

January 7, 1991

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For further information, contact

Ophelia Paine, 862-7970

#### LOCAL CONFERENCE ON AFRO-AMERICAN CULTURE & HISTORY

Nashville's award-winning local conference on Afro-American Culture and History will be held on February 13 at the Avon N. Williams, Jr., downtown campus of Tennessee State University, 10th and Charlotte.

The American Association for State and Local History awarded the conference a Certificate of Commendation at its annual meeting in Washington, D.C., in September. The Afro-American Conference was the only project in Tennessee to receive an award this year.

Sponsored by the Historical Commission and the College of Arts and Sciences at TSU, the one-day event brings together historians, students, educators, and all persons interested in the contributions of African Americans to the culture and history of Middle Tennessee. Hours are 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Registration is \$6 (\$5 for senior citizens, \$4 for students) which includes lunch and publications.

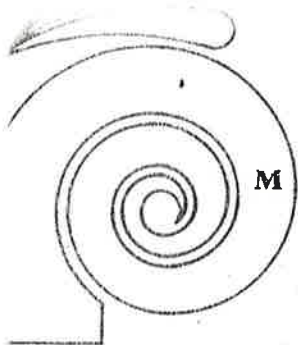
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Highlighting the conference this year will be a performance by the Fireside Singers, a nationally known gospel singing group organized in the 1940s. The 1:00 p.m. performance, funded by a grant from the Metro Nashville Arts Commission, is free and open to the public. Dr. Robert Cogswell, Director of Folk Arts for the Tennessee Arts Commission, will give a brief presentation on the history of the group and gospel quartet singing.

Other presentations include: "Josephine Holloway, Founder of Black Middle Tennessee Girl Scouts," Dr. Harriette A. Insignares; "The Negro Baseball Leagues in Nashville and America," Mr. William "Butch" McCord; "A Portrait of Charles Allen Rawls: Black Entrepreneur in Brownsville, Tennessee," Mr. James Baxter; Haywood County's Black Education History: "Striving to Teach the Children," Dr. Dorothy Granberry; "African American Historical Markers in Tennessee," Mrs. Linda T. Wynn; "Slave Archaeology at The Hermitage," Dr. Larry McKee.

This year's art exhibit will feature the works of local artists Emma Faulkner, Anita Holloway, Bill Johnson, Michael Rouse, Larry Scott, Pat Smith, and David Solomon.

For more information or to pre-register, call 862-7970.



METROPOLITAN  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Harriette Insignares, Dr. Bobby L. Lovett,  
Dr. Reavis Mitchell

FROM: Ophelia Paine

RE: MORNINGS ON FIVE TAPING

DATE: January 23, 1991

Thank you for your willingness to appear on May Dean Eberling's program MORNINGS ON FIVE. The taping will be Tuesday night, January 29, at WTVF-Channel Five, 474 James Robertson Parkway.

May Dean has asked that we be at the station no later than 7:30 p.m. The night entrance is at the back of the station. There is parking in the back as well.

Thanks again for your help. Please call me if you have any questions.

Thanks

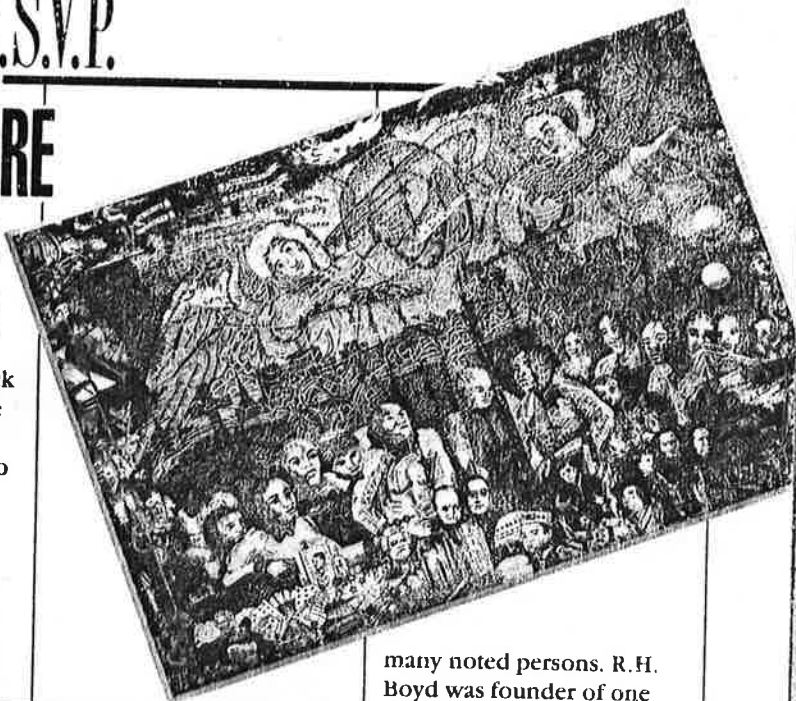
R.S.V.P.

