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African-American History and Culture

A Remembering

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Cover photo—Sergeant Charles Daniels is shown here with his wife Mary and daughter Tina, 1905. Photo courtesy the Institute of Texan Cultures. (See article, p .8.)

Statements of fact and views are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect an opinion or endorsement on the part of the editors, the CRM advisors and consultants, or the National Park Service. Send articles, news items, and correspondence to the Editor, *CRM* (2250), U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; (202-343-3395, Fax 202-343-5260, Internet: ron_greenberg@nps.gov).

Foreword

Historic places serve many functions in our society. They anchor us in time and space, they provide a focal point for celebration and remembrance and contemplation, and they act as springboards to understanding meaningful truths about our social and cultural development. The National Park Service's education program examines those truths through the use of compelling stories that connect place and meaning. These compelling stories expand our understanding of both place and meaning and explore the "universal questions, moral dilemmas, beliefs, drama, and conditions that make up the human condition."

In March 1996, the National Park Service published an issue of *CRM* with the theme, "Connections: African-American History and CRM," (Vol. 19, No. 2). This issue of only 48 pages met with such demand that the Park Service ordered a reprinting that resulted in the distribution of 11,000 copies to teachers, parks, federal agencies, state and local governments, and the public. It stimulated discussions in conferences and classrooms. In response to one of the largest responses to a *CRM* issue to date, we have prepared a second *CRM* offering that strives to connect African-American history with the specific places in this country where that history can be visited and studied.

That history is rich and wide and deep. While the public perception of black history generally focuses on the South and the North and primarily east of the Mississippi River, scholars like Quintard Taylor remind us that the history of the African-American people is truly a national story. His article, in the winter (1996) issue of *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, titled "From Esteban to Rodney King: Five Centuries of African-American History in the West," demonstrates, yet again, that the story of black Americans is inextricably a part of the distinctive mosaic of American history. The articles in this *CRM* issue further illustrate the richness and depth and complexity of that history as they contribute to our understanding of the Texas frontier, War of 1812, John Brown, maritime history, and American independence, to name only a few.

Our understanding of the past is not monolithic, rigid and static, but dynamic and fluid. We search for truths, knowing that ultimate truth will always elude us. Historians also understand now that our understanding of history comes not just from the written record, but from various tangible and intangible remnants from our past. Wallace Stegner captured this understanding when he wrote, "The past becomes a thing made palpable in the monuments, buildings, historical sites, museums, attics, old trunks, relics of a hundred kinds; and in the legends of grandfathers and great-grandfathers; and in the incised marble and granite and weathered wood of graveyards; and in the murmuring of ghosts." (*Wolf Willow*, 1962.) As we continue to explore this provocative puzzle we call the past, the stories collected here will illuminate and expand our understanding of Stegner's monuments, relics, graveyards, and ghosts of African-American history.

—Dwight T. Pitcaithley
Chief Historian
National Park Service

In Memory of David Guynes

1945–1997

David was Site Manager, Museum and Archeological Research and Support (MARS) Facility, NPS.

Frank Faragasso and Doug Stover

African-American History and Culture
A Remembering

The study of African-American history has changed significantly in recent years. Previously, African-American history focused on a limited number of central themes, such as slavery, the Underground Railroad, and the Civil Rights movement—studies of discrete time periods and events. While these studies contributed important knowledge to our understanding of this history, what was often missing was a clear understanding of historical change and continuity within the larger context of American history. Recent scholarship reveals a more comprehensive and complex history that is moving to a more central place in our society. African-American history has entered our consciousness.

This issue of *CRM* expands the investigation of African-American contributions to American civilization. There is a keen interest in topics previously unexplored, even by people familiar with the field of American history and culture. Our request for articles resulted in a large number of responses from NPS employees, academics, and independent scholars. Selecting articles for publication from so many sources was difficult. Many good articles could not be included because of space.

In the following pages, the reader will be taken to unexpected places and times, such as western frontier towns, Mexican haciendas, Canadian historic places, Independence Hall in Philadelphia, and a sandbank off the coast of Charleston, South Carolina. Even traditional subjects, such as slavery, reveal exciting new avenues for exploration. There is also a blend of theory and practice, factual information, and practical suggestions for interpretation. Several of our articles defy categorization. Park rangers, interpreters, historians, archeologists, and others may find suggestions for either (1) development of new programs or (2) enrichment of existing interpretive programs.

Our lead article, by Juliet Galonska, describes the lives of African-American deputy U.S. marshals who exercised significant police authority in a predominantly white world. They required courage and ingenuity in the performance of their duties. An equally fascinating and revealing part of the history of the Old West is Shirley Boteler-Mock's and Mike Davis's article which provides a rare glimpse of Seminole black culture searching for a place to call home and a sense of identity amidst a society that accepted neither free blacks nor Native Americans.

More traditional in subject matter, but opening new avenues of research, is Jenny Masur's and Kent Lancaster's research into the family archives at Hampton National Historic Site in Towson, Maryland. Park Service professionals, in cooperation with university scholars, are providing valuable insight into the reality of slave life. Another NPS employee, Pam Sanfilippo, tells of efforts to uncover the history of slavery in her lively article about the White Haven plantation (Ulysses S. Grant NHS).

On the familiar subject of the Underground Railroad, we are treated to a masterful analysis from the Canadian perspective by Hilary Russell. She informs the reader regarding both the similarities and the differences between the African-American Canadian experience and that of the United States. Following the theme of the Underground Railroad, Jane Williamson presents astute comments on the treatment of fugitive slaves in Vermont.

The discipline of archeology provides two compelling stories: Paul Shackel's investigation of the John Brown Fort from Harpers Ferry to other locations and back to Harpers Ferry; and while doing archeology pertaining to the Civil War period, Steven D. Smith's investigation of a forgot-

Frederick Douglass in his library, c. 1890-1895. Photo courtesy Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, NPS.

ten black soldiers' cemetery. His research is a vivid reminder of how quickly places and events are erased from memory.

Two excellent articles focus on African-American participation in warfare. Gerald T. Altoff, with extensive experience, gives us the black soldier in the War of 1812. Professor P. Reidy, a prominent historian from Howard University, presents his thoughts on the participation of black sailors in the Civil War.

From military conflict we move to education, the segregated school system, and the need to capture that history. Antoinette Lee's article on the M Street School in Washington, DC, and Rachel F. Weekly's article on the Monroe Elementary School in Topeka, Kansas, discuss efforts to preserve a history of segregated education. Many of these schools were superior institutions of learning. Steven Davis provides an important and little-remembered part of the Civil Rights struggle with his illuminating article. He tells us why these sites are important and presents a system for evaluating sites for preservation.

This issue has included six articles that are distinguished by their emphasis on site interpretation. Individually, or as a group, they provide a valuable resource for anyone developing a new interpretation or rethinking an existing one. From George Washington University, thoughtful efforts of four young scholars—Stephanie L. Batiste-Benthan, Michele Gates Moresi, Teresa Anne Murphy, and Marguerite Carnell Rodney—provide interpretative tools for historic sites. Joanne Blacoe, Anna Coxe Toogood, and Sharon A. Brown offer a frank insight into the efforts to interpret African-American history at Independence National Historic Site. Christopher Geist gives us a clear picture of recent efforts at Colonial Williamsburg to interpret African-American participation in the colonial community. Bob Moore offers his thoughts on the weaving of new themes into existing exhibits at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in St. Louis. Finally, we have an example of reinterpretation at a site. Ranger Qefiri Colbert presents the history of interpretation at Booker T. Washington National Monument in Virginia. Readers will find both theoretical and practical suggestions for site interpretation.

Eighteen feature articles and numerous shorter pieces constitute an impressive attempt to deepen our understanding of the African-American/Canadian past. Much of that past is lost and much remains to be revealed. We are pleased to make a contribution toward remembering.

We wish to thank the managers of *CRM* for the opportunity to put together this thematic issue concerning African-American history and culture.

The management of National Capital Parks East has been supportive and permitted us the time to do this work.

Frank Faragasso, Ph.D., is the historian for National Capital Parks East, which includes African-American sites such as the Frederick Douglass NHS and the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS. He writes and speaks frequently on the life and time of Frederick Douglass.

Doug Stover is the curator for National Capital Parks East. He is responsible for over a million museum objects of which the Frederick Douglass collection constitutes the largest and most varied portion. He also oversees the National Archives for Black Women's History.

Ethnographic Study

In 1994, the National Park Service initiated an ethnographic assessment of relationships between contemporary African Americans and resources under its stewardship in 17 parks in the Northeast. Conducted under cooperative agreement with the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, its goals were to provide a general overview of contemporary park-associated African Americans, the historical and legislative basis for relationships between them and park resources, and an evaluation of available data on the associated groups and the traditional cultural and natural resources they use and value. Based on a thorough review of the ethnographic literature, and other relevant published and archival documents, as well as site visits and ethnographic interviews, Principal Investigator Dr. Helan Page and her research team have produced a landmark study that will be available to the public in late 1997.

The Northeast Field Area Applied Ethnography program sponsors and assists research to identify and document resources of significance to African-American communities and groups throughout the region. Park studies include General Grant National Memorial, Saint Paul's Church National Historic Site, and Booker T. Washington National Historic Site. For additional information, contact Rebecca Joseph, Program Manager, New England System Support Office, 15 State Street, Boston, MA 02109 (617-223-5056, beckyjoseph~nps.gov).

Juliet L. Galonska

African-American Deputy Marshals in Arkansas

In the Visitor Center of Fort Smith National Historic Site stands an exhibit honoring "The Men Who Rode for Parker," a reference to the hundreds of deputy U.S. marshals, posse and other officers charged with enforcing law and order over the Indian Territory during the tenure of Judge Isaac C. Parker. Prominent in the middle of the display is Bass Reeves, an African-American deputy who served the U. S. Court for the Western District of Arkansas for over 20 years. He is one of several challenging the traditional image of the lawman on the frontier.

Until 1896, the jurisdiction of the Western District of Arkansas encompassed all or parts of Indian Territory (present day Oklahoma). This vast area was home to the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles, removed from their homelands in the Southeast by the U.S. government during the 1830s. Treaties in 1866 reduced the territory of those nations as a result of alliances of at least some portions of each tribe with the Confederacy. This resulted in the relocation of additional Indian tribes in the territory, as well as increasing pressure from whites to open the lands to settlement. The treaties also granted the railroads access, creating a transportation link that enhanced the possibility of huge profits in cattle, lumbering, and mineral mining. With these opportunities for wealth, the overlapping jurisdictions of the U.S. government and independent Indian nations, and the vast acreage and distances that made avoiding justice easy, the Indian Territory became a chaotic refuge for the lawless.

