
THE COALITION OF UNITED PROGRESSIVES CHARMECK CHRONICLE



Greetings!

We truly appreciate everyone's involvement.
This War on Oppression will only be won as one
mass movement.

Sections

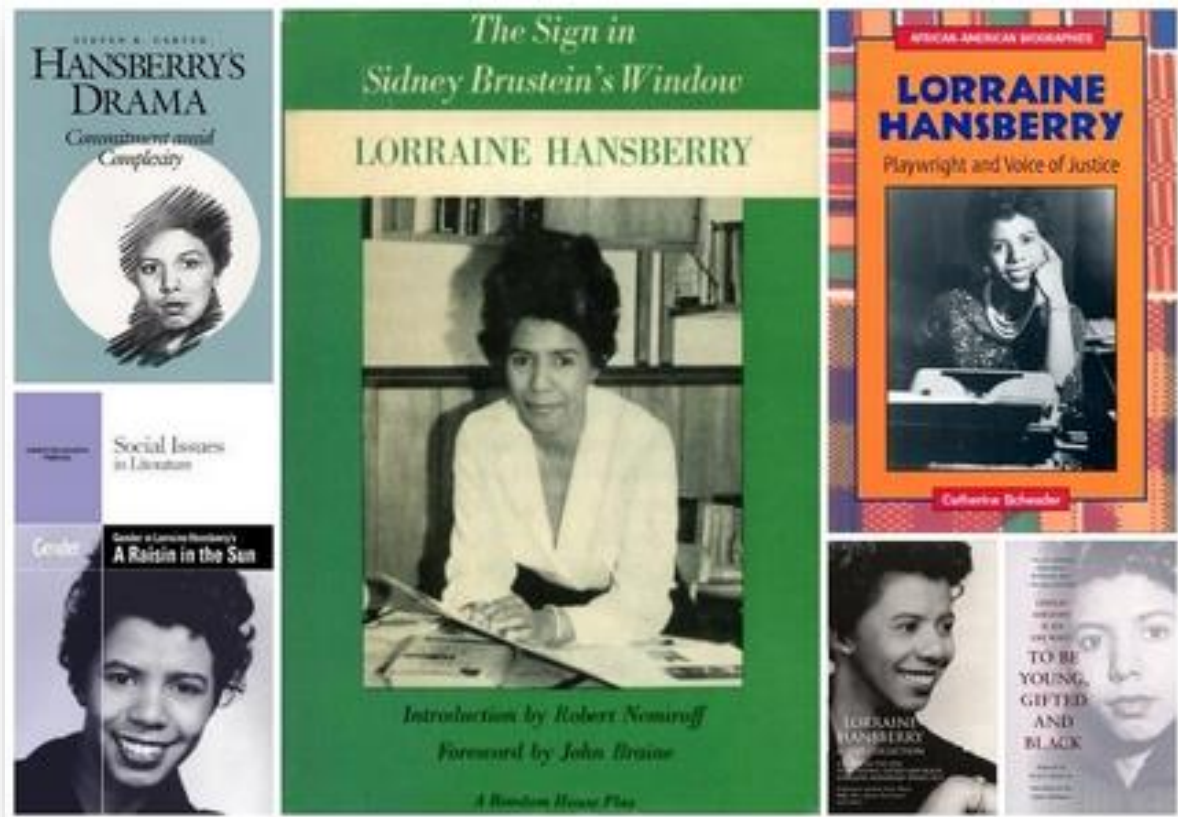
- **Spotlight - by DonnaMarie Woodson**
 - **Editorial - by Tarik Kiley**
 - **Announcements**
 - **Happenings Gallery!**

Our Mission Statement

The continual unification of as many organizations as possible starting at the local level and branching out to both the state of North Carolina and then the entire nation.

Spotlight

Lorraine Hansberry (May 19, 1930 – January 12, 1965)



“To Be Young, Gifted and Black”

By DonnaMarie Woodson

My memory of Lorraine Hansberry is as the author of the groundbreaking play, “A Raisin in the Sun” about the dynamics of a struggling black family, but I was unaware of the complexity of her life and the tenacity of her spirit. Click on photo below to see trailer.



