

Controversial exhibit nixed here

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"The major icon (of the exhibit) is basically a mock-up of the slave ship and the shackles. I didn't see how that would present us as blacks in a positive light.

But, Fred Mills, vice president of the local NABS chapter, the Nubian Divers of Charlotte, disagreed.

"I feel it is unfortunate they would take that position," Mills said. "I do not believe the exhibit would be too powerful for people to take. The educational value would more than justify any discomfort.

"The incidents (on slave ships) did happen and are part of recorded history. We need to learn from our mistakes and get something positive out of it. I hope they would reconsider their decision."

Support for the exhibit among Discovery Place officials led to a meeting with Afro American Cultural Center officials, in part to sway Cooper from his opinion and develop a collaborative effort.

Harry Harrison, Afro Center

program director, said the center is just not big enough for the exhibit, which requires at least 3,000 square feet of space. It would cost about \$25,000 to bring the exhibit to Charlotte.

Ahmad Daniels, a respected voice on racism and African American history, compared the exhibit to drug therapy.

Like drug addicts must look into their past, "black people need a sense of their history," Daniels said.

"Jews in Washington, D.C. have a holocaust exhibition showing how skin was used to make lamp shades. You don't hear them say that is negative. It motivates them to say it won't happen again.

Such exhibits are good for the children, Ahmad said.

"It puts them in contact with history and makes it real," he said. "Otherwise it is just something Mom and Dad talked about."

"Mel Fisher is known for his discovery in 1985 of a Spanish ship with as much as \$400 million worth of treasure aboard.

Demostenes Molinar, an African American diver work-

ing for Fisher, discovered the Henrietta Marie.

The involvement of African American in deep sea diving and other underwater projects adds to the educational value of the exhibit, says supporters. Members of the local scuba divers group are planning educational programs which could have accompanied the exhibit.

The wooden British ship, 80 feet long and 20 feet wide, had already replaced slaves with sugar, indigo and cotton and was on the way to England, when it hit a reef and sank.

Divers have recovered such artifacts as beads that were traded for slaves, cannons, pewter ware, a bronze bell labeled "The Henrietta Marie, 1699," and iron shackles of various sizes used to chain slaves and their children. The ship was large enough to carry up to 350 slaves and took about two months to cross the Atlantic Ocean.

Oswald Sykes, a member of the national black scuba divers group, said the issue of slavery in this country has been called the underpinning for most of what occurs in

black/white relations.

"People want to deny it," Sykes said by phone from his Albany, N.Y., home. "Whites don't want to own up to it."

Sykes, who has lectured about the slave ship, says its salvaging is very stirring because so many artifacts were recovered. "Nothing like this has ever been found," Sykes said.


He said the exhibit will go to Chicago after Detroit and the preliminary schedule puts it in Atlanta from November 1998 to April 1999. The Charlotte showing would have preceded an appearance in Atlanta.

Black scuba divers, locally and nationally, plan to continue efforts to bring the exhibit to Charlotte.

Roy Alexander, Discovery Place's director of exhibits, said he is very interested in bringing the exhibit to Charlotte.

"Speaking personally, this would be very meaningful to Charlotte to have it here," Alexander said. "I'm very interested in seeing the exhibit myself."

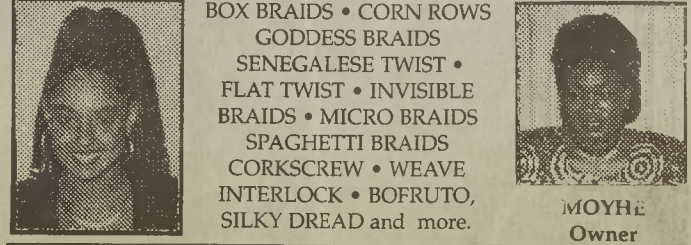
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Brazil home to discrimination

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mixed-race workers, routinely perform the humblest jobs, from streetsweeping to house-keeping.

Often, blacks' road to success is limited to sports or entertainment. Blacks are prominent in soccer, samba, carnival and "capoeira," a uniquely Brazilian combination of martial arts and dance.

On paper, Brazil has tough laws barring racial discrimination in areas like employment and access to stores, restaurants and public transportation. But the laws are

rarely enforced, and most blacks do not have the economic, educational or political means to enforce their rights.

Araujo, the historian, says prejudice is so ingrained that many blacks agree white is better.

"In Brazil, blacks perceive themselves as inferior beings, while whites, regardless of their social or economic standing, perceive themselves as superior," he said.

