

consideration of the joint resolution (H.J.Res. 2) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States with respect to the number of terms of office of Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

THE ROLE OF CIVIL RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS IN HISTORY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the gentlewoman from California [Ms. WATERS] and also the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. STOKES] who continues a long tradition of special orders during African-American History Month. I would like to continue in the same set of rules that they were following, whatever they were. If you have a list of people, I will follow that list. I will make a few opening remarks and then go back to the list as you have come because I think that we want continuity between the two sets of special orders.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to open up by saying I thought that the topic chosen by the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. STOKES] relating to civil rights organizations and their role in history is a good focus in terms of our civil rights organizations ought to be congratulated for what they have done up to now.

□ 1630

They are to be congratulated. We ought to use history to sort of re-appraise where we are and where we are going.

Ken Burns today, at a speech at the National Press Club related to his forthcoming film on Thomas Jefferson, said that history is a record of everything that has happened up to this moment. Everything is history, whether you are talking about the history of science, the history of technology. So Black History Month is a time when a lot of people are reminded of certain kinds of achievements of individual African-Americans, achievements related to inventions; related to first steps in terms of organizations; first steps related to leadership that has been provided in various ways by African-Americans. All that is in order.

But there is another dimension of black history which I think we have neglected, which I would like to discuss in greater detail later on, and that is our civil rights organizations need some underpinning now and would be greatly strengthened if we were to really decide where we are in history now, what our past history has meant, and how we should use the lessons of our past history.

South Africa has a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is designed to help get the country on a

smooth path toward the future and not have it become bogged down in its past. I think it is most unfortunate that at the end of the Civil War America did not establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, because some of the problems we are facing now are rooted in an unjust history: 235 years of slavery.

What did 235 years of slavery do to a people, and how are the repercussions of 235 years of slavery now impacting upon those same people; and can we go on and really deal with our problems currently if we do not really force America to own up to that history? We need a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in order to get on with the discussion of reparations.

We have had some legislation introduced by JOHN CONYERS and others talking about reparations. That seems like such a radical idea that most people dismiss it right away. We had some steps toward reparations when we voted to try to do something to compensate the victims of internment in Japanese camps during World War II. We made some steps in that direction. I do not want to go into reparations and alienate everybody. Let us just have a Truth and Reconciliation Commission which might come to the conclusion that reparations should also be on the agenda.

But in that Truth and Reconciliation Commission we should talk about some other things, like 232 years of slavery. What did that mean in terms of accumulation of wealth? Wealth is accumulated, certain books have told us recently, by passing it from one generation to another. Most wealth is accumulated that way. People do not really work hard and accumulate their wealth; they do get a break from the previous generation. If you have 232 years of slavery, that means there was 232 years where no wealth was passed on from one generation to another.

Is it any wonder then that African-Americans, the middle-class African-Americans are becoming closer and closer to white Americans, mainstream Americans, in income, the money they earn through salaries and wages, but there is a great gap between white mainstream Americans and African-American middle-class people in terms of wealth. There is a great gap. The gap is explained by the fact that there were 235 years where no wealth was accumulated.

We ought to take a look at that. We ought to take a look at what that means to the very poorest people of course; we ought to take a look at what it meant in terms of the impact on a people where their children were denied education and laws were made to make it a crime to teach slaves to read. All that may be examined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Civil rights organizations I think really need underpinning now of, really, where are we? How hard should we fight against laws which take away aid to families with dependent children.

How does that relate to race? Is there a race base for demanding that you do something for the poorest people, especially those who are descendants of slaves. Is there a reason why we should make greater demands for education?

The President says he is going to move Head Start by the year 2000 to the point where Head Start will encompass 1 million children. Well, should not something be done in terms of compensation in recognizing the great need for special treatment for the descendants of slaves. Those children ought to be taken into Head Start right away. There are a number of ideas like that which would grow out of an understanding that the civil rights agenda should be broadened and the civil rights agenda should take into consideration what the history of slavery did to the people who are major victims of denial of those rights.

I am going to come back to this later on, but we have several colleagues here who are waiting to speak, and I would be happy to take them first. I am pleased to have at this point remarks on African-American history month from our colleague from New York, the Honorable CAROLYN MALONEY.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Black History Month, and I thank my colleagues, Congressman OWENS, Congresswoman WATERS, and Congressman STOKES, for organizing this Special Order.

There are many black Americans who are important to our history, and I am pleased to speak of four African-American women who hail from the great State of New York. These women, ranging from the early 1800's to the present day, have each left their mark on New York and America.

Sojourner Truth was born a slave in Huron, NY. After receiving her freedom, she moved to New York City where she dedicated her life to the abolition of slavery and suffrage for all women. She was the first person to publicly acknowledge the relationship between slavery with the oppression of all women.

After the Civil War she worked tirelessly for women's rights, gaining the support and respect of fellow suffragettes, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. At the Equal Rights Association in 1867 she gave one of the most quoted speeches in feminist history, "Ain't I A Woman".

Lorraine Hansberry was the first African-American female Broadway playwright. Her play, "Raisin in the Sun," opened in 1959 to outstanding reviews. It focused on discrimination and family values. She was the first black and the youngest person to win the Best Play of the Year Award of the New York drama critics. Though she died in New York City at the age of 34, Hansberry opened the door for all future young black playwrights.

Shirley Chisholm has the distinct honor of being the first black woman elected to Congress and the first

woman to run for President of the United States. She was elected to the New York State Assembly in 1964 and went to Congress in 1968. She was an early member of the National Organization for Women and the National Women's Political Caucus. A former Head Start teacher, she did a great deal to help the children of this Nation. Congresswoman Chisholm not only paved the way for more black Representatives, but for all women.

Judge Constance Baker Motley attended New York University and Columbia. She worked for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, where she won seven lawsuits before the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1964 she became the first black woman elected to the New York State Senate. A year later she became the first black woman elected as Manhattan Borough president. In 1966 President Johnson nominated her to the U.S. District Court for the Southern district of New York, making her the first woman named to the Southern District bench and the first black woman named to the Federal bench. In 1993 Judge Motley was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.

From Sojourner Truth to Judge Constance Baker Motley, these women have worked to make our lives better. Civil rights is not just a place in time; it is an outlook we should all strive toward in our life. I salute them and all who are here in our collective appreciation of Black History Month, and I thank my colleagues for organizing it.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to continue this discussion on African-American history to the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA).

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman and my good friend from New York. I also would like to thank the gentleman from Ohio, and Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California not only as the chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus, but someone not only as a national leader whom I have the highest regard and respect. I certainly appreciate this opportunity of sharing my sentiments concerning Black History Month.

