



Handout - Debate over Beach Segregation in Asbury Park, Summer 1887

Document 1: "Their Jubilee Day"

THEIR JUBILEE DAY.

ASBURY PARK, N. J., July 21.—This was "Jubilee Day" at Ocean Grove for the colored people. Three large excursion trains from Newark, Jersey City, and Orange arrived here this morning and one from Philadelphia, each loaded with members of the African Methodist Episcopal churches in the cities named. A large number of colored people also came from New-York. This afternoon a large crowd filled the auditorium, and as one looked over the congregation it was pretty well mixed, black and white. The Rev. J. P. Sampson, Chairman of the New-Jersey Committee presided. There were present on the platform the Rev. G. A. Mills, Presiding Elder of the Morristown District, the Rev. William Lynch, of the Presbyterian church at Newark; the Rev. J. W. Cooper, of Burlington; the Rev. D. R. Pershon, of Freehold; the Rev. J. C. Agier, of Princeton; the Rev. H. Webb, of Orange; the Rev. C. H. Greene, of Long Branch. Dr. Stokes, President of the Ocean Grove Association, made an address, in which he welcomed his hearers "in the name of Thomas Jefferson, who wrote the Declaration of Independence." J. P. Sampson said their reception had been cordial. The white people of Orange had felt indignant at the reports of feeling against them and told them to come. None of the speakers mentioned James A. Bradley, the founder of Asbury Park, who recently announced that he wanted the colored people to keep off his beach and ocean plaza. The colored pleasure seekers visited the beach of the Grove and Asbury Park in droves and sat for several hours on the sand. A dozen or so applied at the bath houses for bathing suits. They were told that they could not be accommodated. In every case the refusal was taken in good spirits. It rained heavily this afternoon. The colored people ran into the pavilions on the beach for shelter, but were quiet and orderly all through the storm.

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Document 2-3: "To Invade the Beach," "An Asbury Park of Their Own"

TO INVADÉ THE BEACH.

ASBURY PARK, N. J., June 29.—It is reported that the negroes intend to go to the beach board walks in full force on Saturday evening and attempt to remain in spite of James Bradley's remonstrance. An entire police force will be at the beach on Saturday.

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AN ASBURY PARK OF THEIR OWN.

From the Philadelphia Call, June 29.

It is strange that the colored people of the North have not taken hold of this color question in a practical way. It cannot be pleasant to be treated as inferiors and submit to unreasoning prejudices. Of course, the color line will be obliterated in time, and even Asbury Park will open its gates to persons of dark complexion, but the process is a slow one. There are many wealthy negroes in the North, and land on the Jersey coast is cheap. Why not establish a colored Asbury Park where respectable colored people can have their cottages and hotels and where no white man can claim superior privileges? Colored people should assert their dignity and avoid all places where they are placed on an inequality. There is money as well as dignity in the scheme if properly managed.

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Document 4: "Answering Mr. Bradley"

ANSWERING MR. BRADLEY.

COLORED PEOPLE AT ASBURY PARK SPEAK OUT IN MEETING.

ASBURY PARK, N. J., June 27.—The little edifice of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, in West Asbury Park, was crowded to-night when the meeting called by the colored people to protest against the recent remarks made by James A Bradley, the founder of the Park, in reference to the obnoxious manners of certain classes on the beach plaza was held. Nearly one-half of those present were white. The Rev. F. A. Corsey offered a prayer, in which he asked the blessing of God while they were engaged in defending their rights.

The Rev. John Francis Robinson, Pastor of the church, denounced Mr. Bradley's remarks as an outrageous insult against the colored race, and said they were simply the old slavery feelings and ideas revived. "We are here," he said, "to defend our citizenship and our manhood. This we want to do peacefully. We colored people fought for our liberty some years ago, and we do not propose to be denied it at this late day. We will not be dictated to in this manner by Mr. Bradley or any other man. Why, he sent me an open letter this evening, telling just how to conduct this meeting: I am here to defend seven and a half millions of people from insults hurled at their race because of their color. The colored man contributes largely to the wealth and prosperity of the country, including the town of Asbury Park. We are a free people, and we have the same rights by law as our fellow-citizens whose skins are white. We are here in Asbury Park, and we are here to stay. We fought to save the Union as the white man did. This country is for the whites and blacks alike, including even the beach of Asbury Park. We shall go to the beach when we please, because we have a right there. They may put up signs telling us to keep off the beach, but we will go there just the same. If there were notices tacked up on the doors of hell, telling the negroes not to go there, some of them would because we have the right to go there. Mr. Bradley said he was the father of this



Document 4: "Answering Mr. Bradley" cont.

... piece of rubbish printed against our race. Well, if it is his child, we are here to-night to nurse it for him."

Mr. Robinson then read Mr. Bradley's remarks in reference to the way the beach seats and plaza are monopolized by the colored help of the hotels and cottages. He commented sharply upon the article, and condemned Mr. Bradley's stand in the matter. He claimed that the poor colored people did as much for the prosperity of the Park as the poor whites, and yet the whites wanted to be protected from them. He wanted protection for the colored young ladies and cultivated young men when they were insulted and annoyed by the poor whites. He claimed that Mr. Bradley had shown the same spirit as was shown in the South before the war, and his action was an outgrowth of the old race feeling. His sarcastic comments upon Mr. Bradley's remarks were greeted with ringing cheers.

