

BLACK HISTORY

The Portland Observer

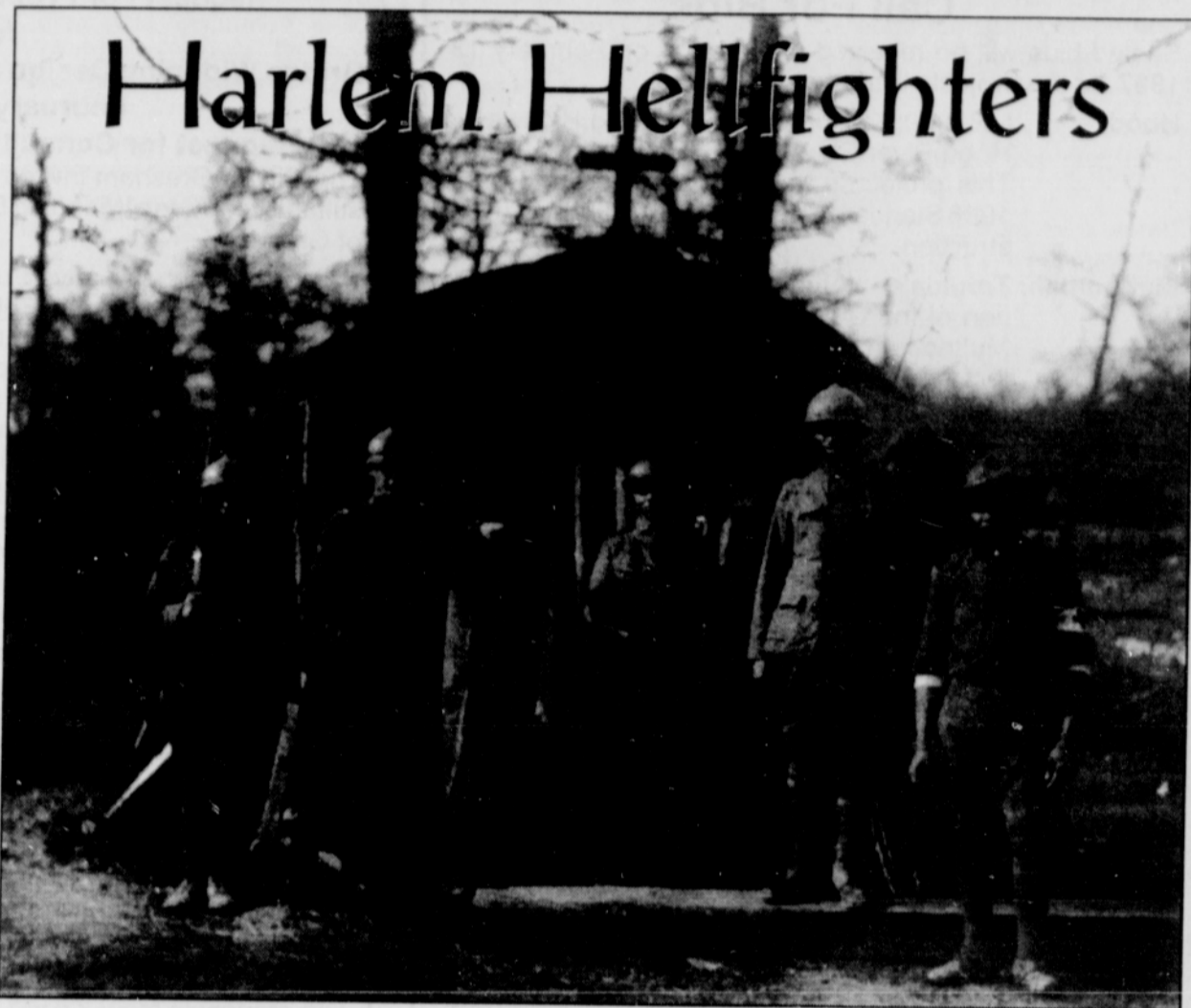
The greatest unknown fighting force in America's history

The World Premiere of Harlem Hellfighters, the greatest, unknown fighting force in America's history, airs February 23 at 10 pm ET/11 pm PT.

New York, January 12 - Memorial Day 1996. Henry Johnson is honored for bravery in a war he fought 78 years ago. This 110-year-old World War I veteran was part of the 369th Infantry, known as the "Harlem Hellfighters." Their triumphant story, though unknown to most Americans, is vividly remembered by men like Johnson. Harlem Hellfighters airs on The History Channel as part of its History Alive Black History Month presentation. The World Premiere airs February 23 at 10 pm ET/11 pm PT.