Mr. Speaker, I too would like to echo the sentiments expressed earlier from the gentleman from Illinois, [Mr. JACKSON], as he paid a special tribute to my good friend and colleague from Georgia, Congressman JOHN LEWIS, certainly one of the living giants of the civil rights movement. Mr. Speaker, 6 years ago the gentleman from Georgia invited me to join him to visit Selma, AL, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of that famous march from Selma, and it was one of the most spiritual experiences I have ever had in my life. I would like to urge and encourage my colleagues to go to Selma, AL. It will give you a real sense of what the civil rights movement is all about.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the opportunity this afternoon to speak at this year's con-

gressional recognition of Black History Month. The idea of celebrating black history began in 1926, where noted educator Dr. Carter Woodson set aside a special period of time in February, February because that was the birth month of Frederick C. Douglass and of Abraham Lincoln, to recognize the heritage, the achievements and the contributions of African-Americans.

African-American history is of course, Mr. Speaker, a much larger subject than 1 month could possibly encompass. We all know the names of famous African-Americans, artists, performers, and writers such as Paul Robeson, Lena Horne, James Earl Jones, Cicely Tyson, Imamu Amiri Baraka, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Zora Neale Hurston, Maya Angelou, Jessye Norman, Duke Ellington, and William Grant Still. African-American athletes like Jackie Robinson, Jackie Joyner-Kersey, and Wilma Clodean Rudolph broke records and barriers in their striving for excellence.

African-Americans have expanded all of our horizons as explorers: Guion S. Bluford, Jr. was the first African-American to fly in space. Mathew Alexander Henson, a member of Adm. Robert Peary's fourth expedition, may have been the first person to set foot on the North Pole. From George Washington Carver, recipient of the Roosevelt Medal for Distinguished Service to Science, to George Carruthers, the physicist and the designer of the Apollo 16 lunar surface ultraviolet camera/spectrograph that was placed on the moon in April 1972, African-Americans have made significant contributions in the areas of science and technology.

African-American political activists like Nat Turner and Fannie Lou Hamer changed the course of history. Leaders such as Adam Clayton Powell, Joseph Hayne Rainey, the first African-American Member of Congress, Ralph Bunche and Shirley Chisholm, and activists like Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and A. Philip Randolph and Sojourner Truth moved their people forward with them. All of these stories are inspiring to all of us.

Mr. Speaker, the contributions of African-Americans to all aspects of U.S. culture have been significant, and all of us as Americans have been moved forward by the achievements of these great individuals. However, the history of African-American people is much more than simply the stories of great and famous individuals.

The people whose names we never hear, the women who participated in the Birmingham bus boycott led by the late Dr. King, the many individuals who, inspired by the actions of Rosa Parks, refused any longer to sit in the back of the bus; the people who sat in at segregated lunch counters; the people who stood firm in the face of fire hoses and growling dogs; the people who registered for college and went to their classes; the people who registered to vote and came to the polling places on election day, these are also people

worthy of celebration and worthy of a place in history.

Mr. Speaker, not all children will grow up to be Martin Luther King, Jr., or Shirley Chisholm, but all children should grow up knowing that their greatness is a part of our heritage, that its celebration is not confined to only 1 month out of the year, and that the dreams and aspirations of African-Americans are as worthy of fulfillment and as likely to come true as the dreams and aspirations of all of our fellow Americans.

So as we celebrate Black History Month, Mr. Speaker, let us also keep in mind those whose names are not in the books, those whose private and unpublicized heroism in word and deed also contributed to this story which all Americans should celebrate and all of which all Americans can be proud.

□ 1645

Mr. OWENS. I thank the gentleman from American Samoa. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to the gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. MALONEY].

(Mr. MALONEY of Connecticut asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MALONEY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I would very much like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the gentleman from New York and the other Members of this Chamber who have organized this special order today.

Mr. Speaker, this year's theme for Black History Month is "African-Americans and Civil Rights: A Reappraisal." It is most fitting, therefore, to take a moment to honor a very special woman, a longtime resident of my hometown, who is not only acclaimed for her glorious God-given voice, but for the historic contributions she made on behalf of all African-Americans.

Marian Anderson, of Danbury, CT, who was the first African-American singer to perform with the Metropolitan Opera, stands out as a leading example of African-American pride and achievement. This month would have marked, or does mark, the 100th anniversary of her birth.

As a young woman developing her singing career, Ms. Anderson faced many obstacles and was often the victim of racism. Probably the most widely known incident occurred in 1939, when, after a triumphant appearance through Europe and the Soviet Union, she was prevented from performing in Washington's Constitutional Hall by its owners. To apologize for that mistreatment, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt invited Ms. Anderson to perform at the Lincoln Memorial on Easter Sunday, 1939.

Ms. Anderson proudly sang to an audience of 75,000 people, while millions more listened over national radio. Her inspirational performance that April day is considered by historians as the first crucial victory of the modern civil rights movement.

Even after her artistry was recognized in the United States, Ms. Anderson still faced racial prejudice on a

daily basis. Well into her career, she was turned away at restaurants and hotels. Even America's opera houses remained closed to her until Rudolph Bing invited her to sing at the Metropolitan Opera.

Throughout all of her trials and struggles, Ms. Anderson did not give up. Her undaunted spirit fought on and her determination opened doors for future black artists that had been firmly bolted shut.

The soprano Leontyne Pryce, one of the earliest artists to profit from Ms. Anderson's efforts, once said, "Her example of professionalism, uncompromising standards, overcoming obstacles, persistence, resiliency, and undaunted spirit inspired me to believe that I could achieve goals that otherwise would have been unthought of."

Soprano Jessye Norman said, "At age 10 I heard for the first time the singing of Marian Anderson on a recording. I listened, thinking, this can't be just a voice, so rich and beautiful. It was a revelation, and I wept."

Later in life, Ms. Anderson was named a delegate to the United Nations by President Dwight D. Eisenhower and was the recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Carter. She died in 1993, but her successful fight to give every individual an opportunity to achieve their own greatness helped our country become a stronger nation. Her contributions will live on forever.

As President Clinton pointed out in his State of the Union Address last week, American race relations have certainly come a long way, but our country is still plagued by bigotry and intolerance. Each of us must learn from the example set by Marian Anderson to eliminate hate and violence and create a stronger, more tolerant America.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Connecticut, and again congratulate him on his hard-won race in order to get to this House of Representatives.

Continuing the discussion on Black History Month, African-Americans, and civil rights, I am pleased to yield to the gentleman from Texas, Mr. KEN BENTSEN.

(Mr. BENTSEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to join our Nation in celebrating Black History Month. Today I want to recognize and pay tribute to community leaders in Houston whose vast accomplishments and contributions have helped to revitalize a very large segment of our city.

In 1996, Pastors James Dixon, Harvey Clemons, Bill Lawson, Ed Lockett, and Kirbyjon Caldwell were awarded the Mickey Leland Humanitarian Award by the Houston chapter of the NAACP for their outstanding contributions to the community.

