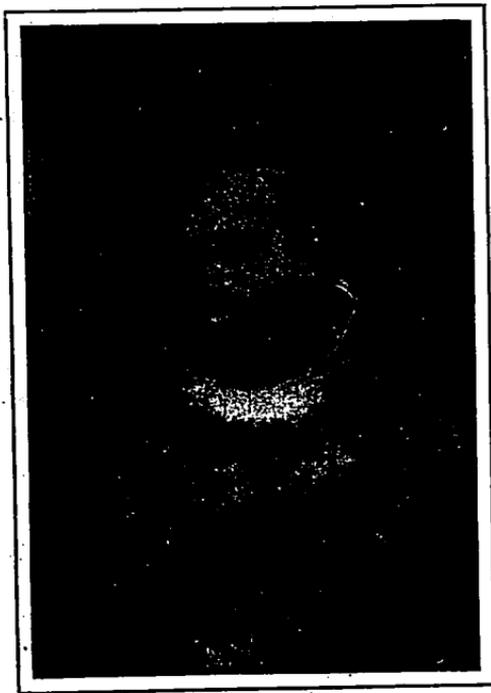
Negroes accompanied the first Spanish explorers and discoverers of America across the Isthmus of Panama with Balboa, and assisted in constructing the first ship that was launched on the Pacific. They were with Cortez in Mexico in 1522.

A negro by the name of Little Stephen was the first discoverer of the country of the Zunis, what is now called New Mexico.

Negroes were with De Soto in 1540, and the first stranger who settled in the State of Alabama was one of the negroes who accompanied De Soto on his march thru that State.

A negro accompanied William Clark, of Lewis and Clark's expedition, which, in 1840, explored the sources of the Missouri River and gained for the United

States the vast and rich extent of land known as the Oregon country.



MATTHEW HENSON.

Negroes were among the first adventurers to look for gold in California, and when John C. Frémont, in 1848, made his desperate and disastrous attempt to find a pathway across the Rocky Mountains, he was accompanied by a negro named Saunders.

Negroes have taken part, so far as I can learn, in all the wars that have been fought on American soil. They fought at Bunker Hill, in the Revolutionary War. In the War of 1812 James Fortin, a negro sailmaker of Philadelphia, raised

a regiment of negro soldiers to defend the city from the intended attack of the British soldiers. Negroes were in the famous battle on Lake Erie under Perry. They fought on both sides in the Civil War. In the Spanish-American War negroes not only did their full part at El Caney and San Juan Hill, but after these battles were over, they took up the more difficult and more dangerous labor of working in the hospitals in the malaria-haunted camp at Siboney.

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