

Family Matters

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Official Newsletter of the Gillyard-Johnson-Mahoney Family Reunion
www.gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com



Team Leader's Corner Bettie Gillyard Griggs

History

This issue is arriving a few weeks after the start of a new year and during the month set aside to celebrate Black History. Many of us have no doubt resolved to do something differently this year. Many of you maybe like me, reflecting on our family and our history. What mark are we making? It is my hope that our family history will continue to be passed down, generation to generation. We do have a story to tell; one that may be an inspiration to the younger family members. Our family reunions and Family Matters are a part of the history of our family.

How many families can go to the church their ancestors started and attended regularly nearly 102 years ago?

Our family history reveals that a majority of Gillyards, some Mahoneys attended Sunday Worship services at the Sunshine Baptist Church, located in the Clear Lake Community of Desoto Parish. Our Guest Spotlight features Pastor Barry Joffrien of the Sunshine Baptist Church (see page 2).

As we celebrate the national, social, scientific and political contributions made by Black Americans this month, I am delighted that we again spotlight one of our own, Pastor Jerrie Gillyard in the Family Spotlight (see below). She is on a mission, preaching and spreading the good news of Jesus Christ.

I am so amazed by how much family history I've learned from reviewing census records dating as far back as 1870. The census is a snapshot of America and it is vastly important that we are included in the picture. On page 4, we get a clearer picture of why we should participate on

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Upcoming Events

- ◆ July 6, 2010 - Reunion Fees Due
- ◆ August 6 -8, 2010 Family Reunion Days

Family Spotlight



This month the spotlight shines on **Pastor Jerrie Gillyard**. Jerrie is the daughter of the late Robert and Estella Gillyard, and is the founder and Administrator of **On the Way Home Ministries**, located in Denton, Texas.

In 1997 she was commissioned by God to go to Shreveport, Louisiana to start her ministry. The ministry speaks to all of God's children and reaches out to the unsaved. Jerrie tells Family Matters, "I am not attracted to the platform or the pulpit, but to the calling to go and unlock the darkness that has been a hindrance to many people." Her new book, "Pounds Loss for the Journey - God's Vision for Weight Loss" has been released and is available on www.xlibris.com, www.amazon.com and www.barnesandnoble.com. Pastor Jerrie will host, "Prayer Retreat and Women's Conference" April, 23-25, 2010, in Shreveport, Louisiana. For more information about Pastor Jerrie or the ministries: email her at jerriegillyard@yahoo.com or log on onthewayhomeministries.org.



Pastor Barry K. Joffrion

Having been raised in a Christian home and atmosphere, Pastor Joffrion accepted Christ as his personal Savior at the St. Rest Baptist Church and was baptized by the late Reverend John B. Simmons. Under Pastor Simmons' administration, he was ordained as a Deacon, Sunday School teacher and Assistant Superintendent of the Sunday School. He was also actively involved in the 13th District Association, the Louisiana State Convention and the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A.

Later he cast his lot with the Little Union Baptist Church. He continued to serve on the Deacon Board.

He announced his calling in the ministry on Sunday, June 26, 2005 and preached his initial sermon on Sunday, July 24, 2005. On Sunday, December 3, 2006, Brother Joffrion was called as Pastor to the Sunshine Baptist Church, Mansfield, LA. He was ordained on Friday, December 22, 2006 at the Little Union Baptist Church, and on January 28, 2007 he was installed as the 11th Pastor of the Sunshine Baptist Church.

Brother Joffrion received his formal education in the Caddo Parish School System where he was a graduate of Booker T. Washington Class of 1979. He received his Bachelor of Arts Degree from Louisiana Tech University. He received the Certificate of Theology from the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, GA.

He is employed by the United States District Court as a Courtroom Deputy Clerk. He is a member of the Shreveport Alumni Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. He is a past board member with the Shreveport-Bossier Rescue Mission and VAC Credit Union. He has done volunteer work with the Odyssey Hospice and with the Cristus-Schumpert Hospice Grace Home.

Brother Joffrion is the son of Mrs. Verna Lee Bowie Gray and the late Ellington Joffrion of Alexandria, LA and the husband of Mrs. Valerie Chanell Newton Joffrion. He is the father of two sons, Darius and Ellington.

The History of Black History

Submitted by: Sylvia Lucille Gillyard

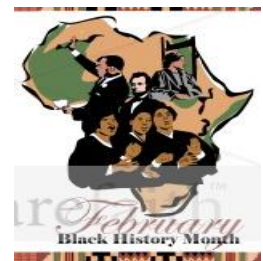
The Negro Spiritual, "Motherless Child" has lasted throughout the centuries. The hope is in the first verse of the song, which says, "Sometime I feel," not all the time, but just "Sometimes"! The slaves used codes in Gospel Music to carry messages. Each song was a story with a message that the other slaves could understand. The songs told the story of the slaves' suffering and determination to be free. The words of the song say:

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child; Sometimes I feel like a motherless child; Sometimes I feel like a motherless child; A long ways from home ,A long ways from home, True believer, A long ways from home, Along ways from home. Sometimes I

feel like I'm almos' gone, Sometimes I feel like I'm almos' gone, Sometimes I feel like I'm almos' gone; Way up in de heab'nly land, Way up in de heab'nly land. True believer, way up in de heab'nly land, Way up in de heab'nly land.

