

# Charleston Club Tattler

Volume 18, Issue 81

A publication of The Charleston S.C. Club of Washington, D.C. Area

Website: <http://charlestonclub.com>

February 1, 2015



## Who Started Black History Month?

### The Father of Black History Month

**Carter Godwin Woodson** was born on Dec. 19, 1875 in New Canton, VA. He was the son of former



slaves, James and Eliza Riddle Woodson. He was the oldest of nine children. His father helped Union Soldiers during the Civil War and moved his family to West Virginia when he heard that Huntington (WV) was building a high school for blacks. Woodson became an African-American historian, author, journalist and the founder of the *Association for the Study of African American Life and History*. He was one of the first scholars to study African-American history and a founder of *Journal of Negro History* in 1916, Woodson has been cited as the father of black history.

Coming from a large, poor family, Carter Woodson could not regularly attend school. He was self-educated, Woodson mastered the fundamentals of common school subjects by age 17. Wanting more education, Carter went to Fayette County (WV) to earn a living as a miner in the coal fields. He was able to devote only a few months each year to his schooling.

In 1895, at the age of 20, Woodson entered Douglass High School, where he received his diploma in less than two years. He earned his Bachelor of Literature degree from Berea College in Kentucky in 1903 by taking classes part-time between 1901 and 1903.

From 1903 to 1907, Woodson was a school supervisor in the Philippines. Later, he attended the University of Chicago, where he was awarded an A.B. and A.M. in 1908. He was a member of the first black fraternity Sigma Pi Phi and a member of Omega Psi Phi. He completed his PhD in history at Harvard University in 1912, where he was the second African American (after W.E.B. Du Bois) to earn a doctorate. His doctoral dissertation, *The Disruption of Virginia*, was based on research he did at the Library of Congress while teaching high school in Washington, DC. After earning the doctoral degree, he continued teaching in public schools, later joining the faculty at Howard University as a professor, where he served as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Convinced that the role of African American history and the history of other cultures was being ignored or misrepresented among scholars, Woodson saw a need for research into the neglected past of African Americans. Along with Alexander L. Jackson, Woodson published *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861* in 1915. And he also wrote many historical works, including the 1933 book *The Mis-Education of the Negro*.

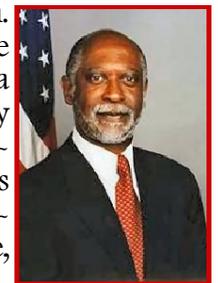
On February 7, 1926 he announced the celebration of "Negro History Week", considered the precursor of Black History Month. Woodson pioneered the celebration of "Negro History Week", designated for the second week in February, to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln on February 12<sup>th</sup> and Frederick Douglass on February 14<sup>th</sup>. The week of recognition became accepted and has been extended as the full month of February, now known as Black History Month. The expansion of Black History Week was first proposed by the leaders of the Black United Students at Kent State University in February 1969. The first celebration of the Black History Month took place at Kent State one year later, in February 1970.

At the time of Negro History Week's launch Woodson contended that the teaching of black history was essential to ensure the physical and intellectual survival of the race within broader society: *"If a race has no history, it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated. The American Indian left no continuous record. He did not appreciate the value of tradition; and where is he today? The Hebrew keenly appreciated the value of tradition, as is attested by the Bible itself. In spite of worldwide persecution, therefore, he is a great factor in our civilization."*

Dr. Carter Goodwin Woodson died on Monday, April 3, 1950 in Washington, DC; he was 74 years old. He is buried in Lincoln Cemetery in Suitland, MD.

### Amb. James I. Gadsden receives Harvey Gantt Award

Former U.S. Ambassador James Irvin Gadsden was born on March 12, 1948 in Charleston. On January 18<sup>th</sup> he appeared at the church he attended as a youth to deliver a keynote address and receive the Harvey Gantt Triumph Award for his contributions to civil and human rights. He was the special guest at the 43rd Martin Luther King Tri-County Ecumenical Service, held at Morris Street Baptist Church.



