

Imbibe black history all year

As we all know, February is the month set aside as Black History Month. During this time we celebrate the accomplishments, achievements and contributions of black Americans who have richly enhanced our heritage.

It is sad that for so many of us we only learn, or perhaps I should say memorize, the significance of our fellow black Americans for the 28 days of February. When February has come and gone, so has our remembrance and knowledge of our black history. And I ask myself why. Was black history all made in 28 days? No, because our history is still being made today and will continue to be made tomorrow and the next day too. Can we possibly learn all about our heritage in just one month? I'm inclined to think not. Our celebration of black history should not be confined to one month out of a year. Besides February is the shortest of all the months. Black history should be celebrated 365 days a year.

There is always something new to be learned about our heritage. In fact, we should make it a point to learn something new about our culture every day. Whether we learn or become aware of significant happenings in our classrooms, in the newspaper, on TV or just by conversing with our friends, we should make it a point to do so because it is all worthwhile.

Furthermore, we must learn not to accept what little has been given to us or told to us, but we must search and find out for ourselves.

The next time that someone asks you about the significance of February, don't say that it is Black History Month. Instead say that it is a time when more emphasis is given to black history, but the celebration lasts the whole year. (Penny Hill)

'Love' had everything to do with it

Sentiment is a strange thing, you know. What seems insignificant on one day instantly takes on meaning given another situation.

Last week, for example, on what would have otherwise been simply considered a dreary, snowy Friday afternoon, I observed men and women enrapt with passionate thoughts of one another braving the elements to prove their love.

I saw them buy cards with trite but nonetheless touching verses and roses with far more stems and thorns than buds. I think I spent the greater part of Thursday and Friday evenings making the greater part of the Greensboro community happy from happiness headquarters—Bernice's Flowers and Gifts.

It was no chore unloading hundreds of roses on eager customers, their mouths hanging open and eyes jumping to the ring of the cash register. No one com-

plained that day. I suspect that love had everything to do with it. Of course, I didn't mind dethorning all of those roses, pricking my already aching fingers and inflating all of those difficult balloons. They said "I love you" in a beautiful script.

Somehow, though, I questioned the motives of some of my more passionate customers. Like the guy who bought five plants and signed each of the cards "To my very best girl." And then there were the customers who simply refused to commit. They didn't want "I Love You" balloons; they wanted "Can we negotiate a short—I mean very short relationship" balloon.

All in all, it was a good day. I wouldn't want to repeat it though. I've had the last of rose dethorning for a while. (Vicky Dunn)

Gambian profile

a column
by Gladys Dayo Forster

I was born in Banjul, the capital of Gambia. The Gambia is situated on the west coast of Africa. It is partly surrounded by Senegal and lies next to Guinea Bissau. The Gambia is a small country merely trying to survive on her two feet. She has a population of about half a million, and it is often said everyone is related or knows one another.

The Gambia is a predominantly Muslim country. Christians have very little say in governmental affairs. There are three so-called tribal groups. Akus referred to as "creoles," make up the majority of the Christian community. The Mandinkas, the most powerful tribe, form about two-thirds of the government. The Wollofs are also next to the Mandinkas but have more say than the so-called Akus.

Sir Dawda Kairba Jawara, a Mandinka, has been president since the nation gained its independence from Britain in 1965. The Gambia is a democratic state and has a three party system—The Peoples' Progressive Party, the ruling party; The National Convention Party and United Party which is slowly declining.

The Gambia's staple food is rice. The main crop exported is peanuts and the economy of the country largely depends on this and tourism.

Tourism in The Gambia starts around October and ends in late April. It is dominated by white people, and the hotels are constantly kept busy. On package tours, the visitors move across the country and take a lot of pictures. They bask in the sun, and some have the right tan color they wanted before they leave.

Buses take tourists to the Nature Reserve, hospitals, House of Representatives, State House (where the president lives) and, most important of all, "Juffureh," where Alex Haley's roots began.

Most people work for the government, but the cost of living rises everyday, and salaries are very low and insufficient. Private businesses are becoming more numerous as people add this as a means of maintaining their families. The problem of unemployment leads to juvenile delinquency, which is quite rampant.

Industries are growing, but very slowly, and education is the worst problem being faced now. There are not enough high schools and technical schools for less fortunate Gambians. An ambitious person finds it very difficult when she finishes high school and hopes to continue her education. She has to be ready to work hard to sponsor herself if she plans to go somewhere else that is not Africa. The Gambia government can sponsor students who plan on studying in Africa but this depends on one's high academic performance, and there are competitions.

Students are now going into the army which came into existence about four years ago. Gambia never had an army but a need for this was demonstrated after the 1981 coup d'etat. It failed, but Gambians lost many loved ones, relatives and friends, leaving sad memories.