While all are deserving of recognition, Reverend Dixon for his work in

north Houston, Reverend Clemons for his work with the Fifth Ward Development Corporation, Rev. Ed Lockett, who runs the Sunnyside Up Corp., and of course, Rev. Bill Lawson, the dean of Houston's clergy, and for many, the conscience of the city as well, I want to pay special tribute and highlight as an example the contributions of Pastor Kirbyjon Caldwell of the Windsor Village United Methodist Church.

Reared in Kashmere Gardens, a low-income neighborhood in Houston, Pastor Caldwell, at age 43, is today one of Houston's most prominent clergymen. Pastor Caldwell has emerged as a strong advocate for civil rights in Houston. His intellect and creativity and caring have made him a leader in the quest for civil rights through economic empowerment and cultural awareness.

Pastor Caldwell is best known for founding the Power Center, a multi-million dollar community service facility located in southwest Houston, in my district. The 104,000 square foot complex meets a tremendous range of community needs, including education through the Houston Community College, financial services through Texas Commerce Bank, a Federal women, infants and children nutrition program, and health care through Herman Hospital, as well as a private grade school. Through the Power Center, Pastor Caldwell is making the connection between economic empowerment and political empowerment.

A former investment banker on Wall Street, Pastor Caldwell used his banking and financial background to persuade the property owners to donate a \$4.4 million building, a former KMart, to realize his dream. The Power Center will generate some \$26.7 million in cash flow for the Windsor Village/South Post Oak community over the next 3 years. While constructing the Power Center, Mr. Caldwell started several nonprofit ventures, including a shelter for abused children and low-income housing developments. These nonprofit ventures created jobs for more than 125 people. In addition, the Power Center has provided hundreds of jobs, ranking it among the largest black-owned employers in Houston.

In the pulpit, Pastor Caldwell delivers potent sermons filled with the vernacular of modern life. His preaching style, along with a vast variety of community outreach programs, attracts people from all walks of life.

As we reappraise African-Americans and civil rights in 1997, it is also important to recognize the triumphs that have been made in the past by leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, the Honorable Barbara Jordan, and Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall.

Nonetheless, we should not forget those present-day leaders such as Rev. Kirbyjon Caldwell, who may not be mentioned in the pages of American history now, but are working just as hard to open the doors of opportunity

for all Americans through economic empowerment and cultural awareness.

Mr. OWENS. I thank the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to yield to the gentleman from North Carolina, [Mr. MEL WATT].

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I start kind of like the author of the cartoon, Curtis, with the understanding that you really cannot do justice to practice Black History Month in either 3 minutes or a month. The contributions that black people have made to this country require an ongoing education and input about the many facets of the contributions.

So I want to limit my remarks today to a very, very narrow window, and that is some things that came out of my congressional district in Greensboro, NC, starting on February 1, 1960 at the Woolworth lunch counter where the sit-ins started, to give us the right to be able to go into a restaurant and sit down and have a meal. I mean, this is something that in 1996 is so far removed from anything that we can imagine that so many people have started to take it for granted.

It was at the Woolworth's lunch counter that these sit-ins started on February 1, 1960, and they were started by four students who were attending the North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro, NC. Those four students were freshmen Ezell Blair, Junior; David L. Richmond; Joseph McNeil; and Franklin McCain. Franklin McCain happens to be a personal friend of mine who now resides in Charlotte, NC. But all of these four individuals started a movement that picked up steam, gained momentum, that led ultimately on July 25, 1960 to black people being able to go into the Woolworth's store in Greensboro and sit down at the lunch counter and have a hot dog, buy a drink, things that we now take for granted.

Throughout the South, this kind of movement was going on all across the South to provide that opportunity. To these four gentlemen, we will forever be in debt.

North Carolina A&T is one of six historically black colleges and universities in my congressional district in North Carolina. I could spend hours talking about the contributions of graduates of any one of these institutions, but just to focus on North Carolina A&T, since that is where I started, that is where our current colleagues, the gentleman from Illinois, Mr. JESSE JACKSON Jr., and the gentleman from New York, Mr. ED TOWNS, your colleague, graduated. They are illustrious graduates of North Carolina A&T.

Former astronaut Ronald McNair, to whom we all owe so much in the field of space exploration, is a graduate of that institution. State Justice Henry Frye, on our State supreme court in North Carolina, is a graduate of North Carolina A&T university. I could go on and on and on talking about these people, but I will end, and reemphasize

what the Curtis cartoons have been saying throughout this year: We cannot do justice to black history by having a month for it. We all have to give it the kind of ongoing respect that the kinds of contributions that our people have made over the years to the history, the culture, the music, the vitality, and the economy of this United States, deserve.

The more we can come to grips with that, the more we can put this, parts of history like the sit-ins, behind us, and we can all become one Nation, indivisible, under God, with liberty and justice for all. I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. OWENS. I thank the gentleman. I hope we will never put the spirit of the sit-ins behind us. I do hope the gentleman will take out additional time. He could spend a whole hour on the spirit of A&T and the first big sit-in.

I think we may need to instruct this generation and this group of people right here, in the year 1997, that there is a time when we must go down, we must confront the authorities. We may have to confront the authorities on the attempt to remove Medicaid as an entitlement. I think there are some points in the history right now that we are going to have to come to grips with that are just as important as our civil rights, such as the importance of the right to life that emanates from having health care for everybody. There may be a number of other issues where we may have to follow history, and understand there is a time when we confront the authorities and tell them we will not accept this.

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. I will just reaffirm what the gentleman has said, Mr. Speaker, if he will continue to yield. It took a tremendous amount of guts and determination for these four students to stand up and confront a system. The need for us to continue to confront issues head on, without fear of intimidation or being called down by our colleagues, even here in the House, certainly should be apparent to us.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. I lived in the South for 20 years. I was born in Memphis, TN. I know all about the kind of courage it took to stand up at that lunch counter.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. DONALD PAYNE, the distinguished former chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus.

□ 1700

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in commemorating Black History Month. Let me take special attention to the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. STOKES], who has led us in this over the years and of course our distinguished chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. WATERS], for organizing this, too, and thank the gentleman from New York for yielding time to me.

Much has happened over the course of the year since we last gathered for

this commemoration, had both successes and setbacks. But we stand here today stronger and more determined than ever to continue moving ahead regardless of the obstacles we face.

This past year the Congressional Black Caucus took action on a number of issues, particularly the devastating fires which ravaged African-American churches throughout this Nation, mostly in the southern part of our country, but all over. In response to the caucus, we galvanized forces to focus national attention on the magnitude of this tragedy. Our actions led to the passage of new legislation to strengthen Federal law enforcement so that these cases could be solved.

We convened public hearings and pointed out that during the early days of the civil rights movement, as we heard MEL WATT talk about, the churches were places where we met and the churches were places where we gathered not only for worship but for strategy. We cannot forget the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, AL, in the mid-1960's, four little girls, Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Wesley, lost their lives.