In a recent interview, Gadsden shared his early experiences, discussed the importance of education and provided insights into his long career in the Foreign Service. It all began in the segregated schools of Charleston. He attended Courtenay Elementary, Simonton Middle School and then, from 1962 to 1964, Charles A. Brown High School before finishing his secondary education in New York City.

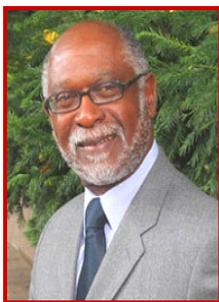
During his years at C.A. Brown, Gadsden participated in civil rights demonstrations, church meetings and marches, but he left for the north before his friends and fellow stu-

dents, including Millicent Brown, managed to integrate the public school system, he said. At C.A. Brown, his teachers and supervisors were dedicated to the students, "maneuvering in the absence of integration" to provide them with a high-quality education as well as important life lessons. Principal Nathaniel Manigault was especially adept at promoting a progressive agenda that prepared students for success, Gadsden said. Mr. Manigault singled out students who showed special talents and pushed them to take advantage of an education exchange program with New York City schools administered by the Quaker organization The American Friends Service Committee. For example, the late Jack McCray, a former jazz advocate and Post and Courier writer, was sent to the Brooklyn Friends School; Gadsden enrolled at Elizabeth Irwin High School. To convince Gadsden's parents that this was a great opportunity for their son, Manigault visited the house every night for two weeks, Gadsden said. Eventually, the elder James Gadsden, who worked as a janitor, and Hazel Gaines Gadsden, a maid and housewife, agreed. Other C.A. Brown students went on to do great things, too. Ralph Dawson attended Yale, he was roommates with Howard Dean and went on to practice labor law in New York City. Charles Foster integrated The Citadel in 1966 and went on to run an employment agency. At the time, U.S. Rep. James Clyburn was a history teacher at the school.

Clyburn said Gadsden was a student who stood out. "Gadsden was a very special student and someone I enjoyed getting to know during my teaching career, and we developed a friendship that still continues," Clyburn said in a statement provided to The Post and Courier. "His homecoming symbolizes the importance of education to our nation's youth."

While at Elizabeth Irwin High School, Gadsden excelled, especially at French, math and physics, he said. He took an interest in literature and music. His SAT French subject test score was 685, so high it exempted him from language requirements at college. One day, his guidance counselor asked him where he wanted to go to college. Howard University, or City College of New York, came Gadsden's reply. "No, you're going to Harvard."

At Harvard, Gadsden majored in economics, studied politics and took a course in music appreciation. He was seeking a rounded education, new experiences, he said. "I developed an interest in world affairs rooted in the course that Clyburn taught." Then his life took a turn southward. Some friends were doing social outreach work in Peru, where local families would host volunteers. Gadsden went, became close to his host family and began to experience the nuances of another culture. He found a certain atonal music irritating, even if everyone else enjoyed it, he said. Then it dawned on him: "I realized they weren't the problem, I was the problem." It was a fantastic leap of enlightenment, he said. He understood his education was



too rooted in Western thought and perception; he began to question the standard euro-centric historical narrative.

He graduated from Harvard (cum laude) in 1970 with a degree in economics, then pursued a master's in Chinese studies at Stanford University, thinking that at some point it might become useful. The trick to a successful life, he said, was to "figure out what the game is, then get ahead of it." In 1972, he finished at Stanford and joined the Foreign Service, just four months after President Richard Nixon's trip to China. His degree was useful. He went to Taiwan. His diplomatic career was underway. Soon he shifted to European affairs, helping advance "single market" initiatives that would better unify the continent economically. By the mid-1990s, he was deputy chief of missions stationed in Budapest, Hungary, encouraging that country's transition to capitalism.