Responsibility for policing this area fell to the federal court in Fort Smith, Arkansas. The Western District of Arkansas, created in 1851, derived its uniqueness from the responsibility to handle cases between Indians and those who were not tribal members. The court, unlike most of its federal counterparts, handled an extraordinary criminal caseload, with most of this activity erupting after the Civil War. Until 1875, when Judge Parker arrived from Missouri, the court's reputation for justice was poor. Parker's predecessor had resigned under the threat of impeachment; the past five U.S. Marshals had all left under similar clouds of scandal; and the deputies had a history of using perjury and bribery for their own ends. In his 21 years at Fort Smith, Parker would restore the court to respectability. He gave much of the credit for his success to his deputies, once commenting that "without these officers, what is the use of this court?"[1]

While the majority of deputies were white, the law enforcement force working in Indian Territory was probably the most integrated on the frontier at that time, having its share of both Indian and African-American members. The use of these officers was an efficient and effective way of carrying out the work of the federal court because of the multicultural population in the jurisdiction. As one historian has noted, "A deputy's authority to a great extent depended on his being accepted and respected by the Indians."[2] African-American deputies held a decided advantage here because of the Five Tribes history of slaveholding. Unlike white deputies, many African-American officers had lived with the Indians, understood local customs and possessed knowledge of tribal languages. Some were freedmen, like Grant Johnson, the son of a Chickasaw Freedman and a Creek Freedwoman. Deputy Bass Reeves, an ex-slave, left his owner in Texas sometime prior to or during the Civil War and found refuge in the Indian Territory where he learned several Indian dialects. Although not all black deputies were former slaves—Zeke Miller had been a mine inspector in Ohio—a high percentage of them had some previous dealings with the tribes and often seemed trustworthy as a result.

How these men were chosen remains somewhat of a mystery. Some may have been sought out by the court, which was in need of brave men who knew the territory. Bass Reeves, possibly the first black American west of the Mississippi to become a deputy U.S. marshal, was approached by Judge Parker himself and convinced to serve as a lawman.[3]

By all means, it was a dangerous profession. Gunfights and ambushes erupted as suspects fought arrest or prisoners attempted escape. Bass Reeves killed 14 men in his career, but proved self defense in each case. Deputy John Garrett, another African American, became one of the first victims of the infamous Rufus Buck Gang as they carried out their spree of robberies, murders, and rapes in the summer of 1895. Frequently working

with celebrated lawman Heck Thomas, Deputy Rufus Cannon, the descendent of an ex-slave and a Cherokee mixed-blood, assisted in arresting some of the most notorious outlaws of the period, including Bill Doolin, William Christian, and Bill Carr.[4]

Making those arrests often took ingenious methods. On one occasion, Bass Reeves, disguised himself as a tramp and walked 28 miles to the home of two outlaws. Although they were not home at the time, Reeves convinced their mother that he could be trusted and she invited him to spend the night. When the sons returned that evening, they shared a room with the deputy who proceeded to handcuff them while they slept. After breakfast the next morning, he marched them back to his camp and transported them to Fort Smith. Reeves was also known for his incredible memory. Lacking a formal education and the ability to read or write was a formidable obstacle, considering that all legal writs and subpoenas required proper service. Bass Reeves studied the paperwork until he could associate the symbols of a written name with the sounds of the name as spoken. When he located the suspects or witnesses, Reeves selected the correct documents by matching the symbols. He would then have the person read the paper aloud themselves. In this way, only if the person could not read was Reeves forced to find someone that could.[5]

Although African-American deputies may have been welcomed into the Indian communities they served more easily than white lawmen, prejudice against them remained. Much of this derived from the placement of blacks in positions of authority over whites.

Despite such prejudice and adversity, African-American deputy marshals performed their duties efficiently and heroically in the Indian Territory. Fort Smith National Historic Site continues to do research on these individuals and their contributions to law enforcement history. Dr. Nudie Williams of the University of Arkansas once wrote about Bass Reeves that "the mark of this man was not that he died with his boots on, but what he did with them while he wore them."[6] The same may be said about those other deputies who proved so instrumental in preserving law and order in Indian Territory.

Notes

1 Quoted in Fred Harvey Harrington, *Hanging Judge*, (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1951: Reprinted by University of Oklahoma Press 1966) p. 66.

2 Paul L. Brady, *A Certain Blindness: A Black Family's Quest for the Promise of America* (Atlanta: ALP Publishing, 1990) p. 20.

3 Brady, p. 20; *Fort Smith* (Arkansas) *Weekly Elevator*. April 15, 1887: July 13, 1888.

4 Nudie E. Williams, "United States vs. Bass Reeves: Black Lawman on Trial" *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Summer 1990, p. 156; Glenn Shirley, *Law West of Fort Smith: A History of Frontier Justice in the Indian Territory 1834-1896*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1957), p. 160; Arthur T. Burton, *Black Red and Deadly:Black and Indian Gunfighters of the Indian Territory, 1870-1907* (Austin, Texas: Eakin Press, 1991) p. 243.

5 Burton, pp. 176-177, 204-205.

6 Williams, "Bass Reves: Lawman in the Western Ozarks," *Negro History Bulletin* (April/May/June, 1979) p. 39.

Juliet Galonska is the park historian at Fort Smith National Historic Site. Recently she served as project director for two history conferences at Fort Smith NHS. In 1994 she received Oklahoma State University's Leroy H. Fisher Award for the best graduate paper in history. She has a master's degree in history from Oklahoma State University.

Mary McLeod Bethune Council House Dedication

The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site was dedicated as the newest African-American unit of the national park system on October 10, 1996. Dignitaries attending the dedication celebration in Washington, DC, included NPS Field Director for the National Capital Area, Robert Stanton; and the following Federal Advisory Commission Members—Dr. Dorothy Height, Dr. Savannah C. Jones; Mrs. Romaine B. Thomas; Ms. Brenda Girton-Mitchell; Dr. Sheila Y. Flemming; Dr. Bettye J. Gardner; and Mrs. Bertha S. Waters. Actress Cicely Tyson also attended.

Photo courtesy NPS.

Shirley Boteler-Mock and Mike Davis

Seminole Black Culture on the Texas Frontier

I'd like to see the whole story told before I die...Most of us are pretty scattered out now, scattered out or dead.

—San Antonio Express News, *1990*
Miss Charles Wilson, tribal historian

A small, dusty side road outside Brackettville leads to a small well-tended cemetery, bounded by a barbed wire fence and scrub brush. Established on the Fort Clark reservation in 1872, its obscurity belies its importance in the history of Texas. Here lie the 100 or more Seminole black scouts and their families, and four distinguished Medal of Honor winners. These people known for their horsemanship, scouting, and courage played a major role in defending communities and forts on the Texas frontier.

Seminole black culture and history is the focus of the ongoing research described in this collaborative paper. The project was born out of a 1993 Cultural Resource Management Project (CRM) in Brackettville, Texas, at two sites—41KY18 and 41KY68—located within the limits of the Seminole black village as depicted on a 1910 U.S. Army Quartermaster plane table map of the Fort Clark military compound.

The fruits of this project were many; however, the recovery of a house foundation and artifacts in the Seminole village at 41KY68 by Mike Davis and ethnographic interviews and research conducted by Shirley Boteler-Mock revealed significant new information. Such a collaboration has the power to make substantive contributions to a reconstruction of both the behavioral and physical aspects of the Seminole black culture, enhancing greater anthropological understanding than a single strategy would allow by itself.*

The Seminole blacks lived in adobe jacals or chink houses in the village on Las Moras Creek outside Fort Clark. Photo courtesy the Institute of Texan Cultures.

Seminole Black History

One of the distinctive and fascinating cultures of Texas, the present-day Seminole blacks are descendants of runaway black slaves (maroons) who took shelter in the early 1800s with the Seminole Indians in Florida.The Seminole Indians in Florida practiced a modified form of slavery; however, maroons essentially controlled most aspects of their existence, living in their own villages, owning property, and having their own leaders. Some intermarriage did occur between the two neighbors. Both groups shared the common goal of resisting European intrusions into their homeland and a desire for independence. During the frequent border skirmishes and Indian Wars, the Seminole blacks enhanced their fighting skills and evasive tactics of guerrilla-like warfare in the Florida swamp lands; skills which would lead to their eventual deployment to Fort Duncan on the Texas frontier as Indian scouts.

Following the Indian Wars, the Seminole blacks were forcibly moved with their Seminole allies to Indian Territory in Oklahoma. After suffering harsh treatment at the hands of the slave owners and oppression by the Creeks, groups of Seminoles, Seminole blacks, and other runaways began desperate migrations to Mexico, where slavery was not practiced. One journey, in particular, began in 1850 and taking nearly a year, was led by the great Seminole chief, Wild Cat (Coacoochee), and John Horse (Juan Caballo), the Seminole black chief. During this trek, making camps near Waco, along the Llano River, and at Las Moras Springs (near Fort Clark and Brackettville), they were constantly chased by slave hunters.

After crossing the Rio Grande at Eagle Pass, the Mexican government granted the Seminole blacks asylum and gave them supplies, provisions, and title to lands or *sitios* in the state of Coahuila. In return the Seminole blacks, because of their

Seminole black scouts at Fort Clark, Texas, c. 1885. Photo courtesy Institute of Texan Cultures.

fierce reputation, were expected to act as an effective deterrent to Indian raids along the Mexican border. Eventually, the Seminole blacks would start a small community, the *hacienda* of Nacimiento at the headwaters of the Rio San Juan Sabinas, northwest of Muzquiz. At this time they were also given the official designation, *Mascogos*, a term still used to describe the Nacimiento maroons today.

Seminole black ties to Texas strengthened after the Civil War, accelerated by the return of their Seminole Indian allies back to Indian Territory. In 1870, U.S. military officials, plagued by Indian raids on settlements and seeing value in their scouting and diplomatic skills with Indian tribes, persuaded the Seminole blacks to return to Texas. In July of that year, a small group moved to Fort Duncan and two years later, another contingent of Seminole blacks moved to Fort Clark, becoming a unit and fighting their first military engagement. The scouts and their families occupied land south of the fort on both sides of Las Moras Creek.

We'd have baptisms right in the river, and cook food over the fires,...Sometimes they'd cook a whole goat in the ground, head and all....If we didn't have dolls we'd take sticks or something and our parents would carve faces on them. Our houses had dirt floors, except the living rooms would be board floors. Any company got entertained in the living room.