Another young lady, Sarah Collins, was partially blinded, and so that brought back those dark days when there was an attack. This year, the past year we also were disappointed by several court hearings undermining the Voting Rights Act guaranteeing minorities fair participation in the political process. While we remain deeply concerned about the dismantling of majority-minority voting districts, we are pleased at the determination of our colleagues who, in spite of the blatant attempt to turn us back, were still returned to office.

Over this past year there were also assaults on affirmative action, which helps minorities and women move ahead to make this country a greater place. However, despite much misinformation from opponents, we have worked hard to educate the public to understand that affirmative action is about fair opportunity and not about quotas or unfair advantages.

The theme chosen this year for Black History Month is African-Americans and civil rights, a reappraisal. It is certainly fitting during this month that we reassess where we have been, where we are, and where we want to be. We remember with deep respect those in the early history who never gave up in their quest for justice and equal rights for African-Americans. We were inspired by the courage of the great abolitionist and orator, Sojourner Truth. Born in 1797, she traveled across this country in a tireless crusade against slavery.

In that same era, my home city of Newark, NJ, was the home to an abolitionist, journalist, and a minister by the name of Samuel Cornish. He became the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church on Plane Street working for the advancement of the black community.

Another prominent figure who spent time in New Jersey was the famous fugitive slave, abolitionist, nurse, and social reformer Harriet Tubman, who spent some of her retiring days in New Jersey. She made about 19 trips to various States to lead slaves to freedom, and her work with the Underground Railroad brought her to New Jersey between 1849 and 1852.

We remember Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois as early people who had different ways of going about bringing black people to their final fruition, but we feel that they both earned a place in history.

As I conclude, I just want to mention one last person who will be celebrating her 84th birthday very soon, just celebrated it, Mrs. Rosa Parks, who refused to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery. She changed the course of history.

Soon we will enter a new era of history with the dawn of the 21st century. President Clinton in his State of the Union Address talked about our Nation finding strength in diversity. As we celebrate the contributions of African-Americans to this Nation, we must also renew our commitment to the next generation, our children. African-American children must get an education, must have skills to compete in the rapidly advancing world of technology. They look to us just as we look to those before us for hope and inspiration. And therefore, it has been a long journey but we will continue to move ahead with faith and determination.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey for his most appropriate remarks. I think it is very important that you mentioned the burning of the churches.

I would like to point out that the reaction to the burning of the churches, the people who started the burning of the churches know that the church is the center of the black life all across the country. They wanted to get at the core of our organization and inspiration, and it was a devastating blow to go after our churches. But our Government is to be congratulated, our President is to be congratulated, the general public, foundations, and various people are to be congratulated for the manner in which we have reacted.

If only we had had a similar reaction to the Ku Klux Klan and the kind of violence perpetrated after the freeing of the slaves, history might tell a different story. If only our Government had not capitulated, if only it stood behind General Howard and General Armstrong and Thaddeus Stevens from Pennsylvania and Charles Sumner from Massachusetts and resisted the kind of violent response of the white former Confederate officers and soldiers in reorganizing a violent overthrow of legitimately elected black governments in the South and a number of other institutions that were upset by violent and illegal means. If only our Government had stood firmly then, we should congratulate our President for the fact

that he stood firmly, offered leadership from the bully pulpit of the White House and stood firm on the ravages of affirmative action at a time when hysteria was being generated.

It makes a difference and it is a pity that we do not have that kind of leadership from all sectors of the American leadership community during the second Reconstruction. We would not have lost so much so fast. I thank the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. PAYNE. Let me just say that it was, I believe, the Congressional Black Caucus coming together, calling a hearing, bringing witnesses together, all-day hearing focusing the attention and then really pushing the administration to really become as involved, visiting black churches.

Mr. OWENS. Not for one moment would I want to minimize the role of the caucus in stimulating, the caucus stimulated the activity from the general community and from the White House. We played a major role. The leadership of the first Reconstruction, we must pay homage to them. They tried very hard. They were up against bullets and fire, and they did not succeed in playing the kind of role that stimulated the rest of the country to do the kind of things they ought to do. But we played a major role. I certainly do not want to minimize that, of the Congressional Black Caucus.

I yield, to continue the discussion on Black History Month, African-Americans and civil rights, to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. DELAHUNT]. I want to congratulate Mr. DELAHUNT. He is new here. I welcome him to the floor and congratulate him on his victory.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join with my colleagues in this special order celebrating Black History Month. It is truly a magnificent history as has been recounted by previous speakers and a history that is truly a history of heroism.

I thought I would take this opportunity to say a few words about a remarkable chapter in that history, which is being retrieved and returned to us by a dedicated band of preservationists in Massachusetts. That chapter concerns the African Meeting House of Nantucket, once a church, a meeting hall and a school for children prevented from attending public school because of their race.

The one room meeting house was built in the 1820's and is one of the oldest standing structures of its kind in the United States. It embodies a rich history. When the meeting house was built, Nantucket was the center of the whaling industry in which blacks played an integral part. Among the whaling ships that set sail from the island was the *Industry* with the black captain named Absalom Boston and an all-black crew. Absalom Boston later became one of the four trustees of the African Baptist Church which was to become known as the African Meeting House.

Absalom Boston's grandfather was a slave named Prince Boston who took a whaling voyage in 1770. At the end of the voyage, Prince Boston's white master demanded that he turn over his earnings. With the help of a white shipmate, Prince Boston went to court and won his earnings and his freedom, becoming the first slave set free by an jury verdict in this Nation. That year Nantucket freed its slaves, 13 years before the rest of Massachusetts followed suit.

In 1845, the daughter of one of the founders of the meeting house went to court to demand admission to the public high school. In the next year Nantucket became one of the first districts in the country to desegregate its schools. With its strong Quaker tradition, the island became a stronghold of abolitionist sentiment. It was there that Frederick Douglass delivered his first public address before a mixed race audience.

Once the public schools had been integrated, the meeting house ceased to operate as a school but continued to function as a vital institution in this community island. In 1910, the meeting house was sold to the owner of a trucking business and eventually it fell into disrepair. Now, thanks to the efforts of the Friends of the African Meeting House and the Museum of Afro-American History, this extraordinary landmark is due to be opened to the public in 1998. I can think of no more fitting commemoration of Black History Month, and I commend all of those who have brought this project to fruition.

Mr. Speaker, much of this fascinating history is recounted in a superb article by Don Costanzo that appeared in the Nantucket Beacon on January 29, 1997. I include the entire article for insertion in the RECORD.

[From the Nantucket Beacon, Jan. 29, 1997]
RESURRECTING THE HEART AND SOUL OF NEW GUINEA

(By Don Costanzo)

Pending a thumbs-up from their local school board, about 460 children in Florida will be saving their pennies to help restore the African Meeting House on Nantucket.

Last fall Len Kizner, an elementary school teacher at the Bay Vista Elementary School in St. Petersburg, Fla., saw a segment on "This Old House" about the meeting house. Last week, he read an article in the New York Times about it.

