



S A N F R A N C I S C O
*African American
Historical & Cultural Society*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:



Season's Greetings to One and All:

I trust that you and yours had a safe and enjoyable Thanksgiving and that you are looking forward to a happy holiday season.

CONGRATULATIONS! Once again African Americans, and others, have saved America's fragile democracy, at least temporarily. What we have accomplished this year truly makes Thanksgiving 2020 one to be long remembered. Hopefully, **President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris** will succeed in bringing the country together.

The election of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris bodes well for the country's addressing issues of equity and justice for African Americans and all Americans. However, from an historical perspective we must be mindful that it is by no means a guarantee that the potential of this moment will be realized. While the election of Biden/Harris is truly momentous and historic – our first female Vice President, and, she is bi-racial! - we cannot afford to rest on our laurels. We have made progress in the past and seen it eroded when we relaxed and took time to savor our success. While we stop to celebrate, those who would deny us our rights and privileges are busy at work plotting to eradicate what we have accomplished and turn back the clock.

A recent *Atlantic Magazine* article indicates that the current state of affairs in the United States was predicted 10 years ago. It also predicted that things are going to get much worse before they get better. Therefore, we must continue to organize, develop our communities, advocate and fight for the rights and privileges we are entitled to.

We are in this struggle for the long haul and we have

PRAISESINGER NEWSLETTER, Final Edition 2020
demonstrated time and again that we are capable of and intent on succeeding.

According to philosopher George Santayana "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

As we approach the holiday season one of the most important gifts we can give each other is **knowledge of our personal, family and community histories**. This gift may help us avoid repeating past mistakes and continue our forward progress.

Take good care and stay safe.

- Al Williams, President



3 African Thumb pianos, donated by Ruth Wall

THE BLACK FAMILY: REPRESENTATION, IDENTITY & DIVERSITY

The Society is planning the 2021 Black History Month program. Due to the pandemic stay-at-home orders, activities will be via ZOOM. We endeavor to present quality programs to educate, entertain and commemorate Black History as we have over the years. See below how you might get involved. More to follow!

- Black History Month Kick-off, featuring keynote speaker on the BHM theme
- Black Family Exhibit (**Do you have a story told in photos or videos?**)
- More theme-based activities...

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Little did we know on March 16, 2020, that the doors to the Society would be closed for the rest of the year. Here we are after a tumultuous nine months having endured the corona virus, shelter in place, political unrest on the streets, and most importantly, a national election with critical national and worldwide implications.

One of many responding to this crisis was our own, Barack Obama, the two-term, 44th president of the United States, elected in 2008. His support for President-elect Joe Biden, his Vice President, was critical, and in keeping with his belief that inside the "American experiment" progress is always possible - as expressed in his message of hope and change.

The current exhibit, "*Obama: A Legacy of Hope*", has remained in place since the Complex's closing. It is our goal to share this exhibit with you in a virtual format. The exhibit consists of two segments, "*Voting*", created by artist Courageous Cunningham, depicting the struggles related to the right to vote, and the "*Barack Obama Story*" as seen through the eyes of Society member Ms. Francee Covington. The exhibit captures the challenging time we are experiencing in an artistic and meaningful way.

Starting with Black History Month, our focus will be on the importance of the Black Family in today's society. The Association for the Study of African American Life and History theme should provide insight as to how the Black Family survived the challenges of 2020.

In conclusion, I would like to wish you all a most wonderful holiday season filled with love, joy, happiness and the positive expectations of a better tomorrow. Please remember that your support and active participation is critical to the survival of our organization.



- Bill Hoskins, Executive Director

**JAMES HERNDON, ESQ.:
REMEMBERING THE SOCIETY'S CO-FOUNDER**

Attorney James Herndon was born the first of eight children, on May 14, 1925, in Troy, and raised in Birmingham, Alabama. The Jim Crowism that denied economic opportunities and threatened violence inspired Herndon's life-long striving for betterment.

