

one-word answers to questions, and have limited vocabularies." Other advocates claim that Head Start children gain motivation and self-esteem that carries through their school years. The first claim is backed by most social-science researchers, Hold reports; evidence for the second comes chiefly from a dubious 1984 study.

Much of the confusion over Head Start's effects stems from bad research; "early-intervention" studies are relatively new and are highly politicized. Hold says that researchers are finally beginning to overcome some of these handicaps. Some are even beginning to wonder whether early

intervention itself is vital. In the future, she says, the top priority will be to figure out what causes the "fadeout" that erases the gains of Head Start graduates.

In the meantime, however, there are plenty of reasons why unlikely people like George Bush support Head Start. It provides health care for poor children; it also puts some of their parents to work and gets them involved in their children's education. And more than most federal social programs, Head Start is run by poor people themselves. These are no small virtues; they are also a far cry from the utopian hopes of the Great Society.

## *Two Black Elites*

"Prosperous Blacks in the South, 1790-1880" by Loren Schwening, in *The American Historical Review* (Feb. 1990), 400 A St. S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.

Hard as it may be to believe, the South before the Civil War was home to more than a few well-to-do free blacks. In fact, writes Schwening, a historian at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, the antebellum South gave rise to two fairly distinct black elites.

To compound the irony, the wealthiest blacks lived in the Deep South. There, especially in southern Louisiana, where French and Spanish customs prevailed, a number of white men left substantial inheritances to the black women who had been their sexual partners or to their mulatto children, creating several hundred landowning black families by the early 19th century.

In many respects, these prosperous blacks were not very different from their white neighbors. One out of four free black families owned slaves, Schwening reports, and the freedmen were not known as especially humane masters. Whites did not feel threatened by the black elite. In 1822, Edwin C. Holland, a leading South Carolina editor, wrote: "So far as we are acquainted with their temper and disposition of their feelings [they] abhor the idea of association with blacks in any enterprise that may have for its object the revolution of their condition." Indeed,

prosperous blacks held themselves aloof from their less fortunate counterparts, Schwening adds, forming "small, tightly knit social and cultural clans, linking their families through intermarriage."

The story was much different in Virginia, Kentucky, and the other states of the Upper South, where four out five of the South's free blacks lived. Few were planters. Only one family in 14 owned slaves. Fewer black families prospered: One out of 73 families had accumulated real estate worth \$2,000 or more by 1860 compared to one out of 10 in the Deep South. Women, who constituted more than a third of the black aristocracy in the Deep South, were a much smaller part of the Upper South elite. Finally, free blacks in the Upper South were neither clannish nor acceptable to whites, who scorned them as "indolent" and "depraved."

Apparently, these qualities served them well, because during the decade before the Civil War the wealth of well-to-do blacks in the Upper South began to increase faster than that of their Deep South counterparts. Their numbers tripled, from 213 to 619, their average real-estate holdings grew to \$4,099, and a few truly wealthy free blacks emerged in the cities, such as Baltimore caterer Henry Jakes, North Carolina mer-

chant-farmer Hardy Bell, and St. Louis tobaccoist William Deaderick.

The Civil War ruined many of the Deep South's prosperous blacks, just as it did many white plantation owners. The Upper South's black elite prospered. "More self-confident, able to mix more easily with

former slaves, and viewing the formerly dominant class with suspicion and skepticism," Schweningen writes, "they could more easily build on their past experiences during the postwar era to advance not only their own cause but the cause of freedmen as well."

**PRESS & TELEVISION**

*The Atom Bomb  
And the Press*

"The Office of Censorship's Attempt to Control Press Coverage of the Atomic Bomb During World War II" by Patrick S. Washburn, in *Journalism Monographs* (April 1990), 1621 College St., Univ. of S.C., Columbia, S.C. 29208-0251.

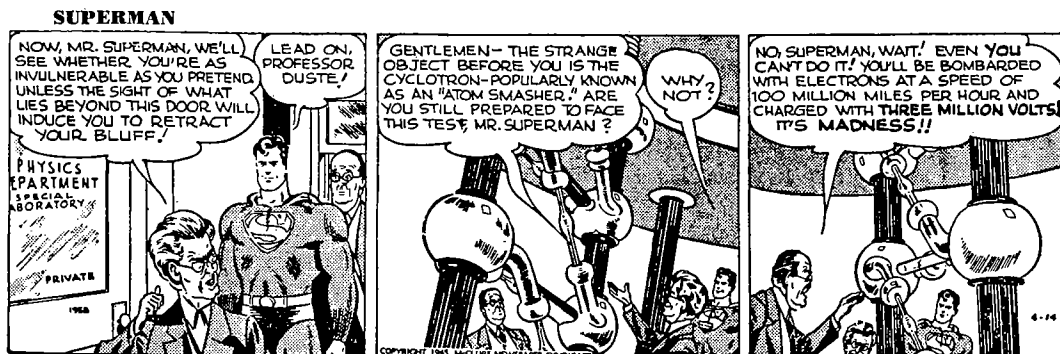
A month after the first atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, Gen. H. H. Arnold of the Army Air Force wrote a glowing letter to the head of the U.S. Office of Censorship thanking him for suppressing "any mention" of the new weapon in the press until it was used. Arnold wrote that it "shall go down in history as the best-kept secret of any war."

What is interesting, notes Washburn, a professor of journalism at Ohio University, is not the fact that Arnold was wrong but why he was wrong. Despite the patriotic cooperation of newspaper, magazine, and radio editors, there were dozens of references to atomic energy and weaponry in the press during World War II.

Until 1943, even the Office of Censorship was kept in the dark about atomic research. In June, it asked editors (volun-

tarily) to avoid all mention even of the element uranium. Almost immediately, problems appeared. On Halloween Day, for example, the *Washington Post* ran a lighthearted feature story which began: "A young fellow who has been studying much of his life on the matter of blowing up nations with an atom would like to get a wage increase from the War Labor Board." In December, the *Cleveland Press* published a vague story about the "Forbidden City" at Los Alamos, New Mexico.

In some cases, Washburn says, editors simply were not aware of the guidelines; in others, they did not think that the rules applied to their story. Other leaks slipped through because of carelessness, often the result of wartime labor shortages. On more than one occasion, public officials themselves were responsible for uninten-



*This 1945 "Superman" comic strip was the most bizarre breach of wartime secrecy. Censors complained, but it took seven more strips to extricate Superman from the atomic theme.*