New Film for Prince

By Ida Peters

Q. Please tell me why we have a Black History Month? Why is it necessary after a month saluting Martin Luther King?

J. M.M.
Columbia, Md.

A. The true facts of the contributions of Afro-Americans to the discovery, pioneering, development and continuance of America have not been properly and adequately presented in the textbooks, media and other communication devices in this country. Indeed, for the most part Blacks have been left out of the written record about America. In order to understand Black History our children must learn that Africa is the homeland of most of America's Black population. West Africa, Ghana, Mali and Songhai were the first to feel the impact of the European slave trade. For many, movies and TV pictured Africa as steaming jungles, and Cleopatra was a blond with blue eyes while true history shows she was brown with wooley hair. Also the Egyptians invented cosmetics and hair straighteners.

The people of Africa range widely in types, speak hundreds of languages and includes Semites, Hamites, Blacks, Christians, Moslems and Pagans. Latest scholarship has uncovered evidence that Africa was the home of the earliest known humans. They influenced ancient Egypt, conquered it for a time and helped to preserve and disseminate its culture. During the late Middle Ages, West African kingdoms developed complex political, economic, social and cultural institutions.

There's more to Black History than Martin Luther King and Frederick Douglass, the great abolitionist. Here are some facts:

1350—Omari, in his Massalik al-absad, wrote of exploration across the seas by the ships of Mali.

1375—Legend among North American Indians about people coming from the land of the sun (the East?) who had Black skins and "curly" hair.

1492—Peter Alonzo Nino, pilot of one of Columbus' ships was of Black ancestry.

1501—Diego el Negro (James the Black) was cabin boy on Columbus' fourth voyage.

1512—Peter Mexia, of African descent, traveled with Ponce de Leon in Florida in search of the "Fountain of Youth."

1619—Twenty Blacks landed with the earliest English colonists at Jamestown, before the Mayflower.

Prince

All letters should be addressed to DAWN Magazine, 628 N. Eutaw St., Baltimore, Md. 21201. All questions are welcome, but while Dawn cannot provide individual answers, questions of general interest will be used in this column.

Q. Whatever happened to the marriage of Glynn Turman and Aretha Franklin? I see his career is going sky-high with regular appearances on Bill Cosby's "Different World" as the R.O.T.C. instructor? Has she married her longterm fiance," Willie Wilkerson?

E. J. O.
Durham, N.C.

A. Aretha Franklin married Glynn Turman in April, 1978 and they combined their seven children in the lap of luxury, Hollywood style, in a large mansion in Encino, Calif. In the new book, "Aretha Franklin: The Queen of Soul" by Mark Bego he says that Aretha never explained to the press or co-workers why she left Glynn. Whatever happened, the breakup had a devastating effect on Aretha. He also speculates on why Aretha hasn't married her longtime beau, Willie Wilkerson. He thinks that wedding bells signal some sort of jinx with the men in her life.

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Q. Is there any truth to the rumor that the great Prince is about to make another movie?

K. B. ANDERSON
Philadelphia, PA.

A. According to trade magazine *Variety*, Prince is getting ready to do another feature film, this time for Warner Brothers. He's going to star and direct. His love interest is supposed to be Kim Basinger.

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Q. I enjoyed Eddie Murphy's "Harlem Nights" which the White critics around here brushed off. Please look up and tell me how its doing at the box office.

V. M. S.
Baltimore, Maryland

A. "Harlem Nights" is doing quite well, thank you. In the Jan. 10, 1990 *Variety*, on the Top 40 List, "Harlem Nights" ranks No. 2; has grossed more than $17 million in seven weeks on the chart.

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