As a child, he worked at a print shop; the owner observed how smart he was and recommended that James attend the Huntsville, Alabama Trade School. James learned to print, and because the printers' union did not have a discrimination clause, he was able to join the printer's union, enabling employment, as similarly did the son of Frederick Douglass.



Left to right: James Herndon, Martin Luther King

As a printer, James Herndon supported himself through Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, and Howard University in Washington, D.C. James and **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** were in the same Morehouse graduation class; a family photo shows the men sitting in the same row. There, Herndon was student president of the NAACP.

James pursued a law degree at Howard University during the McCarthy era when W.E.B. DuBois was on trial and Paul Robeson's passport was confiscated. At both institutions, Herndon honed oratorical and rhetoric skills, inspired by DuBois and Robeson.

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Continued, James Herndon

He worked for ten years at the government printing office in Washington, D.C. after graduation.

It was the late Attorney **Richard Bancroft** who studied law with James at Howard, who encouraged Herndon to come to San Francisco. Herndon was employed as a typesetter at the San Francisco *Chronicle*, where he met co-worker **Julian Richardson**, the late owner of Marcus Bookstore. Though passing the bar, James maintained his membership in the International Typographical Union. During this period Herndon co-founded the Negro Historical and Cultural Society, organizing many Negro History Week observances and brought outstanding scholars to speak before the Society. Herndon’s friendship lead to having the Society’s materials printed in Richardson’s print shop.

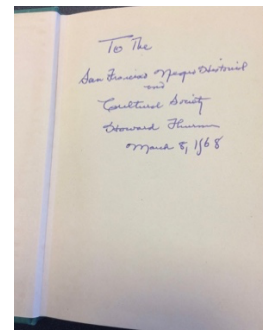
Herndon was the first African American partner in a San Francisco major law firm. He was active during the civil rights period in: the successful campaign to employ an African American in a Bayview supermarket as checker, representing low-cost housing groups in the Hunter’s Point and the Mission Tenants Union, the United Farm Workers Tulare rent strike, demonstrators at the sit-ins on Automobile Row, (who fought for African Americans to be employed as salespersons, and the suit to end SFUSD’s de-facto segregation in the public schools. In addition to his law practice and civil rights work, he established the Paul Robeson Society, dedicated to human rights, social and economic justice. **Herndon served as Society President from 1955-63 and 1966-71**

James met and married Shirley Keith Herndon in San Francisco, and had two daughters. Attorney James Herndon passed in 2002 at age 77. Shirley Herndon, Corrine Vega and Julia Sobalvarro reside in the Bay Area. Vega and Sobalvarro are San Francisco Unified School District educators. Mrs. Herndon is still active, alert, and fulfilling a productive life while enjoying her four grandchildren, one great-grandchild, with a great-grandchild on the way. Her message to the

Society:

“Congratulations to the Society and to the **Praisesinger** for your hard work and many years of dedication and perseverance. May you continue the mission to inform, educate and instill pride!”

- Eldoris Cameron



Howard Thurman inscribed and signed book

TRANSITIONS & FAREWELLS

**Hugh Jesse Arnelle, Esq.,
December 30, 1933 - October 21, 2020**

Attorney Arnelle was known for many firsts, notably for starting one the first minority owned corporate law firms. Under his leadership as Society President (1980-1982), the Society and the World Affairs Council of Northern California sponsored a fundraiser with Edmund Muskie, Secretary of State as honored Guest Speaker on December 4, 1980, Sheraton Palace Hotel, San Francisco.

Melody Martin 1933 - September 5, 2020

If you visited our website recently, you know that Melody Martin, our long-time member and frequent volunteer, passed away after a brief illness. Linda Stewart, Melody’s daughter, was recently here settling her mother’s affairs. She was touched when we included Melody’s name and her photo on our website. The Society extends its thanks to Linda, who made a donation to the Society in honor of Melody Martin.