Today, Kizner has become so inspired by the project he is about to ask a Florida county school board for permission to raise money within the school to give to the Nantucket landmark.

"What better way to celebrate black history month (February) than to tie it into the first schoolhouse for free black people on your island," said Kizner. "It's a great project. We're teaching children, celebrating black culture, and preserving a piece of it too."

"It supports black history heritage, and by doing that supports American heritage."

Kizner expects to build a scale model of the meeting house, and incorporate the project into geography and social studies classes to help the children better understand where their money is going.

But what is happening at Bay Vista is only part of the impact this restoration project is having nationally.

On Martha's Vineyard, a Black Heritage trail has been developed in direct reaction to Nantucket's initiative. And, Helen Seager, Convener of the African Meeting House, has further inspired the people of Portland, Maine to generate more ideas on how they could save the Abyssinian Baptist Church, considered one of the oldest black churches in the country behind one on Beacon Hill in Boston, and Nantucket's.

"They have said over and over again," said Seager, "that the Nantucket experience was setting an example for them and inspiring them to go on."

But, there would be no 'Nantucket experience' today had it not been for the tribulations and accomplishments of men and women from another time.

A SENSE OF PLACE

Although Nantucket was 13 years ahead of the Commonwealth in freeing its slaves in 1770, and more than 100 years ahead of the nation in desegregating its schools in 1845, scars from the fight for freedom and equality here are explicit. Just before 1770, Prince Boston, a slave belonging to William Swain, took a whaling voyage with William Rotch, a highly successful entrepreneur. When Boston returned from his working journey with Rotch in 1770, Swain insisted that the black man turn over all his earnings—since, of course, he owned the slave.

But Rotch was well-respected on the island by this time, and decided to defend Boston in court. They won the case and Boston was the first slave set free by a jury's verdict. It is believed that blacks on Nantucket shed the chains of slavery for good following this court decision.

Fifty years later a laborer and mariner named Absalom Boston, Prince Boston's grandson, was establishing his place in history too.

Boston captained an all-black crew aboard the whaling vessel *Industry*; he ran an inn and opened a store in an area on the island known as New Guinea, where he worked hard for the betterment of Nantucket's black community.

By 1821 the nearly 300 blacks who lived on Nantucket had formed a common bond in New Guinea (the name indicated the African roots of its residents, and was used to specify particular section of many cities and towns).

New Guinea—thought originally to be bordered by Williams Land, Prospect, Silver, and Orange streets—consisted of a cluster of houses and gardens, as well as its own stores, an inn, and eventually a school, cemetery, and two churches.

One church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church was established in 1835 in a building (which no longer exists) on West York Lane. Little is known about the activities of this church and the participation of blacks there.

But just a few yards down the street stood another building, which today is a historic testament to the struggle and triumphs of Nantucket's black inhabitants.

One event that defined black/white dissension on the island was the Anti-Slavery Convention at the Nantucket Athenaeum in 1842. In a speech, Stephen Foster called Town Meeting voters who had supported segregation in schools "pimps to satan."

Foster hurled fierce words at members of many of the island's churches, charging they were guilty of adultery, theft, kidnapping, and the murder of slaves. He called the clergy and church membership a "brotherhood of thieves."

The pro-slavery faction, incensed at Foster's accusations, shot back with rotten eggs and stones—a riot ensued. While police did almost nothing to calm the fighting, many blacks sought refuge and prayer in a place

born as the African Baptist Church, but known then as the African School.

It was at that time that the building we know of today as the African Meeting House further distinguished its place in black history on Nantucket.

TRUCKS INSTEAD OF PEWS

Absalom Boston was one of four trustees of the African Baptist Church built in the heart of New Guinea on the corner of York and Pleasant Streets. That said a lot for the church, for Boston was, perhaps, the most respected and wealthiest black man who ever lived on Nantucket.

Though construction on the building likely began in 1824, the land upon which it eventually stood was not purchased until two years later. Jeffrey Summons, a black man who worked as a carpenter on the island, purchased the land in 1826 for \$10.50.

The building was used as a school, church, meeting house, for anti-slavery lectures, and even used as a makeshift medical clinic where vaccinations for small pox were given in 1834.

When the Nantucket Public Schools integrated in 1846, the building was no longer needed as the island's only educational center for black children. Yet, it was still used for everything else up until about 1910—about the same time Nantucket was reeling from economic disaster.

Suffering financially, Edgar Wilkes, who had taken over the church in 1888 from the Rev. James Crawford, was forced to sell the building to a trucking business owner named Henry Chase for just \$250. Chase needed a place to put his trucks, so he remodeled the former black schoolhouse to accommodate his rigs.

Then in 1933 Florence Higginbotham, who was already living in the house next door on York Street, bought the building and two adjacent outhouses from Chase for \$3,000.

"Rumor was that she bought it because she didn't want anybody else between her and the corner," said her son, Wilhelm, in a phone interview last week from his home in Oakland, Calif.

Over the next several years the once proud symbol of black life on Nantucket continued to fall into grim decay, used for nothing more than a storage space for bicycles and construction equipment.

Wilhelm, an Afro-Indian, inherited the property when his mother died in 1972. But Wilhelm didn't really have much interest in the property, or Nantucket for that matter. The winters were too harsh and the work was too erratic (he did work at Glidden's Island Seafood market for a time), and 24 years after he arrived, Wilhelm left Nantucket in 1948. He worked as a postal clerk and managed the island property from his home in Oakland.

While Mrs. Higginbotham used the building as a source of income, actively marketing it as rental property, Wilhelm owned it "free and clear" and didn't care much about renting it out at all, said Seager.

So it sat there, virtually empty up until about 20 years ago when then Nantucket Bike Shop owner Morgan Levine, who was using the building as a bicycle repair shop, became fascinated with the old relic.

It was Levine who raised the money for a historical study of the building, and after nearly five decades of degeneration, the wheels of transformation had begun for the old Baptist Church because of a man who just wanted a place to fix bicycles.

REVIVAL

It's been called the African School, York Street School, African Church, York Street Colored Baptist Church, Colored Baptist Church, and Pleasant Street Baptist Church. Today, we know it as the African Meeting House on Nantucket.

In 1981 Byron Rushing, then president of the Museum of Afro American History (MAAH) and now a State Representative, wrote a historical summary of the building.

By 1986 a historical and architectural study was performed. Three years later MAAH purchased the building to preserve and restore it, and to help provide education about the history of blacks on Nantucket.

The building's earlier neglect may also have been its saving grace. A full 70 percent of the building was original material when the museum purchased it in 1989.

"You have to remember that neglect is a wonderful preservation strategy," mused Seager.

Since last fall, the meeting house has slowly begun to rise again as an icon to the history of blacks on Nantucket. Artifacts have been found, and the architect and builders are finding out what of the structure that now stands can and cannot be used in the restoration.

"We're able to save and use quite a bit of what remained," said John James, architect for the project, who added that the building is being restored according to how it looked in 1880.