—Miss Charles Wilson
San Antonio Express News, 1994

Here they continued to speak their Creole language called Gullah, a survival of their southeastern and African heritage; however, many who had lived in Mexico were also fluent in Spanish. Fort Clark became their home base through the early 1880s as the scouts performed exemplary duty in the Texas Indian campaigns of Bullis, Shafer, and other military leaders. Under Bullis's leadership for eight years, the Seminole black scouts were to embark on a period of intense border wars, many of their future postings being at outlying posts such as San Pedro Springs, Elm Creek, Camp Meyers Spring, Camp Del Rio, and Painted Cave.

With the final removal of Indian tribes to reservations outside Texas, the scouts fought their last battle in 1881 and their residence on Fort Clark became problematic. The War Department determined that Seminole black families would be removed from the fort and were entitled to no allotments since they were black and, despite their mixed blood, not considered Seminole. Forced from their homes, some families returned to

Nacimiento, Coahuila, while others traveled to Indian Territory in Oklahoma to settle among Seminole blacks who had not migrated south to Texas in 1849. Yet, a few families, often destitute and dependent for handouts, remained in Brackettville until 1914 when the Seminole scouts were disbanded. Descendants, such as Miss Charles Wilson, granddaughter of the illustrious Seminole black chief, Sampson July, and a community spokesperson and educator, still live in Brackettville; however, the majority have spread out to other parts of Texas or the United States.

Current Research

ITC, in particular, with research grants from the Summerlee Foundation, and in collaboration with the Texas Historic Commission, The Fort Clark Springs Association, and the Fort Clark Springs Museum, has been actively engaged in the act of recording Seminole black culture and history by developing the following projects:

- Recordation of oral interviews with key Seminole black elders in Nacimiento and Texas
- Production of a video documentary entitled "Singing to the Ancestors: Revitalization Attempts Among the Seminole Blacks" (with ITC Director of Media Production, Leslie Burns)
- Outreach activities such as classroom presentations and university lectures
- Integration of Seminole black history and culture into the African-American area of the ITC Exhibit Floor
- Involvement of the Seminole blacks in preservation efforts and public forums
- Development and production of an exhibit on Seminole black culture that will travel to selected museums in Texas.

These projects have centered on core themes:

- How new beliefs acquired have been layered over traditional beliefs and practices, to accommodate a diversity of needs among the Seminole blacks of Texas and Mexico

- The dynamics of gender and the representation of women in Seminole black culture
- How Seminole black descendants assimilate new interests and influences into their culture, while holding on to the tenuous threads of the past.
- The changes through time in the two communities, Nacimiento and Brackettville, and reasons for these changes

Today, the Seminole blacks of Mexico, Texas, and those remaining in Oklahoma continue their attempts to maintain ties between the various groups through yearly reunions at Brackettville during Juneteenth and Seminole Days. The Seminole scout cemetery just outside Brackettville, containing the remains of four scout Medal of Honor winners, survives as a dramatic symbol of historic time and place and a link with the Seminole black ancestors. As Miss Charles notes:

> My grandfather, my mother, even a lot of those of us who weren't in the military, we're all buried here. The Julys, the Jeffersons, the others, we were all cousins (*Fort Worth Star Telegram*, March 1990).

Note

* Subsequent to this, the prospects of expanding this research as well as a continued commitment to the collaboration were enhanced by the present authors' new positions: Shirley Boteler-Mock at the Institute of Texan Cultures (ITC) at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and Mike Davis at The Office of the State Archeologist (OSA) of the Texas Historical Commission (THC). Thus ITC, a multicultural institution focused on the history and culture of Texas, and OSA/THC are presently conjoined in a common mission: to continue documenting the history and culture of the Seminole blacks and assist them in revitalization efforts.

Dr. Shirley Boteler-Mock is a Research Associate at the Institute of Texan Cultures of the University of Texas at San Antonio in San Antonio, Texas.

Mike Davis is an archeologist with the Office of the State Archeologist, the Texas Historic Commission in Austin, Texas.

Jenny Masur and Kent Lancaster

Interpreting Slavery at Hampton NHS

Hampton National Historical Site, Towson, Maryland, contains the core of the Hampton estate, which belonged to seven generations of the Ridgely family from the 1740s-1940s. The huge and beautiful mansion is known for its careful reconstructions of earlier periods in the family history. Exciting research is now underway on the work force that made gracious living at the site possible, particularly the African Americans, who at one point numbered as many as 329 under Ridgely control.

The Ridgelys were the consummate recordkeepers. Mrs. Eliza Ridgely (1803-67), for example, recorded her every expenditure down to five cents for a year of ribbon for her own use and $1.27 for cloth for slave clothing. A working socialite, the mistress of a great plantation, she was typical of the family who produced and saved an enormous number of documents detailing their history. Most of these records are now at the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore, the Maryland State Archives in Annapolis, or in the Park collection. Scores of long account books, thousands of brief receipts for purchases, letters, runaway advertisements, diaries, lists of clothing and shoes given out, and other sources are available to reconstruct slave life at this site for more than a century before the Civil War.

Two interesting examples are a list of "Christmas Gifts of the Colored Children of Hampton" kept by a daughter of the house from 1841-54 and a letter from a Washington lawyer in 1866 to Master John Ridgely demanding the return of property—including "furs and muff" and "6 prs of white lace sleeves"—claimed as her property by Lucy Jackson, a former slave. Of more importance, though, are recently discovered documents, which permit identification of large numbers of slaves by age and, it is hoped, eventually by family groupings. These documents open various avenues of understanding of the Hampton community.

By his will, Governor Charles Ridgely manumitted his slaves in 1829. Controlled to some

extent by the state laws of the time, he permitted females from 25 years and males from 28 up to a legal ceiling of 45 years to go free. Younger slaves were to be kept by his residuary heirs and released when they reached those ages; older slaves were to be taken care of honorably for life. Some 90 individuals, some of whom continued to work for the Ridgelys, were released into Baltimore and surrounding areas in 1829-30, beginning a stream of freed Ridgely slaves that was to continue for decades.

On the surface this seems an act of great altruism. Under closer scrutiny, however, it becomes obvious that this was a mixed blessing, for this act split families as effectively as sale would have done. Sally Batty, for example, was within the designated age and was freed. George, the man we believe to have been her husband, was overage and thus ineligible for manumission, and their six children were to remain under control until each reached the requisite age over the next seven to 22 years.

The governor's elder son, John Ridgely, inherited the Hampton property in 1829 with no slaves, and he began to buy slaves totalling more than 70 individuals, who were freed in their turn by the Maryland state's dissolution of slavery in 1864. The study of slavery at Hampton, then, is complicated by the fact that it is the study of two discrete groups of slaves. There was overlapping and intermingling, too, for some of his father's freed slaves stayed on to work at Hampton, and John "rented" some of the younger slaves left in the care of his sisters, the residuary heirs.

An immediate question is by what mix of punishment and incentives such large communities of slaves were controlled. There is, in fact, no easy answer because of change over time and because slave masters were unlikely to record some of the uglier aspects of the system (the Ridgelys did not). One payment recorded by chance in a blacksmith's bill for chains and a neck iron seems important as does a passage in a memoir of a family member about the governor demanding several times that an recalcitrant and proud slave be given extra lashes until he was humbled. Over 60 runaways (1760s-1860s), too, may testify to abuses.

On the other hand, there were incentives for good behavior. Slaves working overtime at the ironworks (1760s-1830) could earn money to supplement rations of herring, corn, and bacon with pork or beef purchased at the company store. The first and third masters' slaves were included at family prayers, and Christmas gifts were given to all. While unlikely ever to plumb completely the nature of the slave control process, we do know that order was maintained. A fellow slave owner, for example, asked in 1794 if he might send some slaves to Hampton to be trained by the Ridgely overseer. In 1846, John Ridgely provided a power of attorney to his overseer to sell if necessary any "disorderly, disobedient, or unruly" slaves.

Hampton was situated close to a large urban center and in a county that bordered on a free state, so the lure of melding into Baltimore or finding freedom in Pennsylvania was necessarily a factor in slave life. Surviving powers of attorney empower representatives of the Ridgelys to pursue respectively, Isaac in 1831 believed to be "now or was lately in the Service of Some inhabitant of Abbottstown, in the State of Pennsylvania," and John Hawkins in 1852 "believed to be at large in the State of Pennsylvania." The Ridgelys were vigilant, quickly advertised and aggressive in seeking runaways.

A fugitive slave named Bateman was returned and became one of Ridgely's favorite slaves. At times of stress or upheaval there were often group runaways. One such event occurred in 1829 just after the governor's death. The escapees were brought back, one of them at least to discover that by the governor's will he was free. Running away was not a universal goal, however; one Nancy Davis, a beloved nurse of a generation of Ridgely children, chose to stay at Hampton when her freed husband moved to Baltimore. Very close to the family, she was buried and commemorated on stone in the Ridgely family burial ground.

We can make individuals come alive. Short slave biographies are already emerging from the records and, incomplete though they may be, they show something of what slavery meant to the individual. Lucy Jackson, for example, for whom the Washington lawyer wrote in 1866, was bought by John Ridgely from Baltimore auctioneer Samuel Owings Hoffman in 1838 for $400. She was apparently pregnant at the time, so her price was

One of three slave quarters centered around the farm house. A "designed" structure in quality of construction and workmanship, it was part of a home farm on the Hampton estate. Estimated date of construction was 1845-60.

high; later she had another child. According to the records, Lucy was a house servant—the housekeeper—in fact. Ridgely clothing distribution lists and expense accounts show that house servants were better dressed and probably better fed than the field or industrial slaves.

Lucy, then, was well up in the slave hierarchy. Apparently a Catholic, she had enough influence to see that her younger son George was buried in Baltimore's Cathedral Cemetery and that the Ridgelys paid the costs. Her older son Henry can be traced through childhood; we know what he was given for Christmas. At three he was given a harmonica, for example, and the next year a soldier on a horse. He can be traced in clothing lists until 1861 when he is marked "gone," probably having fled servitude.

Bits of the biography of a founder of the East Towson community are falling into place. We know from his certificate of freedom at the Hall of Records that another slave, Daniel Harris, was 44 years old in 1829, of "yellow" or light complexion and raised in Baltimore County. He was evaluated at a low $100 in an inventory taken to administer the governor's will, probably because he was only a year from statutory old age. He continued to work in the Hampton gardens well after his 1829 manumission, and appears in local land records as the first African American to buy property in the nearby community of Towson.

At Hampton, we have the opportunity to base interpretation on concrete Ridgely records and not on generalizations from research at other plantations. Hampton records contain a wealth of information on African-American labor, diet, costume, family relationships, living conditions, attempts to escape, etc. As suggested by the dearth of information about control, the one great flaw, of course, is that all Ridgely records are white engendered. They tell us nothing of slaves' non-working hours or their perception of life.

