

# Martinet

Lately I've been reading about a lot of men who gave up things that today men die for. Like the \$1,200 annual stipend for three years from President Hayes to live in Paris, France that Louis Martinet refused in 1894. At that time his family was in financial stress caused by his work. But he knew his place was with his newspaper.

In 1889 Martinet, a physician and attorney, published a newspaper called *The Crusader* to bring forth issues about inequality and segregation. He didn't have to do it, but someone did, so he stepped to the plate. It was time for change.

On September 5, 1891 The Citizens' Committee, which Martinet was a part of, formed in response to a suggestion by *The Crusader*. This committee had pretty much the same purpose as the newspaper, just a little more action. Like, one thing the Citizens' Committee is known for is challenging the Separate Car Act of 1890.

Members of the Citizens' Committee had been fighting for years. Some had been a part of the Unification Movement, others had raised money to help freed blacks, and many had held government positions. Martinet himself served on the Orleans Parish School Board from 1877 to 1881 and was the last black man to do so until Dr. Mack Spears was elected in 1969.

In 1896 Martinet closed down *The Crusader* but not the mindset of freedom for his people.

Martinet had a choice to go along with the main stream and live a comfortable life. Instead he chose to spend his time fighting for his people.

I admire him for that and am waiting for men of my generation to set aside at least some of their luxuries and step to the plate.

--Rodneka Shelbia,  
Douglass Students at the Center,  
April, 2005