—The Big Three

(Continued from page 17)

white and other free persons were to enjoy. *The Negro in the Making of America* should be a must on yr reading list. Do it soon.

The Supreme Law of the Land

The United States Constitution, the supreme law of the land, has a preamble "A pre-what Grandpa?" A preamble. This is, according to Webster's Dictionary, an introduction to a constitution, statute stating its reason and purpose, etc. The preamble describes what the purpose of the Constitution is and introduces the various sections of the Constitution. As I was saying, the Constitution includes a preamble, seven articles, and 26 amendments. The Constitution separates the powers of the government into the executive, legislative, and judicial areas. The executive branch is headed by the President of the United States; the legislative branch includes the House of Representatives and the Senate; and the judicial branch includes the Supreme Court and the laws of the country. The Supreme Court, as I said earlier, is the final authority on the Constitution.

The United States Constitution

The men chosen to draft and write the Constitution were considered the brightest and most experienced men of their day. Their intellect is reflected in the high sounding words one finds in the Constitution. I will read some of the Articles of the Constitution and then explain to you in words I hope you will understand. All of the Constitution and amendments have meaning for all Americans. There are some sections which have greater meaning for blacks who were slaves in the early days of this country and for those of us who are black and free in this Twentieth Century.

The PREAMBLE begins: We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

These words describe the need for the United States Constitution. The people in the original thirteen colonies felt that they needed some general agreement, some rules or regulations that would result in a better way of living than they had in England. They wanted to have a body of laws that would guide people in their business and personal dealings with one another. They wanted peace and harmony among and between individuals, families, cities and states; they wanted to have proper defense from the enemy whether they were the Indians or people from other colonies or countries. The Constitution would be the one major document that would guarantee these things for the people in the original thirteen colonies as well as for their children, their children's children, and forever.

Charter Number Three: The Bill of Rights (1791)

The Bill of Rights represent a balance of the pendulum of government. The Declaration of Independence, based on the concept of the "social contract" between the people and their government, was followed by a weak government under the Articles of Confederation. Then the pendulum swung to the strong central government outlined in the Constitution. Lastly this swing was counterbalanced by the Bill of Rights, so that a strong central government could be maintained with due respect for the rights of the people.

Included in the Bill of Rights are: freedom of speech, press, religion, assembly, right to keep and bear arms, no person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law, right to a speedy and public trial, and no unreasonable searches and seizures.

—Sojourner Truth

(Continued from page 17)

energy of a naturally powerful mind — the fearlessness and child-like simplicity of one untrammeled by education of conventional adherence to principle — and a native enthusiasm which, under different circumstances might easily have produced a Joan of Arc.'

Little wonder, during the second half of the last century, Sojourner Truth was among the best and most famous anti-slavery orators. Among the outstanding black and white abolitionists she met and worked with include William Lloyd Garrisson, Gerit Smith, Parker Pillsbury, and Lyman Beecher Stowe. Harriet Beecher Stowe called her "the Libyan Syvil".

Sojourner also was admitted entry into the White House to speak with President Abraham Lincoln, even though she was an uninvited visitor.

Her life, however, was far from easy. Sojourner was stoned, beaten and constantly harrassed by sherrifs, mobs organized and sponsored by slavers and other racists. One day a heckler, in the middle of one of her speeches, shouted out to tell her that he cared no more about her mission and speeches than he would about a fleabite. "Maybe not," Soujourner replied, "but the Lord willin', I'll keep you scratchin'."

And so she did, along with other abolitionists until the scratching opened up a major wound, yet to heal.

When she died at the age of 86 on November 26, 1883, Sojourner had seen some rays from the sun of freedom she set out to reach — rays that signaled the end of slavery, former slaves given the right to vote.

Sojourner believed that death was only the beginning, not the end of life. To her it was only like walking from one room to another. So, on November 26, 1883, at three in the morning, Sojourner Truth walked from "this room to the next". "I ain't gonna die honey," she gasped. "I'se going home, like a shooting star."

Blacks in military focus at UMBC

"Black Defenders on Land and Sea: From the Revolutionary Era Through World War II" will be the focus of this year's Black History Month, sponsored by the African American Studies Department at UMBC (University of Maryland Baltimore County).

Beware of religious traps

By George B. Gary

A great number of people are caught in a religious trap because of judging religious conviction on the basis of emotional feelings, instead of taking God at His word, which is to hear Him, believe Him, and obey Him.

For these are the combinations to unlock the heavenly door, not by emotions. Some are only interested in sermons that stir the emotion, even if they are not according to the truth which is to set them free.

The spirit of truth should do the electrifying and not just the sound of the voice. "...ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31, 32).

Sermons from God are directed at setting people free from ignorance, sin, poverty, disease and racism which are the works of Satan. "...For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the Devil," (1 John 3:8). This is the joy of religion.

People are falling into traps through fear because of ministers feeding the emotion to gain control of the mind. When you are in a highly emotional state of mind, you become rash and are subject to captivity. "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans16:18). They use all kinds of gimmicks to show themselves the only ones right to draw people to them.

Their motive is not the souls of men, but tax rip off in the name of religion, which holds the government captive. They have become great corporations, merchandising business with their monumental building.

