

Unique Black Women Cont'd.

women of color.

Other associations, organizations or societies were formed during the pre-Civil War days that protested slavery so that it was inevitable that spin-offs of these groups would evolve into a format that demanded civil rights for all Blacks. Here, Blacks found that the road they wished to travel would be a long, lonely one. Many white abolitionists who acknowledged that blacks should have their freedom were reluctant to agitate for equality. Therefore it was left, initially, to individual Blacks who were in a position to do so, to crusade for civil rights.

One of these was **Marie Stewart** who was born free in Connecticut in 1803. At the age of 28, she became a professional lecturer, the first American woman to do so. She vehemently demanded that her own people, as well as whites, take direct action in the abolishing of slavery and the instituting of civil rights for all Blacks.

Stewart was insistent that Blacks become financially independent through pooling their assets and forming cooperatives. She also insisted that her "sisters," as she addressed Black women audiences, take responsibility for the intellectual and moral education of their children. At the end of her speaking career, she became a teacher in Washington, D.C.

Another educator, **Mary Ann Shadd Cary**, taught in several northern states before she moved to Canada in 1850. Born a slave in Delaware in 1823, she was educated by Quakers and felt a deep commitment to teaching Blacks. When she felt compelled to leave the States because of the Fugitive Slave Act, she continued her teaching career by opening a school for refugees of slavery in Windsor, Ontario. Limited income from tuition and contributions was augmented by funding from the American Missionary Association.

Cary's encouragement of Blacks to emigrate to Canada remained unabated throughout this period, and she published a pamphlet called **Notes on Canada West**. This led her to found a weekly newspaper, **The Provincial Freeman**. As its editor from 1854-56, she encountered opposition from Windsor's townfathers because of her politics and gender. After her marriage to Thomas Cary in 1856, she resigned her post as editor, and returned to teaching. She continued to submit articles to the newspaper.

When the Civil War began, she was appointed a recruiter in Indiana, and helped to recruit a regiment of Black soldiers. After the war's end, she entered Howard Law School, graduated in 1883 as the second Black female lawyer, and entered into private practice in Washington D.C. Using her new skills to fight the injustices that her people suffered, she continued until her death in 1893.

As educators, Cary and Stewart were members of an army of women who are appalled at this monumental task of educating

their illiterate folks. They knew that without at least a rudimentary education, Blacks were at the mercy of unscrupulous white employers, and doomed to an unending cycle of generations of poverty and ignorance. Cary, as a lawyer, was well aware of how hopeless a task this seemed to be. However, she and her sisters did not give up.

Several schools in the North had been established. One of the earliest was by **Catherine Ferguson** of New York City. Illiterate, she was concerned with the religious instruction of poor children, and so opened Kathy Ferguson's School for the Poor in 1793. Her zeal and dedication came to the attention of the minister with whom she had Bible studies, and he offered larger quarters and helpers who taught the children how to read and write, in addition to their catechism, which Ferguson taught. In all, she fostered forty-eight children. Those for whom she was unable to find suitable homes, she raised herself.

Nancy Gardner Prince trod a similar path in Boston, in 1833; but with less spectacular results. In that city all homes for orphans or destitute children admitted whites only. Recognizing that the people for whom she had worked represented the attitude of the majority of white people in that town, Prince was able to determine that they were Christian in name only.

Having acquired some knowledge of how to establish such an asylum while she was in St. Petersburg, Russia, she set about organizing the home with the help of others. Without strong funding sources, Prince was forced to close the home in a few short months.

Money, then, was often the bottom line in many attempts to acquire freedom from slavery, racism, ignorance and poverty. Those Blacks who could, did contribute to the various cause to alleviate the four nemeses; but, at best, their help was little more than a band aid where major surgery was indicated.

It can be argued with some validity that racism was the cause for the other three; but if major surgery was to be performed, many felt that poverty needed to be attended to first. Housing, nutrition, sanitation and health care appeared to be better for Blacks in the North, but women who wanted to go into the field of health met stronger resistance from their white counterparts in the North than in the South, where separation was the rule.

In the field of nursing, **Mary Eliza Mahoney** graduated from the School of Nursing, New England Hospital for Women and Children in Boston in 1879. She became the first Black woman to receive her diploma in nursing. It would not be until 1891 when Dr. Daniel Hale Williams founded Provident Hospital in Chicago with its School of Nursing that numbers of Black nurses would be granted in the North.

