REMEMBERING

Black History Month

WHAT BLACK FOLKS' DID
Would America Be America Without the Negro People?

By Chris Levister

Remembrances during Black History Month (a concept that started as Negro History Week in 1927), provides Americans of all racial and ethnic backgrounds an opportunity to learn about the significant contributions of people of African descent who were chained, herded on to ships, physically forced to America and enslaved. Historian and educator, Carter G. Woodson, "The Father of Negro History," was instrumental in proposing that America designate the entire month of February, rather than a week, for Black History.

Many of my colleagues along with many of you are contemplating the need for this national observance. Why do we need to recognize one group of Americans? Why not observe White American or European Month? Until recent years, it was not easy to get a clear or accurate picture of Black life and history. Woodson's goal was two fold - a celebration of Black culture and contribution but more importantly he said, "it is this country's moral responsibility to right the myths, lies and distorted images of a people who have been systemically left out of the historical picture.

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the past will find himself condemned to repeat it."

The reason we celebrate Black History Month is that African-American history is the core of American history. It embodies world history, which is part of everyone's history. African-American history still remains excluded from many history books and classrooms. The national media continues to highlight the negative news of the plight of African-Americans instead of the essence and merit of our race. In The Souls Of Black Folk, W.E.B. Du Bois, wrote, "Our song, our toil, our cheer, and warning have been given to this nation in blood-brotherhood. Are not these gifts worth the giving? Is not this work and striving? Would America have been America without her Negro people?"

Thus, one week or a month is still not enough time to study or observe the contributions that African-Americans have made to the political, social and economic fabric of this nation. There are many unsung heroes and heroines who made great sacrifices with their blood, sweat, soul and their lives. The history of the Negro needs no embellishment or the doctoring of mythmakers. African-Americans need not be ashamed of their past. A pioneer Negro historian, E.A. Johnson in his, A School History of the Negro Race in America, noted in 1891 that "white authors, studiously left out many of the creditable deeds of the Negro."

"How must the little colored child feel when he has completed the assigned course of U.S. History and in it found no mention of that it was against the law to teach a slave to read or write." Instead Black and white children were fed with pictures of the barbaric scantily clothes African, the happy slave,
A Look Back

Garrett Morgan

THE TRAFFIC SIGNAL

1877-1963

Who Invented the First Stop Light and First Gas Mask?

“Garrett A. Morgan’s inventions were snubbed by city and fire officials when they learned he was a Black man.” In the early days of the automobile, traffic was controlled by a person sitting in a little tower at intersections, mainly operating stop and go signals. This all changed when Garrett A. Morgan saw a fatal accident between an automobile and a horse-drawn carriage on a busy street.

In November 1923, Morgan invented and patented the first automatic three-position stop light.

In 1916 Morgan became an “accidental hero” when, using a breathing device he had invented, he rescued nearly a dozen workers trapped in a smoke-filled tunnel beneath Lake Erie following a disaster.

Garrett Augustus Morgan, was an African-American businessman and inventor whose curiosity and innovation led to the development of many useful and helpful products. A practical man of humble beginnings, Morgan devoted his life to creating things that made the lives of other people safer and more convenient.

Among his inventions was an early traffic signal, that greatly improved safety on America’s streets and roadways. Indeed, Morgan’s technology was the basis for modern traffic signal systems and was an early example of what we know today as Intelligent Transportation Systems.

The son of former slaves, Garrett A. Morgan was born in Paris, Kentucky on March 4, 1877. His early childhood was spent attending school and working on the family farm with his brothers and sisters. While still a teenager, he left Kentucky and moved north to Cincinnati, Ohio in search of opportunity.

In 1907, Morgan opened his own sewing equipment and repair shop. It was the first of several businesses he would establish. In 1909, he expanded the enterprise to include a tailoring shop that employed 32 employees. The new company turned out coats, suits and dresses, all sewn with equipment that Morgan himself had made.

In 1920 Morgan moved into the newspaper business when he established the Cleveland Call. As the years went on, he became a prosperous and widely respected business man, and he was able to purchase a home and an automobile. Indeed it was Morgan’s experience while driving along the streets of Cleveland that led to the invention of the nation’s first patented traffic signal.

In 1923, Morgan opened the Ford Motor Company was founded in 1903 and with it American consumers began to discover the advantages of the open road.