We already have established firm ties with the local African-American community which will attempt to identify descendants of Ridgely slaves. We hope to work backwards with the family traditions of descendants to fill in some of the gaps in the plantation owners' records. Eventually through oral histories and personal records, we hope to discover the African-American perspective on life at and association with Hampton and the Ridgely family. Then the site will have a fuller and more in-depth picture of life at Hampton in earlier centuries.

Each small research success opens six other paths, and there still looms many shelf feet of unexplored Ridgely documents. Most new research has depended on volunteers and interns from local colleges and universities. Hampton, nonetheless, has pushed ahead for the past three years in this exciting new research area and will continue to probe into its broader past.

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Volunteer Kent Lancaster is Professor Emeritus of History at Goucher College. He has done groundbreaking research at Hampton for the last three years.

Photos courtesy Hampton National Historic Site, NPS.

This log slave quarters, c. 1835-1860, consists of five rooms, including cellar with dirt floor; the second floor is a loft with a ladder to climb up. There is a stone fireplace in the cellar with a wrought iron crane and iron brackets for cooking. There are two present windows, one of which originally was a door. Now there is a modern lumber stair to the trap door. There is a crawl space under one room. Interior log walls, daubing, underside of upper flooring, stair stringers, and plastered fireplace walls were always whitewashed: ceiling joists and remaining interior trim were painted an iron-oxide based brown or red-brown. The exterior whitewash is consistent with whitewash or white paint on exterior masonry of other farm buildings. Period of hardware varies, though some original. —Reed Engle (1986)

Artifacts recovered indicate quarters assembled and placed on foundations during the third quarter of the 19th century, perhaps as late as c. 1870. The log timbers are clearly reutilized from a late-18th or early-19th century structure, judging from wrought nails and spikes embedded in the logs and cut for earlier doors and windows. It may not be a slave quarters; if not, it is significant that the building is patterned after a slave quarters, thus suggesting limited change and opportunity available to former slaves after the Civil War.—Brooke S. Blades and David G. Orr (1985)

Pamela K. Sanfilippo

Slavery at White Haven

I never was an Abolitionest, [n]ot even what could be called anti slavery, but I try to judge farely & honestly and it become patent to my mind early in the rebellion that the North & South could never live at peace with each other except as one nation, and that without Slavery. As anxious as I am to see peace reestablished I would not therefore be willing to see any settlemen[t] until this question is forever settled.[1]

—Ulysses S. Grant, 1863

Thus wrote Ulysses S. Grant to his friend and political ally, Senator Elihu Washburne, in August 1863. A national resolution to the issue of slavery would, in Grant's view, restore peace and reunite the North and South. In addition, it would resolve differences of a more personal nature between families divided over the slavery question. Grant understood the tensions such families felt, because he found himself in a similar situation. Growing up in Ohio, Grant was under the domineering tutelage of his abolitionist father, Jesse Root Grant. In 1848 he married Julia Dent, the daughter of a Missouri slaveholder and a slave owner herself. As Grant saw it, the abolition of slavery would not only reestablish peace in the nation, but in the personal lives of its citizens, his included.

The end of slavery would also mean a new life for the African Americans held in bondage throughout the country. Slaves at White Haven, the home of Grant's wife's family, lived and labored with Grant between 1854 and 1859, when he farmed the land for his father-in-law, Colonel Frederick Dent. The interpretation of slavery at White Haven, now known as Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site, provides insight into Grant's subsequent treatment of African Americans, as well as an understanding of slave life on a 19th-century Missouri farm.

According to historian Lorenzo J. Greene, most slaveholders in Missouri owned few slaves—those who owned 10 were considered rich.[2] In the city of St. Louis, slavery was said to exist "only in name," where a large contingent of freed men and women were available to work as house servants and unskilled laborers. Colonel Dent's plantation of over 1,000 acres was only 12 miles distant from the city, but its rural setting was conducive to the perpetuation of slavery, where hired hands were scarce unless they were a neighbor's slaves. By 1850, a total of 30 African Americans lived and worked in bondage at White Haven and in the Dent home in the city of St. Louis.[3]

According to Emma Dent Casey, Julia's youngest sister, there were 18 slave cabins located on the Dent plantation, a short distance behind the main house. During Grant's ownership of the property in 1867, he instructed his caretaker, William Elrod, to tear down a number of cabins on the property, presumably all that remained of the former slaves' homes.[4] Today that portion of the original estate is part of a suburban home development, and no evidence has been found of these cabins. Archeological artifacts discovered in the winter and summer kitchens provide some clues as to the lives of the white and African-American residents of White Haven. Evidence suggests that one or more slaves may have lived in the winter kitchen, located in the basement of the main house. Remains of animal bones indicate that slaves were eating the poorer cuts of meat from slaughtered pigs and cattle.[5] Julia recalled that her father bought kegs of herring for the slaves, and that they were provided with everything that the farm produced, fruits, meat, poultry and vegetables.[6]

The responsibility for planting, nurturing and harvesting these crops fell mainly on the slaves. Although Colonel Dent owned some of the best farm machinery available, the tasks of operating the machinery and gathering the harvest were left to the field hands. In 1858, Grant wrote his sister Mary that there were "three negro men, two hired by the year and one of Mr. Dents, which, with my own help, I think, will enable me to do farming pretty well, with assistance in harvest."[7] Dan, one of the slaves given to Julia by her father, and other slaves were there to help Grant cut the logs and build his cabin, Hardscrabble. They also helped him cut and load the wood which Grant sold in St. Louis.[8]

One of the individuals who worked with Grant was William Jones, a mulatto, about 35 years old in 1859. Grant purchased William Jones from Frederick Dent. When and why Grant purchased him is unknown at present, the only known record of his existence being the manumission paper Grant filed in St. Louis Circuit Court on March 29, 1859. Grant's emancipation of William Jones occurred about the time the Grants were preparing to move to Galena, in the free state of Illinois. Grant's willingness to free Jones contrasts with Julia's decision to hire out the four slaves she owned. Where Jones went after leaving White Haven is a matter of speculation. Years later, as Ulysses and Julia were returning home from their around-the-world tour, Julia met Henrietta, one of Emma's former slaves, in San Francisco. She was introduced as Mrs. Jones, but Julia did not indicate in her memoirs if she was the wife of William Jones.[9]

Maintenance of family and personal integrity was difficult for African-American slaves in any period or location, and White Haven was no exception. Slave census records do not record names which would allow us to track the stability or movement of slaves on the farm.

At White Haven, we have the unique opportunity to examine 19th-century Missouri farm life on a slave plantation. The National Park Service continues to research archeological, historical, genealogical, social, and cultural evidence to learn more about the lives of those individuals who lived and worked at White Haven. Such research will help us fulfill the dictates of the enabling legislation for Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site, "to preserve and interpret . . . a key property associated with the life of General and later President Ulysses S. Grant and the life of First Lady Julia Dent Grant, knowledge of which is essential to understanding, in the context of mid-19th-century American history, his rise to greatness, his heroic deeds and public service, and her partnership in them."

Notes

1 Ulysses S. Grant to Elihu B. Washburne, August 30, 1863, *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, (Carbondale, 1982), vol. 9, p. 218.

2 Lorenzo J. Greene, et al. *Missouri's Black Heritage*, (Columbia, MO, 1993), p. 28.

3 Fifth Census of the United States, 1830 Population Schedules—Missouri, p. 326; 1850 Federal Census, pp. 507, 583.

4 Emma Dent Casey, p. 2; LeRoy H. Fischer, Ed., "Grant's Letters to His Missouri Farm Tenants", p. 28.

5 James E. Price, *Description of the Artifactual and Ecofactual Archeological Specimens Recovered from the Winter Kitchen at the Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site*, February, 1996, pp. 1-3, 5.

6 Julia Dent Grant, p. 34.

7 Ulysses S. Grant to Mary Grant, March 21, 1858, *Papers*, vol. 1, pp. 340-1.

8 Walter B. Stevens, *Grant in St. Louis*, (St. Louis, 1916), p. 26.

9 Ulysses S. Grant, March 29, 1959, *Papers*, vol. 1, p. 347; Julia Dent Grant, p. 42, 311.

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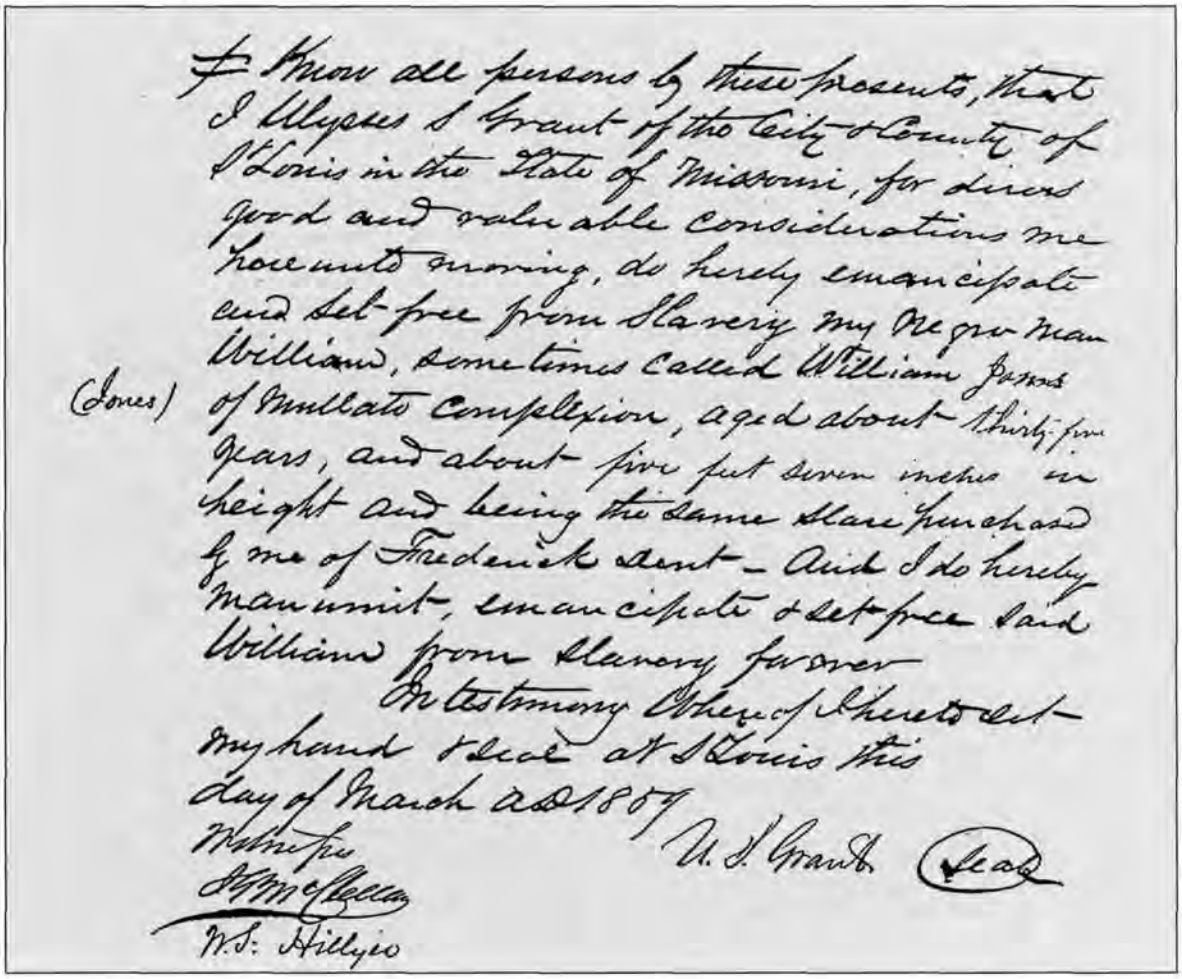
Copy of the manumission paper freeing William Jones in 1859.


