



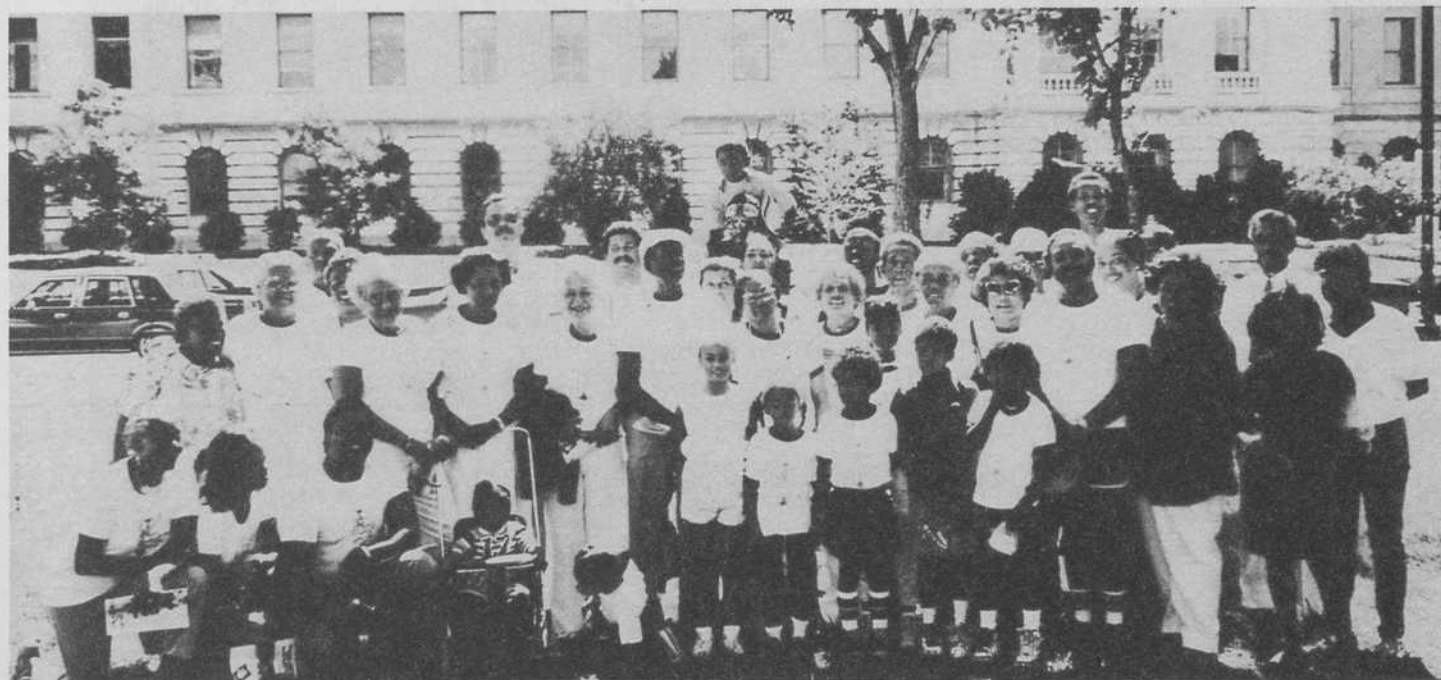
An exhibit on hair-braiding was just part of the program at the Black Family Reunion. Other activities ranged from blood pressure and cholesterol and eyesight checks to children's participatory activities. The first annual Black Family Reunion was held in Washington, DC.



Coretta Scott King was a program participant at the first annual Black Family Reunion.



Dick Gregory and Alex Haley, pictured here with Dr. Dorothy I. Height (national president of the NCNW), were among the speakers at the first annual Black Family Reunion at the National Mall in Washington, DC.



The Quander Family.

The activities were organized into Main Stage and Pavilion events. The Main Stage events included an opening ceremony where Arthur Ashe, D. C. School Superintendent Floretta McKenzie, Lerone Bennett, Alpha Phi Alpha national president, Charles Teamer, and Stephanie Lee Miller, Assistant Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, spoke. Zaida Edley presented *The Black Family Pledge*, written by poet Maya Angelou. Suzahn Matney was soloist, and The Voices Of Hope presented gospel. The O'Jays, on Saturday evening, and Lou Rawls, on Sunday evening, closed the days' events with outdoor concerts.

In the Family Values Pavilion, Coretta Scott King recalled how her husband made a particular effort to spend time with his children. And Yolanda, Bernice, and Dexter each shared in the meaning of their family life.

The Reverend Jesse Jackson, with Jesse, Jr. and Santita, stressed the great heritage of Afro-Americans. He made a plea to the crowd to "say no" to babies making babies and "say yes" to family, love, and joy.

Alex Haley, speaking on Family Values, said that he was "bemused" that Black people hear more negative things about themselves than positive things. He said that if one were to travel to any city with a sizable Black population in the United States just before sundown and find an empty lot with a basketball hoop, he would see young Black people "getting shots in" before the day ended, believing they are "Dr. J." or someone famous. Haley explained that this is evidence of Black people's discipline and determination to be excellent at something. We really need very much to have the sun start going down on young Black people with test tubes and books in their hands so that we develop the best in more areas," he said. The biggest challenge for Black families is the need to have reunions, said Haley, because a family needs to have support structures which support the family's young people.

"I believe that when you come together as a group, you are proud of who you are." The author added that people should search to find valuables that date back many years and which can tell a lot about one's history. "It is in attics that you are apt to find manumission papers, freedom papers, pieces of paper which were very valuable to your forebears who couldn't write. These are like family heirlooms, precious to behold," Haley said. One should leaf carefully through the pages of old books, because in them very important papers were kept hidden and safe. While doing research for *Roots*, which took 12 years to complete—nine years to research, and three years to write—he found that the Mormon church has

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