



Songs open windows into the past

Slave spirituals carry messages that still apply today

Songs and stories are handed down from generation to generation because they tell of a particular history. They display the beauty and sufferings of the heritage their ancestors were a part of. This is characteristic of every group — but particularly African-Americans.

These songs were of an open, spiritual nature that spoke of survival and the long enduring hope for freedom. The slave spirituals of old carried hidden messages of dignity and faith that told of a new world they would someday inherit.



TRACEY JONES
Columnist

*A fire by night, a shade by day ...
We need not always weep and moan
And wear these slavery chains forlorn ...*

And then, some spirituals were created to praise God for the strength he'd given them to go on. They did not believe that it was the inherent power of their bodies alone that sustained them through 12 to 16 hours each day in the hot sun and the occasional times they were caught without enough food to eat.

This back-breaking labor was their cross to bear because if Jesus could bear hardship, so should they:

*... He never said a mumbalin word.
They nailed him to the tree,
And they pierced his side, And the blood came streamin' down,
He never said a mumbalin word, As he hung his head and died —*

*Be still and know,
For he never said a mumbalin word ...*

The African-American gospel culture is so very rich because of the open, real pain and agony displayed by those who created them as a tangible source of hope.

The feeling of being a dignified, unjustly punished people in the eyes of their God is deeply enmeshed in the spirituals and myths of our ancestors.

In spite of the ugliness and debasement the slaves suffered, they were still able to create a world about them that contained beauty and long lasting hope.

These songs and stories were passed on to us as teachers of ourselves and how we came to be. They imparted the ideas that beauty was to be found inside the self, no matter how much ugliness existed in the world. They also taught a wisdom that doesn't come from books, but only from living. And these two things — inner beauty and wisdom — can never be taken away.

These spirituals even speak of our lives today, acting as a window through which we look back to see the heritage from where we were borne. They still speak of our hope for freedom and justice centuries later.

They still tell us of the beauty within ourselves and give us a spiritual hand we can hold on to in trying times; and the same hand that impels us to reach our aspirations. Only through understanding this aspect of our past can we better understand where we are headed.

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EDITORIAL

Border order

Immigration policy ensures safety

Last week, President Clinton unveiled a new immigration policy that should go far in helping the United States regain control of its borders and curb the number of terrorist incidents here at home.

The plan calls for providing additional funding to border patrols, making it harder for people who may pose a security threat to enter the country undetected.

In addition, it would speed the process of denying asylum to those people whose requests are found unwarranted.

"The simple fact is that we must not, and we will not, surrender our borders to those who wish to exploit our history of compassion and justice," Clinton said.

The State Department would receive \$45 million to upgrade its database that lists the names of suspected terrorists and international criminals, people who should not be allowed in the country.

Perhaps if this had been done several years ago the World Trade Center bombing could have been prevented. The man who authorities believe is behind the bombing, Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, entered the United States in 1990 and was granted a "green card," or permanent resident alien status.

When the Immigration and Naturalization Service discovered Rahman's revolutionary background, it tried to deport him.

However, the current deportation process is so bogged down that the case is still being tossed around in the courts. Even if the courts do find Rahman deportable, they have yet to consider his request for political asylum, a procedure that currently takes at least one year before action is taken.

Administration officials contend that under Clinton's proposal Rahman and his followers would have been denied visas and not allowed into the United States to begin with. And if Rahman had come requesting political asylum, the process involved would be cut to five days.

More than half the money needed to fund these proposals would come not from tax increases but from a surcharge on visas and an increase in the immigration inspection fees international travelers pay when they arrive in the United States.

In the past year, the United States has seen terrorists bomb its buildings and kill and injure its citizens. It has stood idly by and watched as immigrants continued to flood across its borders unchecked.

Clinton's plan offers a viable solution to regain control over these borders and takes needed steps to ensure the safety of the United States and its people.