<p>IN HIS OWN WORDS: LANCE BURTON & PLANET FILLMORE</p>	<p>building still stands, though most other buildings around it were demolished. For 10 years, the family</p>
<p>I arrived in San Francisco in my grandfather’s 56 DeSoto from Little Rock Arkansas. My parents were driving in our ‘49 Chevrolet with my brother Ken, 5 years younger, enjoying the view from the back seat. That was our exit from Jim Crow and the segregated South. I had turned 6 and started the first grade at Booker T. Washington Elementary. Nearby, 9 teens were being escorted by US troops, to Central High School; the first black students admitted to this institution. From the look of things on TV, it was not a fun first day. In SF, I was to start first grade at Golden Gate Elementary school in the Fillmore.</p>	<p>played checkers on Redevelopment's “moving” chess board. All while soaking up the culture of the more than 700 black businesses and social clubs. Fillmore was the center, energy, education and optimism in a multi-cultural rainbow...shrouded in a dusty cloud of destruction. That environment shaped many of us. For 50 years, I soaked up the richness of the Fillmore and San Francisco's new age media, information, tech, entertainment and Green convergences, different from the military waterfront and Fillmore I knew prior to the 1970s.</p>
<p>The family left Arkansas to join the elder Burtons to live at 1745 Ellis St. We came wide-eyed and eager to find normalcy in this fascinating and supposed integrated City. My granddad had been in SF since discharge from the Navy in 1946; my grandmother, since her family came in the ‘30s. The Ellis St. location was between Steiner and Pierce Streets, at Bourbon, a one-block side street (no longer exists.) As you peered toward Eddy, it looked right into the front entrance of a corporate building that took up the entire block. It was the regional HQ for Foster Kleiser Billboard Company, which, as I later learned, was then the largest billboard communications company on the west coast.</p>	<p>Some say our past left few apparent images. It was hard to figure out how people like us came of age. Yet, it was the first Black this or that. But it turns out there are plenty useful images of us. Access to those images was not in our control. Then, David Johnson and others validated our lives on film, inviting the world to see who we are. Planet Fillmore Communications is forged from the same concept. Fillmore minds inspired me to graduate from SF State University and serve as instructor of Broadcast at City College of San Francisco; to gain business knowledge from a handful of technology companies enabling access to high-value organizations and their leaders.</p>
<p>I came to know the other side of the street from a front room window. I could see blocks up to Geary Blvd. The City was dismantling homes on that 2-blocks area to redesign Geary Blvd. Buildings were in shambles and rubble lie everywhere – a lasting image. Elderly black men in coveralls were scattered throughout the area picking up bricks, chipping off mortar, and stacking them neatly. I was told they earned a penny a brick. That was my intro to San Francisco and the Fillmore in Fall ‘57.</p>	<p>Now celebrating 50 years, Plant Fillmore Communications’ stories exemplify who we have been, who we are and who we are becoming - that our Black lives matter. The <u>Planetfillmore.tv</u> website and the podcast, <u>Planet Fillmore Orbit</u>, reflect my own youthful experience of a historically rich Fillmore.</p> <p>Type in these urls, do a search in your browser, or go to our website to reach Planet Fillmore to see and hear Fillmore African American stories, past and present.</p> <p>https://planetfillmore.tv/ https://anchor.fm/planetfillmore</p>
<p>In 1958, we moved to 1775 O'Farrell Street. The</p>	<p>--- Lance Burton, member</p>

1928-2020 - BLACK HISTORY MONTH THEMES

Carter G. Woodson was the founder of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASAHL) and creator of Negro History Week in 1926. In 1928 the ASAHL established annual themes by which observances could focus.

