

Search for photos of singles in your area.

I am a Seeking Near ZIP

VIEW PICS >>

powered by match.com

blAck
americaweb.com

Login | Register

Search

HOME | NEWS | ENTERTAINMENT | TJMS | MONEY | LIFE & STYLE | COLLEGE FAIR | DATING | TJ FOUNDATION | PHOTOS | BLOGS

04:12 PM Tuesday, July 20, 2010

| Gulf's Fishing Families Turn to Fast Food | Tea Party Slates 'Uni-Tea' to Show Diversity | Famed Mathematician David Blackwell, 91, Dies | FCC: B

Home > News > Moving America

[\[-\] Text \[+\]](#) | Print | E-Mail

>> MOVING AMERICA

WELLS FARGO



- Home Mortgage
- Online money-management tools
- Mortgage and closing estimates
- PriorityBuyer® Preapproval

Get Pre-Qualified

Oldest Pullman Porter Still Living Life Fully

Date: Wednesday, June 30, 2010, 4:15 am

By: F. Finley McRae, Special to BlackAmericaWeb.com

SHARE ...

James Cleveland's powerful gospel classic "I Don't Feel No Ways Tired" speaks eloquently to the life and service of Lee Wesley Gibson, the nation's oldest living Pullman porter.

The 100-year-old Angeleno could easily repeat Cleveland's lyrics with conviction: "Nobody told me the road would be easy ... but I don't believe He brought me this far to leave me," for he's devoted most of his life to his family, community, church - and unknown thousands of railroad passengers - with equal measures of strength, calm, diplomacy, elegance and grace.

Only Gibson and fewer than 50 other members of the black fraternity who



At 100 years old, Lee Wesley Gibson, who lives in Los Angeles, is the nation's oldest living Pullman porter.

Career Central

Search millions of job listings from across the web. **New jobs added daily!**

Job title Location

Find Jobs

- Accounting jobs
- Engineering jobs
- Finance jobs
- Management jobs
- Marketing jobs
- Sales jobs

Post a Job on Black America Web!

advertising

The New Nissan Altima
Quality you can love.



© 2010 Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.
All rights reserved. Member FDIC.



earned their living on the rails are still standing, according to Dr. Lyn Hughes, founder of the A. Phillip Randolph Pullman Porters Museum, the first such institution to celebrate African-American labor.

One year younger than Gibson is Linus Scott, 99, a Gary, Indiana resident.

In 2000, Hughes unveiled the National Registry of Pullman Car Porters, "an ongoing, fluid data base containing the names of more than 4,000 African-American men employed by the George Pullman Company from 1869 to 1969," which, she says, "is an anthology of respect." She established the museum in 1995.

The registry's preface was written by Lerone Bennett, the highly regarded historian and longtime managing editor of Ebony Magazine. Each Pullman car waiter and porter is listed along with a snapshot of his history. The registry is available on Amazon.com.

During their tenure on the rails, no higher level of service existed anywhere in the United States or Europe. Neither blustery, howling winds, boring, boisterous passengers, spoiled, whining little monsters nor lurching express trains deterred the porters - mostly all dark - from their exquisite, silky smooth delivery of frosted cocktails, piping hot soup and spicy, pungent appetizers. Nothing and nobody unnerved Gibson and his fraternity as they whisked made-to-order entrees to candle-lit tables adorned with silver service and white linen cloths. Later, at leisurely paces, they offered signature desserts, cigars and after-dinner drinks to top off the lavish dinners.

After 38 years as a Pullman porter and another 35 as a tax preparation specialist and manager and tailor, Gibson, who celebrated his 100th birthday May 21, has decided to spend his time enjoying himself and his significant other, Evelyn Dotson, 83, rather than adding and subtracting numbers on a computer.

Gibson, interviewed by BlackAmericaWeb.com last week, is nothing if not a picture of near perfect health. Slim and trim at 140 pounds, the 5'9" Gibson, who still drives, arrived at Get It & 'N' Go Creole Restaurant, located in the Crenshaw District, well before his scheduled interview time.

Dressed in a dapper houndstooth suit, white shirt and natty tie, Gibson, who walks without a cane, doesn't need glasses and says he doesn't "have to take any medication and has no health problems," appeared more spry and alert than many of the restaurant's customers half his age.

A quiet man who flashes a bright, easy smile, Gibson mentioned his birth in Keachi, Louisiana, early childhood in Marshall, Texas and arrival in Los Angeles in 1936 with his late wife, Beatrice A. Gibson. Soon after moving to



Recent Activity



Democrats to Give Jobless Benefits Another Vote

20 people shared this.



Little-Known Black History The First African-American Bike Festival

17 people shared this.



Tea Party Slates 'Uni-Tea' to Show Diversity

12 people shared this.