A perfect example of this belief can be found in "Go Down, Moses":

*When Israel was in Egypt's land
Let my people go
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,
Let my people go
Go down, Moses, 'way down in Egyptland,
Tell ole Pharaoh, let my people go.
No more shall they in bondage toil
Let them come out with Egypt's soil
The Lord told Moses what to do*



Closing Mosher Institute means Aggies lose opportunities

The Mosher Institute for International Policy Studies is scheduled to close at the end of August. Its loss would be to the detriment of Texas A&M, its students, faculty, former students and the state of Texas. Ed Mosher established it to give the states of the Southwest a voice in the formation of American foreign policy. Its closing would signal the end of this opportunity.

The Mosher Institute has affected the policy making process in countless ways during its short life. Before scheduled arms control negotiations actually began, it organized an international symposium on arms control in January 1990 that "saved at least two years of negotiating over false issues" according to Oleg Grinevsky, the Soviet Ambassador to the Negotiations on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. This past winter it sponsored a conference in San Antonio on the military's role in the war on drugs in the United States and South America. Government officials from the Pentagon and the Drug Enforcement Agency marveled at the quality and usefulness of the conference. Considering that both of these symposiums were held immediately after the hectic Christmas-New Year's holiday, the turnouts demonstrated the significance of both conferences.

Now the Mosher Institute is planning a conference on international and industrial terrorism to be held later this year, provided it is still open. It already has lined up a number of speakers including William Colby, former Director of Central Intelligence, William Sessions, the former FBI Director, and Dick Cheney, the former Secretary of Defense under President Bush.

The conference has taken on added relevance after the April bombing of the World Trade Center in New York and the arrests in June of Muslim militants who allegedly plotted to bomb the United Nations building in New York and assassinate a U.S. Senator.

The institute helps the students and faculty of A&M as well. It has worked with the student leaders of Memorial Student Center organizations. The former director of the institute, Dr. Ronald Hatchett, especially gave freely of his time and was instrumental in helping bring to A&M distinguished speakers such as Dr. Pavel Palazchenko, personal advisor to former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Also, the institute's doors are open to A&M students for research of their choice on military policy, foreign policy, and international trade policy issues. This research is the kind of outside-the-classroom work that is as important a component of a college education as any group of classes a student takes.

On a more personal note, the Mosher Institute also serves the former students of A&M. As a Texas Aggie, Class of '89, I worked in Angola, Zaire, Cabinda and Nigeria and spent time in the Middle East and Central America.

I have been working as a research associate at the Mosher Institute doing political analysis on Latin America since November. However, I will leave in September to begin the Latin American Studies Program at Georgetown University in Washington. I will pursue an honors certificate in International Business Diplomacy from the Foreign Service School at Georgetown in addition to a Masters Degree in Area Studies.

I am very adamant when I say my work at the Mosher Institute was instrumental in Georgetown offering me a slot in their international affairs program. It is one of four schools considered to be the best in the world in international affairs; the others are Oxford, Cambridge and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard.

The overseas work I did obviously helped, but the work experience under Dr. Hatchett and Dr. Frank Vandiver probably carried the most weight. For this I will be indebted forever to these two gentlemen and the Mosher Institute.

Other students and former students will be cut off from the same opportunities that were open to me if the institute closes. While it is true that a top business school brings acclaim to a university, it is also true that former students in positions of power in the State Department, the National Security Agency, and the World Bank would benefit Texas A&M. Consider, if you will, that Fred McClure, '72, was on President Bush's staff at the White House and played a key role in bringing the Bush Presidential Library to Texas A&M.

Since I began undergraduate school here in 1985, Texas A&M has been turning itself into a "world class universi-

ty." With the Bush Library due to arrive, the school's administration would be remiss in allowing the only international policy institute in the southwest to sink.

But it will be the students and former students of Texas A&M who would really lose out on the chance they presently have to make their voices heard in the foreign policy of our country.

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