<https://asalh.org/black-history-themes/>

- 1928 Civilization: A World Achievement
- 1929 Possibility of Putting Negro History in the Curriculum
- 1930 Significant Achievements of the Negro
- 1931 Neglected Aspects of Negro History
- 1932 What George Washington Bicentennial Commission Fail to Do
- 1933 Ethiopia Meets Error in Truth
- 1934 Contribution of the Negro in Poetry, in Painting, in Sculpture and in Science
- 1935 The Negro Achievements in Africa
- 1936 African Background Outlined
- 1937 American Negro History from the Time of Importation from Africa up to the Present Day
- 1938 Special Achievements of the Race: Oratory, Drama, Music, Painting, Sculpture, Science and Inventions
- 1939 Special Achievements of the Race: Religion, Education, Business, Architecture, Engineering, Innovation, Pioneering
- 1940 Negro Labor
- 1941 The Career of Frederick Douglass
- 1942 The Negro in Democracy
- 1943 The Negro in the Modern World
- 1944 The Negro and the New Order
- 1945 The Negro and Reconversion
- 1946 Let us Have Peace
- 1947 Democracy Possible only Through Brotherhood
- 1948 The Whole Truth and Nothing but the Truth
- 1949 The Use of Spirituals in the Classroom
- 1950 Outstanding Moments in Negro History
- 1951 Eminent Negroes in World Affairs
- 1952 Great Negro Educators (Teachers)
- 1953 Negro History and Human Relations
- 1954 Negro History: A Foundation for Integration

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS! HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The Society Board of Directors extends **Holiday Greetings** to the membership and all of our friends. This is the season of Family, Giving, and Gratitude. We urge you to celebrate AND to stay safe. See you in the New Year!

In the Eastbay: HUEY P. NEWTON AND CHAUNCEY BAILEY HONORED

Oakland Councilmember Lynette Gibson McElhaney proposed renaming a short stretch of **9th St.** between **Center & Chester Streets**, “**Huey P. Newton Way.**” The site is near where Newton was killed in 1989. Her proposal included renaming part of **14th Street** in honor/memory of **Chauncey Bailey**. The Oakland City Council approved the renaming of the two streets in July 2020.

Huey P. Newton was the co-founder of the Black Panther Party for Self- Defense. He was born February 17, 1942 and died August 22, 1989.

Chauncey Bailey was editor-in-chief of the Oakland Post Newspaper and prominent in the Oakland Black Community. Bailey was born in Oakland on October 20, 1949. He was investigating financial dealings of members of the Black Muslim Bakery when he was gunned down on August 7, 2007.

Good job Councilwoman, **McElhaney!**

African American history is kept alive in Oakland!

- Eldoris Cameron

Learn more about African American history and culture as experienced in the eastbay. Visit (virtually) the African American Museum and Library (AAMLO) in Oakland which holds the archives of our “sister” historical society. Signup for their email newsletter:

<https://www.oaklandlibrary.org/locations/african-american-museum-library-oakland>

SERVE on the Society’s Board - your skills and commitment are needed. Pay your 2021 dues before the March Annual Meeting!