Famed Mathematician David Blackwell, 91, Dies

12 people shared this.

Facebook social plugin

advertising

Los Angeles, Gibson "worked in various jobs as a porter and short order cook at the Latin Quarter," a famous club located close to the city's downtown section.

That same year, seven years into the Great Depression, Gibson's good friend, David Johnson, a deacon at Olivet Baptist Church where Gibson was also a member, told about him openings for Pullman porters. Johnson wasted no time in introducing his friend

1 2 3 Next >>



Please **Login** or **Register** to Rate this article

Please **Login** or **Register** to post comments on this article

| **Read More Comments**

Comments On this Article

<p>Ancestry.com Family Tree Free family tree. World's largest online family history resource.</p>	<p>Publish Your Afro-Am Book Get A Book Publishing Guide Mailed To Your doorstep At No Cost.</p>
--	---

Ads by Google

More Headlines

Democrats to Give Jobless Benefits Another Vote

The measure is expected to pass later Tuesday.

Read More

Gulf's Fishing Families Turn to Fast Food

As long as you could toss a line, a net or a trap, you could eat. Or you could, until now.

Read More

Tea Party Slates 'Uni-Tea' to Show Diversity

See web site for state licensing information

advertising

Search for photos of singles in your area.

I am a Seeking Near ZIP

VIEW PICS >>

powered by match.com

blAck
americaweb.com

Login | Register

Search

HOME | NEWS | ENTERTAINMENT | TJMS | MONEY | LIFE & STYLE | COLLEGE FAIR | DATING | TJ FOUNDATION | PHOTOS | BLOGS

04:14 PM Tuesday, July 20, 2010

[' to Show Diversity](#) | [Famed Mathematician David Blackwell, 91, Dies](#) | [FCC: Broadband Market Not Serving All Americans](#)

Home > News > Moving America

[\[-\] Text \[+\]](#) | Print | E-Mail

>> MOVING AMERICA

WELLS FARGO



With you when
*all of your
numbers count*

- Two kids in college.
- Twenty years in business.
- Retiring by 65.

See how Wells Fargo

Oldest Pullman Porter Still Living Life Fully

Date: Wednesday, June 30, 2010, 4:15 am

By: F. Finley McRae, Special to BlackAmericaWeb.com

SHARE

..... to the Pullman superintendent, who, shortly after interviewing Gibson, said he'd "make a very good porter."

That began Gibson's long, rewarding and yet very demanding tour of duty over the rails. His routes over nearly four decades stretched from Los Angeles to Oakland, California, Salt Lake City and Ogden, Utah, Omaha, Nebraska and as far east as Chicago.

Along the way, he often spoke with A. Phillip Randolph, the silver tongued orator and chief organizer of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), and his unshakable lieutenants, C.L. Dellums, an uncle of former Congressman and Oakland Mayor Ronald Dellums, and Milton P. Webster. After founding the Brotherhood in 1925, the



At 100 years old, Lee Wesley Gibson, who lives in Los Angeles, is the nation's oldest living Pullman porter.

Career Central

Search millions of job listings from across the web. **New jobs added daily!**

Job title Location

Find Jobs

Accounting jobs

Management jobs

Engineering jobs

Marketing jobs

Finance jobs

Sales jobs

Post a Job on Black America Web!

advertising

The New Nissan Altima
Quality you can love.



can help you make the most of your numbers.

[Learn More](#)

© 2010 Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. All rights reserved. Member FDIC.



men and their loyal band of iron-willed blacks defied a 12-year barrage of violence, sabotage, lies and slander thrown at them by George Pullman and his web of operatives to win official recognition in 1937, a year after Gibson was hired.

"They were strong, they didn't crack. If they had, we wouldn't have had a union to represent us. Because of them, good things happened for us," Gibson said. Before Randolph and Dellums won concessions for the porters from an intransigent George Pullman, Gibson said, "we didn't have vacations, much less other benefits, so I'm very grateful for them and their leadership."

Randolph, capitalizing on the union's hard won recognition, swung it throughout the nation like a sword to cut into poverty, race discrimination and political powerlessness. More than a few members of President Woodrow Wilson's administration called the unflappable Randolph - who, in one difficult year, owned only two pairs of trousers and one pair of shoes with gaping holes - "the most dangerous Negro in America."

Dr. Hughes told BlackAmericaWeb.com that "Randolph was sent a blank check that he could fill in for any amount of up a million dollars if he'd no longer organize to create a black union. He returned it with a note saying 'Negro principles were not for sale.'"

Most black men would have exchanged everything but their wives, girlfriends and children to land a porter's job. Little did many know, however, that porters were forced to pay for their uniforms, meals and even the polish they used to shine rich people's shoes. Their pay was meager, a paltry \$810 a year for 400 hours a month or 11,000 miles on duty. Although some porters' hands were routinely greased by large tips from the super rich and celebrities, most survived on average-sized gratuities. Pullman managers posted signs urging passengers to refrain from tangibly expressing pleasure from the service black men provided.