Know all persons by these presents, that I Ulysses S Grant of the City & County of St Louis in the State of Missouri, for divers good and valuable considerations me hereunto moving, do hereby emancipate and set free from Slavery my Negro man William, sometimes called William Jones (Jones) of Mullato complexion, aged about thirty-five years, and about five feet seven inches in height and being the same slave purchased by me of Frederick Dent – And I do hereby manumit, emancipate & set free said William from Slavery forever

In testimony Whereof I hereto set my hand & seal at St Louis this day of March AD 1859

U. S. Grant (Seal)

Witness

S G McClellan

W. S. Hillyer

Hilary Russell

Underground Railroad Parks
A Shared History

The Josiah Henson house, where its owner died in 1883. It was established as a tourist attraction in 1948, and is now the focus of a complex of buildings known as "Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site." Photo courtesy Robb Watt.

The National Park Service and Parks Canada embody the respective federal government's commitment to preserving, protecting, and presenting the nation's nationally-significant cultural and natural heritage. While there are important structural and other differences between the organizations, they share many of the same concerns and aspirations; over the years, each has been inspired and enlightened by the other's ideas and accomplishments.

The example of the National Park Service is particularly significant with respect to its recent efforts to incorporate African-American history into its parks and programs. Parks Canada has much to learn from the breadth and variety of these undertakings, since, with one exception, our initiatives relating to the commemoration of African-Canadian history are less than 10 years old, and, to date, they entail 9 commemorative plaques.

Four of these plaques relate to the Underground Railroad — the focus of this article and an historical subject that promises exciting collaborative opportunities for National Park Service and Parks Canada. Though no existing national historic site in Canada is closely connected to the Underground Railroad, Parks Canada has begun to question how to enlarge the commemoration of a nationally-significant story in Canadian history.

The nine plaques mentioned above bear the name of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, a nationally-representative, advisory, and appointive body of experts in Canadian history. Its first recommendation bore directly upon the national historic significance of people of African descent in Canada only six years after its inception in 1919. In 1925, the Board recommended that the "the Fugitive Slave Movement" was of national importance. Sixty-two years would pass before it made another pronouncement that evinced a black presence in Canadian history.

It is important, however, to view this hiatus within a larger context. Until the late 1970s, the Board's recommendations seldom explicitly referenced cultural or racial groups who were other than British and French—the "two founding nations"—or, to a much lesser extent, Native peoples.

Though the concept of Canada as a "mosaic" (as opposed to an American "melting pot") gained wide acceptance —at least in academic circles — no such mosaic was reflected in the federal commemorative program. Like most general history books of the time, this program tended to focus on what might be called "mainstream" and "manifest" history — on great events and great men featured in contemporary newspaper headlines — and on nation building, outstanding examples, and earliest survivors.

Nonetheless, the Board's commemoration of the "Fugitive Slave Movement" was not an anomaly; it contributed significantly to a master narrative that delineated a distinct and heroic Canadian history. This was acknowledged in the text of the following Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada plaque, unveiled near a border crossing in Windsor, Ontario, in 1928:

HERE THE SLAVE FOUND FREEDOM
Before the United States Civil War of 1861-65,
Windsor was an important terminal of the
"UNDERGROUND RAILROAD".
Escaping from bondage, thousands of FUGITIVE
SLAVES from the South, men, women,
children,landing near this spot, found in Canada
Friends, Freedom, Protection.
UNDER THE BRITISH FLAG.

Entrance to the North American Black Historical Museum and Cultural Centre, a project of local resident Mel Simpson, who was deeply concerned with fostering black history and black pride. The former home of George Taylor, a refugee from slavery, is in front of the museum building on the right. Photo by the author.

The text of the 1928 Historic Sites and Monuments Board plaque indicates that "Fugitive Slave Movement" directly involved the Canadian government and the Canadian people in the lore of the Underground Railroad. This was (and is) a source of national pride. That Canada was a haven for thousands fleeing the slavocracy and racial caste continues to be invoked as transparent evidence that the country was (and is) different from and morally superior to the republic south of its border. After all, not only was there no slavery here at the time, but Canadian laws made no invidious distinction between black and white. The words "Canada" and "freedom" could be used interchangeably.

Arguably, memoirists, journalists, and other activists of African descent in the abolition movement helped to build this estimable reputation for Canada as a land of freedom and colour-blind opportunity: the most moving and persuasive evidence to this effect were contained in the testimonials of the refugees themselves, and in that they came in increasing numbers, some kissing the ground on arrival. The lore of the Underground Railroad cemented a notion of Canada as an enlightened and just society unsullied by racial oppression, and helped to expunge from popular memory the existence of black slavery on Canadian soil between the early 17th century and 1834.

Josiah Henson, 1789-1883, whose renown as the model for Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom" focused the attention of the world on Canada's role as a haven for runaways. He was also an important memoirist and Underground Railroad conductor who helped to found a school for all ages and races called "The British American Institute," and a promising black settlement named "Dawn", though these latter achievements did not survive long and were clouded by controversy. Photo courtesy of Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site, Dresden, Ontario.

African-Canadian History

More than the Underground Railroad

Most North Americans have little awareness of African-Canadian history — usually not much more than the notion that thousands of black refugees came to Canada on the Underground Railroad, a clandestine network that assisted runaways from slavery in the mid-19th century.

Often, they have no information at all about the existence of black slavery on Canadian soil, or about two earlier influxes of thousands of blacks who arrived on British vessels, not by means of any clandestine network. African-Canadian history thus includes:

- more than 1,000 blacks who were enslaved in New France at the time of the British conquest in 1759;
- some 2,000 enslaved blacks who came to British North America with Loyalist slaveholders in 1783;
- at least 3,500 free blacks on the British side during the War of Independence who were evacuated on British vessels to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick at the end of the war;
- about 2,000 black "refugees of the War of 1812" who had been promised their freedom if they joined the British and were evacuated from the Chesapeake Bay area to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick between 1813 and 1815.

No history student could sustain this ingenuous view after the publication of Robin Winks's landmark, *The Blacks in Canada: A History* (1971). No doubt, its somber assessments contributed to the way the Historic Sites and Monuments Board plaque was rewritten in 1973 — without a whiff of self-righteousness:

> *FUGITIVE SLAVES*
>
> *From early in the 19th century, and particularly after the passage of the American Fugitive Slave Law in 1850, the towns along the Detroit River served as major terminals of the network of routes by which thousands of slaves reached Canada. Once in Canada the fugitive was often aided by philanthropic societies and individuals in securing land, employment and the necessaries of life. In some cases separate colonies were established for former slaves. By 1861 an estimated 30,000 fugitive blacks resided in Canada West, but more than half of them returned to the United States following emancipation.*

Though this revised inscription supplies dates, numbers, and other intriguing details miss-

ing from the earlier version, it communicates less about vital issues: why runaways and free blacks came to Canada, and the importance of their fate to all African Americans and to the propaganda war against slavery: blacks in Canada bore the brunt of "proving" the truth of the abolitionists' argument that legal equality was all that was required.

Further, like its predecessor, this inscription does not hint that many former slaves rose above immense discriminatory barriers to forge their own institutions and destinies, that they introduced commercial tobacco growing into the province, and that they were otherwise implicated in the economy, culture, and politics of the country. On the contrary, its statements that runaways were "often aided by philanthropic societies and individuals..." and "in some cases separate colonies were established for former slaves" deprive them of agency and imply a helpless dependency.

Recent research by Professor Michael Wayne of the University of Toronto calls the 1973 inscription into question. His pioneering examination of the enumerators' schedules pertaining to the 1861 census of Canada West (called "Upper Canada" between 1791 and 1840, and "Ontario" after 1867) causes him to refute the following oft repeated claims:

- that 30,000 to 40,000 African Americans moved to Canada West between about 1815 and the Civil War;
- that perhaps two thirds of this population were runaways;
- that more than half of this number returned to the United States after emancipation.

Instead, Wayne estimates that there were about 22,000 black residents in Canada West in 1861, of whom more than 40% were Canadian born; only about 20% of the 20,000 were runaways; only about 20% of the total disappeared by the next census in 1871.

Mary Ann Shadd (Cary), 1823-1893, the first woman of African descent declared to be of national historic significance by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada. In Canada West (Ontario) between 1851 and 1863, she was an indefatigable advocate on behalf of African-American refugees in Canada and women's rights, and a ferocious opponent of American slavery, racial segregation, and the system of fund raising for refugees known as "begging." Photo courtesy National Archives of Canada, C-2997.

Wayne's research in the manuscript census would also indicate that both inscriptions place undue emphasis on settlements in southwestern Ontario, on the American border, since enumerators in Canada West in 1861 found black residents in "...a total of 312 townships and city wards in the schedules, representing every county and city of the province and the Algoma district." They were more widely scattered in the province than Germans, "the only immigrant group in the middle of the 19th century that was roughly comparable in size to the black population." These facts, argues Wayne, warrant scholarly attention, the more so because an unwarranted amount has been lavished upon "separate colonies" supported by white philanthropy like Wilberforce, Elgin, Dawn, and the Refugee Home Society. With the exception of the Elgin Settlement in Buxton, "sepa-

Exterior and interior views of the British Methodist Episcopal (BME) Church, Salem Chapel, St. Catharines, where Harriet Tubman worshiped during her residence in Canada. This building, dedicated in 1855, replaced a log structure on the same site that had served as an AME church. Photos courtesy Rob Watt.

rate colonies" failed badly, they involved only a small percentage of the black population, by any estimate, and they are not windows into the more general experience of refugees in the province or the country.