Returning to the U.S. in 1997, Gadsden was named deputy assistant secretary of state for European affairs, on NATO expansion. One evening, he rose from his office desk at the State Department to stretch, wandered to the window and looked out. To his left was the flagpole atop which fluttered the Stars and Stripes. To the right, on the other side of the Potomac River, was the Robert E. Lee mansion at Arlington. In between, he could see the Lincoln Monument and the Vietnam Memorial. In the distance, across the Tidal Basin, he glimpsed the Jefferson Memorial. "My goodness," he thought. "There is a sweep of American history. How on Earth did a poor black kid from Charleston, SC, get to stand in front of this window?"

Then someone brought in more memos and Gadsden got back to work. The icing on the diplomatic cake came in 2002 when he received invitations from Secretary of State Colin Powell and President George W. Bush to become ambassador to Iceland. "It was a great surprise, a great honor," Gadsden said. In 2005, he joined the faculty of the National War College in Washington, DC, designed a course on European relations and settled in as a leader of the school. In late September 2007, he retired. The school threw him a nice party. A young man approached him and asked: "What are you doing between now and Christmas? We need you in New York to twist the arms of our European friends to get a U.N. resolution passed." He had retired on a Friday. He was hired the following Monday and found himself moving into a New York City apartment on Tuesday. After three busy months, he retired again.

His longtime friend Millicent Brown, who helped integrate the Charleston public schools in 1963 and went on to a career in academia, spoke of what she perceives as a paradox: It is right and proper to celebrate Gadsden's accomplishments, but we do so at the risk of diminishing others. "He is exceptional," Brown said. "He is a focused, ultimate professional with just an incredible amount ... of integrity, but also great gifts and insight. The conflict for me is, as someone who has studied African-American history and U.S. history for a very long time, I think it is also dangerous if we elevate James as if he is a superman." Yes,

he is brilliant, she said, but "there are so many James Gadsdens, and potential James Gadsdens." The diplomat is the product of several forces - talent and intelligence, community support, strong family values, a culture of achievement and more - coming together at once, Brown noted. "He serves as such a fine example of personal initiative, but don't take the individual out of context," she said. "If we look at all the awful things that are happening in public education around the nation, I think this is a cautionary tale that we cannot afford to designate any group of people or any school as not having the same kind of potential for greatness." She added: "He also represents all the undeveloped talent that our school systems sometimes don't recognize, or are reluctant to even believe exists. ... Exposure, that's what made James. He was individually focused, then believed in and encouraged."

Today, Gadsden is affirming his friend's sentiments. He is senior counselor for international affairs at the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation in Princeton, NJ, working to identify talented people from underserved communities and usher them into the Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship Programs. The fellowships are jointly administered by the foundation and the Department of State. For all his life, Gadsden has been perceived as "a successful black man," his identity and his career inseparable from his race. Now he's working to change that, to introduce other minority students to the challenges and rewards of the Foreign Service, he said. "What I hope is they will think it's nothing special," Gadsden said of a diversifying diplomatic corps. "It will have become the norm."

#### 4 Million Renovation of Charleston's Colonial Lake

The renovation of Charleston's Colonial Lake began its 1-year construction phase in January 2015~2016. Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr., members of City Council and the Charleston Parks



Conservancy gathered on site at Colonial Lake and the Charleston City Council has approved the \$4 Million construction contract with Wildwood Contractors of Waltherboro.

The project is a public/private partnership between the Charleston Parks Conservancy, the City of Charleston and Historic Charleston Foundation. The planned renovation will transform Colonial Lake into a public park similar in quality to the City's Waterfront Park.

The renovations will include: 1) A new and improved flushing system so water within the Colonial Lake Basin will be more consistent with the water quality in the Ashley River. 2) Gardens designed and maintained with the highest level of horticultural skill will be added to Colonial Lake. 3) The promenade around Colonial Lake will be enhanced with new, improved and additional pathways and shade

trees. 4) Seating and gathering places will be situated in each of the four corners of the park. 5) Historical markers and displays will detail the lake's history from its beginning in April 1768.

