



The Decree

"Wesleyan's Student Voice Since 1984"

VOL. 16, NO. 5

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2001

Black History Month *Not just Black history... but American history*

Thomas Morris Chester
Master of public communication

Thomas Morris Chester, 1834-1892, was the first and only African American correspondent for a major daily newspaper during the Civil War. Working for the Philadelphia Press, he covered the activities of African American troops around Petersburg and Richmond, Va.



Prior to the war, Chester was editor of the publication "Star of Liberia." In later years, he practiced law in England.

His successes helped open the field of mass communications — including radio and TV broadcasting, computer networking, print media and public speaking — to future generations of African Americans, who now participate in these careers in record numbers.

Daniel Hale Williams
First open heart surgeon

Daniel Hale Williams, 1856-1931, was considered one of the most outstanding medical innovators at the beginning of the 20th century.



After gradu-

How it all began

In 1915, Carter G. Woodson, a historian keenly interested in education, founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. It was through this organization that he began pressing for a "Negro History Week" as a mechanism for exploring the contributions of Black Americans.

This dream became reality in 1926. Woodson chose the second week of February because two persons he felt had dramatically affected the lives of Black Americans were born during that month: Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass.

It would be much later, in 1976, when the now-renowned Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History would succeed in promoting this week into Black History Month.

— Submitted by Janet Morrison

ating from Northwestern University's medical school in 1883, he taught anatomy there.

President Cleveland invited him to head Freedmen's Hospital in Washington, D.C., but he chose to return to Chicago in 1891 to help set up the first school of African American nurses in the United States.

In Chicago, Williams performed the first successful open heart surgery. Since then, many African Americans have made significant contributions to medicine.

Madame C. J. Walker
*Self-made millionaire
and hair-care expert*

Madame C. J. Walker, 1869-1919, was a rags-to-riches suc-

cess story — she was orphaned at seven, married at 14, then widowed at 20.

Forced to make a living on her own, Walker started working as a washerwoman in a laundry.

But her innovations in hairstyling and beauty care propelled her into a career in African American beauty and fashion.

She invented hair softener and a straightening comb that deinked hair. Then she set up beauty parlors all across the nation. Almost overnight, Walker became a millionaire — all through her own efforts.



Gallery sets free evening of music, art

The Mims Gallery in N.C. Wesleyan College's Dunn Center on Feb. 16 at 7 p.m. will host a free evening of entertainment and art called "Pinetops Prototypes and Princeville Blues" with live music by nationally known recording artist and Princeville native George Higgs and AUSTEC sculpture and inventions by Donald Austin, the featured exhibitor.

Donald Austin is a self-taught African-American inventor, mime performer, and artist who lived in the town of Princeville a year and a half ago before Hurricane Floyd flooded that community.

Austin's workshop and living quarters were flooded and much of his art was destroyed, but with characteristic optimism, he has started over on higher ground outside of Princeville in Pinetops.

Born in Arkansas, Austin grew up with a large extended family of siblings that created competition for toys. Because he was so little, Austin resorted to making his own playthings, patterned after things he couldn't have.

His creative spirit and attraction to making things grew as Austin spent his teen years in Pittsburgh, Pa., hanging around with a street-savvy, creative, and resourceful crowd, good at hand-counterfeiting fashion sneakers and shaping urban trends.

Austin admired the neighborhood virtuoso who could make change from a hand-drawn dollar.

Earning a subsistence living from occasional odd jobs, Donald Austin's creative spirit underlies a resourceful survivalist life-style. Much of Austin's work involves re-cycling and re-invention.

On exhibit you will see a "Harmonica Holder With Built-In Microphone for George Higgs" who will be performing at the opening of Austin's Mims Gallery Exhibition. The AUSTEC sculpture and inventions that the artist fashions are assembled and rendered foremost with a great concern for a "techy" appearance.

This is a free event for the greater Rocky Mount community. Blues aficionados and art lovers from the Triangle are welcomed as well. Call 252-985-5268 for details.

Nineteen students participate in Emerging Leaders retreat

Nineteen first-year students have been selected for their leadership ability to participate in this year's Emerging Leaders retreat and a series of education sessions on various topics related to leadership.

The Emerging Leaders program is an annual production of the Office of Student Life and is run by the Coordinator for Student Development. Cara Skeat.

Participants in this year's Emerging Leaders Program are: Jennifer Bridge, Ashely Bulluck, Christal Chapman, Veronica Ciampi, Earlleena Clark, Eugene Curtis, Andrew Faison, Lori Henderson, Tammy Jones, DeNeasha King, Sharvett Lee, Leslie Mavengere, Matthew Ottavio, Demar Payne, Jan Pittman, Tiffany Ray, Arshar Smith, Joel Street, and Takela Swain.

Black History Month Calendar

(From Janet Morrison, via campus intranet)

Feb. 15	African Storyteller/Griot Shindana Cooper	Hartness Center	7:30pm
Feb. 16	Movie: Cabin in the Sky	Hartness Center	9pm
Feb. 22	Destiny's Hand	Minges Aud.	7:30 pm
Feb. 28	Chronicle of the Life of Paul Robeson Poetry Night	Hartness Ctr.	TBA