Since the Revolutionary War, blacks have had to overcome difficult circumstances to fight simultaneously for their country and for equal status within it. The Harlem Hellfighters paved the way for black Americans to become officers with real duties and real authority. The very name, coined by the Germans, symbolizes black achievements and pride, and transcends the memories about what the 369th Infantry actually did.

Looking back to the Civil War, even the Union Army was initially



Church in sector held by the 369th Regiment Infantry, 93rd Division. France. May 4, 1918.

Photo by Fisher / Merlis Television

opposed to using black officers. But as casualties mounted and blacks demanded a role, that changed. By the time the war ended, almost 185,000 African Americans were soldiers in the U.S. Army. In fact, one of the black troops that was created during the Civil War had a banner that read: "It is Now Our Turn to Prove Our worth as Men." The very notion of proving their worth was central to much of what occurred during the Civil War for Black Americans. The Harlem Hellfighters began in Harlem, as the 15th Regiment of the New York National Guard. Virtually every white ethnic neighborhood in New York had a National Guard regiment. Harlem, an emerging black city within the city, had none.

Spanish American War veteran, Col. William Hayward was a vigorous supporter of a black presence in the military. At first, recruiting was slow but Hayward persuaded James Reese Europe, the most popular black band leader of the time, to enlist and for the regimental band. Reese, in fact became the first black American officer to go into combat in World War I when he accompanied French soldiers on a nighttime raid of German trenches.

In spite of the regiment's accom-

plishments, the American Expeditionary Force decreed that all black units must have either an all-black or an all-white officer corps. Captain James Reese Europe was the sole exception, winning a dispensation that allowed him to lead his band.

The Harlem Hellfighters had less training than any other American unit, but they were no less prepared. No member of the 369th was ever captured. It was the first black American unit to go into combat in the Great War. They were the only unit to serve 191 days at the front—the longest service of any American unit—black or white. Amazingly, they fought exclusively under French command. The Harlem Hellfighters never served in an American brigade or division.

The History Channel is a 24-hour television network featuring historical documentaries, movies and mini-series. Launched on January 1, 1995, the network showcases World Premiere productions and co-productions from around the world, joined by quality acquisitions and an in-house library of historical documentaries, ensuring that The History Channel is Where The Past Comes Alive.

Visit us on the World Wide Web at <http://www.historychannel.com>.

High points in history

The History Channel presents five great stories for Black History Month including *Voice of the Fugitive* airing February 3 at 6:30pm ET/7:30 PT. *Perspective: Jackie Robinson* Airing February 11 at 6:30pm ET/7:30 PT. *Digging for Slaves* which airs February 14 at 6pm ET/7pm PT. *The Buffalo Soldiers* airing February 19 at 6pm ET/7pm and *Africa: The Bible and the Gun* airing February 21 at 6pm ET/7pm PT.

Five High Points In History episodes agree being showcased on The History Channel during Black History Month. The series explores issues of freedom, re-enacts legendary battles and profiles great athletes.

High Points In History episodes in February include:

Voice Of The Fugitive (February 3): Is the story of a group of escaped slaves and their passage through the "Underground Railroad" as the seek freedom in Canada. This perilous route of choice by many runaway slaves was dangerous under the best circumstances. The program also highlights people who along the way assist the fugitives with food, shelter and funds.

Perspectives: Jackie Robinson (February 11): Veteran journalist Mike Wallace examines the professional career of Hall of Famer, Jackie Robinson. The biography portrays Robinson as an aggressive competitor who won the admiration of players and fans alike with his skill and daring. A rival baseball player once commented that, "He (Robinson) can beat you more ways than any man alive."

Digging For Slaves (February 14): Unearths the realities of slave life and discovers the contributions that African people of bondage made to American society. Narrated by David Drew, the program explores the finding of archeologist immersed in the excavation of slave site in South Carolina and Virginia. The work reveals some surprising information and brings about a reappraisal of the black contribution to white society.

Is the Story of the 9th and 19th Regiments of the United States Cavalry. From 1897 until they were disbanded, these two Regiments of the United States Cavalry. From 1897 until they were disbanded, these two regiments amassed some of the most distinguished unit and individual records in the U.S. Army. The Buf-

falo Soldiers were a highly disciplined group and no fighting men in the world could excel them for initiative and bravery in the face of the most daunting odds.