The wall facing York Street and the east wall are both going to have to be entirely new, said James. The south wall was cut out and a rolling door installed in 1922 to accommodate truck storage. The east wall, bearing the brunt of harsh weather, collapsed and was rebuilt with simple two-by-four construction in the mid 1970s.

Those two walls, said James, are being rebuilt in keeping with framing techniques of the original building, post and beam—not two-by-four. The west and north sides of the building were in much better condition and can be preserved. And though the windows could not be saved, they are, said project foreman Mike DeNofrio, being virtually duplicated. White cedar shingle will, of course, be the exterior's finishing touch.

The Friends and Committee of the African Meeting House are hoping to raise \$600,000 to complete restoration of the building (exterior is expected to be finished by April, but funds are still being sought for interior restoration) so that future plans for the meeting house can be realized.

Earlier this month, a group of people involved in the project, community members, and others met to define what the interior of the building should look like and discuss future goals.

"They wanted the integrity and respect for the place to remain intact," said Sylvia Watts McKinney, executive director of the Museum of Afro American History in Boston.

McKinney said replicas of the pews will be placed in the building, matching them with markings on the original floor and walls.

Boards on the walls and floors had outlines of the pews, so James knew the length and width of the aisles based on those markings.

"They are absolutely clear," said James. In explaining how the markings were made, the architect said to imagine painting a wall a light color, then putting an object, like a pew, up against the wall and painting around it a darker color. When the object is removed, the outline of where it was would be quite clear.

When the building was used as truck storage earlier this century, a reinforcing floor was built on top of the original floor. Yet, oil and gas dripped down through the newer floor and saturated much of the original floor. The stench could force use of new floorboards in place of many of the original ones.

"We just don't know how much of the original flooring we could use," said James, who added that pews would still be placed in their original positions even if the original floor cannot be preserved.

Also, a round wooden canopy is on the ceiling where a chandelier had once hung. The original chandelier, donated to the church by a group of whites in 1837, has yet to be found. A raised platform will also be built at the north end of the building, and a stove, originally used for heating, will be installed for "ambiance of space," said McKinney.

Much of the original ceiling has rotted and will need to be replaced.

"Our primary goal has been and will continue to be that this building is restored," said McKinney.

A HISTORY WITHIN

Upon complete restoration of the building the African Meeting House will be more than an educational center for black history on the island.

McKinney explained that the nation's oldest meeting house on Beacon Hill is used for such things as press conferences and weddings, and envisions the same on Nantucket.

Also planned is an audio system playing gospel and spiritual music, reenacted sermons on abolition, and more contemporary themes like Martin Luther King's speech.

In the 1940s and 50s the building was used, said Seager, for "an occasional record hop" with jazz and blues music.

McKinney said the restored landmark should be "perceived as a living history where anyone who visits can get a sense of what it was like.

"We don't want people to just point and say 'that's where it used to be.' We want people to feel that they're a part of it."

And Kelly Hanley Goode, a member of the steering committee, added that the original church was not just the center of black life in New Guinea, but on Nantucket and the country as well.

"We want to be the impetus and motivation for more research, to draw black history within Nantucket's history where it becomes a part of it—not a separate part," said Goode.

Seager believes deeply in the project, not just for Nantucket, but also for other communities inspired by what is being accomplished here. She said the African Meeting House restoration project has now caught the attention of a church in Savannah, Ga. The priest there is a Nantucket native.

"The story of the people is preserved," said Seager, "when the building is preserved."

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from the great State of Massachusetts. We should take note of the fact that Massachusetts was one of the first to heed the call of President Lincoln and with great fervor their soldiers went into the lines and the civil rights battles. Also Massachusetts produced Charles Sumner, one of the great defenders of slave rights and later on one of the architects of the legislation that led to 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. MORAN], a neighbor from Alexandria.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from New York.

I gather there are other speakers so I will not take time. I have a statement that I am going to submit for the RECORD that pays tribute to the people within my district that have put so much effort into preserving the memory, the artifacts, the books, recordings of black history in northern Virginia, the Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage, the Parker-Gray Society, we have a number of groups that

have been very successful. I want to honor them within the RECORD.

I would also mention some of the history that cannot help but be recalled at this time. In fact, it is relevant to some of the issues that we deal with today.

For example, in 1846, there was a secession of Alexandria from the District of Columbia and our newspaper reports how African Americans, who had been brought here involuntarily for the purpose of slavery but then had been freed because they were part of the District of Columbia, having lived in Alexandria lined the way to all the polling stations, begging those whites, because white people were the only ones allowed to vote at the time, not to—what it was was a secession from the District of Columbia to make that populated part of northern Virginia part of the Commonwealth of Virginia and thus they would no longer be freed people.

They were unsuccessful in that effort and Alexandria immediately slipped back to some of its darkest days and became a center for slavery. I want to thank the Washington Urban League for purchasing the buildings now that at one point were slave quarters, to remind young people growing up in our community of the relatively recent history that gives us cause to renew our efforts to be vigilant and not to take our freedoms and progress for granted.

□ 1715

Because we are only talking about 150 years. Almost exactly 150 years ago when this occurred. It took a Civil War to restore dignity and freedom to those citizens.

We, today, are in a similar struggle, although it may not be as clear, to establish dignity and opportunity for all of our citizens, particularly within the District of Columbia, our capital city. And so I would hope that as we focus on Black History Month, that we would have more than the African-American Representatives within the Congress contribute to this.

We are all representing districts of our country that have been profoundly affected by the most scandalous era within America's history, and it is up to all of us not just to contribute words but to contribute a sincere commitment to build upon the progress that our African-American brothers and sisters have achieved. We are where we are, in large part, because of the pain, the suffering, the perseverance and the immense contribution they have made to our culture and our history.

Mr. Speaker, the prepared statement I referred to earlier follows herewith:

Mr. Speaker, today, as we come together to celebrate the contributions that African-Americans have made to this great Nation, I would like to pay special tribute to the many African-Americans in my district that have helped northern Virginia grow into the diverse and distinguished place it is today.

Since 1983, the Alexandria Black History Resource Center has been educating northern

Virginia about the history of our community. In addition to giving lectures and tours of the center, the Resource Center houses an impressive collection of memorabilia which documents the history of the African-American experience in Virginia. Upon visiting the Resource Center, guests learn of the great efforts made by the Alumni Association of the Parker-Gray School and the Alexandria Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage, Inc. to remind everyone of the contributions that African-Americans have made across the country. Their efforts also remind us that only by working together do we achieve an understanding of who we are as individuals.

The Parker-Gray School and the Alexandria Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage, Inc. both have an impressive history of their own to tell. The society began as the response of African-Americans in the Parker-Gray section of Alexandria to protect the Alfred Street Baptist Church from demolition. This church served as a catalyst for the black community in Alexandria. During an unstable time for African-Americans in this area, the church was not only a place of worship, but it was also a place for blacks to meet, plan, and build the community into what it is today. The Alexandria Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage, Inc. succeeded in its efforts. It continues to use the same perseverance to maintain and expand upon the black community.