#### The Sixth USS Charleston (LCS-18) To Join The Fleet

Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus was in town on January 8<sup>th</sup> to announce that *USS Charleston*, a sleek, state-of-the-art warship, one of the Navy fleet's fastest, is set to be built in Mobile, AL shipyard and designed to operate in far-forward combat zones where other ships can't go.



*USS Charleston (LCS-18)* will be an Independence-class Littoral Combat Ship (LCS), one of the newest and most-advanced ships in the world, stretching 418-feet long, 104-feet wide across a trimaran hull (A trimaran is a multihull boat that comprises a main hull and two smaller outrigger hulls (or "floats"). These ships are capable of reaching speeds over 44 knots (50 mph). The Independence-class LCSs were proposed shortly after the September 11, 2001 attacks and were originally developed with a new modular armament system that allows parts of the ship to be swapped out depending on its mission, which can include minesweeping, anti-sub operations, transport, and fighting small ships.

Charleston's maritime tradition makes it a natural to lend its name to one of the Navy's newest warships, Secretary Mabus said during an honoring ceremony held alongside Charleston Harbor. "This city has had an important connection with the American Navy," said Mabus, in town to recognize what is now the sixth ship in the U.S. fleet designated with carrying the Charleston name to sea.

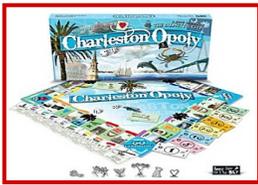
The new vessel is one the fleet's group of "littoral ships." The littoral combat ship (LCS) is a class of relatively small surface vessels intended for operations in the littoral zone (close to shore) by the United States Navy. These ships are fast and agile crafts that can operate close to shore for combat duties including mine detection and removal, anti-submarine defenses and addressing hostile surface ships.

*USS Charleston (LCS-18)* is expected to be delivered by December 2017. As an added bonus, Sec. Mabus said he was declaring Charlotte Riley, wife of Mayor Joe Riley, as the ship's sponsor. It means she is an honorary member of the first crew. Mabus traced the city's maritime history from the 1700s, through the Confederate submarine H.L. Hunley and on to the later Charleston Navy Base and Shipyard as evidence the city is worthy of the recognition.

#### The Miracle of "The Christmas Spirit"

This year the **Charleston Club** decided to change its venue for their **Christmas Holiday Social** to the elegant Waterford at Springfield on January 17<sup>th</sup>. Members and their guests gathered in The Waterford Way for *A Great Evening of Pleasure* with live Jazz and music by Keith

“Kool K” Wilson, a buffet dinner, dancing, and the Christmas Gift Exchange! Norma McKayhan was the Mistress of Ceremony and Jerry B. Ravenell was the keynote speaker for the evening event. The Christmas gifts exchange is always a favorite among the members; who was my “secret pal” or who gave me this ridiculous gift, is always the question! Someone exchanged a Charleston board game (Charleston Opoly) based on the childhood favorite Monopoly! And as with ALL Charleston Club



events, there is always a surprise moment, that stand out and make events more memorable! Club vice-president, Delores Abrams was one of the first to hit the dance floor; eight months ago she was in the hospital recovering from knee replacement surgery. Then there was the return of Charleston Club member emeritus Lorraine Holmes Roseboro and her daughter, Jackie Bradford, they were the *special guests*. They reminded members of the “ole days” when Lorraine was the main event with her **Gullah/Geechee** storytelling routines...Lorraine became legendary telling her Gullah stories at local hospitals and senior venues, here in the DC area and in The Holy City.



The party ended around 10 o'clock, not everyone was ready to call it a night, but a GOOD Time was had by one and all! Happy New Year from the Charleston Club!