Prof. Newsome, the Principal of the colored public school of this district, read the following preamble and resolutions:

Whereas, Mr. James A. Bradley, of Asbury Park, recently has placed before the public an article unwholesome to the tastes of cultivated and respectable colored citizens of the above-named place; and

Whereas, We, the respectable citizens of this place, feel fully justified in boldly resenting such gross insults, therefore be it

Resolved, That we, respectable colored citizens of Asbury Park, while not in the least sympathizing with those who are deserving of such imputations, yet do herein record our solemn protest against the slurs hurled at us as a nation, and be it further

Resolved, That we herein request Mr. Bradley and his colleagues in their further utterances to specify more definitely the class to whom they refer; and be it finally

Resolved, That, feeling our weakness and justness of our cause, we appeal to the intelligent colored press in particular, and our white friends in general, who are ever ready to lend us a helping hand, to listen to the cry from Macedonia, and by taking up our cause help us.

The resolutions were adopted with cheers. In a short speech the Professor denounced Mr. Bradley for not separating the respectable and orderly class of negroes from those who conduct themselves in such a manner as to annoy the hotel guests and cottagers. J. R. Arneau, editor of the New-York *Enterprise*, also spoke strongly against Mr. Bradley's stand in the matter.

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Document 5: "Color Line at Asbury Park"

COLOR LINE AT ASBURY PARK.

NEGROES INDIGNANT AT THREATENED EXCLUSION FROM THE BEACH.

ASBURY PARK, N. J., June 25.—The colored people here are wild with indignation over the fact that James A. Bradley recently gave the reporters of the *Daily Journal* an interview which filled over a column of that paper, and in which they claim that he was unjust to them as a race. They are going to hold an indignation meeting Monday evening to express their feelings upon the subject. Mr. Bradley is the owner of the plaza at the beach. It is a mile long. Mr. Bradley pays the cost of maintaining it and furnishes seats for several thousand persons. When a *Journal* reporter asked why he had appointed ex-Postmaster Snedeker as Superintendent of the beach and what his duties were, Mr. Bradley said that disorderly characters were to be driven from the beach and that all obnoxious persons were to be kept off the plaza.

Mr. Bradley quoted from a letter he wrote to the *Journal* while at Wiesbaden, Germany, last season, to show that at the watering places and other Summer resorts in Europe hotel and cottage servants are not allowed to obtrude themselves among the cottagers and hotel guests.

The Rev. J. Francis Robinson, the Pastor of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, in West Asbury Park, spoke with great feeling upon the subject this evening. The indignation meeting is to be held in his church. He said that Mr. Bradley had put his entire race upon the same level, and made all colored persons out as disorderly and obnoxious. He said the general run of colored men and women were respectable and orderly at all times and in all places. Mr. Bradley had no right to single out his race in such a manner, and he proposed to speak very plainly at the meeting called for Monday evening.

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Document 6: "Africa and Asbury Park"

AFRICA AND ASBURY PARK.

The colored people of Asbury Park are doing their utmost to bring the projector and patron of that resort into odium and contempt. Mr. BRADLEY has had so much to do with the growth of Asbury Park that it would not be inaccurate to describe it as a proprietary resort. His interests in it and his stake in its prosperity are at all events much larger than those of anybody else. When he forms and expresses the opinion that a particular line of conduct on the part of a particular class of people is injuring the place it must be supposed that this is his opinion as a man of business, and has nothing to do with his personal sentiments toward the class in question.

This is a consideration which has been entirely lost sight of by the zealous and passionate colored orators who have undertaken to fire the colored heart of Asbury Park against its proprietor. It appears that the colored population of the resort in question is very large. It is not for the most part made up of people who go there to spend money, but of those who go to earn it in various honorable callings, from that of a laundress to that of a head waiter. In order that these people may earn their livings it is necessary that people, mostly of the Caucasian race, shall find Asbury Park attractive. Mr. BRADLEY, who ought to be a judge, declares that its attractiveness is diminished for these people by the pervasiveness of the colored race in general, and by the misconduct of some of its members in particular, not in the kitch-



Document 6: "Africa and Asbury Park," cont.

ens and laundries, but upon the beach. There are undoubtedly many whites who object to the mere presence even of well behaved and well conducted colored people, in any considerable number, on a beach to which they go for recreation. There are also many whites who would object to the presence, in any considerable number, upon such a beach of the servants from the hotels in which they themselves were guests. When they find the benches upon the beach provided for their accommodation engrossed by the colored servants from their hotels these people resent the presence of the colored servants, either as being colored, or as being servants, or as both.