# AFRICAN-AMERICAN CULTURE AND HISTORY CONFERENCE

**T**he names Overton, Briley and Robertson are familiar to Nashvillians, but lesser-known names like McKissack, Napier and Boyd played a part in the making of our city's history as well. The tenth annual Afro-American

Culture and History Conference celebrates Black History Month in Nashville by exploring contributions of Afro-American leaders to the city's culture.

Historians, educators, students, and community members will gather for a day-long series of lectures, art exhibits and music. The celebration has highlighted



many noted persons. R.H. Boyd was founder of one of the city's important economic assets — the National Baptist Publishing Board. Citizens Savings Bank was originally founded in 1904 as the One Cent Savings Bank by James C. Napier. And Moses McKissack built Fisk's Carnegie Library and the Hubbard House on First Avenue South (on the National Register of Historic Places).

Organized by the Nashville Conference on Afro-American Culture and History and the Metro Historical Commission, the conference was recently honored at the American Association for State and Local History in Washington, D.C. — the only project in the state to receive an award. This year, a focus of the conference will be a gospel performance by the Fireside Singers, formerly the Fairfield Four Juniors. The conference takes place at Tennessee State University on February 13 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Admission is \$4-\$6. For more information, call 862-7970. ■

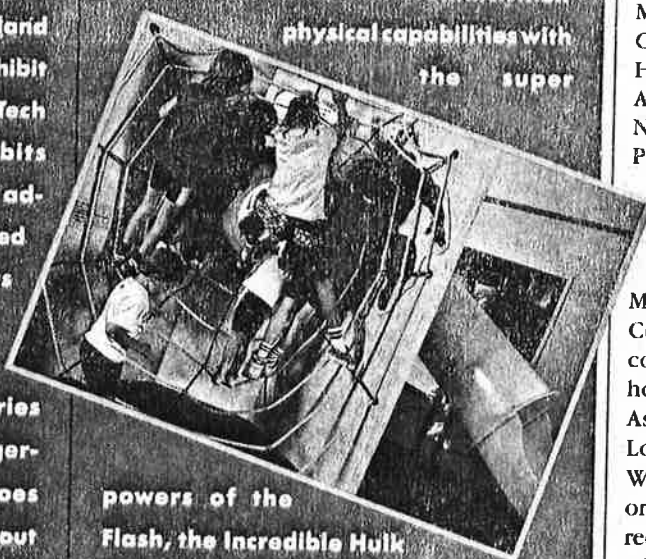
## THE SUPER HEROES ARE COMING

Nashvillians can now visit a "city" which will endow them with the powers of super heroes. The two-story, 5,000 square-foot city is within the Cumberland Science Museum, and is its largest exhibit to date — "Super Heroes: A High Tech Adventure." Participatory exhibits throughout the "city" show how advances in modern science have enabled humans to do many of the same feats as legendary comic book heroes.

Batman's crime lab equipment will allow visitors to solve mysteries using gas chromatographs or fingerprinting machines; the Super Heroes hospital provides a chance to learn about x-ray vision and fiber optics, and Spiderman's giant web challenges visitors to climb without getting caught by sticky strands. "The main focus of the exhibit," explains assistant marketing director Robin Johnson, "is that, now, humans are able to do many of the same

things as super heroes, with the use of machines."