New England, again, was the region that produced another "first" in the field of health. Fifteen years before Mahoney became a nurse, **Rebecca Lee** graduated from New England Medical College. Three years later, the second Black woman, Rebecca Cole, was graduated from the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania. After Reconstruction, she joined Charlotte Abby in Philadelphia where they offered medical and legal services to women.

Maria Steward, sister of **Sarah Garnet**, the first Black principal of a school in New York, graduated as the valedictorian of her class from the Woman's Medical College of the New York Infirmary for Women and Children in 1870.

The 19th century would almost come to a close before women entered the field of dentistry and pharmacy.

Ida Gray, born in Clarksville, Tenn., graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in dentistry in 1890. She practiced in Cincinnati, Ohio. **Mary Williams** graduated from Howard University's School of Dentistry in 1896.

The new century saw few to add to the roster of female dentists; **Gertrude Curtis** received her degree from Columbia University in New York in 1909. **Annie E. Delaney** also received her degree and practiced in the State of New York, as did Curtis.

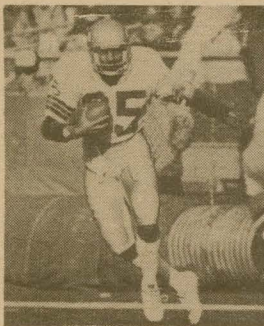
The first woman dentist of any race who served in the military was **Mary Jane Watkins**, a 1924 graduate.

Pharmacy boasts fewer Blacks than any health field. Only four graduated before 1900, and the first was **Mary Ellen Morrison** in 1887.

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BILLIE HOLIDAY was the best-known jazz singer in America in the 1940's. She was born Eleanora Fagan, but took her more famous name when she became a singer. Also known by her nickname, "Lady Day," this jazz great also wrote many songs. Her troubles with drugs brought an early end to her career and her life.



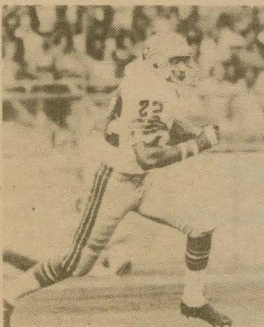
Paul Johns



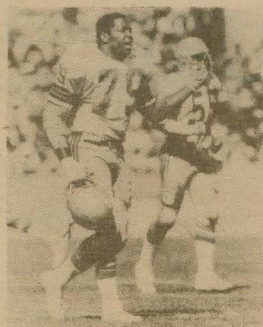
Kenny Easley



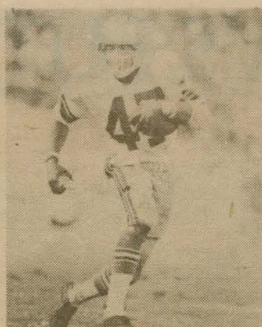
Keith Simpson



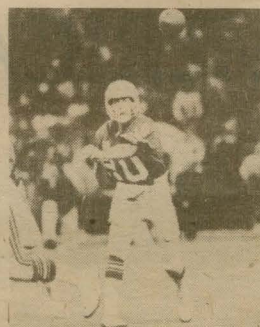
Dave Brown



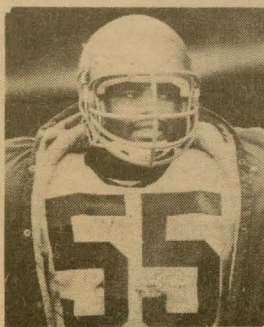
Jacob Green



Sherman Smith



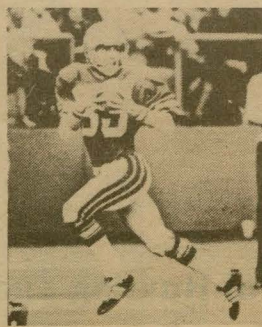
Jim Zorn



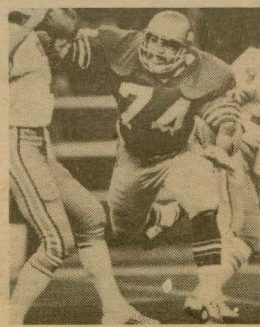
Michael Jackson



John Harris



Steve Largent



Manu Tuiaosopo

Seattle Seahawks Salute The Medium and Black History Week

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