These objectors may be as unreasonable and as prejudiced and as full of the spirit of caste as the colored orators declare them to be. But if they really entertain objections to the society of colored servants, what are the orators going to do about it? The orators cannot persuade them to delight in society which they in fact dislike, nor to compel them to frequent that society. The prejudiced and tyrannical white, when he finds the beach strewn with happy and innocent colored people diverting themselves, simply betakes himself to fresh fields and pastures new. The loss does not fall upon the Caucasian criminal himself, but upon Asbury Park, upon its proprietor and its hotel keepers and its boarding house keepers, and upon their men servants and their maid servants, who are mostly of the African race. When, then, a zealous colored orator declares that Mr. BRADLEY cannot



Document 6: "Africa and Asbury Park," cont.

"keep the colored people off GOD's beach," he is in effect maintaining the right of the colored people, in their capacities as human beings and as American citizens, to prevent themselves from earning wages in their capacities as head waiters and cooks and laundresses and chambermaids and carpet-shakers and whitewashers. The unfortunate Mr. BRADLEY is, in effect, required by the colored orators to emulate the behavior of that character of DICKENS who blew out his brains in vindication of his great principle that crumpets were wholesome. They call upon him to maintain "GOD's beach" as a resort for colored people, even though he depopulates it of every paying Caucasian, plunges himself into the abyss of bankruptcy, and dooms his hotels to tumble into a ruinous wreck of olive clapboards and Indian, red shingles. When the orators recover their mental equipoise they will, we think, consider that it is asking something too much of poor Mr. BRADLEY to convert himself from a man of business, engaged in a lawful speculation in real estate, to a philanthropist bent upon securing the use of GOD's beach to colored

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Document 7: "Asbury Park's Warfare"

ASBURY PARK'S WARFARE.

COLORLED PEOPLE IN MASS MEETING DENOUNCING MR. BRADLEY'S ACTION.

What the mass meeting of colored citizens to protest against the color line at Asbury Park lacked in numbers last night at St. Marks' Church, on West Thirty-fifth-street, was fully compensated by complete harmony of purpose. The temper and direction of the proceedings were set by the Rev. H. H. Monroe, Pastor of the church, who declared that he had nothing to say against ex-Mayor Bradley personally, but that he was there to protest, with all his power, against action by any white man designed to put the stamp of infamy upon the colored people. Between the employers at Asbury Park and the employed no one had a right to interfere.

If the masters, Mr. Monroe said, objected to their servants coming between the wind and their nobility, that was the business only of those concerned. But it was a shame that indignity should be heaped upon a race because a few had been offensive. The speaker now understood that threats had been made to discharge the colored servants from the hotels unless the Bradley order was obeyed. Whatever such talk might be called in New-Jersey, it would be bulldozing if it was reported from Texas. Mr. Monroe hoped it would frighten no one, and that the contest would be waged on the broad ground of equal rights. If good behavior and willingness to pay one's way were not to count in any colored man's favor at Asbury Park, the ante-war spirit of race distinction still prevailed there. That fact should be made plain.

"I have always admired the Southern people in their relations with the negro," the speaker continued, "because the Southerners are candid. The negro may go so far, they say, and no further. But every act of Southern intolerance has had its match in the North. The press is with us, but this act goes unrebuked by the pulpits. At a place set apart for temperance and religion we witness a spectacle that should shame the boasted civilization of the North. Let us devote ourselves to stripping off false religious senti-



Document 7: "Asbury Park's Warfare," cont.

ment and hypocritical philanthropy, that we may expose before the people how far race hatred can go in New-Jersey. Standing by the well defined issue presented to us, we can accomplish more than in any other way. No one can successfully controvert us if we insist that, while ex-Mayor Bradley may deal as he pleases with his own, neither he nor any man has a right to strike at a whole race for the misconduct of a few."

The Rev. John Francis Robinson, of Asbury Park, said he was the only one of the four colored Pastors of that place who had dared cry out against Mr. Bradley. He had been warned against doing anything, his friends pleading that Mr. Bradley was good to the colored people and that many had been helped by his bounty. To such pleading he replied that any man who struck at a race to punish a class was no friend of that race, but a coward. So the indignation meeting was held, and the majority now felt as he did. The *Asbury Park Journal*, Mr. Bradley's paper, had commented on this resentment in language to make one think it was edited in Georgia. He took a copy of that paper to Mr. Bradley to ask him if he was responsible for a certain article. Mr. Bradley said he was its father. As the colored people were pretty good nurses, they took this baby to their meeting. The baby cried, but they nursed it just the same.

"Boycott it," said a voice—a sentiment eliciting loud approval.

"The fact is," he continued, "that neither the paper nor Mr. Bradley can keep us all off the beach. I went down there last night and saw some elegant colored ladies. There were Chinamen there, too, and Italians. Mr. Bradley himself is an Irishman—"

"Make allowance fer him, chile: make allowance!" exclaimed an "aunty" in the Amen corner, and she, too, was applauded.

"Mr. Bradley might as well try to hang his handkerchief on the horns of the moon as to keep the colored people off God's beach," Mr. Robinson added.

The young preacher continued very earnestly, declaring his full faith in the influence of such meetings as this to put an end to race ostracism. Howard L. Smith, Frank Farrell, and others spoke, and the meeting lasted until a late hour.

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Document 7: "Asbury Park's Warfare," cont.

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