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Every February we celebrate Black History Month by honoring African-American heroes and remembering past victories in the fight and struggle against racial discrimination. While we always hear about such greats as Madam C. J. Walker, we also remember other great pioneers who help in the business community.

On *December 23, 1803*, Jonas Seaman spent $4 for a license to operate a house of Public Entertainment. The Golden Lamb got its name due to the fact that many early
pioneers
could not read, so giving a
business
a name that could be easily drawn and recognized, such as the
Black
Horse or Golden Lamb, was a necessity, and was recognized as the oldest continuously operating
business
in the State of Ohio.

Considering all the progress that has been made by our community since our ancestors started arriving by slave ship, a 28-day month seems too short a time to fully appreciate the scope of our history. And indeed, ours is a history that continues to be written everyday, as African-Americans work toward creating a level playing field.

Black History Month should offer new insights for some and allow others to tell of the struggles of a people with a tarnished past and how they endured severe injustices and overcame harsh realities to become a positive role in developing this great nation.

Black History Month should illustrate what is truly good about this country and provide living examples of our untapped potential.

Consequently, many Americans, both Black and White, are still unaware of the tremendous milestones made by African Americans. Hopefully in school, they are teaching that in 1926, Carter G. Woodson came up with the idea of 'Negro History Week' after he noticed the absence of a history of Black Americans in textbooks.

He believed the omission was intentional and set out to highlight the achievements of Blacks in America. Although Negro History Week gained mass appeal in the 1960s, it wasn't until 1976 that it was expanded into Black History Month.

Woodson's achievements are remarkable for anyone of any color at any time. But he accomplished all this as a Black man, living under the grueling conditions of Jim Crow. History in my life helps me to remember where my ancestors came from.

Remembering where my ancestors came from helps me to understand my heritage, more about me, and how I should live my life the best I can. What I mean is that it tells me how I should live my life.

History also tells me about how my family's ancestors lived their lives, including things like who is in my family, what religion they believed in, where they lived, and what kinds of jobs people in my family held.

Sure I know about my parents and grandparents. That will always be etched in my memory, especially Grand Ma Wade taking me to her favorite store Sears on Carnegie. Most families shape your future. For example, my family could let me know if there were any famous, notable or important people in my family.

Knowing what religion my ancestors believed in gives me a suggestion of what I might want to believe in. Knowing where my ancestors lived lets me know where I came from and knowing which party they supported, as far as politics is concerned, helps determined if I'd be a Democrat or Republican.

Many days, I just sit around and pay honor to my parents who influenced my life in so many ways. My heritage stems from the way they raised me, both in church and by their golden rules (whippings). But if I had a chance to ask for another set of parents, I won't.

The Call & Post this year is celebrating 95 years which is a great task for a Black Newspaper who was the State of Ohio's largest voice for the Black community.

The Call & Post kept the Black community informed.

With the hard work and concept of the late great W.O. Walker and Garrett Morgan to our present owner the infamous boxing promoter extraordinaire, Don King, this paper is part of Black History.

One area that has always been hard for Blacks is the financial area. Blacks must have effective access to banks, credit unions, and mortgage companies with fair lending practices. They must have enough financial education to know a bad financial deal when they see it so they can recognize when they are being taken advantage of.

Several lending institutions are getting more involved in financial literacy programs for all people. Credit Unions who use to be just looked at as a place to go get a car loan cheap are not becoming a worth while investment agency.

The advantage of local credit unions was that, as neighbors, they would lend higher amounts with better interest rates to people who would have been overlooked or seen as risks to bigger, faceless financial institutions.

Faith Community and Antioch Credit Unions enabled more community members to build assets by purchasing a home or a car, and opening savings accounts. In addition, the interest generated by the credit union stayed in the community, helping to increase everyone's wealth.

Too many people in the Black community have lost out on the opportunity to fully participate in the American dream simply because they lack the financial literacy that would enable them to make better financial choices and overcoming this will be one of the next struggles in our movement for Civil Rights.

Black History Month means that all Americans will understand and appreciate the Black Americans who have contributed to American history. Many who never learn about Black History will never realize many of the things Americans use every day or even take advantage of having wouldn't be here without the contributions of a Black Man or a Black Woman.

The flag is something that many realize is a symbol for Black History Month but a few people have asked what the colors stand for. The red on the flag represents the blood. The black on the flag represents the race (skin color). The green represents the land.

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Comments and questions are welcome but, because of the volume of mail, personal responses are not always possible. Please note that comments or questions may be used in a future column.