

# ECMAA Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2022



## In this Issue:

**Feature:** Celebrating Black History Month by Honoring Our Past

"Passport Rule" Tossed Out for Diversity Visa Program

Remembering Dr. Syoum Gebregziabher and Professor Getatchew Haile

At-home COVID Tests to be Distributed At Libraries, Cultural Centers

Amharic Corner: Poetry ማስታወሻ

Authentic Shiro Recipe

Upcoming Events

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## From the Board

ECMAA is back to share a lot of wonderful events and enriching reads to warm you up! February is a month we honor the contributions of Black Americans past and present. We would like to pay homage to the activists that stood before us, without them life in this country would be impossible for us as Ethiopian immigrants in the United States. It is important that we take every chance to acknowledge history to inform our future. With this in mind, we would like to remind you all about our first event for 2022, the **Annual Remembrance of the Battle of Adwa and Yekatit 12 via Zoom on Sunday, March 6, at 2:30PM**, the link will be sent via email. Join us as we commemorate those who sacrificed their lives for Ethiopia's independence.

February is also a month to celebrate love. In the spirit of Valentine's Day, ECMAA would like to send love to all its members. As the saying goes, 'the best way to a person's heart is through their stomach' so we have shared a heartwarming recipe of some favorite Ethiopian dishes, skip to page 7 and indulge!

As we mentioned last month, we are in the process of restructuring ECMAA from the inside out. Our mission remains the same but our goal is to reach more people in the Tri-State area and to ease access to resources. This means we are working on updating our website and improving our membership experience, we appreciate your patience as we make updates. We want all of you to know how important your participation and input is to our organization. We encourage anyone who would like more direct involvement to reach out to us via email, at [ecmaany@gmail.org](mailto:ecmaany@gmail.org), our board and advisory members are always looking for people to help out with different committee initiatives.

As always we would like to send everyone well wishes, we urge you all to stay safe and stay connected.

# Celebrating Black History Month by Honoring Our Past

*Negus Mikael, King of Wollo, reflects the diversity and the greatness of Ethiopia's long history.*

*Taken from an article by Solomon Kibriye*

In honor of Black History Month, which is observed in February, it is perhaps fitting that we feature a figure from Ethiopian history who reflects the diversity and the greatness of the country's long history. Negus Mikael, King of Wollo, is one such figure who deserves to be more widely known and remembered than he presently is.

**Born:** Negus Mikael was born in 1850 as Mohammed Ali to parents Ali Liben Abba Bula and Woizero Gete Gebalo. The king later changed his name to Mikael after converting to Christianity.

**Ancestry:** Negus Mikael was born into one of the greatest aristocratic families of the Muslim faith in the Ethiopian Empire, the Mammadoch Clan of Warra-Himano in what would later be known as Wollo. The Mammadoch boasted a very illustrious ancestry, tracing their family back to Nur Hussein; the Prophet Mohammed's grandson by his daughter Fatima. This clan's power had risen to great heights in the region, particularly during the Zemene Mesafint in the 1700s.

**Battle of Adwa:** In 1896, when the Italians invaded Ethiopia, Negus Mikael fought alongside Emperor Menelik at the infamous Battle of Adwa. Negus Mikael and his Wollo cavalry were in the forefront at Adwa and played a huge role in that victory.

Negus Mikael was a very valued advisor to Emperor Menelik II. His governance of Wollo was celebrated as his benevolent rule of all its communities reflected the culture of this region. Muslims, Christians, lowlanders, highlanders, Amharas, Oromos, farmers and traders lived in harmony, broke bread together and intermarried.



**Source:** [allaboutETHIO.com](http://allaboutETHIO.com)

**Rivals:** The Weresheik clan of Yejjju, which for most of the Zemene Mesafint had provided the hereditary Enderase-Re'ese Mekwanint (Regent-Head of the Nobility), ruled from Gondar in the name of the Solomonic Emperors of the day. The Weresheik dynasty of princes, unlike the Mammadoch, had converted to Orthodox Christianity (but mostly keeping a tradition of Muslim names) while the Mammadoch had mostly kept to Islam. Although there were several marriages between the clans to the point that there were eventually several blood ties, their rivalry would survive into the 20th century.