[Lorraine Hansberry: Sighted Eyes/Feeling Heart \(Preview\)](#)

Ms. Hansberry, who was the first black playwright and the youngest American to win a New York Critics’ Circle award, was born on May 19, 1930, in Chicago, Illinois. Throughout her life she was heavily involved in civil rights and died at the young age of 34 of pancreatic cancer.

The new documentary, [American Masters – Lorraine Hansberry: Sighted Eyes/Feeling Heart](#) launched the PBS American Masters Season 32. It is the first in-depth presentation of Hansberry’s complex life, using her personal papers and archives, including home movies and rare photos, as source material. The film explores the influences that shaped Hansberry’s childhood, future art and activism.



**ARTIST. ACTIVIST.
REBEL. VISIONARY.**

If you only know "A Raisin in the Sun,"
then you don't know Lorraine Hansberry.

Hansberry wrote "*The Crystal Stair*", a play about a struggling black family in Chicago, which was later renamed "*A Raisin in the Sun*", a line from a [Langston](#)

[Hughes](#) poem. The play opened at the [Ethel Barrymore](#) Theatre on March 11, 1959 to standing ovations, having a run of 530 performances.

It was the first play produced on Broadway by an African-American woman, and at 29, she was the youngest American to win a New York Critics' Circle award. The film version of "*A Raisin in the Sun*" was completed in 1961, starring Sidney Poitier, and received an award at the Cannes Film Festival.

But, Hansberry was far more than just an artist, she was considered a left-wing radical, landing a place on J. Edgar Hoover's Communist list.

The granddaughter of a freed slave, and the youngest by seven years of four children, Lorraine Vivian Hansberry was born into her activism.

Hansberry's father, Carl Augustus, was a successful real estate broker, and her mother, Nannie Louise, was a schoolteacher. Her parents were active in both the [NAACP](#) and the Urban League; her father was also a director with the NAACP.

In 1938, Hansberry's family moved to a white neighborhood and was violently attacked by neighbors. They refused to move until a court ordered them to do so, and the case made it to the Supreme Court

as *Hansberry v. Lee*, ruling restrictive covenants illegal.



Lorraine attended the University of Wisconsin, but after 2 years dropped out in 1951 to live in New York and learn a “different kind of lesson” as a writer. Her first job was at the Pan Africanist

“Freedom Newspaper”, edited by Louis E. Burnham and published by activist/actor/singer [Paul Robeson](#). It was considered a radical publication, focusing on stories about the everyday Black man’s experience.

In 1963, Hansberry became active in the [Civil Rights Movement](#), meeting with then Attorney General [Robert Kennedy](#). Lorraine, along with icons [Harry Belafonte](#), [Lena Horne](#) and [James Baldwin](#), convened with Kennedy to test his position on civil rights.

Hansberry was very outspoken and had no problem telling Robert Kennedy, “if a liberal white man like himself can’t understand the struggle of Blacks, then there’s no hope.”

On June 20, 1953, she married Robert Nemiroff, a Jewish publisher, songwriter and political activist. Hansberry and Nemiroff divorced in

1962, though they continued to work together. In 1964 Hansberry was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. She died on January 12, 1965.

After her death, Nemiroff adapted a collection of her writing and interviews in *"To Be Young, Gifted and Black"*, which inspired the Nina Simone song of the same title.

Because of the times, it is believed that Hansberry was a closeted lesbian, a theory supported by her secret writings in letters and personal notebooks.

She was an activist for gay rights and wrote about feminism and homophobia, joining the Daughters of Bilitis and contributing two letters to their magazine, The Ladder, in 1957 under her initials "LHN."

Hansberry was a feminist before the term existed and in 1959 commented that women who are "twice oppressed" may become "twice militant".

She held out some hope for male allies of women, writing in an unpublished essay: "If by some miracle women should not ever utter a single protest against their condition there would still exist among men those who could not endure in peace until her liberation had been achieved."