Other exhibits let visitors match their physical capabilities with the super



powers of the Flash, the Incredible Hulk and Wonder Woman. Special appearances by super heroes highlight the exhibit, and the planetarium at the Museum will offer a special program, "Super Heroes: A Space Adventure." The shows run February 2 through May 5. For more information, call 259-6099. ■

# Afro-American Culture & History

7:50-8:30 AM	Coffee and Registration, Atrium
8:35-9:10 AM	Opening Remarks Annie W. Neal, Vice-President of Academic Affairs, Tennessee State University Ann Reynolds, Executive Director, Metro Historical Commission Bobby L. Lovett, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Tennessee State University
9:15-9:40 AM	"Josephine Holloway: Founder of Black Middle Tennessee Girl Scouts." Dr. Harriette A. Insignares, Tennessee State University
9:50-10:30 AM	"The Negro Baseball Leagues in Nashville and America." Mr. Clinton "Butch" McCord, Nashville
10:35-11:00 AM	"A Portrait of Charles Allen Rawls: Black Entrepreneur in Brownsville, Tennessee." Mr. James Baxter, Roane State Community College
11:00-11:10 AM	Break and Refreshments, Atrium
11:15-11:45 AM	Haywood County's Black Education History: "Striving to Teach the Children." Dr. Dorothy Granberry, Tennessee State University
11:50-1:00 PM	Lunch (free with registration), Atrium
1:05-2:05 PM	Gospel Music Concert, Fireside Singers, Nashville* Dr. Robert Cogswell, Tennessee Arts Commission
2:10-2:35 PM	"African American Historical Markers in Tennessee." Mrs. Linda T. Wynn, Tennessee Historical Commission, Nashville
2:40-3:05 PM	"Slave Archaeology at the Hermitage." Dr. Larry McKee, Archaeologist, The Hermitage
3:10-3:30 PM	History of the Conference on Afro-Americans. Mrs. Vallie Pursley, Librarian, Tennessee State University
3:35-4:30 PM	Discussion/Closing Remarks
All Day, Atrium	Art Exhibition: The works of Emma Faulkner, Anita Holloway, Bill Johnson, Michael Rouse, Larry Scott, Pat Smith, and David Smith. Coordinated by Ms. Viola Wood, Tennessee State University

\*The performance by the Fireside Singers is made possible by a grant from the Metro Nashville Arts Commission.

Planning Committee:

Bobby L. Lovett  
Lois C. McDougald  
Reavis Mitchell  
Ophelia Paine  
Vallie Pursley  
Viola Wood  
Linda T. Wynn

Financial Supporters:

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Tennessee Arts Commission  
The Tennessee Historical Society  
Winston-Derek Booksellers  
Woodcuts Custom Frame Shop

Sponsors:

Tennessee State University  
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Metropolitan Historical Commission

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# Leaders of Afro-American Nashville

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GEORGIA GORDON TAYLOR

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Georgia Gordon Taylor, a native Nashvillian, was an original Fisk University Jubilee Singer. She entered Fisk in 1868 and remained a student in the literary department. She took music lessons from George L. White before becoming a Jubilee Singer in 1872. Georgia was among the first group of singers to tour the United States and Europe in 1872-73 when the Jubilee Singers appeared before Queen Victoria in England. After returning to America, Georgia married the Reverend Preston Taylor, founder of Greenwood Cemetery and the Lea Avenue Christian (Disciples of Christ) Church. In 1978, Georgia Gordon Taylor was posthumously awarded a bachelor's degree by Walter Leonard, president of Fisk University.

Georgia Gordon was eighteen years old when she went to Europe in 1873. She sits in a Victorian chair with her feet on a footstool at the extreme right of the oil painting by Haverhill, Queen Victoria's artist friend who was so fascinated with the Jubilee Singers' music that he offered his services free of charge to the Queen to paint the group's portrait. This famous oil painting now hangs in the Appleton Room of Jubilee Hall on Fisk University's campus.