In the early years of the 20th century, it was not uncommon for bicyclists, animal-powered wagons and new gasoline-powered motor vehicles to share the same streets and roadways with pedestrians. Accidents were frequent. After witnessing a collision between an automobile and a horse-drawn carriage, Morgan was convinced that something should be done to improve traffic safety.

While other inventors are reported to have experimented with even marketed traffic signals, Garrett A. Morgan was the first to apply for and acquire a U.S. patent for such a device. The patent was granted on November 20, 1923. Morgan later had the technology patented in Great Britain and Canada as well.

The Morgan traffic signal was a T-shaped pole and that featured three positions: Stop, Go and an all-directional stop position. This “third position” halted traffic in all directions to allow pedestrians to cross streets more safely.

Morgan’s traffic management device was used throughout North America until it was replaced by the red, yellow and green-light traffic signals currently used around the world. The inventor sold the rights to his traffic signal to the General Electric Corporation for $40,000. Shortly before his death, in 1963, Morgan was awarded a citation for his traffic signal by the United States Government.

Other Morgan Inventions. Garrett Morgan was constantly experimenting to develop new concepts. Though the traffic signal came at the height of his career and became one of his most renowned inventions, it was just one of several innovations he developed, manufactured and sold over the years.

Morgan invented a zig-zag stitching attachment for manually operated sewing machine. He also founded a company that made personal grooming products, such as hairdressing and the curved-tooth pressing comb.

Another Significant Contribution to Public Safety. On July 25, 1916, Morgan made national news for using a gas mask he had invented to rescue several men trapped during an explosion in an underground tunnel beneath Lake Erie. After the rescue, Morgan’s company received requests from fire departments around the country who wished to purchase the new masks. The Morgan gas mask was later refined for use by U.S. Army during World War I. In 1921, Morgan was awarded a patent for a Safety Hood and Smoke Protector. Two years later, a refined model of his early gas mask won a gold medal at the International Exposition of Sanitation and Safety, and another gold medal from the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

As word of Morgan’s life-saving inventions spread across North America and England, demand for these products grew. He was frequently invited to conventions and public exhibitions to demonstrate how his inventions worked.

Garrett A. Morgan died on August 27, 1963, at the age of 86. His life was long and full, and his creative energies have given us a marvelous and lasting legacy.

Courtesy of Christine Levisier and the United States Department of Transportation.
Benjamin Banneker was born in Maryland on November 9, 1731. His father and grandfather were former slaves.

A farmer of modest means, Banneker nevertheless lived a life of unusual achievement. In 1753, the young man borrowed a pocket watch from a well-to-do neighbor; he took it apart and made a drawing of each component, then reassembled the watch and returned it, fully functioning, to its owner.

From his drawings Banneker then proceeded to carve, out of wood, enlarged replicas of each part. Calculating the proper number of teeth for each gear and the necessary relationships between the gears, he constructed a working wooden clock that kept accurate time and struck the hours for over 50 years.

At age 58, Banneker began the study of astronomy and was soon predicting future solar and lunar eclipses. He compiled the ephemeris, or information table, for annual almanacs that were published for the years 1792 through 1797. "Benjamin Banneker's Almanac" was a top seller from Pennsylvania to Virginia and even into Kentucky.

In 1791, Banneker was a technical assistant in the calculating and first-ever surveying of the Federal District, which is now Washington, D.C.

The "Sable Astronomer" was often pointed to as proof that African Americans were not intellectually inferior to European Americans. Thomas Jefferson himself noted this in a letter to Banneker.

Banneker died on Sunday, October 9, 1806 at the age of 74. A few small memorial traces still exist in the Ellicott City/Oella region of Maryland, where Banneker spent his entire life except for the Federal survey. It was not until the 1990s that the actual site of Banneker’s home, which burned on the day of his burial, was determined.

In 1980, the U.S. Postal Service issued a postage stamp in his honor.

Elijah McCoy was born in Colchester, Ontario, Canada on May 2, 1844, the son of former slaves who had fled from Kentucky before the U.S. Civil War. Educated in Scotland as a mechanical engineer, Elijah McCoy returned to the United States and settled in Detroit, Michigan. He began experimenting with a cup that would regulate the flow of oil onto moving parts of industrial machines.

His first invention was a lubricator for steam engines, U.S. 129,843, which issued on July 12, 1872. The invention allowed machines to remain in motion to be oiled; his new oiling device revolutionized the industrial machine industry. Elijah McCoy established his own firm and was responsible for a total of 57 patents. The term "real McCoy" refers to the oiling device used for industrial machinery. His contribution to the lubricating device became so popular that people inspecting new equipment would ask if the device contained the real McCoy. This helped popularize the American expression, meaning the real thing. His other inventions included an ironing board and lawn sprinkler.