Wayne's estimates may diminish the number of blacks in Canada West, but they do not diminish their importance or the impact of the Underground Railroad in Canada. On the contrary, his work contradicts a pervasive impression of blacks as outsiders who were not really part of the Canadian immigrant experience. He demolishes the notion that the great majority were "birds of passage" who huddled close to the border, burdening Canada and themselves with their exile mentalities until after U.S. emancipation, when most gratefully returned to their real home and to more accustomed warmer climates.

Eleven existing sites and museums in Ontario interpret the Underground Railroad, though, not surprisingly, they have not benefited as yet from Michael Wayne's unpublished research. None are national historic sites or within the Parks Canada system: they are owned and operated by local authorities or non-profit corporations. Most of them are concentrated near the U.S. border, and in rural or small town areas of Essex and Kent counties in southwestern Ontario, and three — Uncle Tom's Cabin in Dresden, the Raleigh Township Museum in North Buxton, and the John Freeman Walls Historic Site in Puce — are inextricably linked to three "separate colonies," (respectively Dawn, the Elgin Settlement, and the Refugee Home Society).

These and other Underground Railroad-related sites in south western Ontario have special appeal to African-American heritage tours; their interpretations often focus on slavery, dramatic escape, the Underground Railroad, abolitionism, and border crossings. As such, some visitors may conclude that these sites are "the end of the Underground Railroad" and not the beginnings or the outgrowth of an intrinsically-Canadian experience — though one admittedly joined at the hip to African-American history.

Portrait of William Wells Brown, who escaped from slavery in Kentucky in 1834 and helped others to escape to Canada on the Lake Erie steamboat where he worked for two years. Later, he became a noted abolitionist speaker and writer: his most important titles were The Narrative of William Wells Brown, a Fugitive Slave *(1849), his novel,* Clotel *(1853), and a pioneering book on black history,* The Black Man, his Antecedents, his Genius, and his Achievements *(1863).* (Narrative of William Wells Brown, *1849)*

Understandably, established sites in Ontario tend to stress the successes of runaways and free blacks in Canada. Most are constrained by scarce resources that do not permit them to mount sophisticated displays that elucidate in detail such significant aspects of the refugee experience as the establishment of segregated schools in Ontario, the meaning and repercussions of self-help and black convention movements, the conundrums posed by colonization and emigration schemes, the divisive and critical debate on segregated black communities, and on the impact of runaways on the politics of the province and on the relationship between the Canadian and American governments.

Black refugees obviously brought to Canadian localities many aspects of African-American culture, together with their concerns about slavery and the progress of the race. While they involved themselves in Underground Railroad operations, in ferocious U.S. debates on abolition and emigration, and in later Civil War and Reconstruction efforts, they did not remain "African Americans" who had a single national identity and history. After they crossed the American border, they and their descendants forged a distinct but multi-faceted African-Canadian culture and history. These were deeply imprinted with their Canadian milieu and had a permanent impact upon it.

John Freeman Walls and Jane Walls's cabin at the John Freeman Walls Historic Site. The Walls fled North Carolina for Canada in 1845. Their descendants still own their original land and cabin in Puce, near Windsor, Ontario. Photo by the author.

The Underground Railroad was predicated on crossing borders; its meaning and implications are constrained and distorted when the subject is considered only within the context of a "national" history — whether Canadian or American. Its U.S. underpinnings and operations were seminal to the unfolding of the Canadian story; in turn, the fate and activities of refugees in Canada are germane its overall development and to U.S. history.

A shared history, but not a unitary one, is being invoked — a shared history where differences are no less important than similarities. Greater understanding of these differences and similarities may be promoted by collaborative efforts of Parks Canada and the National Park Service to promote public awareness in both countries of a dramatic and inspiring chapter in North American history that contains essential messages for the present.

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Canadian Historic Sites and Monuments Board Recommendations Relating to African-Canadian History

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada recognized the importance in Canadian history of the "Fugitive Slave Movement" in 1925. During the last 10 years: it has recommended three other commemorations that relate to the Underground Railroad:

- legislation passed in (what is now) Ontario in 1793 that freed any slave who came into the province, whether brought by an slave holder or escaping bondage. (The bill introduced gradual manumission for slaves — perhaps a few hundred — who were already resident in the province) (recommended in 1992);
- Mary Ann Shadd Cary, pioneer newspaperwoman and activist, whose work in Ontario was largely concerned with those who had fled slavery and the U.S. Fugitive Slave Law (recommended in 1994);
- Josiah Henson, a refugee from slavery, a conductor of the Underground Railroad, an important figure in the abolition movement, and a community leader who helped to found the Dawn settlement near Dresden, Ontario. His later fame as the model for the character of Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom" brought international attention to the Canadian haven (recommended in 1995).

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board has been particularly active in recognizing African-Canadian history during the last 10 years. In this period it has also recommended the commemoration of:

- Sam Langford, a talented Nova Scotian boxer who achieved international recognition early in this century (recommended in 1987);
- The No. 2. Construction Battalion, a labor battalion formed in 1916 after blacks insisted upon serving in their country's war effort (recommended in 1992) ;
- The Black Loyalists at Birchtown, the largest and most influential free black community in 18th-century Canada (recommended in 1993)
- Black Railway Porters and their Unions, who played a major role for the struggle for black rights in Canada (recommended in 1994).
- Nova Scotian Contralto Portia White, who forged a brief but spectacular career on the concert stage during the 1940s (1995).

Ontario Heritage Sites that Interpret the Underground Railroad

The North American Black Historical Museum & Cultural Centre, King Street, Amherstburg

The museum building contains displays relating to the history of Africa and people of African descent in North America, together with artifacts and information relating to the Underground Railroad and its impact in Amherstburg. Two historic buildings form part of the complex: the former home (moved to the site) of George Taylor, a refugee from slavery, and the former AME (African Methodist Episcopal) Nazrey Church, built in 1848. The centre was the project of a local resident and members of the AME congregation. No provincial or federal designations apply to this site, though the museum has received limited funding from the municipality, and from various provincial and federal departments.

The John Brown Meeting House/First Baptist Church, King Street East, Chatham.

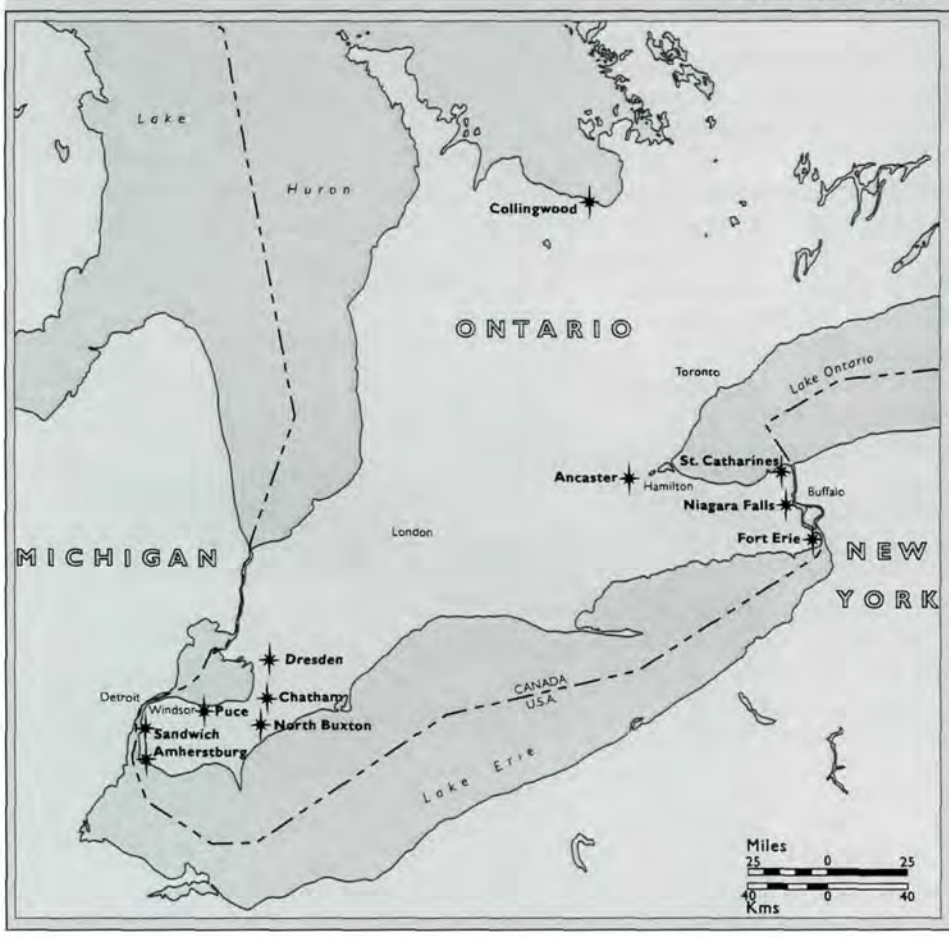
The First Baptist Church was the site of John Brown's secret constitutional convention in May 1858. The building does not look much like it did at the time: a 1946 brick facade and 1950s renovations have transformed the appearance of the wood frame church that was built in 1853. The church is still active, and is open by appointment to tourists. A provincial plaque making the convention was erected beside the church in 1958.

The Raleigh Township Centennial Museum/Elgin Settlement, North Buxton.

The museum commemorates the Elgin settlement at Buxton, an utopian and highly publicized black refugee community founded in 1849 by the Reverend William King. A 1967 museum building contains artifacts relating to early settlers. An 1861 former schoolhouse forms part of the complex; an historic BME (British Methodist Episcopal) church and cemetery are nearby. The museum resulted from local efforts, and receives very limited Provincial funding. The settlement was commemorated by a provincial plaque in 1965.

Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site, (The Dawn Settlement), Dresden.

This site is connected with the Reverend Josiah Henson, whose 1849 memoir, "The life of Josiah Henson," formerly a slave and now an inhabitant of Canada as narrated by himself, was read by Harriet Beecher Stowe and contributed to her composite character of "Uncle Tom." The museum complex includes Henson's 2-story home, where he died in 1883. (It has been moved three times, but is now apparently very close to its original site.) It abuts the Henson family



Heritage Sites

Amherstburg
The North American Black Museum and Cultural Centre

Ancaster
The Griffin House

Chatham
John Brown Meeting House/First Baptist Church

Collingwood
Sheffield Park Black History and Cultural Museum

Dresden
Uncle Tom's Historic Site

Fort Erie
Bertie Hall

Niagara Falls
The Nathaniel Dett BME Church and Norval Johnson Heritage Library

North Buxton
Raleigh Township Centennial Museum

Puce
John Freeman Walls Historic Site and Underground Railroad Museum

Sandwich
Sandwich Baptist Church

St. Catharines
The BME Church (Salem Chapel)

African Canadian Heritage Tour

plot and a monument to Josiah Henson erected just after his death. The complex also contains a "refugee cabin" and a mid-19th-century Presbyterian Church that have been moved from nearby locations. From the late 1940s until the 1980s, the site was operated by local businessmen as a tourist destination; since 1992, it has been owned by the St. Clair Parkway Commission, a provincial agency. A provincial plaque to the Josiah Henson House was erected in 1965. Henson was declared to have been a person of national historic significance in 1995; the erection of the federal plaque is pending.