The Parker-Gray School, which is named for two African-American principals of earlier schools that added greatly to the community, became the first 4-year high school for blacks in this area. The descendants of those who fought long and hard for the opening of this high school continue to work to build our community.

Another important project in the Eighth Congressional District is the Slave Memorial at Mount Vernon. The memorial, whose design was contributed to by students of the Howard University School of Architecture and Planning, consists of a gray granite column at the center of three concentric brick circles. The center column bears the inscription "In memory of the Afro-Americans who served as slaves at Mount Vernon." The three brick circles around the column are inscribed "Faith," "Hope" and "Love"—to symbolize the virtues that sustained those living in bondage. This memorial serves as a reminder of all of the thousands of visitors who come to Mount Vernon every year that this country was built by the labor of all of our ancestors.

This is the only known monument of its kind. It is a permanent tribute to enslaved African-Americans, whose skills, talents and spiritual strengths were an integral part of America's past. Every year, for the past 13 years, Black Women United for Action, an organization which serves as a strong voice of the black community, and the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, the non-profit organization that owns Mount Vernon, organize a wreath-laying ceremony at the Slave Memorial to honor these men and women.

All of the organizations and people mentioned above have done much to honor the rich contributions of African Americans, not only in northern Virginia but across the Nation. Their hard work is important to all of our communities to grow as one, remembering the struggles of our past and building the blocks to our future.

Black History Month is a time for celebrating the strength and diversity that African-Americans provide to these United States of America. And I thank you for giving me this time to add to the celebration. I only wish I had more time to give thanks to all of the groups and highlight all of the sites in the Eighth District of Virginia which add to the community. I would like to encourage everyone to come across the river to experience this rich environment.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I would ask if there is anyone in the House that has not spoken yet that would like to speak?

If not, I would like to yield to the gentlewoman from California to make a closing statement, and the gentleman from Ohio if he would like to make a closing statement, also, after the gentlewoman.

Mr. STOKES. Yes, after the chairwoman.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California, the leader of our Black Caucus.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for the additional time he took out here to ensure that all those who would like to make a statement about the contributions of the history, the development, the involvement of African-Americans in our society, in our country, in our Nation, would have that opportunity to do so.

I would additionally like to thank Congressman STOKES, because we do this today because he engineered this tradition for us in this House. Today he was able to sit here and advise us, and to instruct us and to help us learn protocol and to do all those things that we must learn to do to make these kinds of presentations.

I am grateful to him for his assistance, for his leadership, but I am eternally grateful to him for the role that he played in the founding and the development of the Congressional Black Caucus. It is because of his work that we understand our power. It is because of his work that we understand what it means to be unified. It is because of his leadership and the others that had the vision about where we could go and what we can be that we stand here today and share with the world who we are, what our aspirations are and what our vision is for the future.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California for her leadership in also organizing this special order, and I yield to the gentleman from Ohio, if he would like to speak.

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to thank the gentleman in the well for having taken this last hour and providing us the opportunity to extend this special order for a 2-hour period. I particularly want to recognize the contribution the gentleman is making as a member of the Congressional Black Caucus and one of the new leaders. So we are particularly proud to have had your participation this afternoon.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on Black History Month.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank the members of the majority for yielding us this time in a way which allowed us to present this special order in a 2-hour format back-to-back.

I want to close with just a few remarks thanking my colleagues and thanking Mr. STOKES again for the tradition that has been established here by the Congressional Black Caucus. This is just the beginning. I hope that we stimulate a more thorough discussion all year round within the African-American community in general, but all of our organizations and all of our leaders ought to take another close look at history.

What we need is more profundity. We need to dig deeper into our history and follow the example of the South Africans. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission is a model that is still pertinent for America. I think we ought to understand that some of the tensions within our society are there because people do not understand what the history of slavery is all about. They do not understand, even our own young people do not understand, how great their ancestors were.

I talk to young people and I say, all your ancestors were members of an aristocracy, an aristocracy of survivors. Survivors. Just to survive, just to survive the Atlantic crossing, just to get here to these shores alive, to survive 232 years. Two hundred thirty-two years. And remember Shakespeare's phrase, "Tomorrow, and tomorrow and tomorrow."

What was 232 years like? What did slaves have to look forward to? Two hundred thirty-two years. What are the economic implications of being in America, a people being in America for 232 years and not being paid for their labor? What are the economic implications of a people not being able to save anything? What are the economic implications of not being able to pass anything on to your children?

Some of our young people are ashamed that it seems that blacks are always at the bottom. They are at the bottom of the economic structure, et cetera. It would take a miracle for us to get to the top when we consider the fact that most wealth is inherited.

The researchers have established the fact that wealth is inherited. It is passed on from one generation to another. Sometimes it may be a small amount, but in order to have a small amount to invest and to make that amount grow you have to have it to begin with.

As I said before, the gap between the black middle class in America and the

mainstream middle class is not great when it comes to income, the salaries being earned, the kinds of jobs being occupied; but when we compare the wealth, wealth means property, wealth means stocks and bonds, wealth means cars and things that have value beyond a few years. When we look at wealth, it is not there.

One of the reasons wealth is not there is because 232 years went by without us earning wages, being able to save. Nothing could be passed on to the young people. We need to study that. We need to look at the implications of it.

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission is dealing with more immediate kinds of things that happened, all of the killings and maiming and murders that took place in South Africa, perpetrated by one group, the minority whites on the majority blacks. In order to deal with that and not have that poison their present, not have the past poison their present, to be able to go forward for the future, they have this Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

I do not have time to talk about it, but, Mr. Speaker, I want to enter into the RECORD an introduction which explains what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa is all about. I say in introducing this, this background paper on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, that I intend to introduce legislation which calls for the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the United States related to slavery and the condition of people of African descent, the descendants of the slaves.

The gentleman from Michigan [Mr. CONYERS] has introduced for several years a bill related to reparations. I am not going to add reparations. That is money. It excites people. It leads the discussion in the wrong direction. I want to talk about truth, truth before reconciliation.

We are not reconciled. We have too many people out there among the descendants of slaves who do not understand where they came from and who do not have the right self-esteem and sense of self-worth. We have too many people out there among the descendants of slave owners who are not willing to admit that there was a great injustice done and that injustice had repercussions.

Some of the people who stand on the floor and yell loudest about welfare and the need to make everybody go out and overnight get a job, et cetera, when the jobs do not exist and the economy does not favor certain kinds of people, they are descendants of slave owners.

We need to put these things in perspective. We need to study in a deeper and more thorough way some of the major documents of our own history, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

And again I want to emphasize the fact that reconciliation is more impor-

tant than justice. We are not seeking justice. Justice means we have to go fight wars and make people pay us reparations, and really justice would be out of the question.