Her biography, American Masters – Lorraine Hansberry: Sighted Eyes/Feeling Heart is a must-see and available online at PBS.org.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lorraine_Hansberry

<https://www.biography.com/people/lorraine-hansberry-9327823>

Editorial

What Black History Month Means to Me

By Tarik Kiley

January 19, 2018



I grew up in two major metropolitan cities as a kid. I lived in Baltimore, MD and also in Los Angeles, CA. But, my experience regarding Black History were significantly different in these two great cities.

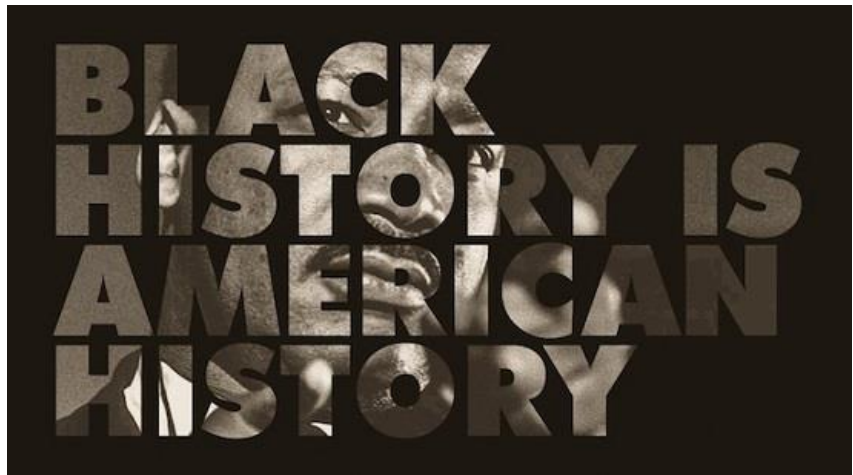
In Baltimore, I distinctly remember learning about African American heroes and historical figures. I remember

learning about Matthew A. Henson, Garrett Morgan and a whole list of accomplished Black people. I had schools around me named after Black historical figures, such as Duke Ellington Elementary; I even attended Matthew A. Henson Elementary School.

In Los Angeles, the only memories I have about studying Black History, or any type of African or African American history, was when we came to the section on African history in Honors class at Le Conte Junior High School. The teacher skipped over it and basically said that there was nothing noteworthy in Africa to study.

I will say that experience in LA was very infuriating and when I became older I took it upon myself to learn more about my culture and to find out the contributions of Africans to this country. As a result, I became fascinated with Africa and even finished college with a major in Africana Studies in addition to my Political Science major.

Black History Month is, has been, and will continue to be necessary because I'm sure still today there are some teachers who say that Africans have added nothing of value to this world. They have this historical

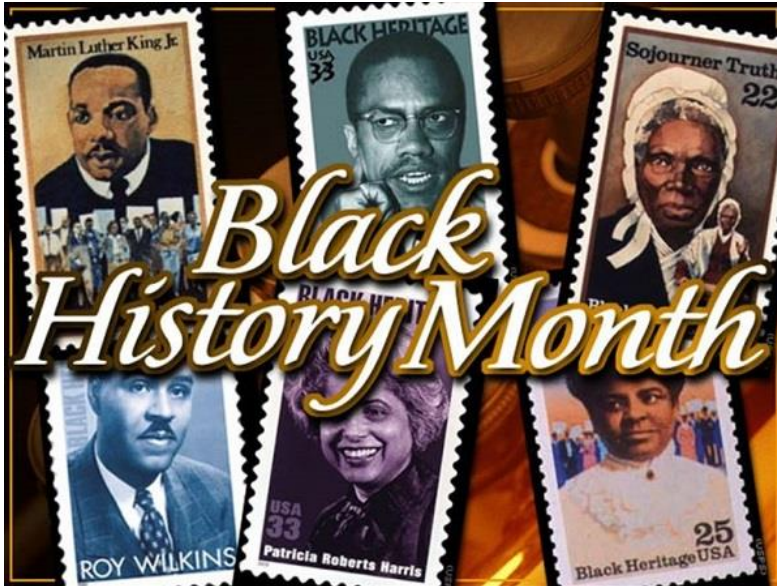


myth of the Dark Continent where Tarzan lives in a tree with Jane and the jungle savages. Of course, their depictions are completely inaccurate but if a person doesn't have the proper self-knowledge as an African American youth, then said youth can be easily misled.