John Freeman Walls Historic Site and Underground Railroad Museum, Puce.
This complex of buildings is owned and operated by the Walls family, descendants of a refugee from slavery. A log cabin said to have been constructed in 1846 and a family cemetery are on the site, and an assortment of other buildings moved there to serve as interpretation centres. These are on land that was made available to refugees at inflated prices through the Sandwich Mission, an organization launched in 1846 by white American abolitionists. During the early 1850s, the Sandwich Mission became The Refugee Home Society, acquired over 2,000 acres, and settled about 150 blacks on scattered 25-acre parcels, with various strings attached.

The Sandwich Baptist Church, Sandwich
A still active black church built in 1851, and the oldest extant in the Windsor area. African-Canadian Heritage Tour literature describes it as "the oldest black church in Canada...built of logs in 1841 [and] rebuilt in 1851 with bricks made by former slaves." Its basement is said to have sheltered runaways from slave catchers.

The Griffin House, Ancaster
The home for over 150 years of the Griffin family, descendants of Enerals Griffin, a refugee from Virginia, and his white wife. They came to the Niagara area in 1829, and bought the house in 1834. The building and a 45-acre parcel of land, intact since 1841, were purchased in 1988 by the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority, which has undertaken research, archeology, restoration, interpretation, and landscaping. It is open to tours by appointment.

The British Methodist Episcopal Church (Salem Chapel), Geneva Street, St. Catharines.
Between 1855 and 1858, Harriet Tubman worshiped at this Church, and lived just around the corner in a boarding house on North Street (since demolished). The church is said to have been "designed and constructed by refugee blacks, and in continuous use as a church since 1855." A provincial plaque to Harriet Tubman was erected next to the building in 1993.

The Nathaniel Dett British Methodist Episcopal Church, Peer Street, Niagara Falls.
Another active church that receives African-Canadian Heritage tours and which houses the Norval Johnston Heritage Library relating to black history. Its congregation was organized in 1814. The church was built by the faithful in 1836 on a site that proved so cold that the building was moved in 1856 to its present location; it still rests on the logs that were used to effect its move. (It was renamed in 1983 in honor of R. Nathaniel Dett, a noted composer and music teacher who played the piano and organ there during his youth.) The church was designated to be "architecturally significant" under the Ontario Heritage Act in 1986. It receives no government funding.

Bertie Hall, Fort Erie
An historic building (now owned by the Niagara Parks Commission and leased to the Mildred Mahoney Doll Museum) which, according to historian Owen Thomas, "...is believed to have been a 'safe house' for fugitive slaves prior to the American Civil War. Local legend claims that slaves were brought across the River under the cover of darkness and were kept in the basement until arrangements could be made to take them to safer quarters further away from the border."

Sheffield Park Black History & Cultural Museum, Collingwood
A museum opened in 1991 which interprets black settlement in the area: land grants to black veterans of the war of 1812 in Oro, other black settlers and their descendants in Simcoe county and Collingwood, black marine heritage on the Great Lakes, the Underground Railroad, and slavery and African history. The museum receives no public funding; it is kept open by donations and a small entrance fee.

The Underground Railroad in Quebec and the Maritime Provinces

Quebec was a weaker magnet than Ontario for 19th-century refugees from slavery and black codes, though Montreal served as an Underground Railroad terminus and a centre of anti-slavery activity in Canada. The city became home to a celebrated runaway, Shadrach Minkins, whose rescue in 1851 from a Boston courtroom and the clutches of the Fugitive Slave Law was celebrated throughout the Abolition movement.

William and Ellen Craft were the most famous refugees to arrive in the Maritimes via the Underground Railroad, but, unlike Shadrach Minkins, they did not come to Canada to stay. From Boston, they took "a tortuous trail ...to Maine, Nova Scotia, and St. John, New Brunswick," where they soon boarded a steamer to Liverpool, England.

The operation of the Underground Railroad also implicated sea routes to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia from American ports. Nevertheless, its local impact seems to have been relatively slight; the few hundred refugees whom it assisted to reach the Maritimes (or who came clandestinely, on their own) were assimilated into existing communities of descendants of black Loyalists and black refugees of the War of 1812.

Jane Williamson

A Private Museum Confronts the Underground Railroad

Just off US Route 7, the major north-south artery on the west side of Vermont's Green Mountains, midway between Burlington and Middlebury, sits Rokeby Museum.[1] Perched on a gentle rise, the imposing Federal Style house looks over the Champlain Valley to the Adirondacks beyond. Behind the house and sheltered by it is an intact 19th-century farmyard with eight agricultural outbuildings and associated structures. An open field and acres of former orchard and pasture stretch east to the hills. It was here that the Robinsons, a remarkable family of Quakers, settled in the early days of Vermont statehood, prospered during Vermont's"golden age" of sheep farming, and, ultimately, suffered economic decline in the mid-20th century. This prosperous farm was owned by Rowland Thomas Robinson and worked by him and many hired hands, some of them African Americans escaped from bondage.

Robinson was "progressive" in both his farming practices and his social views. An outspoken Garrisonian abolitionist, he was a founder of both the Vermont and Ferrisburgh Anti-Slavery Societies, a regular reader of *The Liberator*, and a participant in the Underground Railroad. Robinson was a devout Quaker and a highly respected elder of his Meeting; his antislavery attitudes and activities were informed by his religious views.

In the decades after the Civil War, his children and especially his grandchildren passed on stories of the fugitive slaves at Rokeby. These stories, primarily oral,[2] reflected the prevailing mythology of the Underground Railroad: fugitives at Rokeby were in flight, they were hidden in the east chamber or "Rokeby Slave Room," the entire enterprise was laden with risk and cloaked in secrecy. When the site became a museum, this oral tradition was integrated into house tours and all programming. In the mid-1980s, this interpretation came into question when research into family documents began to suggest a very different story.

Rokeby has incredibly rich paper documentation in the form of family letters (10,000+) as well as account books, diaries, receipts, and other records. Seven letters in the Rokeby collection, to and from Rowland T. Robinson, make specific reference to fugitive slaves. From these letters, as well as other sources, we have pieced together a picture of fugitive slaves living and working on the Rokeby farm in relative safety.

The farm operation at Rokeby was at its height during these years, and the Robinsons had quite small families, so the need for hired hands was probably constant. It is this need and the relative safety of Vermont—that brought Rokeby to mind as a potential home for certain fugitives. Johnson and Beale both tell us that Vermont is safe, but that fact is implicit in the proposal that Simon and Jeremiah will work on the farm, something that cannot be done in secret.

In 1837, Robinson wrote to Ephram Elliott, a slave owner in Perquimans County, North Carolina, on behalf of Jesse, a fugitive living at Rokeby. Jesse wanted to purchase a freedom paper, and Robinson wrote to negotiate the price. In his reply, Elliott admitted that Jesse's "situation at this time places it in his power to give me what he thinks proper...as he at this time is entirely out of my reach."[3] (Elliott held firm in his request for $300, a sum beyond Jesse's means.) Elliott clearly states that Jesse is beyond the reach of the bounty hunter, Robinson would certainly not have undertaken it if he thought it would put Jesse at risk.

Robinson knew that Vermont's Constitution of 1777 outlawed slavery outright—the first state constitution to do so. And, in case there was any doubt about its intentions, the state legislature announced in 1786 that attempts to transport fugitives out of the state would be "in open violation of the laws of the land."[4] Always ready to confront the federal government, Vermont passed a variety of personal liberty laws in response to the Fugitive Slave Laws of 1793 and 1850. These made recapture of fugitives on Vermont soil extremely difficult, if not impossible, in the few cases that arose.[5]

Vermont's proximity to Canada and distance from the slave states was a powerful deterrent to bounty hunters. The sheer distance to be travelled—coupled with the possibility of failure—meant few slave catchers found their way to the Green Mountain state. Although research on Vermont's Underground Railroad is still being conducted,[6] the evidence indicates that fugitives were rarely pursued inside Vermont's borders.

Also important was Vermont's infrequent economic, familial, or other ties to either slavery or the slave states. David Ludlum says that, "Of all the northeastern states Vermont was {least} suited for the employment of slave labor...An area of small farms, little capital, and hard winters, it could fit none but freemen into its economy. There arose, therefore, no vested interest to come to the defense of the' peculiar institution' when subjected to attack by abolitionists after 1830."[7]

Slavery was subject to increasing attack by Vermont abolitionists in the 1830s and 1840s. Vermont formed the first state auxiliary of the American Anti-Slavery Society, with the help of Rowland T. Robinson, and by 1837 had more local societies—89—than any other New England state, despite its relatively smaller population.[8]

This interpretation of the Underground Railroad at Rokeby—and, by extension, Vermont—is not what visitor expect. For many, the romance of the Railroad is inextricably tied to notions of danger and secrecy. At Rokeby we have come to see the Robinson's contribution in a new light. Rather than providing mere shelter for a night, Rowland and Rachel Robinson took former slaves into their home, gave them employment on the farm, taught them to read and write, and gave them the chance to start life anew. Fugitive slaves escaped with little more than their own courage and determination; at some point they had to stop running and begin new lives as free men and women. This was the opportunity offered by the Robinsons and Rokeby.

References

1 "Rokeby" was the name the Robinsons gave to their family home and farm. The private Museum was named for it.

2 Robinson's son Rowland Evans Robinson was a popular Vermont author at the turn of the century. He wrote one or two Underground Railroad stories that include the usual themes of pursuit, hiding, and the need for extreme secrecy. These have generally been assumed to be factual, given his family background, even though he was a child during the 1830s and 1840s (he was born in 1833), and his tales are not supported by the historical record.

3 Joseph Beale to Rowland T. Robinson, July 12, 1844, Rokeby Collection.

4 David Ludlum, *Social Ferment in Vermont 1791-1850*. New York, 1939, p. 135.

5 Marion Gleason McDougall says in *Fugitive Slaves, 1619-1865* (New York, 1967, p 36), that "The risk and trouble of transporting slaves across free states were so great, that up to 1850, we seldom hear of kidnapping cases, and rarely of the capture of a genuine fugitive in the New England states."