Georgia was born in 1855 in Nashville, Tennessee, to a mulatto mother, Mercy Duke Gordon (1833-1890) and a slave father, George Gordon (1830-1870). Mercy's mother was white, and the law required that children of free mothers were free. Between 1620 and 1820, most American mulattoes had white mothers and black fathers. Mercy had another child, Elwina, born in 1848 and fathered by a white man (a "Doctor Warner") before she married slave George Gordon. It

was also common for slaves and free blacks to marry each other. Free blacks comprised nearly 22 percent of Nashville's antebellum population. Mulattoes (persons of black and white parentage) made up more than half of the town's free Negroes. Some slaves, perhaps like George Gordon, were quasi-independent persons who were allowed to live in their free spouse's household, hire out their own time, and pay part of their wages to their owner. Because Mercy was a free person, all of her children were born free even though Georgia's father was a slave. Mercy and George had two children: Governor B. (1853-1870) and Georgia (1855-1913).

Georgia married Preston Taylor (1849-1931) and had one child, Preston G. Taylor (1890-91). Georgia was broken-hearted about the death of her seven-month-old son. Georgia Gordon Taylor gave freely of her singing ability as a soprano soloist throughout Nashville's black community. She became her husband's constant companion.

She was buried under a magnificent and beautiful monument at Greenwood Cemetery on Elm Hill Pike. A plaque denotes that she was an original Jubilee Singer. Georgia's experiences as a Jubilee Singer are well documented in the special collections of the Fisk University Library.

— Emma W. Bragg  
(A cousin of Georgia Gordon Taylor)

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This publication is a project of the 1991 Nashville Conference on Afro-American Culture and History. The authors compiled the information. Tennessee State University's Department of History and Geography edited the materials. The Metropolitan Historical Commission completed the design and printing.

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# Leaders of Afro-American Nashville

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ERNEST RAYMOND ALEXANDER

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Ernest Raymond Alexander was a prominent contributor to the Nashville chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and a member of the Fisk University board of trustees. He was born in Dixon Springs, Tennessee, on June 21, 1892. After his family moved to Nashville, young Ernest attended Meigs School and graduated from Pearl High School in 1910. He completed Fisk University in 1914.

Alexander attended the University of Minnesota's medical school but completed his medical degree at the University of Vermont (1919). At Vermont he was awarded "Honor Man in Medicine," the first prize for "Special Merit in Medicine," and the Woodbury prize for "Clinical Proficiency in Medicine." He worked in the fields of dermatology and syphilology.

Dr. Alexander opened his medical practice in Harlem during the summer of 1920 and he joined the staffs at Bellevue Hospital and Harlem Hospital. He completed post-graduate studies at Columbia University and additional work at New York University and the Bellevue Hospital Medical College by 1925. He was a member of many professional organizations and author of several articles in medicine.

Dr. Alexander became involved in the advancement of black people. He was an active member of the Abyssinian Baptist Church and a contributing member to the YMCA, the National Urban League, and the NAACP. He was one of the first life members of the NAACP. He was also an advisor to the Boy Scouts of America and received the Silver Beaver Award (1949) and the Silver Antelope Award (1954).

Dr. Alexander's wife, Lillian, donated the E. R. Alexander Collection of Negroana to the Fisk University Library and gave a five thousand dollar matching endowment to support it. Mrs. Alexander was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Minnesota. When visiting Nashville, the Alexanders attended First Baptist Church of East Nashville. Alexander had great influence on developments in black Nashville, especially through his Negroana collection at Fisk University where black achievement and culture are displayed through the Alexanders' efforts.

— H. Henryne D. White

# Leaders of Afro-American Nashville

JOSEPHINE GROVES HOLLOWAY



A "pioneer," a "lanplighter," a "hidden heroine." Armed with determination, an old Willis Jeep, and a dream of equality for African American girls, Josephine Groves Holloway became the founder of the first black Girl Scout troop and was the first black Girl Scout executive in Middle Tennessee. Her father referred to Josephine as "my missionary," and his early perception proved to be accurate when she set out, with missionary zeal, to make the name Girl Scouts of America mean what the name implies.

The seventh child and the second girl of John Wesley Groves and Emma Mae Gray, Josephine Amanda was born on March 10, 1898, in a Methodist parsonage in Cowpens, South Carolina. Although ten children were born to this union, only three boys and two girls reached adulthood.