Elijah McCoy died on October 10, 1929 after a year in the Eloise Infirmary, Eloise, Michigan, suffering from senile dementia caused by hypertension. He was buried in Detroit, Michigan.

Granville T. Woods

It's hard to believe that a man who was forced to leave school at the age of ten could have patented over thirty-five electrical and mechanical inventions. Yet Granville T. Woods did just that, educating himself outside of school in practical skills for his future.

Born in Columbus, Ohio in April 23, 1856, Woods literally learned his skills on the job. Attending school in Columbus until age 10, he served an apprenticeship in a machine shop and learned the trades of machinist and blacksmith. During his youth he also went to night school and took private lessons. Even though he had to leave formal school at age ten Granville Woods realized that learning and education were essential for developing critical skills, abilities that would allow him to express his creativity with machinery. On the railroad. In 1872 he obtained a job as a fireman on the Danville and Southern railroad in Missouri, eventually becoming an engineer. He invested his spare time in studying electronics. In 1874 Woods moved to Springfield, Illinois worked in a rolling mill. He moved to the East in 1876 and worked part time in a machine shop. He took a mechanical engineering course in an eastern college. In 1878, he became an engineer aboard the Ironsides, a British steamer, and, within two years, he became Chief Engineer of the steamer. Even with this background and all his engineering skill he was unable to get anywhere in these jobs. His travels and experiences led him to settle in Cincinnati, Ohio.

But Granville T. Woods was a great electrician and an inventive genius. His talents could not go unnoticed.

Woods invented fifteen appliances for electric railways. Granville Woods received his first patent in 1884 on an improved steam boiler furnace (U.S. 229,854).

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George Washington Carver was born on a Missouri farm near Diamond Grove (now called Diamond), Newton County in Marion Township, Missouri. He received a B.S. from the Iowa Agricultural College in 1894 and a M.S. in 1896. He became a member of the faculty of Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts in charge of the school's bacterial laboratory work in the Systematic Botany department. His work with agricultural products developed industrial applications from farm products, called chemurgy in technical literature in the early 1900s. His research developed 325 products from peanuts, 108 applications for sweet potatoes, and 75 products derived from pecans. He moved to Tuskegee, Alabama in 1896 to accept a position as an instructor at the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute and remained on the faculty until his death in 1943. His work in developing industrial applications from agricultural products derived 118 products, including a rubber substitute and over 500 dyes and pigments, from 28 different plants. He was responsible for the invention in 1927 of a process for producing paints and stains from soybeans, for which three separate patents were issued:

U.S. 1,522,176 Cosmetics and Producing the Same. January 6, 1925.

U.S. 1,541,478 Paint and Stain and Producing the Same June 9, 1925.

U.S. 1,632,365 Producing Paints and Stains. June 14, 1927.

George Washington Carver was honored by U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in July 14, 1943 dedicating $30,000 for a national monument to be dedicated to his accomplishments. The area of Carver's childhood near Diamond Grove, Missouri has been preserved as a park, with a bust of the agricultural researcher, instructor, and chemical investigator. This park was the first designated national monument to an African American in the United States. George Washington Carver was bestowed an honorary doctorate from Simpson College in 1928. He was made a member of the Royal Society of Arts in London, England. He received the Spingarn Medal in 1923, which is given every year by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The Spingarn Medal is awarded to the Black person who has made the greatest contribution to the advancement of his race. Carver died of anemia at Tuskegee Institute on January 5, 1943 and was buried on campus beside Booker T. Washington. (DNB, p.95)

MOMENTS IN BLACK HISTORY

Milestones in Education:

1740 South Carolina makes it illegal to teach slaves to read or write.
1830 Southern states move to curb Black education in the wake of slave insurrections.
1867 Howard University is founded in Washington, D.C., by act of Congress, as a coeducational and multiracial institution to train ministers and teachers for freed Blacks. Howard has become a top-level research institution and the leading historically Black university in the United States.
1896 In the infamous Plessy v. Ferguson case, the Supreme Court upholds the policy of Separate but equal accommodations for Blacks, asserting that the Fourteen Amendment was not meant "to enforce social as distinguished from political Equality."

