

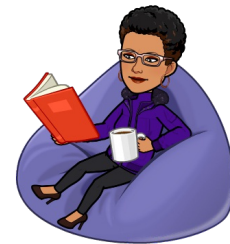


WHERE DID THE TIME GO?

Yikes! Already the 16th of June and I was just starting to compose this newsletter! Usually, by the middle of the third month of the quarter, the newsletter has been written and is being fine tuned. This is a hastily written and short edition, which will be welcome news to many! Please forgive punctuation and spelling errors!

WHAT THIS AUTHOR IS READING ...

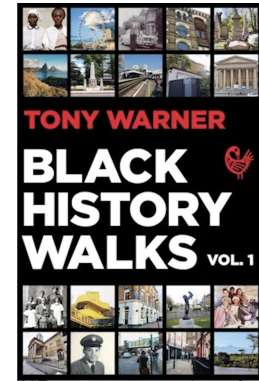
Reading has not been a focus this quarter! With that said, I am currently juggling two books ...



My soror, Ketanji Brown Jackson, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States -- yes, she is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. -- has written quite the read. Her book details her humble beginnings, challenges, accomplishments, and rise to sit on the highest court of this country. Her *FORTITUDE - nod to DST* - is beyond compare! I am taking time with this book hoping for inspiration which will challenge me to take my writing to another level.

In May, I was one of an *inaugural* group to embark upon the **London: The Black Diaspora Experience Tour**. Months ago, an email about the trip was received from UVA's Alumni & Parent Travel group; my curiosity was piqued.

This was my second trip to London; unimpressed by my first, I had no intention of ever going back. In spite of all the visages of color encountered on the first trip, my takeaway was an intentional White representation of the UK.



Tony Warner, co-founder and chair of the African Odysseys programme*, was our 'all-around and about' Diaspora London guide. He commenced his research years before COVID and had trips planned for 2019 and 2020, which never took place. It took five-years post-COVID to restart the program. Fortunately, our group benefited from the postponement with his wealth of information and the gifting of his book which includes all of the details I could not start to remember.

Our tour kicked off May 9 with an orientation dinner. Seated by Tony and engaged in conversation, I started looking forward to London, Part 2. Over the course of the next seven days, it became obvious Tony had actually read and committed to memory the bios we submitted. He incorporated tidbits of each individual's bio into his discussions.

This trip, I experienced an entirely different London. I learned racist attacks and racism in the UK were as rampant as here. And, like here, there was an entrenched opposition to Black people having any public facing roles in transport and shops. In 1966, Dominican Asquith Xavier broke the colour bar*, i.e., color barrier, by becoming the first Black train guard. We learned of diaspora influences, achievements, and uprisings not included in British curricula. Tony states in his book, "If you go into any school and ask the children to list the names of people they learn about in Black history sessions, it does not take long to notice that most of the names are American._

If you travel to London, I strongly suggest contacting [Tony Warner](#) and taking the tour. If you can't make it to London, get and read his book.

**British spelling*



Claudia Vera Jones depicted
@ Black Cultural Archives



Black Cultural Archives



Tony Warner, second from left

Our merry band of travelers included Kevin K. Gaines, UVA's Julian Bond Professor of Civil Rights and Social Justice; Joshua Stuart (Manassas VA), Col '18, M.Ed '22, Senior Associate Director, UVA Clubs Global Engagement Program; Penny Von Eschen, UVA's William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of History and American Studies; Tyrisha Clary-Selli (Chicago IL), Col '04; Chelsea and Maxwell James (Ridgeland MS), B.S. Commerce '12 and B.S. Chemistry '12, respectively; Jennifer Kasey (Dumfries VA), Col '04; Kendra Pugh (Chesterfield VA), Col '84; Charles Smith (Oakland CA), M.Arch '10; three non-UVA alum - Leshan Briggs (Newport News VA), Linda Gibson (Englewood CO), and Sharon Harrington (Norfolk VA); and, yours truly from Glen Allen VA, the elder UVA alum, Col '76.

Also, not to be forgotten, Tony Warner, our fount' of knowledge Tour Guide and Elsit Wilkes aka Elsa, our Tour Director - *I have another daughter!* - as well as a host of guest speakers and optional opportunities like viewing the movie *Sinners* in a packed Brixton theater. Post-viewing the movie, there was a Q&A discussion which included observations of symbolism and spirituality in the film. I must admit, when the movie was first released, I was excited -- Michael B. Jordan!!! -- but, after watching trailers, I lost interest, because I am a scary movie wimp! BUT, there is a lot packed into this film and after the Q&A, I decided I need to see *Sinners* again to catch what I missed on the first viewing.

Already across the pond, Kendra and I took the EuroStar to Paris for four-days of adventure at the conclusion of our London tour. Kendra was last in Paris as a teen; this was trip eight for me and I still had new experiences. While in Paris, we took [Ricki Stevenson's Black Paris Tour](#); my second time taking the tour, Kendra's first. In thirteen days, we walked more than 233,000 steps, i.e., more than 92.25 miles. She actually walked more because this elder stayed in some evenings in London!

"MEMOIR" UPDATE

Last newsletter, I mentioned my being encouraged by author friend, Judith Bice,

to write a memoir. It was going to be a frivolous little book. But, *Lovely One* and the diaspora tour of London have me taking a more serious tone than initially planned. As stated before, I will be including some of my poems, old and new, as well as photos.

Coming close to 200 pages with more to write, the working title has been updated to ... *How I Got "Here!": Memoir of a Black Woman Born Colored in a Former Capital of the Confederacy!*

A WORK IN PROGRESS ...

MICROAGGRESSIONS! (©2024)

Small talk leads to compliments
And, all is going well!
Until ...
A compliment of your
Enunciation because ...
You speak so well!
Equipped by preparation
Code-switching is effortless
Capabilities to shape-shift
Allowing adaptation to the “other”
Knowing how to cross-over
Being an instinctive behavior
Before it became a thing
You are accustomed to ...
Blending cultures like a master chef
With smooth, undetectable transitions
You are accustomed to ...
Your credentials being questioned
And, your abilities doubted
Because ...
You are a Black woman
Birthed and raised in AmeriKKKa!

LAST BUT DEFINITELY NOT LEAST!

A sincere farewell to my Canadian cousin who recently passed. She was an

ardent supporter of my poetry and a beautiful soul, both externally and internally. At 89-years young, she was highly regarded by all who had the good fortune to encounter her even for the briefest of moments. Sweet memories of you will keep you in our hearts always! R.I.P. Cousin Cecelia!

You may have been added as a subscriber because I thought you might have interest in something contained in this newsletter. Feel free to **UNSUBSCRIBE** at anytime.

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Thank you for your support and encouragement,

Y.B. Taylor, Writer



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