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Jamestown Exhibit Censored

Park Service Pulls Gay Plaque

Year of the Visitor

by Mark Hiers

NORFOLK (*Our Own Special Report*)--

Park Superintendent Richard H. Maeder has removed the plaque in the "Jamestown's Other People" exhibit which mentions the role of gay men and women in the colonization of Virginia.

Retired Park Superintendent James Sullivan approved the special exhibit which opened in October 1980, and was scheduled to run for one year. Two weeks after assuming his post, Maeder had the "offending" plaque removed.

The exhibit consists of three triangular displays each of which contains three panels. One display is about blacks; one, about women of both races; and the third is devoted to minorities: American Indians, senior citizens, the handicapped, and gays.

The panel with the gay reference featured a portrait of King James I, after whom Jamestown is named. Beneath the portrait was a small plaque which stated that gay men and women also helped to colonize Virginia and that many historians considered King James I to have been homosexual.

The UUGC represented gay people at the 1979 Jamestown Conference on Women and Minorities.

Superintendent Maeder provided a copy of the Park's report on that conference to Our Own, a document not in public circulation. The report states:

"A minority is a group of people which, because it is different or relatively small or powerless, tends to be overlooked or discriminated against in our society."

This definition led to the inclusion of blacks, American Indians, senior citizens, women, the handicapped, and gays at the conference.

Fifty people from twenty-six organizations attended the conference. The report states that discussion groups specified the stereotypes to be avoided in the proposed exhibit.

The gay group reported that "gay people are seen as immoral, unreligious, aberrant and psychologically ill, and defective in character. Also, they are thought of as being non-existent..."

Secondly, according to the report, the Park asked how to interpret each group's story.

The gay group recommended the following ideas as the most important to mention: "1. Gay people did exist in colonial Virginia; 2. They made positive contributions to society, but are usually depicted as criminals; 3. King James I, after whom Jamestown and the Revised Standard Version of the Bible are named, had several homosexual relationships." (The RSV Bible was not published until the mid-twentieth century. ED.)

Superintendent Maeder wrote Our Own: "While the exhibit as a whole has been well received, the panel stating that gay men and women helped colonize Virginia has not. Thus, I decided to take a careful look at the statement concerning gay involvement at Jamestown."

Learning of the exclusion of the gay plaque, four UUGC members met with Maeder to portest his decision on Wednesday, May 20 at Maeder's Yorktown offices. Compromises to his decision were suggested, but to no avail.

Maeder told the UUGC group that up to 3% of the visitors had registered complaints about the gay plaque at the information desk. According to Jim Early, who also attended the 1979 Conference, Maeder stated that he was not sure if that percentage represented 3% of 10,000 or 20,000 visitors.

Maeder contended that there is insufficient documentation concerning the presence of gays in 17th century Virginia to justify the plaque.

In his letter to Our Own, Maeder wrote: "While today's effort to give recognition to all is admirable, the fact is there there are only three isolated and inconclusive references to possible homosexual activity at Jamestown."

After listing three references to homosexual activity in Jamestown, Maeder then writes: "Indeed, in a society as demanding of conformity as early Jamestown, such deviation would have been brutally punished. The 'Lawes Divine, Morall and Martiall', etc., drawn up between 1609 and 1611 provide that '...no man shall commit the horrible and detestable sins of Sodomie, upon pain of death;...No man shall ravish or force a woman, man, or Indian or other, upon pain of death...' It was a time that condoned no deviation either religious or sexual and those who would so live kept their own council."

Maeder continues: "However, such an attitude rendered it impossible for any actual documentation of what had to be hidden beliefs.

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Gay Press Organizes

by J. D.



Newly elected officers, Gay Press Assoc. l-r: Mark Segal, v.p.; Phil Nash, sec.; Joe De Sabato, pres.; Morgan Pinney, trea. PHOTO: GPA

DALLAS--The Gay Press Association held its second meeting in Dallas during the May 2-3 weekend. The convention was hosted at the Melrose Hotel in the Oaklawn section of the city. Approximately 57 people representing at least 25 publications met. The purpose of the convention, and the previous meeting in New York last January, was to set up the organization of the Gay Press Association (GPA).

