

BASHING SPRING BASH THEMES

It was at the "Monster Bazaar," for the benefit of Atlanta's own military men, that Rhett Butler said it: "With enough courage, you can do without a reputation." It was at that bazaar that the only gala dance in the film "Gone With The Wind" took place. The purpose was to raise money for the Confederacy in order to be able to continue a war to maintain slavery. Not everyone, in spite of Margaret Mitchell's view of that institution, was anxious for its continuation. "Mammy," "Big Sam," "Prissy," "Pork" and the hundreds of other slaves at Tara and the hundreds of thousands at other plantations in Georgia and the millions throughout the south, prayed for the day slavery would end.

The dance hall where the "Monster Bazaar" was held was decorated in crimson, white and grey. There were uniforms of every description along with formal civilian attire. There were red, green, blue, yellow, striped, white, Scarlett's black and other gowns of every description and hue. All of these gay outfits were worn by the best people in Atlanta; the Hamiltons, Butlers, Wilkes, Meades, Meriweathers and Toms and they were all white. There were black men there

but not for any dancing. They were the orchestra and there seem to have been about 20 of them and they played reels (a lively Scottish Highland dance) and waltzes and they never missed a beat. Back in those days when black musicians were hardly paid for their services, they could be found doing just about everything with the exception of being truly free (there were a large number of blacks in the United States during the antebellum period who were not slaves).

Amid all the gaitly taking place, Dr. Meade's announcement that the traitorous "General Lee has completely whipped the enemy and swept the Yankee army northward from Virginia" brought such cheers and rebel yells from men and women alike that the volume was reminiscent of Biblical trumpets bringing down walls.

Dr. Meade stood on a stage when he made his announcement. Behind him, and to his right, hanging on the wall could be found a picture of yet another traitor: Jefferson Davis. The picture was in a large oval frame and there was an inscription which identified it simply as "Our President." Davis did not represent black people. He was not their president so

the inscription was incorrect. It should have read: "Anarchist." Directly behind Dr. Meade hung a rebel flag.

The people in attendance at that "Monster Bazaar," while raising money for the soldiers of the Confederacy, were also participants in one of the very meaningful rituals of the gentry. Handsome men, beautiful ladies, gracious manners were typical at such gatherings but people who, when at their plantations or elsewhere, in the real treatment of their slaves, related to them as though they were animals. Buying, selling, flogging and raping black men and women were common occurrences in slavery. There was nothing beautiful about it. Storytellers, such as Margaret Mitchell, made it seem otherwise.

Her book and the movie began the same way. She wrote: "There was a land of Cavaliers and Cotton Fields called the Old South . . . Here in this pretty world, Gallantry took its last bow. Here was the last ever to be seen of Knights and their Ladies Fair, of Master and of Slave. Look for it only in books for it is no more than a dream remembered — A Civilization gone with the wind."

Her description almost

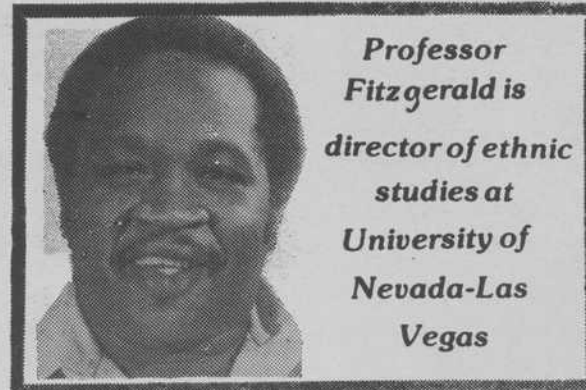
brings tears to your eyes—slavery ending, masters possibly having to dirty their hands by working, ladies possibly not being able to fritter away their afternoons taking naps and sipping tea. The movie made it all seem so sad as it ended. Movies can do that especially if that

ment of blacks. We condemn such behavior whenever it shows its ugly head. Regretfully, we do not do so all the time.

