Black History Month

February is Black History Month and, as usual, the Washington AFRO - AMERICAN is publishing this week its annual Black History Supplement. This year the Association for the Study of Afro - American Life and History under direction of Dr. J. Rupert Picott is centering its celebration of history on the United States Constitution and how it has impacted upon the lives and progress of black people in this country.

It is a most appropriate topic for historical discussion. All of us are aware, from reading other historical documents, that the early days of the black population in America was sadly tainted by slavery. Unfortunately, too, most of us have thought, as our high school textbooks taught us that the Civil War ended slavery and President Abraham Lincoln's famed Emancipation of Proclamation gave freedom to blacks in America.

Much has been written along these lines but, in truth, much of what has been written has never seriously addressed the problems of freedom and what it really meant to black people. Three major documents are regarded as the Charters of Freedom in the United States — the Declaration of Independence, (1776) the Constitution of the United States (1787) and the Bill of Rights (1791).

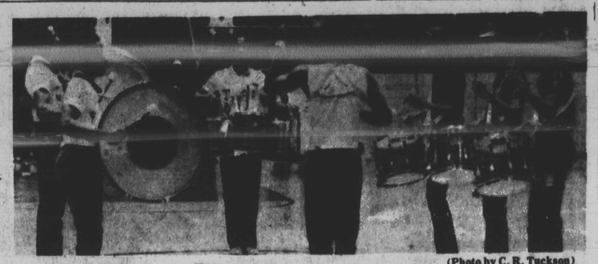
While these Charters of Freedom have provided the pathway to achievement and progress for blacks in America, traditionally they have had to struggle, fight and battle inch by inch to gain what progress they have made, and, in some instances, these same Charters of Freedom have been twisted to block the road to success for them.

Nothing has been easy for them, and often what they have accomplished has been lost in the hidden archives of American history.

Thus, the Washington AFRO - AMERICAN is happy to join with the Association for the Study of Afro - American Life and History to bring to light some of the valued and historical achievements that black people have done in this city, in this country and in the world.

The contributions by blacks have been often overlooked and frequently regarded as "insignificant and unimportant" but the record shows a different view; every achievement they have made, no matter how it was twisted in the general context of history, has been an important step toward America's concept of ideal humanity.

We need to study these achievements and honor the men and women involved in them. We need to do this not only during Black History Month in February, but constantly. We can do this by greater use of the libraries, literature published by the ASALH and, of course, the Black Press such as the AFRO - AMERICAN which has been a weekly chronicle of Black History on through the years.



'THUNDER MACHINE' is the name of the drummers from Howard University's marching band which entertains at half - time during basketball games at Burr Gym.

(Photo by C. R. Tucksen)

Remember our African ancestry

"And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." Gn. 11:6.

I beg Blacks during Black History Month to remember the strength of our African ancestry - Ethiopia (Sudanese Empires) Ghana, Mali, Songhay - how their superior culture contributed to Western Civilization.

The African Warriors standing toe to toe with the Europeans defending themselves with spears-in-hand against deadly bullets. The Europeans suppressing Africa's culture and stealing the credit as leaders in man's early development and as leaders of civilization.

And reach back to the thirteenth century and address that same courage and pride as our ancestors and boycott all daily newspapers, all magazines, turn off your radios and televisions including Cable TV.

If there is a black food chain in your state - as Fedco Foods in New York, carpool with neighbors and shop there for food and do without luxuries and after a month, white society will realize, despite their wealth and political strength, that they are going to play "Hell" the next time they show a Black woman the disrespect of entering her home and placing bugs and a television, monitor and watch her do personal things like bathing, intimacy - things they would hang black man for the thought of doing to white women.

We either stop it now or it will consume us all. The white man has to realize that black woman is appreciated and respected too. Gil Noble, on "Like It Is," is under fire for running a talk show contrary to a Jew, while Blacks are demeaning themselves and underminding their own purpose helping white society put me through sheer horror.

Let white society know that we may not have the wealth to give a housewife prime time on TV, indirect news articles, etc., nor the money to create our own garden of Eden, but we've got group power and the common sense and courage to use it, with GOD on our side - minusHIS little green acre.

ELLA M. NURSE

Pepco salutes Black History

In honor of Black History Month 1983, the Potomac Electric Power Company will pay tribute to the achievements of black Americans by distributing educational materials to Washington area school children and sponsoring cultural programs for PEPCO employees and senior citizens.

PEPCO's Community Relations and Educational Services department is distributing to local schools the booklet "Black Contributors to Science and Energy Technology."

The booklet profiles 24 scientists and inventors who have made significatn contributions in many fields, including space technology, transportation and construction.

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One of the achievers is Lewis H. Latimer, who worked with Thomas Edison's research team to develop the electric light.

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The booklets are accompained by wall posters spotlighting the Mary McLeod Bethune, Frederick Douglas and Martin Luther King, Jr.

—War heroes

(Continued from page 28)

All-black flying clubs would buy their own planes, train their own members and set up their own operations. The clubs promoted air shows and long-distance flights, actitivies that helped increase interest in and awareness of aviation.

One of the first black flying clubs in the United States was the Challenger Air Pilots' Association in Chicago. Barred from established airports in Chicago, the club opened its own airstrip in 1933 outside the black township of Robbins, Ill., later moving its flight operations to Harlem Airport in Oaklawn.

"The operator of Harlem Airport, a white man named Fred Schumaker, allowed the club members to fly in and out of his place, a major concession at the time," Hardesty says.

In his research for the exhibition and a book to be published this month, Hardesty found that segregation, although severe, "was not universal. At different times and in different ways, concerned whites would step in and lend a helping hand."