I do have a criticism which builds on the lack of understanding about African American history and African societies.

First, African American history did not start with slavery. Africans have existed and built civilizations since ancient times. Also, African American history is about more than the Civil Rights Movement. In elementary school in Baltimore, and this is probably my only criticism of the way Baltimore City Schools dealt with Black History Month, they showed images from the Civil Rights Movement almost exclusively. So, I grew up thinking that African Americans

were these passive people who would not fight for themselves. The philosophy of non-violence was never explained. I just remember seeing African Americans sprayed with water hoses and bitten by dogs but not fighting back.



It was not until high school and through my own efforts and curiosity, that I was introduced to various schools of African American political philosophy. There was the separatism of Elijah Mohammed, the black nationalism

of Malcolm X, and the Pan-Africanism of Marcus Garvey and Kwame Nkrumah. There was also the elitism of WEB DuBois and the practical industrialism of Booker T. Washington.

Now, I can safely say that I'm aware of the political and socioeconomic conditions of African Americans but, if it were not for Black History Month in Baltimore, MD, I would have never gotten a taste of my history. Instead, I may have believed my junior high school Honors History teacher—that there was nothing in Africa and that Africans have not contributed anything to society.

Today, I know better. Africa is a vast continent which is very difficult to unite into one country because of its immense size and diversity; even though people talk of it as though it were a single nation. Also, African economic growth was stunted by the slave trade; both the western and eastern slave trade. European

colonialism and imperialism also sought to exploit the continent of Africa's natural resources and subjugated the various African peoples to do so.

I also know that out of slavery and its horrors, African Americans have developed a unique creole culture, for lack of a better term, which has mixed and acculturated European, African and Native



American cultures. Our culture, in the way we dress, the music we listen to, and the way we dance is imitated and admired globally.

So, yes, there is something worth studying about Africa and yes, African Americans have contributed greatly to U.S history.

Black History Month, a Time to Reflect and Remember.

Announcements



Speak Up About Homelessness:

Mecklenburg County Commission Meeting
Tuesday, February 6 at 5 PM
Mecklenburg County Government

Democrats of North Mecklenburg

Precinct Organization Meeting
Thursday, February 8th, 7pm
Magnolia Woods, [12125 Statesville Avenue, Huntersville](#)
RSVP for that at democrats@demsofnorthmeck.org

12th Annual Moral March on Raleigh

Taking the Resistance to the Ballot Box!
Saturday, February 10, 2018, 8:30 AM - 1 PM
[Click here to find out more details and to let the organizers know you'll be there.](#)

Democratic Women of Mecklenburg County

Tuesday, February 13 at 6:30 PM
Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church
401 N. McDowell, Charlotte, NC 28204

Announcements



Race Matters for Juvenile Justice

Implicit Bias Part I

Thursday, February 15 at 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

2225 Tyvola Rd, Charlotte, NC 28210

Senator Jeff Jackson's Gameplan Phone Bank

Advent CoWorking

933 Louise Ave, Suite #101, Charlotte, 28204

Purpose: Targeting voters in the most flappable districts across the state and letting them know there's an election this November 2nd.

- They've got a great challenger running in a competitive race who deserves their support as a voter and a volunteer.
- This challenger could be one of the keys to unlocking the governor's veto which would dramatically shift the political landscape.

Sign up here <http://www.jeffjacksonnc.com/gameplan-phone-bank>



Please submit your group events to donnamarie93@gmail.com by the 15th of the month for inclusion in the Announcements.

Happenings Gallery



(Rev. Amantha Barbee, The Queen City Singers, Jade X. Jackson, Braxton Winston, and Rev. Rodney Sadler)

The Executive Corner:

Executive Director - Jade X. Jackson

Rev Rodney Sadler, Joel Segal, DonnaMarie Woodson

Coalition of United Progressives-CharMeck Chronicle

Editor: DonnaMarie Woodson

Contributor: Tarik Kiley