Her father, a Methodist minister as his father before him, valued education. John Wesley Groves moved his family to Greenwood, South Carolina, where they remained until Josephine finished Brewer Normal School in Beaufort. On the advice of a teacher, Josephine enrolled in Fisk University during the fall of 1919. She worked through college by mending tablecloths in the dining room and winding clocks in the music practice rooms. Illness from a flu epidemic and a shortage of funds did not keep her from receiving a degree in sociology from Fisk in June 1923.

Josephine Groves returned to South Carolina and took a job as a recreational and community worker for the summer while sending out job applications. She said, "The job that appealed to me most was Girls Worker at Bethlehem Center. In this I could imagine using all of my skills and at the same time have a hand in reforming the world." She became Girls Worker in September 1923.

She organized the first Girl Scout group in 1924, after completing training with Juliette Low at the George Peabody College for Teachers during a special training session. Josephine's time with the group came to an abrupt end when she married a former schoolmate and co-worker, Guernsey Holloway, the Boys Worker at Bethlehem Center. After the June 30, 1925, wedding, Miss Mathee Nutt, center director, informed the new Mrs. Holloway that a married Girls Worker would not have enough time for the girls. Mrs. Holloway resigned in the fall of 1925. Not sharing the same enthusiasm and persistence of Mrs. Holloway, the next Girls Worker allowed the troop to fold.

Josephine Holloway returned to school and received a bachelor's degree in business from Tennessee A. & I. State College (today's TSU). She served as assistant registrar at Fisk University (1927-34). Then she took a job with the Tennessee State Department of Welfare.

Almost twenty years passed before the black troop was reinstated in 1943 through Mrs. Holloway's efforts. When resistance to her petitions to the all-white Girl Scout Council continued, she "organized an unofficial club for black girls, with gingham uniforms, but soon learned the girls longed to become 'real Girl Scouts.'"

With the help of some black mothers, teachers, and her husband, Dr. Holloway, she began removing the obstacles. During his studies at the University of Chicago, her husband was able to purchase the handbooks which the local Girl Scout Council would not allow her to buy. Mrs. Holloway taught the girls the Girl Scout promise, the laws, and everything needed for their investiture into Girl Scouting.

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Former Council president Juli Mosley said in a tribute to Mrs. Holloway: "With this trained group of girls, the Council could not deny membership. So in 1943, troop 200 became a reality and began Girl Scouting in Nashville for black girls." Mrs. Holloway's three daughters, Nareda, Josephine, and Weslia became members of her troop.

In November 1944, Mrs. Holloway joined the Girl Scout Council's professional staff as an organizer and field advisor. She also served as a district director and a camp director. In 1951, the Council honored her by naming its new camp for Negro girls "Camp Holloway."

Other honors include the "Sojourner Truth Award" from the Nashville Chapter of the National Association of Business and Professional Women and the "Zeta of the Year Award" from Zeta Phi Beta Sorority.

Mrs. Holloway retired from her scouting career on June 15, 1963. She died on December 7, 1988. Local newspapers featured articles about Josephine Holloway's career and achievements.

— Harriette Allen Insignares

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10th ANNUAL LOCAL CONFERENCE ON AFRO-AMERICAN CULTURE AND HISTORY

Registration Fee: \$6 (adults); \$5 (senior citizens); \$4 (students) — includes lunch and publications

Make check payable to: TSU Foundation: Local Conference  
Mail form and check to: Metropolitan Historical Commission  
176 Third Avenue, North  
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# Afro-American Culture & History

## 2 10th Annual Local Conference

# Afro-American Culture & History

## 2 10th Annual Local Conference

Tennessee State University and the Metropolitan Historical Commission are the sponsors of the tenth in an ongoing series of annual conferences which coincide with Black History Month. The conference brings together historians, educators, students and other interested individuals for a program on local Afro-American history and culture. The conference will be held at Tennessee State University's Avon N. Williams, Jr., Campus, Downtown, 10th and Charlotte, Wednesday, February 13, 1991.

*2nd U.S. Colored Light Artillery Regiment,  
Battery A, Nashville, 1864*