# Celebrating Black History Month by Honoring Our Past (Continued)

**Death:** Nigus Mikael died on September 8, 1922. He was initially buried at Holeta Kidane Meheret Church, and ten years later, his remains were disinterred and he was re-buried in a church that he had built in Wollo- Tenta St. Mikael Church.

**Descendants:** Nigus Mikael left many descendants. His well-known children were his two children by his wife Shewarega Menelik (daughter of Emperor Menelik II): Lij Iyasu and Woizero Zenebework. Negus Mikael had previously been married to Woizero Fantaye Gebru (a descendant of Emperor Susenyous I in the Seife Melekot line) and by her had daughters Woizero Tewabech (wife of Ras Seyoum Mengesha) and Woizero Sehin (mother of Empress Menen). His other children include Ras Gebre Hiwot, Lij Yimam and others. Through him, the blood of the Prophet Mohammed flows not just in Lij Iyasu's large number of descendants, but in those of Emperor Haile Selassie and Leul Ras Asrate Kassa as well.

**Want to learn more about Ethiopia's history? Subscribe to Solomon 's videocast, Tarik Amba, at [youtube.com/user/faustny](https://youtube.com/user/faustny)**

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## “Passport Rule” Tossed Out for Diversity Visa Program

For the last 30 years, the Diversity Visa (DV) program served as a major opportunity for Ethiopians looking to immigrate to the United States. In 2019, the Trump administration instituted a new rule that required all applicants to have a passport prior to applying for the program. Because of this, applicants to the DV program dropped by 8 million in one year – 62% of whom were from Africa. Applicants from Ethiopia dropped an estimated 48%.

Last week, African Communities Together, a national immigration non-profit serving African immigrants and founded by Ethiopian immigrant Amaha Kassa, announced a major win against the Department of State in a lawsuit asking the court to toss out the passport rule. Two of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit were a U.S.-based Ethiopian immigrant and an Ethiopian national from Arba Minch. The Ethiopian national said, "Since the passport rule happened, I have not applied because it meant that I have to close my shop, travel with my whole family to the capital of the region to apply for a passport, spend thousands of Ethiopian Birr just to be able to apply for a lottery that I have a slim chance of winning. Now with this decision, I can continue to apply and hope to be granted the opportunity to receive the Diversity Visa."

**For the press release, visit [bit.ly/3gDBTFc](https://bit.ly/3gDBTFc).**

# Remembering Dr. Syoum Gebregziaber and Professor Getatchew Haile

The past two years have been full of so much uncertainty and loss. As we pivot and navigate a “new normal,” we remember Dr. Syoum Gebregziaber and Professor Getatchew Haile – both of whom were active panelists on our Yekatit 12 annual remembrance.

## Dr. Syoum Gebregziaber (1927-2020)

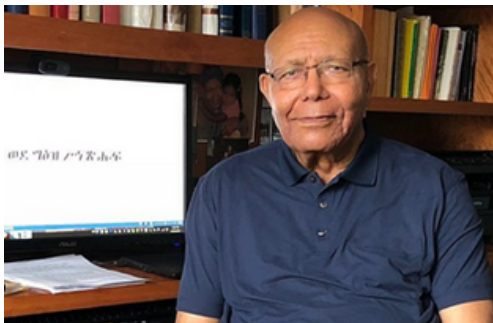
Dr. Syoum was the head of the Department of Public Administration and an Associate Professor at Haile Selassie University. He served as Mayor of Gondar during Emperor Haile Selassie's rule and as the Management Consultant of Ministry of Public Works during the Derg's rule. His autobiography, *Symphony of My Life*, published in 2012, is available on Amazon. Dr. Syoum participated as a Guest Speaker on the panel of Yekatit 12 Martyrs Memorial Day event, organized by ECMAA in 2014.