This poor self-image explains, for instance, why many black Brazilians prefer to be called "moreno" (brown) or "pardo" (dark) - or even try

to pass for white.

"They try to deny their past of misery. They feel ashamed of it," Araujo said. "Individuals who are proud of being black are an exception."

They also can be asking for trouble.

Edivaldo Mendes Zulu Araujo, an architect and theater producer, recalled the time he did not answer the son of a high government official who twice called to him, "Hey, moreno."

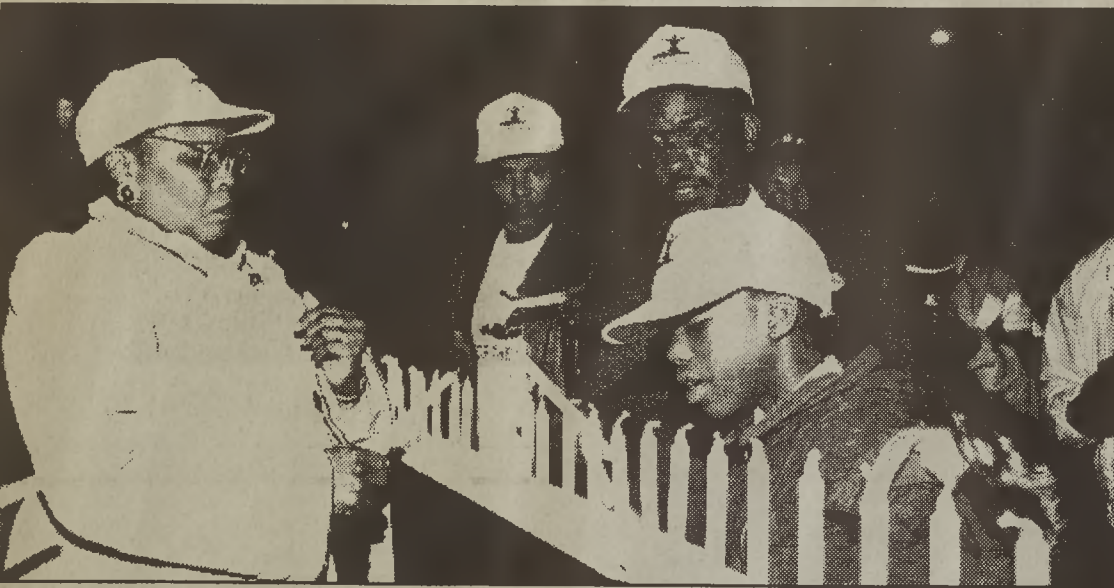
"When I felt a hand on my shoulder I turned around and said calmly: 'I am not moreno. I am black, don't you see?' The

guy got angry, saying I was arrogant and impolite and needed a lesson. He wanted to attack me. Some friends broke in and took me away."

Brazil did not abolish slavery until 1888, long after the rest of the Americas.

While figures are sketchy, historians estimate 3 million to 6 million slaves were brought from Africa to Brazil, where they toiled on sugar and tobacco plantations and in

The Crusade kicks off "Fighting Back Year."



PHOTO/JAMES BROWN

Chante Pauly, 10, (right front) lights a candle during a candlelight vigil Monday evening for those killed by violence in 1995. Rev. James Barnett, Crusade leader, (center, in glasses), Paulian Simuel, (left) and an unidentified man look on during the vigil at Gethsemane AME Zion Church. The event was sponsored by The Crusade, founded by Barnett, and capped an afternoon march, rally and Unity Dinner kicking off another year of "Stop the Killing" campaigns and designating 1996 as "Fighting Back Year." Barnett said the goal is to reduce the Charlotte murder rate by 25

Politics in board setup

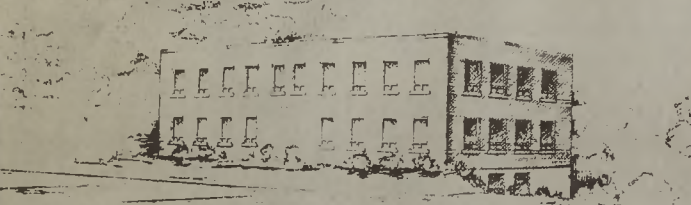
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Charlotte City Council and the Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners appointed members of the committee. It now includes no westside residents and few African Americans and women.

Twenty-two of the 25 committee members are white. An equal number are men. Most live in southeast Charlotte.

A citizens referendum on the new form of government will be held in November. African American and westside support for the city-county consolidation could be jeopardized by the lack of representation.

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