Lincoln University, America’s First Historically Black University Celebrates Sesquicentennial – 1854-2004

The first college expressly intended for the education of the Negro was established in Chester County, Pennsylvania, in 1854. Ashmun Institute was created after Negro students were barred from attending Princeton University. It was called Ashman Institute,
MADAM C.J. WALKER
HAIR CARE ENTREPRENEUR

C.J. Walker" traveled for a year and a half on a dizzying crusade throughout the heavily Black South and Southeast, selling her products door to door, demonstrating her scalp treatments in churches and lodges, and devising sales and marketing strategies. In 1908, she temporarily moved her base to Pittsburgh where she opened Lelia College to train Walker "hair..culturists.

By early 1910, she had settled in Indianapolis, then the nation's largest inland manufacturing center, where she built a factory, hair and manicure salon and another training school. Less than a year after her arrival, Walker grabbed national headlines in the Black press when she contributed $1,000 to the building fund of the "colored" YMCA in Indianapolis.

In 1913, while Walker traveled to Central America and the Caribbean to expand her business, her daughter A'Lelia, moved into a fabulous new Harlem townhouse and Walker Salon, designed by Black architect, Vertner Tandy. "There is nothing to equal it," she wrote to her attorney, F.B. Ransom. "Not even on Fifth Avenue."

Walker herself moved to New York in 1916, leaving the day-to-day operations of the Madam C. J. Walker Manufacturing Company in Indianapolis to Ransom and Alice Kelly, her factory forelady and a former school teacher. She continued to oversee the business and to run the New York office. Once in Harlem, she quickly became involved in Harlem's social and political life, taking special interest in the NAACP's anti-lynching movement to which she contributed $5,000.

In July 1917, when a white mob murdered more than three dozen Blacks in East St. Louis, Illinois, Walker joined a group of Harlem leaders who visited the White House to present a petition favoring federal anti-lynching legislation.

As her business continued to grow, Walker organized her agents into local and state clubs. Her Madam C. J. Walker Hair Culturists Union of America convention in Philadelphia in 1917 must have been one of the first national meetings of businesswomen in the country. Walker used the gathering not only to reward her agents for their business success, but to encourage their political activism as well. "This is the greatest country under the sun," she told them. "But we must not let our love of country, our patriotic loyalty cause us to abate one whit in our protest against wrong and injustice. We should protest until the American sense of justice is so aroused that such affairs as the East St. Louis riot be forever impossible."

By the time she died at her estate, Villa Lewaro, in Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, she had helped create the role of the 20th Century, self-made American businesswoman; established herself as a pioneer of the modern Black hair-care and cosmetics industry; and set standards in the African-American community for corporate and community giving.

Tenacity and perseverance, faith in herself and in God, quality products and "honest business dealings" were the elements and strategies she prescribed for aspiring entrepreneurs who requested the secret to her rags-to-riches ascent. "There is no royal flower-strewn path to success," she once commented. "And if there is, I have not found it for if I have accomplished anything in life it is because I have been willing to work hard."

"Born Sarah Breedlove on December 23, 1867 on a Delta, Louisiana plantation, this daughter of former slaves transformed herself from an uneducated farm laborer and laun..."
Business owner
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3907 Tyler Street, Riverside CA 92503
Who was the founder and first Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church?

Born in 1760 to parents who were slaves, Richard Allen grew up in Delaware, where he developed a Christian faith so strong that he was able to convert his owner, who had allowed him to study religion. Allen purchased his freedom and eventually settled in Philadelphia, where he preached at St. George’s Episcopal Church. The congregation was all white but, Allen encouraged African-Americans to join. One Sunday morning, while kneeling in prayer, a trustee insisted that Allen and other Black communicants move to the rear of the church. Allen and his colleague, Absalom Jones walked out in protest. That same year Allen and Jones formed the Free African Society, a mutual aid organization that later built the St. Thomas African Episcopal Church, naming Jones its pastor.

In 1794 Allen overhauled a blacksmith shop, gathered his own congregation and formed the Bethel African Methodist Church. The current Bethel Church still stands. It is the oldest piece of property in the United States continually owned by African-Americans. In 1816 Allen became the first bishop of the newly formed separate branch of Methodism now known as the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME).

A Journey In Black History

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A Look Back

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The Black Voice News

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*Saluting African American Inventors*

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2. **Submit a Cal Grant GPA Verification Form by March 2nd.** This one’s easy because your school does a lot of the work for you. At most, you’ll just have to fill in a few blanks. Some schools even send these forms automatically, but you’ll need to check with the counseling office to make sure.

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2. Cal Grant GPA Verification Form

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