

Womack steps out front on ship

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historical content. Discovery Place turned it down when vice president of exhibits Rudy Cooper deemed the exhibit would only create "negative images" of African Americans. "We need to forget about slavery," Cooper told The Post earlier this year.

That argument doesn't hold up, says Womack, 36, who worked for the University of Texas system before moving to Charlotte six years ago as director of community programs for Opera Carolina.

"There are people in Charlotte who argue that the Henrietta Marie should not be on exhibit because it only opens up old wounds for blacks," Womack said. "We need to bring this exhibit because we need to remember. It is very painful I know, but more importantly, this exhibit is about remembering slavery and healing because our community needs to heal."

"The Jewish American community have built several Holocaust museums and they have healed as a community because they remember the sad parts and they are not going to repeat their past."

Discovery Place officials deny that Cooper's opinion alone influenced them to pass on displaying the exhibit. Officials say the exhibit did not meet their "hands-on science" criteria.

Museum of The New South also declined to display the Henrietta Marie. Executive director Emily Zimmern said



the museum is a young institution that needs to establish an image. "Unfortunately the Henrietta Marie does not fit into the image," she said.

Mint Museum officials turned the exhibit down because the facility did not have enough space.

Womack, a native of the Bronx, N.Y., says that she can't imagine her 6-year-old not realizing that she has a past. The Henrietta Marie is as much for future generations as the present.

"As adults, it is our responsibility to pass along the torch to younger generations to help give them a strong foundation about their past," she said.

The exhibition is designed to recreate the trade route taken by the Henrietta Marie starting from the slave traders office to the full-sized walk-through replica of Henrietta Marie's human cargo. Hands-on interactive modules allow visitors to access information about the display.

"After people leave Spirit

Square, they will have been enlightened about the transatlantic slave trade," Womack said.

Bringing the project to Charlotte will cost \$80,000, and organizers are looking to raise money from the community as well as traditional sources. "Our funding efforts will kick off April 1," Womack said. "If people can make a contribution of \$1 that would be great because every dollar counts," said Womack.

The Henrietta Marie is the only slave shipwreck identified, recorded, and archeologically examined and preserved in the Western Hemisphere. Other aspects of the exhibit include lectures by Cornel West, a noted scholar, and Jose Jones, President of the National Association of Black Scuba Divers. There will also be workshops, African dancing, panel discussions with topics such as "Women and the Slave Experience."

The O'Sambe-African/Brazilian Dance

Troupe, along with the Afro-American Children's Dance Troupe will be present. Paintings by artist who's work address the period of slavery, as well as contemporary art addressing slavery, will be on display at Spirit Square. The Afro-American Cultural Center, Discovery Place, the Public Library, and the Black Writers Network are collaborating with Spirit Square. But it took Womack's stepping forward to get this far.

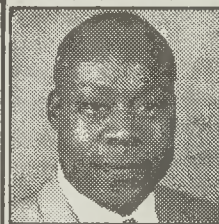
"This exhibit is very broad-based and Dawn Womack has worked hard to make this exhibit successful for the community and Spirit Square," said Don Baker, district director for U.S. Rep. Mel Watt. "I commend Spirit Square for stepping out to do this controversial exhibit."

WPEG station manager Wayne Brown, who is also helping raise money for the exhibit, said the Henrietta Marie crosses cultural and racial boundaries. "One of the main attractions for us is that this exhibit will be one of the most powerful and educational exhibits to come to Charlotte," he said. "This will be a great opportunity to delve into our history."

If you want to make a financial contribution, send you check or money order to: Spirit Square for Henrietta Marie Project, 345 N. College St., Charlotte, N.C. 28202, Attention: Development Dept. For more information call Spirit Square at 372-9664. All donations are tax deductible.

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In the
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On the occasion of "Women's History Month," In the Spirit of Ma'at will highlight the considerable contributions of African and African American women to world civilization.