Dr. Syoum Gebregziaber

Source: Tadias.com

He shared his eyewitness experience about the unforgettable massacre conducted by Graziani on February 19, 1937 (Yekatit 12, 1929 GC ), when the fascist army went on a rampage of murder and arson through Addis Ababa, slaughtering thousands of innocent people. As a kid growing up in wartime, he also shared what he heard from eyewitness accounts on how the Italian war machine rolled into the Ethiopian hills and used mustard gas on our patriots and civilians. **To learn more about Dr. Syoum, visit [bit.ly/3GNO78X](https://bit.ly/3GNO78X).**



Prof. Getatchew Haile

Source: Tadias.com

## Professor Getatchew Haile (1931-2021)

Professor Getatchew Haile was an Associate Professor in the Department of Ethiopian Language and Literature at Haile Selassie I University where he taught Amharic Grammar, Ge'ez literature, Arabic Grammar, and Semitic Linguistics. He is a widely respected scholar of the Ge'ez language and published more than 150 books and articles during his career. Prof. Haile's deep understanding of Ethiopian history, its people and culture continues to inspire many people.

Prof. Haile participated as a guest speaker in ECMAA's panel on Yekatit 12 Martyrs Memorial Day event in 2018. He elaborated on the unforgettable massacre by Graziani's troops on February 19, 1937, in Addis Ababa and the surrounding area. He spoke about the importance of Ethiopians commemorating this day together, in the spirit of fraternity to pay respect to our forefathers who fought and died for our freedom. He encouraged ECMAA to keep the annual Yekatit 12 commemoration program. **To learn more about Prof. Haile, visit [bit.ly/3sGuGcU](https://bit.ly/3sGuGcU).**

**On behalf of ECMAA's members and friends, we salute Dr. Syoum and Prof. Getatchew for their significant contributions to Ethiopia and their community.**

WWW.ECMAANY.ORG

# At-home COVID Tests to be Distributed At Libraries, Cultural Centers

Starting Monday, **February 14**, New York City residents can pick up a free at-home COVID test kit from the Test & Trace Corps. Several cultural sites and libraries around the five boroughs will have members from the organization handing out test kits.



The tests are available on a first-come first-served basis and limited to one per person.

## About NYC Test & Trace Corps

The NYC Test & Trace Corps is the City's comprehensive effort to test, trace, and provide support for every case of COVID-19 and every person exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19. Through a partnership with NYC Health + Hospitals and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Test & Trace Corps allows the City to immediately isolate and care for those who test positive for the virus and then rapidly track, assess, and quarantine anyone who may have been exposed.

**To find the list of sites where the test kits will be given, visit [bit.ly/3sGmaun](https://bit.ly/3sGmaun).**

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## Amharic Corner: Poetry ማስታወሻ

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# Amharic Corner: Poetry (Continued)

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# Authentic Shiro Recipe

Shiro is a staple in any Ethiopian home and takes under one hour to make. **Tip:** boil the tomato and slow cook the shiro to make it even more flavorful. If pressed for time, use ginger and garlic that comes minced and ready to use.

**Prep:** 10 mins

**Cook:** 45 mins

**Total:** 55 mins

**Servings:** 10



## Ingredients

Shiro powder (7 tablespoons)

3 onions

1 large tomato

Ginger (1 tablespoon, minced)

Garlic (1 tablespoon, minced)

Jalapeño (1 - split in half and de-seeded - for garnish)

Salt

Ginger powder

Olive oil

Tomato paste (2 tablespoons)

Water (6 cups)



## Directions

### 01

**Chop onions finely and bring the tomato to a boil in 6 cups of water.**

Once the tomato has boiled, let cool, then peel the skin off. Discard skin and chop tomato finely, set aside. Set the boiled water aside - it will be used to cook the shiro.



### 02

**Sautee onions over medium heat in a large skillet or medium pot.**

Add 2 tablespoons of olive oil and sauté, stirring frequently. Once onions are cooked through, add minced garlic and ginger. Add small amounts of the boiled water so the onions don't stick and stir.