On April 15, 1988, The Allied Arts Masque Ball was held at the Tropicana Hotel's grand ballroom. The theme for the ball this year was "Gone With The Wind." 425 formally attired guests at-

Greeks in Rome. It is always that way and it is not something to celebrate with some festive activity whatever the cause. John Quincy Adams, in describing the serfs of early 19th century Russia, said that some were quite wealthy. However, they were still slaves and a slave, no matter how wealthy, is but a slave.

Imagine how some others would be offended if someone would celebrate the enslavement of the aforementioned groups. They wouldn't tolerate it. Imagine if some were to celebrate with some big bash the slaughter of millions of Jews in concentration camps. They wouldn't tolerate it. Imagine if someone were to celebrate with a big formal dance the "Bataan Death March" or the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. They wouldn't tolerate it. Imagine if someone were to celebrate any one of the many occasions of suffering which so many people have suffered? Who would tolerate it? There are many things to call such things: "The Spring Festival," "The Spring Ball," "The Masked Masque" or "The Big Dance." But for heaven's sake let's not call it "Gone With The Wind" or "Holocaust II" or "Nagasaki Revisited." We've got to be more creative and more sensitive than that because if we are not, someone might do something offensive to us and we will not be in a position to complain. I believe that the ultimate right we must protect is our right to complain and we do not protect it when we offend others.



Professor Fitzgerald is director of ethnic studies at University of Nevada-Las Vegas

is indeed what they set out to do and if the audiences have a predisposition to buy into the propaganda.

Consider propaganda movies of that same period which had to do with World War II. We were made to hate Japanese people along with Germans. They, on the other hand, made movies designed to cause their populations to hate the allies. Some of the literature — novels, short stories, etc., were designed to achieve the same end. Somewhere there are copies of those books and films and people who bought into the ideas they espoused. There are neo-nazis who use such to justify their perception and treatment of Jews and other groups. There are klansmen who use those ideas to justify their perception and treat-

tended and shared in an evening of "Southern hospitality." The fact that the book and film glorified and romanticized an era of our nation's history which was brutal to black people seems not to have mattered in the selection of the theme. My grandfather died in 1954 at the age of 96. Any who is pretty good with numbers can determine that he was born during the period of slavery. In many conversations I overheard him having with others and in those with myself, not once did he suggest that slavery nor the years afterward was one "reel" after another. His time as a slave, like that of every other slave, had been pure hell. It was the same for Jews who had been enslaved in Egypt. It was the same for

"I promise, I won't get you pregnant."

a workshop for teenage students

Adults welcome

Saturday, June 18 10 a.m. to 12 noon
Doolittle Recreation Center
Lake Mead and J Streets

10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Panel Discussion — Sunset High School Students

11 a.m. to 12 noon

WORKSHOP

This workshop focuses on the prevention of teen pregnancies. Educational and career opportunities will be stressed. Young people whose lives are forever affected because of teen pregnancies offer their candid comments on the subject. Adult role model presenters (male and female) will discuss relevant topics such as:

- Limited Employment Opportunities
- The Reality of Having Babies
- When They Cry at 4 a.m.
- The Responsibility of Having Children
- The Problems Associated with Unplanned Families and Parenthood

For more information contact
Faye Duncan-Daniel, Program Chairman
649-6914

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WILLIAMS
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accomplished in the areas of health care, education, fair business trade, affordable housing and gang and drug prevention."

HAWKINS
 From Page 2

under the rug by the Reagan Administration. Presidential candidate Jesse Jackson has exposed much of this indifference. THE REAL TEST OF GOVERNMENT IS HOW WELL CAN WE BEST ADDRESS THE TOUGHEST PROBLEMS IN OUR SOCIETY. The overall question of poverty, and the "new morbidity" as expressed in the problems of young black males should be one of our nation's top priorities.