

0:00:00.660,0:00:03.280

[Hewitt:] I've been talking to Queen Mothers

0:00:03.280,0:00:08.120

and looking at the role they're playing in villages in West Africa.

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I would say in

West Africa, I talk to Queen Mothers

0:00:11.220,0:00:15.440

and then around the rest of Africa I

look at their their origins.

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Like in the Nile Valley you have the "Candaces".

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So, we have a history,

0:00:20.400,0:00:23.720

and then we have a contemporary phenomenon.

0:00:23.720,0:00:29.320

And when I first went to Ghana, I met people who didn't really think the Queen Mother's existed.

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So, I wondered and I begin to go to the villages and ask about them more directly and then

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I met with several university students

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and they explained how they went primarily to Queen Mothers

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when they wanted to develop a project in the villages,

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they would go to the Queen Mothers.

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And that's how I first got started now I've been

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working with Queen Mothers for around... let's see since 2010, so seven years.

0:00:58.960,0:01:00.182

[Claiborne:] Okay, great.

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So, what do you think is important for typically African-Americans communities

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to know about the Queen Mothers,

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and well, just any American really.

0:01:11.360,0:01:15.420

[Hewitt:] So, you know in the United States there was a time in the Sixties,

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like 19... around '65

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when Daniel Patrick Moynihan came out with the ...

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with the pathology... matriarchal
pathology theory,

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Where he argued that in the African-American community

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women were holding inordinate power within the family,

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or leadership within the family.

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But the reality is that not only did we hold it here in the United States,

0:01:40.840,0:01:42.560

but we always held it.

0:01:42.560,0:01:44.660

And not only did we always hold it,

0:01:44.660,0:01:48.300

but it was a really really good thing for society.

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So literally when we understand where we come from

0:01:51.480,0:01:53.160

and why we do what we do

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we see that...

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things people tell us are bad are actually good.

0:02:00.780,0:02:06.580

So I can say more, you know, about the Queen Mothers and why that's really
important, why they're so important.

0:02:06.580,0:02:12.880

[Claiborne:] Do you think there are any examples of great Queen Mothers that we can
point to in the United States?

0:02:13.500,0:02:19.860

Yes, so we just begin with
people like Harriet Tubman ...

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Sojourner Truth ... Queen Mother Moore ...

0:02:25.420,0:02:30.060

Fannie Lou Hamer ... Ella Baker

0:02:30.060,0:02:34.120

All of them were playing a Queen Mother role because the key things
that Queen Mother's do

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is to be a counterpart and a compliment to male leadership

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and male leadership is complementary to the Queen Mother's leadership.

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Oh with the point, with the Queenship in Africa was never either or.

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It wasn't that you only have a queen,

0:02:50.540,0:02:53.320

like a Queen Elizabeth and there's no
king, right,

0:02:53.320,0:02:56.280

you always have both.

0:02:57.000,0:03:05.329

[Claiborne:] And what do you think can actually help people want
to study Africa more, return to Africa?

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Or, do you feel like people are already doing that?

0:03:08.520,0:03:11.510

[Hewitt:] We're in a really difficult turning point

0:03:11.510,0:03:15.880

because society has moved to focus on
the individual

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and African culture is so much not about the individual.

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So it's a little difficult to make
that orientation.

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I find that if we bring some positive information about our African heritage to
people,

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they grab right on that.

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And that that's probably
the way...

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y'know, it's like you can catch more...

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catch more, I wanna say catch more flies with honey than you can with something
bitter.

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So we have a shared history
of a bitter past,

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we have to know it in order not to repeat it.

0:03:50.720,0:03:56.960

But we want to really be careful to bring all the nice, positive things that we
have together,

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I think that makes us want to know more.