info@sfaahcs.org or 415.292-6172



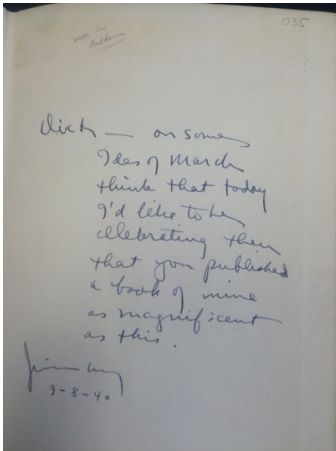
<p>SOCIETY ARCHIVE PROJECT</p>	<p>CHANGING TIMES, CHANGING TECHNOLOGY</p>
<p>During the pandemic, many folks have been clearing out personal items. The Society has received several inquiries about potential donations. We are grateful that people think of the Society when it comes to donating precious items. Before we accept any gift, we consider these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the item unique and does it relate to San Francisco, Bay Area or California African American history, culture and life? - Does the item relate to the Society’s mission? - What is the item’s condition? - Can the Society maintain and preserve the item? <p>Books are considered separately. Is it unique? Is it unavailable elsewhere? Etc.</p> <p>When we do not accept a donation, we suggest appropriate organizations that might.</p> <p>The Society archive goals are to: 1) re-establish and digitize the research library, 2) organize and preserve artifacts for use in exhibits and educational activities, and 3) create and maintain a retrievable database of printed material and artifacts. If you can help, please contact us at info@sfaahcs.org.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ginger Smyly, Board Member <p>See photos of some of our “treasures” throughout the <i>Praisesinger</i></p>	<p>Please join us via Internet-enabled devices. Check your phone and Internet connections for ZOOM before:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The virtual Black History Month Kick-Off, date to be arranged - Other Black History Month activities - The March 21, 2021 Annual Membership meeting <p>The Society Board of Directors: Kiwon Gore, Louis Garrett, Sr., William Hoskins, Ginger Smyly, Al Williams, Marisa Williams</p> <p>PAPERLESS DELIVERY Tell us your email. Save postage and keep us safe.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>SAVE THE DATE!</i> <i>Annual Society Membership Meeting</i> <i>Sunday, March 21, 2021</i> <i>via ZOOM!</i> More information coming</p>
<p>WEBSITE UPDATE - Coming soon to sfaahcs.org:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A link to an article written by Bill Russell (yes, that Bill Russell) called “Racism is Not a Historic Footnote” - Mention of a forthcoming book, titled, “Black Fatigue” by Mary-Frances Winters - Black-owned eateries in Berkeley and Oakland open for takeout - “Two African American Pioneering Entrepreneurs” – essay & photos - MORE! 	<p><i>San Francisco African American Historical and Cultural Society</i> <i>Praisesinger</i> Newsletter, September 2020 762 Fulton Street, 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94102 415.292.6172; info@sfaahcs.org; www.sfaahcs.org</p> <p>Editors: Eldoris Cameron and Ginger Smyly Photos: G. Smyly President: Al Williams Executive Director: William Hoskins</p>

Continued: Black History Month themes	1992 African Roots Experience New Worlds, Pre-Columbus to Space Exploration
<p>1955 Negro History: A Contribution to America’s Intercultural Life</p> <p>1956 Negro History in an Era of Changing Human Relations</p> <p>1957 Negro History</p> <p>1958 Negro History: A Factor in Nationalism and Internationalism</p> <p>1959 Negro History: A Foundation for a Proud America</p> <p>1960 Strengthening America Through Education in Negro History and African Culture</p> <p>1961 Freedom and Democracy for the Negro after 100 years (1861-1961)</p> <p>1962 Negro History and a New Birth of Freedom</p> <p>1963 Negro History Evaluates Emancipation (1863-1963)</p> <p>1964 Negro History: A Basis for the New Freedom</p> <p>1965 Negro History: Freedom’s Foundation</p> <p>1966 Freedom from Racial Myths and Stereotypes Through Negro History</p> <p>1967 Negro History in the Home, School, and the Community</p> <p>1968 The Centennial of the Fourteenth Amendment Afro American History Week</p> <p>1969 Changing the Afro American Image through History</p> <p>1970 15th Amendment and Black America in the Century (1870-1970)</p> <p>1971 African Civilization and Culture: A Worthy Historical Background</p> <p>1972 African Art, Music, Literature; a Valuable Cultural Experience</p> <p>1973 Biography Illuminates the Black Experience</p> <p>1974 Helping America Understand</p> <p>1975 Fulfilling America’s Promise: Black History Month</p> <p>1976 America for All Americans</p> <p>1977 Heritage Days: The Black Perspective; the Third Century</p> <p>1978 Roots, Achievements and Projections</p> <p>1979 History: Torch for the Future</p> <p>1980 Heritage for America</p> <p>1981 Black History: Role Model for Youth</p> <p>1982 Afro American Survival</p> <p>1983 Afro Americans in the United States</p> <p>1984 Afro Americans and Education</p> <p>1985 Afro American Family</p> <p>1986 Afro American Experience: International Connection</p> <p>1987 Afro Americans and the Constitution from Colonial Times to the Present</p> <p>1988 Constitutional Status of Afro Americans in the 21st Century</p> <p>1989 Afro Americans and Religion</p> <p>1990 Seventy-Five Years of Scholarly Excellence: A Homage to Our Forebearers</p> <p>1991 Educating America: Black Universities and Colleges, Strengths and Crisis</p>	<p>1993 Afro-American Scholars: Leaders, Activists and Writers</p> <p>1994 Empowering Black Americans</p> <p>1995 Reflections on 1895: Douglass, Du Bois & Washington</p> <p>1996 Black Women</p> <p>1997 African Americans and Civil Rights; a Reprisal</p> <p>1998 Black Business</p> <p>1999 Legacy of African American Leadership for the Present and the Future</p> <p>2000 Heritage and Horizons: The African American Legacy and the Challenges for the 21st Century</p> <p>2001 Creating and Defining the African American Community: Family, Church Politics and Culture</p> <p>2002 The Color Line Revisited: Is Racism Dead?</p> <p>2003 The Souls of Black Folks: Centennial Reflections</p> <p>2004 Before Brown, Beyond Boundaries: Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education</p> <p>2005 The Niagara Movement: Black Protest Reborn, 1905-2005</p> <p>2006 Celebrating Community: A Tribute to Black Fraternal, Social, and Civil Institutions</p> <p>2007 From Slavery to Freedom: Africans in the Americas</p> <p>2008 Carter G. Woodson and the Origins of Multiculturalism</p> <p>2009 The Quest for Black Citizenship in the Americas</p> <p>2010 The History of Black Economic Empowerment</p> <p>2011 African Americans and the Civil War</p> <p>2012 Black Women in American Culture and History</p> <p>2012 President Barack Obama National Black History Month Proclamation</p> <p>2013 At the Crossroads of Freedom and Equality: The Emancipation Proclamation and the March on Washington</p> <p>2014 Civil Rights in America</p> <p>2015 A Century of Black Life, History, and Culture</p> <p>2016 Hallowed Grounds: Sites of African American Memories</p> <p>2017 The Crisis in Black Education</p> <p>2018 Africans Americans in Times of War</p> <p>2019 Black Migrations</p> <p>2023 Anti-Black Violence and Resistance in the Black Diaspora</p> <p>2022 Black Health and Wellness</p> <p>2021 The Black Family: Representation, Identity and Diversity</p> <p>2020 African Americans and the Vote</p>