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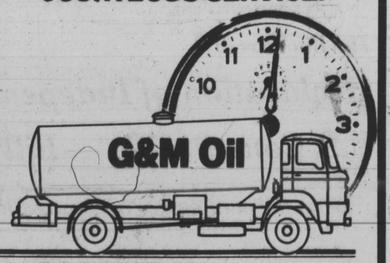

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Anna Julia Cooper pioneer human rights advocate

"It isn't what we say about ourselves, it's what our life stands for — Anna J. Cooper, Aug. 10, 1958.

She was the first woman from the District of Columbia to earn a doctorate from the Sorbonne. She was among the first black women to earn a bachelor's degree from an American college. And she became principal of the first public high school for black people in the United States.

Anna Julia Cooper, feminist, human rights advocate, educational reformer and teacher, was born into slavery as Annie Haywoood in Raleigh, NC, about 1858 (her exact birthdate is unknown).

But Cooper's life represented far more than a resume of achievements. It illustrated, concludes Louise Daniel Hutchinson, Cooper's biographer and historian at the Smithsonian's Anacostia Neighborhood Museum in Washington, D.C., that significant accomplishments could be made by a black woman against seemingly insurmountable odds for blacks late in the 19th century.

"When we consider," Hutchinson writes, "that she...began her life under the most adverse circumstances and at a time when the mental capacity of blacks and women was questioned and disparaged, her achievements take on greater significance."

Cooper, indeed, has won a large place or respect in American history for stead-fastly refusing to bow to the prevailing view held in the late 1800s that black people should forego higher education for work in the trades and fields—work, this thinking proceeded, that would help blacks better themselves and improve their relations with southern whites embittered by post-Civil War Reconstruction politics.

Fate gave Anna Cooper a very long life, one that for American blacks spanned a century of tumultuous history—servitude, Civil War, emancipation, Reconstruction and the brief hope of full citizenship, reaction, segregation and, at last, the slow movement toward real equality.

Cooper died in the 1960s as the civil rights movement was coming a life; yet her life's work aided that cause. She also was well ahead of her time in arguing for women's rights—in particular, roles for the black woman.

ANNA JULIA COOPER (1858 - 1964) led a remarkable life. Feminist, human rights advocate, educational reformer and teacher, she although born in slavery, was the first among black women to earn a bachelor's degree from an American college.

The Civil War was barely three years over when little Anna, encouraged by her self-sacrificing mother (whose child presumably was fathered by her master, Dr. Fabius J. Haywood Sr.), went off to school at Raleigh's new St. Augustine's Normal School and Collegiate Institute, established by the Episcopal Church to prepare black teachers to instruct black youths.

Bright and precocious, Anna served as a tutor at the school, where she received a small stipend to pay for board and tuition, but as she would later recall, "after a while I had a great deal of time on my hands, I had devoured what was put before me, and . . . was looking for more."

In that quest, Anna developed a courageous side that would serve her well in her professional life. Generations before it was in vogue, she fought against sexism at St. Augustine's, confronting the issue as she tried to enroll in a Greek class. Told the class was for males only, she fought back, won a victory—and a seat in the class.

Ironically, a close friendship developed between the young woman and her Greek studies teacher, ministry student George A.C. Cooper, and at the close of the 1877 school year, they were married. "He was probably just the kind of balance wheel that this intense young woman needed in her life," Hutchinson suggests. But the shared life and plans they had made were not to be; George Cooper died two years later, on Sept. 27, 1879.

Now 21 and a full-time teacher at St. Augustine's, Cooper in 1881 looked toward the possibility of higher education, applying to Ohio's Oberlin College, among the first U.S. schools to admit blacks and, especially important to this woman, admired for its academic standards. With her characteristic directness and candor, Cooper wrote the school's president asking to be accepted as a "free tuition" student. "Southern schools pay very meanly," she declared, but "I expect to have money enough to keep me one or two years at college..."

Managing, resourcefully, to complete a classical curriculum at Oberlin in 1884, Cooper soon found another chance to take a stand against sexism. She had been promised a professorship by the president of St. Augustine's, but that commitment was ignored by his successor, who instead offered Cooper the position of "teacher in charge of girls."

She refused, then headed for Wilberforce College, a black church school in Xenia, Ohio, to chair the science and modern language departments.

For this work, Oberlin awarded Cooper a master's, and its president recommended her for a teaching post in Washington, D.C., at the respected M Street Preparatory School (Later, Dunbar High), one of the nation's few black schools at the time—and also fertile ground for the coming clash of two competing, nationally important educational philosophies.

When she arrived at M Street, Tuskegee Institute in Alabama was emerging as "the model" for black education. Founded by Booter T. Washington, Tuskegee stressed vocational and industrial training as a step to improve the lives of black people and relations with whites as the Reconstruction era gave way to discrimination and segregation.

Simply put, Washington urged his fellow Negroes to forget about politics and a college education and to learn how to be better farmers and artisans. Cooper also favored industrial training; yet she found herself far more closely aligned with the black scholar and author W.E.B. DuBois who advocated classical instruction for his race.

"The object was black survival," says Hutchinson, noting that Cooper and others felt that, without the academic programs, there would be little hope of getting black students into college and ultimately the professions. "These students, then, would become the bootstraps by which the entire race would be uplifted," Hutchinson concludes.

Cooper became principal of M Street in 1902, but by the 1904-05 term she was at odds with the white-dominated board, which insisted on the vocational approach, believing, Hutchinson writes, that blacks were "mentally inferior" and that such an approach was therefore "appropriate".

The angered board

(Continued on page 21)

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