Gibson, who said his "largest tip was \$20," spoke appreciatively about the "opportunity to support my family. It was a job. There weren't too many then that gave you the privileges of a porter: Steady pay, time off from work, no dirty work and a nice uniform."

Hughes' museum, with a focus on blacks who worked for the railroads, she said, "is really about honoring American history. We represent the voices of those men, not just imagery because they're suddenly popular figures right now."

Hughes told BlackAmericaWeb.com that her mission "is to honor these everyday, working-class men and women and the legacies they left, which show that ordinary people with pride in one's self, a strong sense of dignity,



Recent Activity



Democrats to Give Jobless Benefits Another Vote

20 people shared this.



Little-Known Black History The First African-American Bike Festival

17 people shared this.



Tea Party Slates 'Uni-Tea' to Show Diversity

12 people shared this.



Famed Mathematician David Blackwell, 91, Dies

12 people shared this.

Facebook social plugin

advertising

self discipline, strength and belief in family can change their lives and the nation's as well."

Harold Hambrick, president of Los Angeles' Black Business Expo and Trade Show, underlined the importance of the porters' and waiters' contributions to African-American life and

<< Previous 1 2 3 Next >>



Please **Login** or **Register** to Rate this article

Please **Login** or **Register** to post comments on this article

| **Read More Comments**

Comments On this Article

Stephen Colbert Ancestors

Uncovered by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. in the new book "Faces of America"
www.nvupress.org/



More Headlines

Democrats to Give Jobless Benefits Another Vote

The measure is expected to pass later Tuesday.

Read More

Gulf's Fishing Families Turn to Fast Food

As long as you could toss a line, a net or a trap, you could eat. Or you could, until now.

Read More

Tea Party Slates 'Uni-Tea' to Show Diversity

The nearly all-white speaking line-ups that usually frequent Tea Party rallies

[Home](#) > [News](#) > [Moving America](#)

[\[-\] Text \[+\]](#) | [Print](#) | [E-Mail](#)

» MOVING AMERICA



**With you when
all of your
numbers count**

- Two kids in college.
- Twenty years in business.
- Retiring by 65.

[See how Wells Fargo](#)

Oldest Pullman Porter Still Living Life Fully

Date: Wednesday, June 30, 2010, 4:15 am

By: F. Finley McRae, Special to BlackAmericaWeb.com

[SHARE](#)

..... culture. "They were respected members of their communities who took pride in their profession. Just as significant, they connected their communities to the outside world."

Hambrick, born in Louisiana, said, "our people waited patiently for the newspapers thrown by porters in the dead of night. They stood by the tracks in pitch darkness because those newspapers were vital sheets of information that listed jobs and housing for African-Americans in the western, mid-western and northern states."



At 100 years old, Lee Wesley Gibson, who lives in Los Angeles, is the nation's oldest living Pullman porter.

The Rev. Charles E. Williams, senior minister of Peoples Independent Church

Career Central

Search millions of job listings from across the web. **New jobs added daily!**

- [Accounting jobs](#)
- [Engineering jobs](#)
- [Finance jobs](#)
- [Management jobs](#)
- [Marketing jobs](#)
- [Sales jobs](#)

Post a Job on Black America Web!

advertising



can help you make the most of your numbers.

[Learn More](#)

© 2010 Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. All rights reserved. Member FDIC.



of Christ, told BlackAmericaWeb.com that he's known Gibson, the congregation's oldest member, since 1980 and described him as one of its most valuable assets. "He's loyal, absolutely faithful and, of major importance, encourages our young people to strive for education."

At a birthday party last month at the Proud Bird Restaurant, more than 200 celebrants cheered Gibson for several minutes. He received awards, plaques and gifts from President Barack Obama, the Union Pacific Black Employees Network, USA Retirement Board, American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Among the well wishers were Gibson's three daughters, Gloria, Gwendolyn and Barbara; six grandchildren, 18 great grandchildren, 12 great great grandchildren and one great great great grandchild.

<< Previous | 1 | 2 | 3

SHARE

Please [Login](#) or [Register](#) to Rate this article

Please [Login](#) or [Register](#) to post comments on this article

| [Read More Comments](#)



Visit NissanUSA.com



Recent Activity



Democrats to Give Jobless Benefits Another Vote

20 people shared this.



Little-Known Black History The First African-American Bike Festival

17 people shared this.



Tea Party Slates 'Uni-Tea' to Show Diversity

12 people shared this.



Famed Mathematician David Blackwell, 91, Dies

12 people shared this.

Facebook social plugin

advertising