

incentive for transmitting the Japanese language or Japanese cultural heritage to their offsprings. The legacy of Japanese language schools in terms of the impact on former *Nisei* students cannot be learned from this book.

There are also a number of unreferenced phrases and one uncited quote. Contextually loaded terms such as “loyalty oath” and “no-no boys” are introduced without benefit of background information for general readers who have insufficient knowledge of Japanese American history. Finally, the author quotes without source of reference a comment on the Japanese language by a famous Japanese writer, Naoya Shiga, to the effect that the Japanese language was the cause of World War II and Japan might as well adopt French as Japan’s official language. Is it a coincidence that the same quote from the journal *Kaizo* is found on page 19 in Haruhiko Kindaichi’s ‘The Japanese Language’ ?

Kumiko Takahara
University of Colorado at Boulder

Stanley Nelson (Producer and Director). *The Black Press: Soldiers Without Swords*, California Newsreel, 149th Street, San Francisco, CA 94103. Video, 86 minutes, 1998. Rental: \$95. Purchase price, \$195. Shipping: \$10. 415-621-6522. www.newsreel.org.

One of the most important institutions established in African American communities has been the “Black Press.” It is also an institution that has not received much of the attention it deserves. The Black Press today still consists of approximately 100 newspapers carrying on the tradition of the first Black newspaper, *Freedom’s Journal* (1827). After recently compiling a bibliography on Blacks in the U.S. West, it became obvious that whenever and wherever a Black community became established, Black newspapers immediately emerged. For example, Colorado had over one hundred, California more than twice that number, and Iowa over forty. States such as

Wyoming or North Dakota that had no Black newspapers received some coverage from out-of-state Black papers. Further, some out-of-state Black newspapers also received distribution in those states with few or no Black newspapers, providing much-needed information and resources.

One of the reasons for the start of the Black Press is relevant today—invisibility. Many black people believe, as the film clearly indicates, that they still are invisible in much of the white press unless they commit a crime. A second continuing reason for the need of the Black Press is that the white press then and today is not seen as objective in reporting on the Black community. A third theme the film examines is advocacy. The Black Press continues to provide a voice to the Black community relating its own accomplishments and presenting relevant topics and ideas. Further, that institution advocated civil rights/human rights from its creation. *The Black Press* documents how Black newspapers stood up against lynchings, provided a “life line” into the segregated South, and were responsible for the great Northern migration of Blacks from the South during and following WWI. The newspapers even printed train schedules. The Black Press also developed Black women editors such as Charlotta Bass and Ida B. Wells, as well as training hundreds of reporters and photographers.

Black newspapers ran cartoons that celebrated Blacks and their culture, spurning the “mushmouth” characters seen in white newspapers. Those newspapers—dailies, weeklies, bi-weeklies, and monthlies—carried news of Black struggles, both national and international, to their communities. A couple, such as the *Pittsburgh Courier*, received national distribution. *The Black Press* also recounts the time when J. Edgar Hoover of the FBI attempted to indict Black newspapers for sedition, how a “Letter to the Editor” kicked off the “Double V” campaign of WWII (Victory against Fascism Abroad and Discrimination at Home) and the reason for the decline of Black newspapers. *The Black Press* is an excellent work that places Black newspapers in their important historical and cultural contexts. The inclusion in film of several people who worked for that institution adds a powerful touch to the documentary. *The Black*

Press is a first-rate film that should be a part of any college

journalism and Black/African American history program.

George Junne
University of Northern Colorado

John W. Ravage. *Black Pioneers: Images of the Black Experiences on the North American Frontier.* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1998). 218 pp., \$24.95 cloth.

This scholarly study is a welcome effort to broaden the horizon of what many Americans have come to believe are the true westering experiences. It began with the early western images created in dime store novels and brought to life on the movie screen. The featured settlers, cowboys, outlaws, and other heroes were generally white. In this scenario, the frontier was tamed by strong willed white men while the role of African Americans in the “western United States and Canada and Alaska” was largely ignored (xv).

In *Black Pioneers*, Professor Ravage challenges any notion of a “white west” scenario and uses “approximately two hundred pictorials” and “other graphic images” to establish the historical presence of African Americans in the West. Between 1870 and 1880, for example, there were at least 150,000 Blacks living west of the Mississippi River; of which, 15-20,000 represented “a broad range of laborers, professionals, builders, gamblers, roughnecks, politicians, leaders, followers, good men and women” as well as the bad (xiv). They joined forced with other ethnic groups, when allowed, to engage “in various endeavors in small and large communities” to challenge an unforgiving frontier with courage and daring (xix).

This forging experience extended the general description of the American frontier. In true diasporic terms, the author has expanded the realm of the traditional west. For him the frontier or the American West (Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, Arizona, Nevada, etc., and the Pacific Northwest) has been re-defined to include Alaska and Hawaii. And, indeed, Canada becomes part of the African American’s frontier experience. This is done despite being overlooked or excluded from the fabric of the