The roots of Black History month can be traced to the early part of the 20th century. In 1925, Carter G. Woodson, an educator and historian began campaigning among schools, journals and black newspapers calling for a 'Negro History Week' to be celebrated. This would honor the importance of black achievement and contribution in the United States. He was able to institute this 'Negro History Week' in 1926 during the second week of February. This time was chosen because

Abraham Lincoln's and Frederick Douglass' birthdays occurred then. Woodson was awarded the Springarn Medal from the NAACP for his accomplishment. In 1976, Negro History Week turned into Black History Month which we celebrate today.



We do not want to take any health issues for granted and believe that because it is our family, we do not need to share information on certain subjects. This month we share information with our family on Aids and HIV.

Worldwide, there are an estimated 33 million people living with HIV. We also know that 1 in 5 of those living with HIV don't even know they have the disease, and may be unknowingly transmitting the disease to others. Even more startling is that only 38% of adults say they have talked with their doctor about HIV.

Too many Americans mistakenly believe that HIV is no longer an urgent problem in this country. This epidemic is a national crisis and each of us must expand access to prevention and testing.

African Americans face the most severe rates of HIV infection in the nation. The HIV/AIDS epidemic in the African American community made its "debut" in the early 1980's and is entering its third decade as one of this country's most critical and challenging health issues. Among African Americans, HIV/AIDS has produced especially grave outcomes.

While African Americans represent approximately 12% of the U.S.

population, they account for almost half of all new infections and nearly half of all people living with HIV in the U.S. Unfortunately, 24% of African Americans reported that they have not been tested for HIV because their physician never recommended it.

As one of 14 member organizations of the Act Against AIDS Leadership Initiative, the National Medical Association (NMA) is leveraging influence, resources, and member physicians to promote HIV awareness, prevention, and care within African American communities.

Here are a few ways we can join the fight against AIDS in our community:

- Encourage family and friends to join the World AIDS Day Campaign; visit www.worldaidscampaign.org for more information.
- Know the facts about HIV/AIDS. Visit www.actagainstaids.org for more information.
- Know your status. You can get tested at your doctor's office - ask your doctor about getting tested and then encourage others to get tested. To find additional HIV testing sites near you, text your ZIP to "KNOWIT" (566948), or visit www.HIVtest.

- Get involved with or host a World AIDS Day event within your community. Visit www.hhs.gov/aidsawarenessdays/days/world/index.html for event details.

- Many of our family members are health care providers. We can play a critical role in HIV prevention. Your patients listen to you; speak with them about HIV openly and about reducing risk behaviors, getting tested and staying healthy.

By committing to the fight against AIDS, you can take responsibility for your health and protect loved ones against HIV. It is important to get the facts, know how you are at risk, how it is spread, and take action to protect yourself. HIV/AIDS is an epidemic that must be fought with everyone's involvement and a persistent effort on all fronts. It will take our collective will to continually reinforce key messages on HIV/AIDS prevention, testing and treatment to adequately put muscle behind the words. **Family, we cannot afford to do less.**

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Family Happenings

Retirements

May 2009 - J W Samuels
From Desoto Parish School Board

In MEMORIAM

Artie Howard -
December 29, 2009

The next edition of Family Matters will be published May 31, 2010. Information for publication must be submitted by May 1, 2010.

School Information

KaNeisha Gillyard and DeCarius Gillyard qualify to attend the FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) Conference in Baton Rouge, LA

Please remember that information for this column must be submitted for publication to bettiegillyard@aol.com or to gjmfamilyreunion@gmail.com

Essence Gillyard - placed 2nd at the Desoto Parish Science Fair Biochemistry

Family Historian
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**Family Reunions
Mission:**

To focus on the things that shape us rather than the circumstances that divide us; to strengthen and preserve family as God orders our steps. We value God's Plan, Family, Tradition, and Service.

We're on the Web!
gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com

Join our Gillyard-Johnson-Mahoney
Family Reunion Group on
Facebook

Be Counted In 2010!

Submitted by Alicia Brumfield

What: The census is a count of everyone in the United States.

Who: All U.S. residents must be counted-people of all races and ethnic groups, both citizens and non-citizens.

When: Census Day is April 1, 2010. Questionnaire responses should represent the household as it exit on this day.

Why: The U.S. Constitution requires a

national census once every 10 years; the census will show state population counts and determine representation in the U.S. House of Representatives.

How: Census questionnaires will be delivered or mailed to household via U.S. mail in March 2010! many households will receive a replacement questionnaire in early April.

Spread the word to family and friends, Be Counted!

Team Leaders Corner (Cont.d from page 1)

Census Day. Of all racial and ethnic groups in the United States, HIV and AIDS have hit African Americans the hardest. March 10, 2010 is also National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS awareness day. On page 3, Health Care Contributing editor, Ida Oatis shares information on this epidemic.

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As we celebrate Black History Month, I

encourage each of us to think of our upcoming family reunion. The reunion will be a perfect time to connect and pass on family heritage and traditions and to learn and/or teach about our own history.

Now sit back and enjoy, "Family Matters", you're reading History.

Enjoy Your Blessings,

Bettie



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