Just as the people in Haiti have given up on justice, and they are not trying to punish anybody, they want reconciliation. They want reconciliation with the people who perpetrated the murders. In Bosnia and the Balkans they will not get anywhere unless they give up any quest for justice. Seek reconciliation but do not seek reconciliation in a phony way. Do not think you can have reconciliation unless you deal with the truth first.

Let us take a document like the 14th Amendment and deal with it truthfully. The 14th amendment, like the 13th amendment and the 15th amendment, were perpetrated, were created by the Members of Congress in response to the aftermath of slavery. We had set the slaves free. Actually the 13th amendment set the slaves free, and what should we do now? The 14th amendment came along to give the slaves equal rights.

But the 14th amendment has some other things in it, and I want to call my colleagues' attention to the other things in the 14th amendment because it is more than just equal rights. The 14th amendment is now being distorted to take away any programs which offer special treatment for the descendants of African slaves. That is turning history on its head, because the interpretation of the Constitution, most of the time the Supreme Court wants to know what was the intent of the founders.

The 14th amendment says the intent of the founders in the 14th amendment was to correct injustices related to slavery. And there are other parts which go on to talk about getting rid of that three-fifths count and counting everybody whole. Every male is to be counted equally.

And there are other parts that talk about punishing, punishing the people who rose up in rebellion against the Union. That is all in the 14th amendment. I cite those things because that makes it clear the 14th amendment is not about equal rights for everybody. It is about making adjustments in this society to take care of the evils of slavery. And when we set aside laws and voting rights laws which favor the descendants of African slaves, then we are in harmony with the 14th amendment.

We need to study these things in more detail. We will be back in the future, and I hope my colleagues will join me. Civil rights organizations need to update their own quest for the truth in history. We need to support a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in order to move forward toward the year 2000 with a more just society.

There are issues that will be coming up this very year: putting a cap on Medicaid, denying medical services to the poorest Americans. The proportion of the poorest Americans is great

among African-Americans, the descendants of slaves. We are moving in a direction which is refusing to recognize that we ought to take some steps to reconcile with the former victims of slavery.

These things are part of history. The small individual achievements of individuals are part of history, and that has been cited in many cases here, but we need to take a more profound, in-depth look at history, the history of America and the awful institution of slavery; how the repercussions of that institution keep going on.

Mr. Speaker, I thank everybody who has participated today.

Mr. Speaker, I want to enter into the RECORD at this point an introduction which explains what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa is all about.

INTRODUCTION BY THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE,
MR. DULLAH OMAR

After a long process of discussion and debate, inside and outside of Parliament, the scene is finally set for the appointment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It is important to understand the context in which the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will take place. The Commission is based on the final clause of the Interim Constitution which reads as follows:

"This Constitution provides a historic bridge between the past of a deeply divided society characterised by strife, conflict, untold suffering and injustice, and a future rounded on the recognition of human rights, democracy and peaceful co-existence and development opportunities for all South Africans, irrespective of colour, race, class, belief or sex.

"The pursuit of national unity, the well-being of all South African citizens and peace require reconciliation between the people of South Africa and the reconstruction of society.

"The adoption of this Constitution lays the secure foundation for the people of South Africa to transcend the divisions and strife of the past, which generated gross violations of human rights, the transgression of humanitarian principles in violent conflicts and a legacy of hatred, fear, guilt and revenge.

"These can now be addressed on the basis that there is a need for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not retaliation, a need for ubuntu but not for victimisation.

"In order to advance such reconciliation and reconstruction, amnesty shall be granted in respect of acts, omissions and offences associated with political objectives and committed in the course of the conflicts of the past. To this end, Parliament under this Constitution shall adopt a law determining a firm cut-off date which shall be a date after 8 October 1990 and before 6 December 1993, and providing for the mechanisms, criteria and procedures, including tribunals, if any, through which such amnesty shall be dealt with at any time after the law has been passed.

"With this Constitution and these commitments we, the people of South Africa, open a new chapter in the history of our country.

I could have gone to Parliament and produced an amnesty law—but this would have been to ignore the victims of violence entirely. We recognised that we could not forgive perpetrators unless we attempt also to restore the honour and dignity of the victims and give effect to reparation.

The question of amnesty must be located in a broader context and the wounds of our people must be recognised. I do not distinguish between ANC wounds, PAC wounds and other wounds—many people are in need of healing, and we need to heal our country if we are to build a nation which will guarantee peace and stability.

A critical question which involves all of us in how do South Africans come to terms with the past. In trying to answer this important question honestly and openly, we are fortunate in having a President who is committed to genuine reconciliation in our country and to the transformation of South Africa into a non-racial, non-sexist democracy based on a recognition of universally accepted human rights.

The President believes—and many of us support him in this belief—that the truth concerning human rights violations in our country cannot be suppressed or simply forgotten. They ought to be investigated, recorded and made known. Therefore the President supports the setting up of a Commission of Truth and Reconciliation.

* * * * *

AMENDMENT XIII

Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

AMENDMENT XIV

Section 1. All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Section 2. Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed. But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of electors for President and Vice President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, the Executive and Judicial officers of a State, or the members of the Legislature thereof, is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such State, being twenty-one years of age, and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens twenty-one years of age in such State.

Section 3. No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.

Section 4. The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing insurrection or rebellion, shall not be ques-

tioned. But neither the United States nor any State shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid of insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or any claim for the loss of emancipation of any slave; but all such debts, obligations and claims shall be held illegal and void.

Section 5. The Congress shall have power to enforce by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

AMENDMENT XV

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

SALUTE TO BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. Fox] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to join with my colleagues to salute Black History Month in the United States.

Just recently, Mr. Speaker, the Nation held a dual celebration, the inauguration of the President of the United States and the birthday of the late Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Mr. Speaker, this was a leader who inspired a generation to dream of a society where prejudice has no place and intolerance is without a foothold.

□ 1730

Now as we stand on the threshold of a new century, we must reevaluate how we have held to the principles espoused by Dr. King. His message, in fact his very life, was a call to arms for millions of Americans. During his all too brief life, he raised the conscience of America and, in doing so, made the greatest Nation on Earth even greater. At times it seems as though his dream has been forgotten, it seems as though the differences of race cannot be overcome.

I was shocked and saddened last year, as many of my colleagues were and the citizens across the country, when depraved arsonists burned down black churches throughout the South. This throwback to a dark era hinted at the underlying and unresolved issue of racism in America. But once again America did not allow darkness to reign. Instead, Americans of all faiths and colors came together to rebuild those churches and as the walls rose, so did the promise of America.

Mr. Speaker, the promise of this Nation was born in the belief that we were all created equal and entitled to certain inalienable rights. That promise grew as our Nation grew until we realized that some were excluded from the promise of freedom and justice. Black Americans suffered greatly, not just in the South but also in northern States, where poverty and hopelessness were the norm for free blacks. But it