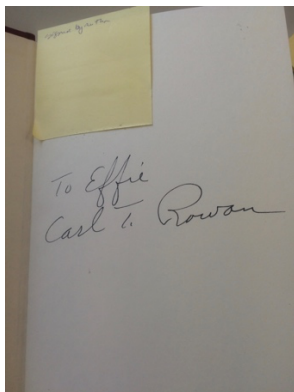
MORE FROM THE SOCIETY ARCHIVE



Inventoried & boxed *ephemera* regarding Mary Ellen Pleasant, William Leidesdorff, H. Welton Flynn and the Anderson Family



Inscription on flyleaf of *Native Son* (Richard Wright), to "Dick" from "Jimmy" dated 3/8/40



Carl Rowan's signature on book flyleaf, to "Effie", the Society's own Effie Lee Morris

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

(Your annual membership term is January 1 through December 31.)
LIFE members, your donation is appreciated

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE _____ CELL _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

Please sign me up as a:

- | | | | |
|---------------|-------|----------------------|-------|
| _____ Student | \$15 | _____ Organizations | \$250 |
| _____ Senior | \$25 | _____ Small Business | \$350 |
| _____ Adult | \$50 | _____ Large Business | \$700 |
| _____ Family | \$100 | _____ Donor | |

If you do not plan to be an active member, please make a donation.

Donation: \$ _____

Total: \$ _____

Membership fees and contributions are tax deductible

Make Your Check Payable/Mail To:

San Francisco African American Historical & Cultural Society

762 Fulton Street, 2nd Floor
 San Francisco, CA 94102
 415.292.6172

I am interested in serving on the committee(s):

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| _____ Development | _____ Library/archives |
| _____ Membership | _____ Programs |
| _____ Black History Month | _____ Communications |
| _____ Volunteer/Reception | _____ Other |

Date rec'd check/cash roster thank you

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