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## **Benjamin O. Davis Jr. Collection - Social, Liberian Independence Celebrations (Embassy Parties)**

Extracted on Mar-28-2024 10:47:29

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[[newspaper clipping]]  
Saturday, August 4, 1951

## The Social Register

By Revella Clay  
Embassy Row

Embassy Row bowed gracefully into the capitals social headlines during the past week with diplomatic dignitaries of two of the so-called "darker nations" hosting brilliant functions... A pace-setter was the Monday last entertainment extravaganza hosted by handsome Ras Imru, Ambassador of Ethiopia and Mrs. Imru at the ultra-swank Mayflower Hotel.

Uptown Washington's attendance at the Embassy fete was markedly slight-with guest including Dr. and Mrs Rayford W. Logan, Prof. and Mrs. William Leo Hansberry, Col. Hildrus Poindexter, U.S. Public Health officer in charge of the Health Mission in Liberia who is currently re-seeing the capital; Dr. Mordecai Johnson, Howard University president; Mrs. Dorothy Bayan Howard University budget officer and her daughter.

Bowing into the diplomatic doings Thursday last with an equally plush event was the Liberian Embassy, whose portly Ambassador C.D.B. King received several hundred guests at the Sixteenth Street edifice in observance of the 104th anniversary of Liberia's independence...Attendance of well known local folks at the Liberian fete was considerably larger than that at the Ethiopian event, though the big white public relations firm which issued releases on the Liberian observance inadvertently perhaps, gave the impression that attendance of Negroes would be almost nil.

## NEWS RELEASES

In a pre-event news release, the publicists issued a four-page guest list containing 148 names, which were assembled in this order and under these headings: page 1 contained Ambassadors and their wives; page 2's first section contained the names of Ministers and their wives, and the second section contained the names of Air, Naval and Military Attaches of the various Embassies; page 3 listed "officials of the United States Government" (included here was the name of the Civilian Assistant to the secretary of Defense and Mrs James C. Evans; pge 4's first section listed "Liberian citizens" while its second section listed "outstanding American Negroes"

Included in this final section were the names of: the president of Howard University and Mrs Mordecai Johnson, Dr. and Mrs Channing Tobias, Col. and Mrs B.O. Davis Jr., and Dr. Emmett J. Scott...After reading this released official guest list, I was pleasantly surprised to find several more persons, well-known in national and local scenes at the Liberian event, such as Philadelphia's Raymond pace Alexander; Dee Cee's Mrs. George L. Washington, who's the sister of the Pentagon's James Evans; Col. and Mrs. Campbell C. Johnson, the very charming Hilda Bolden, General and Mrs. B.O. Davis Sr., Mrs. Vermelle Turner and her mother, Mrs. Hortense Turner and several others.

## REHASH

These two affairs of the week, by the bye, caused a rehashing of capital table talk which has been reverberating around events for over a year



and centers around a feeling that fewer Negroes have been invited to Embassy functions in the last year or two...Most of the talking in this vein commenced with the reception held by Ambassador Gustave Laraque of Haiti and Madame Laraque several months ago where attendance of Negroes was considerably smaller than in previous years.

Actually most of Washington's prominent folks of color met the new Haitian Ambassador away [[?from]] the Embassy...when Mrs. Vermelle Turner, the capital hostess who spares no expense to make her functions stand-outs, entertained in honor of Ambassador and Mrs. Laraque in her thirteenth street, N.W. home, a few months after the official Haitian reception.

Since the Haitian embassy reception Washingtonians have been asking quite frequently "is Point 4 Development and other world issues causing the diminish in the attendance of American Negroes at the events of the 'darker nation's' diplomatic corps?"

Although attendance of prominent Negroes appears to have fallen off at Embassy functions, there are a few who persistently remain on the diplomatic sets guest lists. For example, Dr. and Mrs. Eugene Holmes usually attend the Soviet Embassy's annual big event; Philadelphia's Attorney Alexander is a usual Haitian Embassy guest, as are Roy and Addie Garvin of Dee Cee; Mrs. Vermelle Turner and Madam Lillian Evanti; Dr. Channing Tobias of New York is apt to appear in the official guest list of a variety of Embassies (He was one of the few Negroes invited to the reception given about two years ago by Madam Pandit, Ambassador of India, in honor of her celebrated statesman brother, Nehru, during his visit to this country); Mr. Hansberry, a Howard professor and an authority-recognized I believe as the greatest living authority-on Ethiopia, is a frequent attender of Ethiopian embassy functions.

Since the functions of the past week Washington is also chatting in a new vein...about how elegantly the diplomatic corps entertains. Attendants of both the Ethiopian and Liberian events are telling their friends about the choice of liquors, the tasty delicacies and inimitable grace and charm and politeness of Ambassadors Imru and King. These later mentioned items were the ingredients which helped most to put the mark of brilliance on the fetes.

#### ABOUT FASCINATING FOLKS

Lieut. and Mrs. Lawrence A. Oxley have been house guesting very important and and exceedingly interesting visitors in their Brookland home-Mr. and Mrs. Giles Hubert who are capitaling briefly. Mr Hubert, formerly an official of the American Embassy in Haiti, is en route to a station with the American Embassy in Bombay, India.

Following the Liberian Independence Day celebration Thursday, Dr. Hilda Bolden and Madam Lillian Evanti attended the Pan American Union fete which featured the famous dancer Jean Leon Destine in the Aztec Gardens, as guests of the Haitian Ambassador to the Pan American Union, His Excellency Jean DeJean.

Recently seeing the capital scene through the hospitality of the J. Hugo Warrens was Mrs. Julia Moses, wife of the head of the department of architecture at Hampton Institute, Hampton, Va.

Atty. and Mr. Howard jenkins (Elaine) left over the weekend for Wilberforce, Chicago, Denver, Yellowstone, and butte, Mont., the latter the birthplace of gracious Elaine. Prior to their departure the very popular May-

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