Africa: The Bible & The Gun (February 21): The documentary looks at the effects of the slave trade on Africa, at the way it decimate the population, destroyed to social fabric of African life, and set tribes and villages against each other. The story unfolds on location all over Africa, with specially shot film festivals, ceremonies and life in Africa today, plus archive film, dramatic reconstruction, documented eyewitness accounts, maps and modern animated graphics.

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Moore at The History Channel



LaDebra L. Moore, Manager of Public Relations, The History Channel

LaDebra L. Moore is Manager of Public Relations of The History Channel. The History Channel is part of A&E Television Networks, a joint venture of The Hearst Corporation, ABC, Inc., and NBC.

As manager of Public Relations, Ms. Moore is responsible for consumer and trade publicity, corporate image and promotion of public affairs for The History Channel.

Previously, Ms. Moore was Publicist, where her primary responsibility was to create, develop and implement publicity and corporate communications strategies for the January 1, 1995 launch and rollout of the History Channel, a 24 hour cable service. The advertising-supported network features historical documentaries, movies and mini-series.

Before joining The History Channel in December 1993, Ms. Moore was a Radio/Television Publicist for WNYC Communications Group, New York, NY. There she was responsible for press relations, planning and implementing community outreach campaigns, special events and promotions, and layout and design of marketing materials.

Ms. Moore graduated from Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communications. She is also a recipient of the 1993-1994 Walter Kaitz Foundation Fellowship in Cable Management Program.

Ms. Moore resides in the state of New Jersey.

The African Burial Ground: An American Discovery

The History Channel presents the true story of free and enslaved African Americans in early New York City... February 4-7 at 8 am ET/5am PT

Rebroadcast on February 8, 15, 22, and March 1 at 8 am ET/5 am PT New York, January 13, 1997 - Americans confront their painful past in The African Burial Ground: An American Discovery, an original mini-series airing on The History Channel this November. Telling the true and timely story of lower Manhattan's African Burial Ground, recently unearthed in an archaeological dig, this four-part documentary covers the burial ground's discovery, relates the history of African Americans in early New York, witnesses how modern-day citizens are changing government handling of the area, and delves into the discovery's meaning for modern-day American. This special presentation airs on History Showcase, the network's forum for local films about culture, community and tradition, on February 4-7 at 8 am ET/5 am PT. Narrated by acclaimed actors Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, The Af-

rican Burial Ground: An American Discovery tells the dramatic story of a people whose history was not recorded or preserved, the African Americans that lived in the New world as far back as 200 years before the creation of the United States and helped to build the new nation. Nearly one out of five colonial New Yorkers was African American, most of them enslaved - but until the 1991 discovery of the burial ground deep beneath Manhattan's streets, historians knew little of the way they lived and died.

Using period maps and drawings, still photos and film footage of the excavation, and local news clips spotlighting the discovery, The African Burial Ground An American Discovery unfolds in four parts.

Part One, The Search, explores the search for and discovery of the African Burial Ground. This program examines the archaeological dig that unearthed the remains of some 400 African men, women and children.

Part Two, A History, presents the never-before-told story of Africans and African-Americans in New York

City, from the arrival of a trader named Jan Rodriguez in 1613 until July 4, 1827 - New York City's Emancipation Day. Dutch settlers enslaved African Americans to work the farms around lower Manhattan and build its roads, houses, bridges and forts.

Part three, Politics and the People, shows how ordinary citizens clashed with U.S. government agencies over the handling of the burial ground, this important civics lesson proves that people working together can change the course of history.

Part Four, An Open Window, explores the long-range impact of the African Burial Ground on art, literature, history, science and education in the United States.

Music by Lonette McKee, Bryant McNeil and Jamshied Sharifi accompanies this documentary series; illustrations are by Charles Lilly. The African Burial Ground: An American Discovery is produced by Kutz Television Inc.

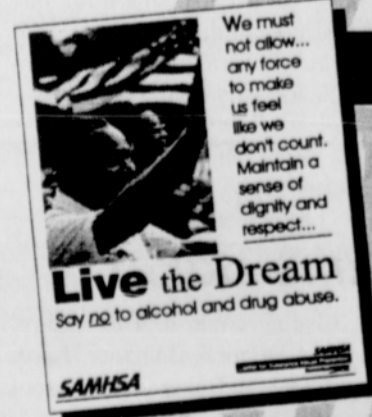
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As we strive to keep the dream alive, The Portland Observer and Washington family would like to wish the late Joyce Washington a happy birthday.

Happy Birthday Mark Washington

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