According to the group's newly approved by-laws, its purposes and objectives are "to ensure and promote ethical journalistic standards among its members; to increase understanding and communication within the gay and lesbian community; and to foster the growth and development of the gay press and media."

The convention was an opportunity to exchange ideas and formulate policy. Most of those attending were editors or publishers. There was also a good representation of writers, advertising managers, artists, news directors and production managers.

The GPA is the brainchild of Joe DiSabato of Rivendell Marketing Company, NYC. He was elected president of the new group at this convention. Other officers elected were: Mark Segal (Gay News, Philadelphia), vice-president; Phil Nash (Out Front, Denver), secretary; and Morgan Pinney, a free lance writer from NYC, treasurer. Seven other board members representing four regions and at-large positions were also chosen. Virginia, part of the southern region, will be represented by Bob Swinden of Cruise Weekly (Atlanta).

Some of the topics discussed during the weekend were the group's structure and by-laws, membership requirements, advertising, business ethics, insurance and the goal of establishing a gay wire service.

The next convention was set for May 1982 in Denver, Colorado. Regional meetings will be held in the interim.

Anti-Gay Violence Leaves One Dead

DURHAM, NC (The Front Page)--A Mebane man died April 15, three days after being attacked and beaten at the Little River (a popular swimming and sunbathing spot for gays and others) by six people who shouted their intentions to beat up homosexuals. At least three other men were injured by the attackers.

The four men were sunbathing on the river on the afternoon of April 12, when a group of four men and two women shouted, "We're going to beat some faggots."

Two of the men beat Ronald Antonevitch, 46, and held him under water. Antonevitch, a native of Massachusetts, was not known to have been gay, "just a nature lover". He suffered kidney and head injuries and died after two days in the surgical intensive care at North Carolina Memorial Hospital, Chapel Hill. His is survived by his wife and son.

Chris Lee Richardson, 20, and Guy Charles "Chuck" Osbahr, 21, both of Durham, were arrested by Durham County deputies and charged with the murder. Detectives said two women had been questioned, but no other charges had been filed as of April 17.

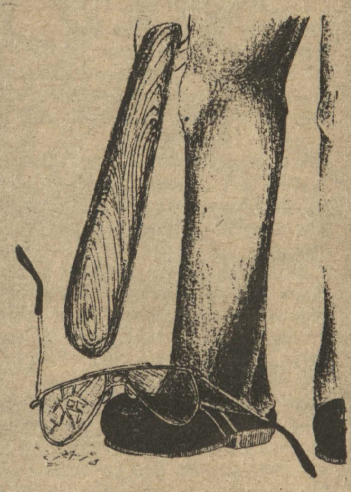
Two of the victims, Michael Penny, 24, and Mark DeMarais, 25, told The Front Page that they were gay. A third victim, Darrel Jones, 21, lives in Virginia and was unavailable for comment.

Penny said that he had left his car and was walking on a path by the river when he saw two men beating heavy sticks on rocks in the river. The men then came towards him, brandishing the clubs.

"I turned away and they hit me across the shoulder," Penny said. A man Penny identified as Richardson then hit him acorss the face.

"There was blood coming everywhere. I was afraid they'd hit my jugular vein."

DeMarais said that he and Jones were leaving the river when he heard one of the men say, "You motherfuckers, you were down there at the queer swimming



hole. We're going to get your faggot asses."

"The shorter, dark-haired one swung the club at my head, but I was hit in my elbow protecting my head. The other guy had taken a running swing at Darrel. I said, 'Let's run get the other guys,' and they paused a moment. Then they both hit me again."

DeMarais threw a heavy bag at the assailants and was able to run back to the swimming hole where the other gays were sunning. There were about ten gays there, but DeMarais said no one was willing to run after the attackers.

Because of a communication mix-up the police did not go to the scene of the attacks until after the assault on Antonevitch, about an hour and a half after DeMarais called the sheriff's department.

"Antonevitch would be alive today if the police had come when we first called," Penny said. "The woman who answered the police phone told us it was illegal to sunbathe out there nude. She didn't seem to realize how many people had been attacked."

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