In America, the royal and fighting spirit of the Africa queen can be witnessed in 'King' Harriet Tubman, 'Pharaoh' Sojourner Truth and 'Priestess' Maria Stewart. Warrior queen Ida B. Wells-Barnett was a mighty journalist who investigated the gruesome crime of lynching and spearheaded the Anti-Lynching Movement in America and England. In

1892, the year of her crusade, 255 lynchings had occurred, more than any previous year. Her fiery speeches were swords which cut and moved a many a person to action. Like a true warrior, Wells-Barnett carried a pistol and would "sell her life dearly." She also said, "A Winchester rifle should have a place of honor in every home... When the white man knows he runs the risk of biting the dust every time his Afro-American victim does, he will have greater respect for Afro-American life." Girlfriend didn't play.

"Queen" Mary McLeod Bethune rose from Maysville, SC in 1875, the first free child of enslaved African parents. Her father taught her to be proud of her pure African blood and her mother told her she was a descendant of African royalty. Bethune acknowledged her lineage and

her life's mission when she said, "For I am my mother's daughter, and the drums of Africa still beat in my heart. They will not let me rest while there is a single Negro boy or girl without a chance to prove his worth." Called by his-torian Paula Giddings, "the great brain truster," Bethune was an institution builder, holding leading offices in professional, civic and black organizations. She was founder and president of both the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs and the National Council of Negro Women, an organization representing one million black women. She advised Presidents Roosevelt and Truman and served as a consultant at the Conference to Draft a United Nations Charter. Amongst her numerous awards and honors, she received eleven honorary

degrees. Establishing Bethune-Cookman college with \$1.50, is just one example of an African American woman who exemplified resourcefulness, courage, imagination and vision.

Providing a model of extraordinary activism, Mary McLeod Bethune left us her "Last Will and Testament" in 1955, the year of her death. Known as the "Bethune Legacy," it is inscribed in its entirety on the base of the Bethune Memorial in Lincoln Park, Washington, D.C. In that document, Bethune advises African Americans from a position of strength, service and accomplishment. With the advent of the Million Man March, African Americans would be especially wise to accept her challenge to "develop confidence in one another" and to accept "a responsibility to our young people."

Churches say attacks not likely here

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lution of support for those churches proposed at the convention's mid-year meeting in May.

Rev. Walter McKelvey, pastor of Simpson-Gillespie United Methodist Church, said he is not aware of any specific actions being taken by local churches because of the arson attacks.

"We just had a meeting of the National Black Methodist for Church Renewal and there was not much talk there about these issues," McKelvey said.

"But there is a general concern about the resurgence of hate crimes between the races."

Bishop George Curry, who pastors several churches, including Present Day Ministries in Charlotte and a similar ministry in Fayetteville, said he doesn't think Charlotte's power brokers will allow such attacks in the Queen City.

"Knowing Charlotte, I don't believe the powers to be in this city will allow that to happen," Curry said. "If it does happen, it will not be anyone from this city."

Charlotte's history is not to allow riots or demonstrations.

"They don't want that kind of thing to happen. That is Charlotte's role model and image of not allowing that kind of thing to happen."

"I don't have any problems," he said. "I'm still watchful. I'm not doing anything particular

security wise."

Some pastors contacted last week just declined to talk about the burned churches.

But most, like Friendship's Jones, were sympathetic to their fellow Christians.

"This is an attack on the Christian faith," Jones said. "The African American church

has been the symbol of redemption, of love and what it means to be in the body of Christ throughout history.

"Apparently there is a segment of the larger culture that has no respect for the Christian church as a symbol of the body of Christ, out of whatever feelings for African Americans, that they would

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All too often the Black Community, particularly the business sector, pulls in two or more directions causing chaos and distortion in our community. UNITY can only be obtained through collective efforts. We must learn from the Hispanics, Asians and Caucasians on how to make it together. They hold a bond that is too strong to destroy. We use tools such as media and organizations to establish strife, opposed to using the same forms to unify. I call to you today... Let's come TOGETHER!

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