

Sowing the Seeds of Global Slavery Awareness

By Gordon Jackson
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HAMPTON, Va. - Book author and activist Venita Benitez wasn't born in Hamp-

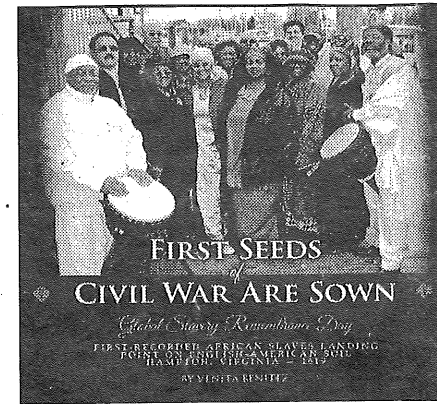
ton, Virginia, yet her spirit and the spirit of the city's history have definitely connected. For the second straight year, she traveled to the east coast city from her Dallas home to

observe one of the most critical and controversial phases of our nation's history, a slice of history that was recognized by President Obama earlier this year.

Benitez has already reflected her commitment to this cause through the publishing of a book and the founding of a human rights organization. She has been lauded by dignitaries such as Molly Ward, the Mayor of Hampton for her efforts.

In *First Seeds of Civil War Are Sown*, Benitez, founder of Global Slavery Remembrance Day, chronicles the history of the slave trade in America, since the first recorded African slaves were shipped to and landed in Hampton in 1619. The city of Hampton was founded and settled nine years earlier.

A memorial to recognize the start of the Transatlantic Slave Trade is held in Hampton every March 25, a ceremony Benitez has attended the last two years. In each memorial, officially recognized by the City of Hampton, a replica of a slave ship is cer-



(Left) Abolitionist Venita Benitez (l.) is honored by Hampton Virginia mayor Molly Ward. (Right) Benitez's book chronicles the beginning history of slavery in America.

emoniously docked from the Atlantic Ocean, not to glorify the slave trade, but to reflect on the inhumane pain it still brings generations later.

March 25 is observed by the United Nations and several other institutions as International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

"Slavery is a complex and difficult topic and yet it is important to learn of and understand the past to make

sense of the present," Benitez said in her book. "The many inherited crimes against humanity in this beginning tragedy included racism and discrimination, about which we continue to have no true answer or peace for reconciliation today."

Benitez, who traces her own lineage back to the Duchess of Norfolk and the first-elected president of Jamestown, Virginia, is a self-proclaimed modern-day abolitionist, inspired by past

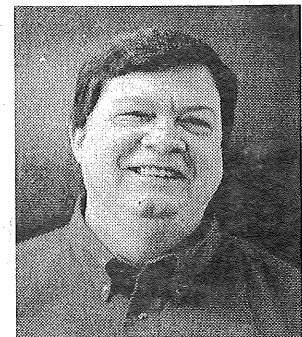
abolitionists like Harriet Tubman, Nat Turner and John Brown. Yet, her work serves an additional purpose, to make the public aware of the underground modern-day slave trade that continues to exist in countries around the world, including the United

States.

The fact that slavery is still practiced in several forms today motivated President Obama on January 4 to issue a Presidential Proclamation, naming January 2010 as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, to coincide with the annual celebration of National Freedom Day on February 1.

"I call upon the people of
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AARP partnering to address inequalities in African-American community



By Bob Jackson

AARP Texas would like to take a moment to reflect on the significant progress that has been made in our country. We salute all the civil rights pioneers of yesterday — African-Americans, Hispanics, women and others -- and the people who are still working to

make positive progress toward creating a more equal and just society.

Amazing strides have been made since the 1950s. The bus boycotts helped begin a movement that culminated in the Civil Rights Acts and the Voting Rights Act of the 1960s. Two generations of Americans have never known segregation. In the past two decades, the number of African-American college students has approximately doubled. Between 2004 and 2008 alone, more than 2 million more African Americans started voting.

Yet there is still work to be done. And AARP Texas wants to help do it.

See AARP, on page 15

ways encouraged to be part of the team, but the issue of your race always comes into play.

And if for no other reason, I'm glad that Marcelas was truant because he got a major photo op. In fact, the picture of him looking on as PrezO signed HB3962 reminded me of the picture

licans lawmakers have realized how much value and valor they earn with their constituents with vein arguments and tomfoolery.

And what's all the fuss about anyway? Our present health care plan is broken and we pay dearly in local and federal taxes. Countless County hospitals throughout

HOPE, continued from page 12

tire life building our house and the whole home collapsed," Jean-Louis continued. "It is very difficult coping with the situation."

Ambassador Joseph said that one of the most hopeful signs of the relief effort is the return of Haitians who live abroad

to their native soil to lend their support. Joseph said, "The people who have been gone for almost five decades are rushing back.

Hopefully, some of these individuals will eventually return to Haiti permanently to continue the rebuilding process."

SLAVERY, continued from page 13

...making aware of Transatlantic Slave Trade

August 22, 2011

Because I understand the importance of history being documented correctly, I cannot let these two misquotes in this article be entered without correction. Everything else is a fact.

“In each memorial, officially recognized by the City of Hampton, a replica of a slave ship is ceremoniously docked from the Atlantic Ocean,” ...This never happened and I don't know where the reporter got it from, not from my interview for sure. –Venita Benitez

AND

“(Left) Abolitionist Venita Benitez (l.) honored by Hampton Virginia mayor Molly Ward” ...This is not a fact. I was honored the previous year in 2009 with a City of Hampton proclamation from Mayor Molly Ward on March 25, 2009 but on March 25, 2010, I was honoring Mayor Molly Ward with two letters recognizing her humanitarian efforts acknowledgment of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery from Mayor Pro Tem Dwaine R. Caraway of Dallas, Texas and Reginald Gates, President of the Dallas Black Chamber of Commerce. –Venita Benitez

DWAINE R. CARAWAY

MAYOR PRO TEM - DISTRICT 4



CITY OF DALLAS

March 22, 2010

*Mayor Molly Joseph Ward
8th Floor, Hampton City Hall
22 Lincoln Street
Hampton, VA 23669*

GREETINGS!

On behalf of the City of Dallas, it gives me pleasure to congratulate you along with Ms. Venita Benitez on your humanitarian efforts acknowledgment of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery.

The book "First Seeds of Civil War Are Sown-Global Slavery Remembrance Day" is one of many reminders of the importance of remembering our forefathers. Remembering the history and culture of our forefathers is to be commended. Over 391 years ago Hampton Virginia marked the beginning for the Transatlantic slave trade and Galveston, Texas marked the end of slavery in 1865 two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed. By acknowledging the beginning and the end of such a tragic era in our Country's history, we can move forward in positive direction that will uplift all of our citizens.

Again, thank you for honoring and remembering the transatlantic journey that was taken by so many over 391 years ago.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dwaine R. Caraway". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".



Constructive
Leadership
Since 1926

March 22, 2010

The Honorable Molly Joseph Ward
Mayor, City of Hampton
Hampton, Virginia

Dear Mayor Ward:

Let me be among those to congratulate and thank you for embracing the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

The Dallas Black Chamber of Commerce is the oldest and largest African American chamber of commerce in the United States. Founded in 1926, and serving over 3000 members, our mission is to serve as an advocate for the creation, growth, and general welfare of African American businesses.

Much of what we all accomplish in life is done through meaningful partnerships. The City of Hampton is to be applauded for establishing such a partnership with Ms. Venita Benitez-Global Slavery Remembrance Day.

If there is any assistance we might offer, please feel free to contact me at 214.421.5200.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Reginald Gates". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping tail.

Reginald Gates
President