### Emanuel AME Church Starts Elevator Fund Campaign

**Emanuel AME Church** (EAMEC) on Calhoun Street is the oldest AME church in the South, and houses the oldest black congregation south of Baltimore, MD. This Gothic Revival style church was built in 1891. The sanctuary of Emanuel is located thirteen feet six inches (13'-6") from the ground with two steep flights of stairs. It is difficult for aging members, handicapped persons and visitors to maneuver the stairs. The membership of Emanuel stands at about 500+ members, many of them elderly. Of the \$270,000 needed to build the elevator, members and friends of the church, along with local business owners have raised (and/or pledged) \$251,892. Rev. Pinckney and Mayor Riley made a community pitch (Dec. 2014) to help assist with donating the \$26,835 balance.

The history of the congregation reflects the development of religious institutions for African Americans in Charleston. Its roots stem from a religious group of free blacks and slaves organized in 1791. In 1816, black members of Charleston's Methodist Episcopal Church withdrew over disputed burial ground, and under the leadership of Morris Brown, formed a separate congregation. The church's 1,400 members soon thereafter established themselves an African Methodist Episcopal Church, a denomination formally established in 1816 in Philadelphia, PA.

### Charleston Club Tattler ~ One liners ...

- The Fredericksburg, VA Branch of the NAACP announced on January 19<sup>th</sup> at the MLK Breakfast that the Branch's scholarship will be named in honor of **Rev. Dr. Nathaniel Young**. Rev. Nathaniel Young died last summer on June 10<sup>th</sup>, he and his wife, **Carolyn Greene Young** were both members of the Charleston Club for many years. A write-up of Rev. Nathaniel Young's life will appear in our March 2015 edition of the *Tattler*.
- **Jimmie Lee Jackson** (December 16, 1938-February 26, 1965) was a civil rights activist in Marion, AL (near Selma) and a deacon in his local Baptist Church. On February 18, 1965, he was beaten by troopers and shot by Alabama State Trooper James Bonard Fowler while participating in a peaceful voting rights march in his city. Jackson was unarmed; he died a week later in the hospital. His death inspired the **Selma to Montgomery** marches on March 7, 1965, a major event in the American Civil Rights Movement that helped gain Congressional passage of the **Voting Rights Act of 1965**.
- **February 21<sup>st</sup>** will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the assassination of **Malcolm X (Malcolm Little ~ May 19, 1925 - February 21, 1965)** in New York Harlem's Audubon Ballroom on **February 21, 1965**, he was 39-year-old. Malcolm X joined the Nation of Islam while in prison in the early '50s and rose to become a respected civil rights activist in the turbulent 1960s. Three members of the Nation of Islam, the black power group he had criticized, were convicted of the slaying.
- The **Johnson Publishing Company**, the esteemed African American owned publisher of *Ebony* and *Jet*, announced (January 23<sup>rd</sup>) plans to sell its photo archive of five million photos, reports The Chicago Tribune. The iconic collection of photos spans 70 years of African-American history, culture and life, including a 1969 Pulitzer Prize winning photo of **Coretta Scott King** taken at **Martin Luther King Jr.'s** funeral (April 1968). The company says it would like to get \$40 million for the collection.
- An **admission-free** showing of the movie *Selma*, exclusively for Charleston County School District (CCSD) students grades 7th-12th, is set for Saturday, **February 7<sup>th</sup>**, at 11:30 a.m., at Regal Cinemas, 2401 Mall Drive in North Charleston. The event is sponsored by **Senator Marlon Kimpson, Charleston City Councilman Keith Waring, and Walterboro dentist, Dr. Harold Rhodes**. For theater admittance, students will be required to present their school ID at the door. Theater seats will be available to CCSD students only, on a first-come basis.

## Happy Birthdays!

### February Birthdays:

**Marian Bennett** - Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> ~ **Elizabeth Alston-Santos** - Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> ~ **George Johnson** - Feb. 8<sup>th</sup> ~ **Ralph McNeill** - Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> ~ **Rose Randall** - Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> ~ **Bernice Johnson** - Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> ~ **Brenda Owens** - Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>. **- The Fly on The Wall!**