One Challenger Association member, Cornelius R. Coffey, became one of the first certified black aircraft mechanics in the country. Recognizing the need for qualified engineers and mechanics, he founded the Coffey School of Aeronautics in 1937 at Harlem Airport with fellow aviator Willa Brown. Coffey's school was one of the first to offer expert flight instruction to blacks.

Los Angeles rivaled Chicago as a hub of black aviation. In 1929, a small group of aviation enthusiasts there banded together to form the Bessie Coleman Aero Club. Two years later, the club sponsored the first all-black air show in the country, an event that attracted an estimated 15,000 spectators.

Black aviation in Los Angeles achieved its greatest fame in 1932 when the club sponsored thr transcontinental flight of James H. Banning and Thomas C. Allen. Allen, a 25-year-old pilot and mechanic, learned of a $1,000 prize offered to the first black to fly cross country. His major problem: no plane. Thirty-two-year-old Banning, on the other hand, was a skilled stunt pilot who owned a four-year-old plane with a 14-year-old engine that needed some work.

They formed a partnership. Never mind that Banning had flown his "Alexander Eaglerock" a total of 10 minutes and Allen had never been in the plane before — or at least so the story goes.

Their history-making flight from Los Angeles to New York took 21 days; 41 hours and 27 minutes were actually spent in the air. With only $100 in their pockets for expenses, the team stopped in towns along the way where they had relatives and friends, tossing leaflets over towns at one point and pawning a suit and watch at another, all to raise funds for fuel to reach the next city. They quickly became known as "The Flying Hobos."

In contrast to these aerial vagabonds, C. Alfred Anderson and Dr. Albert E. Forsythe became the first black aviators to complete a round-trip transcontinental flight in 1933 in a systematic and well-financed excursion.

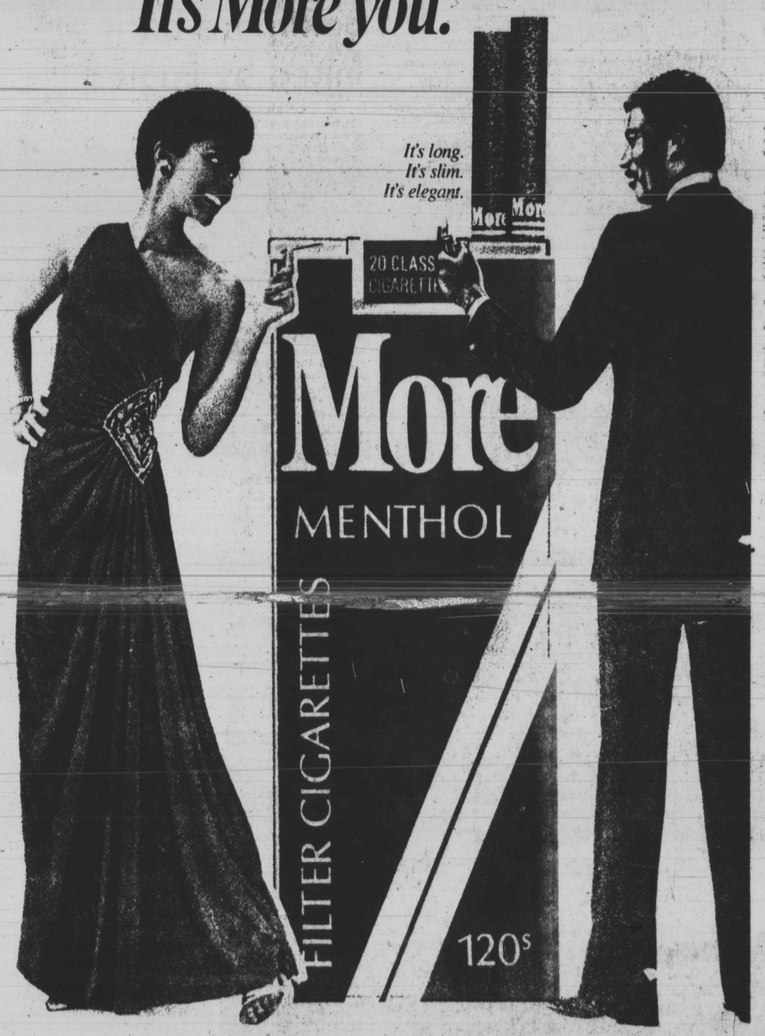
In recognition of the need for more qualified pilots of all races, the Civilian Pilot Training Program was created in 1939 with federal funds. The program offered blacks an opportunity to receive flight training, though still on a segregated basis. Schools such as the Coffey School of Aeronautics, Washington, D.C.'s Howard University and Alabama's Tuskegee Institute participated in the program.

By 1941, 102 blacks had their flying licenses, a tenfold increase in the number of black American aviators in one decade, but still a miniscule segment of the tens of thousands of pilots licensed in the United States. With war looming in Europe, the Army Air Corps decided to open military careers to blacks, activating the 99th Fighter Squadron in March 1941. By 1944, three additional air units joined the 99th, forming the well-known 332nd Fighter Group under the command of then-Colonel Benjamin O. Davis Jr.

During World War II, the 332nd established an impressive combat record. Serving primarily in Italy and North Africa, the group flew more than 15,000 combat stories and downed 216 aircraft, winning the coveted Distinguished Unit Citation.

Participation in the war effort brought a new sense of pride to the black community, an expanded base for black involvement in aviation and a renewed call to end segregation in the armed forces.

It's More you.



Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

12 mg "tar", 1.4 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method

FRIDAY PLUS WE WRAP IT EACH WEEK FOR Y-O-U!