# Authentic Shiro Recipe (Continued)

**03**

**Add the chopped tomatoes to the onion mixture.**

Stir frequently, adding the boiled water as necessary. Once the onions and tomato mixture are cooked thoroughly, add the tomato paste and mix well. Continue to add the boiled water as necessary so that the mixture does not stick.



**04**

**Add the shiro powder and enough water to cover the onion and tomato mixture.**

Stir quickly, adding the salt and ginger powder to your liking. Lower heat and let stand for a few minutes.



**05**

**Monitor the shiro so the thickness is to your liking.**

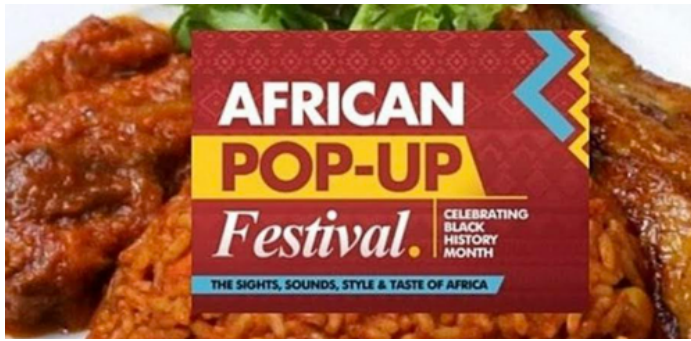
You may need to add more water, depending on the consistency. Lower heat and let the shiro cook for 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Garnish with jalapeño and enjoy!



**What is your favorite dish?  
Share your recipe with us at  
ECMAANY@GMAIL.COM.**



# Upcoming Events



## African Pop-Up Festival

**Date:** Saturday, **February 19, 12:00 PM**

**Location:** Hudson Station, 440 9th Ave (34th street), New York, NY 10001

**Description:** Event will include a market place, DJ spinning Afrobeat/Global sounds, cultural dance and music performances, art exhibition and food from Africa, the Caribbean, and Black Diaspora. Masks required for entry.

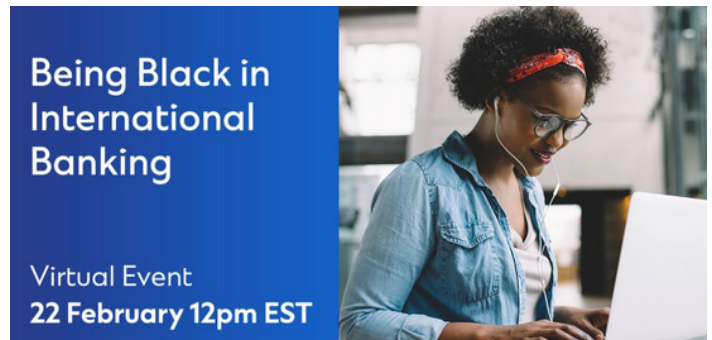
**Register:** [bit.ly/3LskspH](https://bit.ly/3LskspH)

## ECMAA's Annual Remembrance of the Battle of Adwa and Yekatit 12

**Date:** Sunday, **March 6, 2:30 PM**

**Location:** Virtual (details to come)

**Description:** Renowned scholars and subject matter experts, Professor Getachew Metaferia of Morgan State University, and Professor Ayele Bekerie, former Associate Professor of African Studies at Cornell University will present on this historical battle and period in our history. Discussions and poetry reading will follow. The event will be open to the public via Zoom and streamed live on ECMAA's Facebook.



## Being Black in International Banking

**Date:** Tuesday, **February 22, 12:00 PM**

**Location:** Virtual (details to be sent upon successful application)

**Description:** Event is aimed at black college students hoping to launch their careers in financial services. The event provides you with an opportunity to hear more about Standard Chartered and top tips from both senior executives and recent graduates on navigating your career as a black professional.

**Register:** [bit.ly/3LvkuN1](https://bit.ly/3LvkuN1)



**Statue erected in remembrance of the more than 30,000 Ethiopians gruesomely killed in a three-day attack in Addis Ababa and surrounding areas, during the second Italo-Ethiopian war (1937-1941). Today, this dark period in our history is commemorated as "Yekatit 12."**