It may take a long time but Banjul, The Gambia will creep through its problems slowly. Dedicated Gambians need to follow the national anthem: "We pledge our firm allegiance, Our promise we renew, Keep us Great God of Nations, To The Gambia Ever True."

George Washington Williams triumphed over the odds

by Laura Nelson

John Hope Franklin's biography of George Washington Williams presents the life of a black American that few people know about, a man who contributed much to his country and his race.

Franklin traces the history of George Washington Williams, historian, pastor, lawyer and legislator. The author tells of his amazement at how such a successful contributor to society could have been overlooked as Williams was.

The biography begins with his family, freed from slavery, settling in Bedford Springs, Pa. Williams' youth is described as being full of uncertainty until he enlists in the army at the age of 14 under an assumed name and age. Franklin's story of Williams' life creates for the reader a multi-faceted life. Never did George Washington Williams seem to lead an unexciting life.

Franklin's biography of Williams pursues every aspect of Franklin's life, such as the circumstances surrounding his unsuccessful at-

tempt to sue his wife for divorce on grounds of desertion.

This book gives the reader a story of triumph. Williams achieved many rewards he wished to attain, even though he lived the first half of his life illiterate. He became a Civil War veteran, an Ohio legislator, the author of the first history of blacks in America and a spellbinding orator.

George Washington Williams was a true adventurer. He traveled extensively in the United States and abroad, going to such places as the Belgian Congo. Franklin's biography of Williams reveals all the well-known people Williams knew. Williams became associated with Frederick Douglass and Mark Twain; numerous presidents admired Williams.

Franklin puts George Washington Williams' life back together, piece by piece, and gives to his readers an opportunity to learn of yet another great black American. Williams gave all of himself to recording his race's

history in the last years of his life.

Franklin's biography is simple and straight forward, giving readers a sense that there is more to know about this driven man, George Washington Williams. This biography will capture the reader's attention, and if none of the facts are remembered, readers will recall that George Washington Williams was a black man who did great work like that of Frederick Douglass, George Washington Carver and the many other famous black Americans.

It is disturbing to think that our society refused to acknowledge Williams' contributions and allowed him to be an obscure part of the past. John Hope Franklin paid homage to an amazing man, and we too can do our part.

While we are paying tribute to our black leaders and contributors during Black History Month, honor George Washington Williams. Read his biography and learn of new history discovered in the life of George Washington Williams.

Belles suffering washer blues; Botswana's dilemma

To the Editor:

Many Belles on campus are suffering the washer machine blues. Everytime we try to use the machines they are either broken or in use so that a person can't get to them until two in the morning.

I think it is time that we start looking for a new washing system here at Bennett. There are just not enough washers to go around.

There is only one washer per dorm, except for Cone, which has two and Pfeiffer, which has none.

It is time for new washers in every dorm or it is time for Bennett to build a wash building where everyone just goes to one place to wash her clothes on campus.

Many people find it better to go off campus to wash their clothes. Even though it may be inconvenient for the person. At least you will be sure that your clothes will be clean when they come out of the washer. You can put a box of soap in the washers here and your clothes will still be as dirty as they were when you put them in.

The dryer is not any better.

The clothes are as wet as they were when you put them in the dryer. You might as well take the wet clothes and bring them back to your room—which many people do now.

I think it is time to retire those no-wash, no-dry, money-hungry machines for new ones. We need more per dorm or one major place for us to wash our clothes. Shonna Luten

To the Editor:

Botswana, an African republic that borders on South Africa, has had difficulty staying away from the influence of apartheid-minded expatriates and neighbors.

Formerly Bechuanaland Protectorate, Botswana gained its independence largely through the efforts of Seretse Khama, a leader who married an English woman and was exiled from his homeland under South African pressure. He gained popularity as an opponent of racism and colonialism. Returning home, he became prime minister in 1965 and the first president in 1966. When he died in 1980, Quett Masire suc-

ceeded him.

Last month there were land mine explosions in South Africa which she claims Botswana knew of. A Botswana news commentary says that it is "an intention by the South African regime to invade Botswana again." Botswana has in the past punished any person or group of people who were using her land as a base for illegal acts. The Minister of External Affairs, Dr. G. Chiepe, had recently stated that Botswana would not want to offend her neighbors.

According to the commentary, the violence in South Africa is the result of apartheid. "To oppress a person some form of violence is necessary," it read: "and it is common knowledge that violence breeds violence." Therefore South Africa should stop blaming her neighbors, and instead "seek the path to peace by dismantling apartheid."

Hopefully, this word of knowledge will be seriously considered so that Botswana as well as her other neighbors will be free of the deadly fangs of apartheid. Elfrida Mensah

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