6 A Vermont historian, Ray Zirblis, was, at the time of this writing (September 1996) just finishing a major research report on the Underground Railroad in the state.

7 Ludlum, 135.

8 Louis Filler, *The Crusade Against Slavery, 1830-1860*, New York, harper & Brothers, 1960, p. 67.

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Paul A. Shackel

The John Brown Fort
African-Americans' Civil War Monument

The armory engine house, which later became known as the John Brown Fort, is the structure in which Brown and his men took refuge during their failed attempt to capture Harpers Ferry. While John Brown's raid failed, his efforts were revered by abolitionists and he became a martyr in the fight against slavery.

Today, the John Brown fort is a well preserved structure that sits in the heart of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. It is well situated in the landscape and it can easily be seen by visitors who enter the downtown district of the park. Its placement seems intentional, positioned in the midst of a monumental landscape. Without knowing the structure's history one can easily believe that its appearance and symbolic meaning is timeless, rooted in the abolitionist cause for equal rights. But this is not necessarily the case. The structure was not always revered by the majority of Americans. It has taken refuge at several oases in its 150-year existence, for display and for reverence, only to be moved again.

After the Civil War, the structure stood neglected on the abandoned armory grounds in Harpers Ferry. It was transformed into a major tourist attraction, as visiting Civil War sites became a major American leisure time activity beginning in the late 19th century. In 1892, the fort's owner sold it to the John Brown Fort Company for display near the Chicago exposition. The exhibit opened with only 10 days left in the exposition. With only 10 paid admissions at 50 cents a piece, the company lost about $60,000 on this venture. The John Brown Fort Company deserted the structure.[1]

At the height of the Jim Crow era the John Brown Fort lay dismantled in Chicago and in 1895 The *Chicago Tribune* (1 April 1985) published the "Ignoble use of John Brown's Fort," stating that the fort was being moved so that it could become part of a department store stable for delivery wagons. Mary Katherine Keemle Field, active in social reform issues and concerned with the problems of post-Civil War African Americans, saw this as an opportunity to move the fort back to Harpers Ferry, to be close to Storer College, a school established in 1865-1867 primarily for the education of newly freed African Americans.[2]

Field's campaign contacted Alexander Murphy of Jefferson County, West Virginia, about setting aside five acres of his farm, Buena Vista, for the fort. The location was several miles from its original location and railroad line. Alexander Murphy (In Fairbairn 1961: appendix) convinced Kate Field that his farm would be a suitable place for the fort.

On July 23, 1895, Kate Field signed a contract with Alexander Murphy and his wife who deeded five acres of their farm for one dollar.[3]

Alexander Murphy played a major role in the construction of the fort on the five-acre parcel. In an interview with Alexander Murphy's daughter-in-law, Mrs. Will Murphy, she noted that Murphy had to drain a spring on the property in order to make a decent location for the building's construction. The building was to overlook the Shenandoah Valley. While all of the bricks from the fort were on the grounds, an additional 8,000 bricks were purchased in Charles Town. Many of these were probably used in the fort's reconstruction since the 8' deep foundation consisted of stone. If they were all used in the fort, as much as 3 1/2 to 4' of the fort consisted of newly purchased bricks from Charles Town.[4]

Photograph of a Storer College class adjacent to the John Brown Fort on the Storer College Campus, ca. 1930s (HF-1098).

Further expenses were incurred when a caretaker was hired to maintain the building and to receive visitors. The caretaker fended off souvenir hunters. Visitors sometimes climbed over fences and littered the fields and carriages trampled Murphy's crops. Kate Field had verbally agreed to reimburse Murphy for these expenses, although she died suddenly in 1896. Field had not left an estate to draw money necessary for the upkeep of the John Brown Fort.[5]

While the fort was a rallying point for federal troops during the war, and many middle class tourists visited the building through the Reconstruction Era, the structure's meaning transformed during the Jim Crow Era. While African American may have implicitly revered the John Brown Fort as a symbol of their abolitionist struggle, the structure became an explicit and prominent symbol among African Americans from this point. For instance, in July 1896, the first national convention of the National League of Colored Women met in Washington, DC, and took a day trip to the John Brown Fort at the Murphy Farm. This meeting, led by Mary Church Terrell, is the first known event of African Americans explicitly embracing the fort as a symbol of their struggle for freedom and equality

In August 1906, the Second Niagara Convention was held in Harpers Ferry and members visited the John Brown Fort on the Murphy farm. The organization was founded in Fort Ontario, Canada on July 11-13, 1905, with 54 members from 18 states.[6] Nearly 100 visitors came to Harpers Ferry for the second meeting of the Niagara Movement. While in town they celebrated John Brown's Day and came to the fort on August 17, 1906, to commemorate their hero. Many believed that Harpers Ferry was the symbolic starting point of the Civil War. The participants listened to a prayer led by Richard T. Greener. He remarked about his personal recollections of John Brown and told the crowd that when he served as consul at Vladivostok he heard Russian troops burst into song, "John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave".[7]

Max Barber (1906:408), one of the founders of the Niagara Movement, wrote about his experience at Harpers Ferry and the John Brown Fort:

> I have heard men speak of the peculiar sensation, the thrill which comes to one as he stands in the shadow of some mighty structure or on a spot where some great deed was wrought that perceptibly advanced the world. Men have journeyed to the other side of the world to drink a draught of air that played around a Calvary, Trafalgar, or a Runnymede, and they have felt well paid for their trouble. I too have known what it meant to mediate

at Valley Forge, Queenstown, and Gettysburg. But I must confess that I had never yet felt as I felt at Harpers Ferry.

Later that day at the conference DuBois read the *Niagara Address* to the delegation, a speech that was heard around the nation. Max Barber (1906:408) noted that the address "was profound and scholarly and claimed the intellectual admiration of the entire convention." DuBois' tone allowed others in the press to label him as a militant and agitator.

How many other visitors actually came to the fort is unclear from the historical documentation, but it does appear that the structure was accessible to the African-American community and it served as a place of homage for people who revered John Brown and the ideas of social reform. Classes from Storer College visited the fort while on the Murphy farm.

At the peak of Jim Crow and with the southern revisionist history in full force, blacks continued to use the fort as a symbol of their cause for social justice. In 1909, the College Trustees of Storer College voted to buy the John Brown Fort. Members of Storer College agreed to pay $900 which cleared Murphy's purchase price and court costs. Dismantled in 1910, the structure was rebuilt near Lincoln Hall on campus grounds

The fort remained at Storer College after it closed in 1955. In 1968, it was moved again, this time by the National Park Service. Unable to place the fort upon its original foundations, which are now under 14 feet of fill on railroad property, the National Park Service relocated the fort to the former Arsenal Yard that Brown had briefly captured over 100 years before.

The John Brown Fort is a monument that has physically changed through its 150 year existence. What has not changed significantly is how the fort has been embraced by a large portion of the African-American community. The John Brown Fort serves as one of the only few Civil War shrines/monuments claimed by African Americans. After the Civil War, the nation began constructing monuments, a testimony to moral reformation and the justification of the most violent epoch in American history. Vernacular monuments were placed throughout the American landscape with uncontroversial inscriptions. They do not mention slavery or African Americans, and they generally justify the war as "the cause" or "state sovereignty." The common soldier portrayed in these monuments is always understood to be white Anglo-Saxon.[8]

Among the thousands of Civil War monuments only three have African-American representation, even though blacks played a major role in the balance of power. Two monuments show a single black surrounded by other white soldiers, and the third is the Shaw memorial in Boston, a local white hero who led the first black troops, the 54th Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, into battle. This monument is more of a memorial to Shaw than to the troops. Shaw is elevated on horse back and African-American troops are marching beside him.[9] The introduction of African-American troops into the Civil War played an influential role in changing the tide of the war. Yet the lack of African-American representation among Civil War monuments is noticeable.[10] writes, "public monuments do not arise as if by natural law to celebrate the deserving; they are built by people with sufficient power to marshal (or impose) public consent for their erection."

There are few African-American memorials that relate to the moral struggles of the Civil War. The John Brown Fort is one such memorial that symbolizes the fight against inequality and it has been embraced by whites and blacks in varying degrees. The histories of John Brown have changed among whites along with the political climate of this country. But the John Brown Fort has always been revered by the black community. Recently, the 50th anniversary celebration of the West Virginia Chapter of the NAACP was held at the fort in 1994.

Today the fort stands in a monumental landscape. It is a bit smaller than its original size, and many new bricks were added when it was placed on Buena Vista, the Murphy farm. Plaques were also placed on the fort when it was rebuilt. The structure contains mementos that recognize the 1895 rebuilding sponsored by "Kate Field," the 1910 rebuilding on the Storer College Campus, and the stone placed on the fort's exterior wall by the college's alumni in 1918 to acknowledge the "heroism" of John Brown and his 21 men. Several times the fort and its meaning has almost vanished completely. But like the phoenix, it rose from obscurity through the help of many ordinary citizens, performing extraordinary feats to save and preserve this symbol of freedom.

Notes

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2 Charlotte J. Fairbairn, pp. 14, 31.
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[3] *Jefferson County Deed Book*, July 23,1895. On File at Jefferson County Court House, vol 91. pp. 473-474.

[4] Charlotte J. Fairbairn, Letter, Chambers to Field 4 November 1895, 1961. appendix.

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[6] Philip S. Foner, (Editor), *W.E.B. Dubois Speaks: Speeches and Addresses, 1890-1919*, New York: Pathfinder, 1970 pp. 144-149

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[8] Kirk Savage, "The Politics of Memory: Black Emancipation and the Civil War Monument." In *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, edited by John R. Gillis, pp. 127-149. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994 p. 135.

[9] Savage, p. 136.

[10] Ibid., p. 135.

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Spirit of Jefferson [Charles Town, West Virginia]

Paul Shackel is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Maryland at College Park. His recent book is Cultural Change and the New Technology *published by Plenum Press (1996). The book details the relationship between wok and labor in the early industrial era at Harpers Ferry. He was employed as an archeologist for NPS from 1989 to 1996.*

The Niagara Movement—Lessons Reviewed

On August 23-25, 1996, on the former Storer College campus in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, the past was remembered. During this commemoration of the 90th anniversary of the Niagara Movement's 1906 Conference at Harpers Ferry approximately 500 people attended events co-sponsored by Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, the Harpers Ferry Historical Association, Jefferson County Branch NAACP, West Virginia Homecoming '96, and Shepherd College and Community College.

Presentations by Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Chairman of the Department of Afro-American Studies at Harvard University, and Dr. David Levering Lewis, 1994 Pulitzer Prize winning author of *W.E.B. Du Bois—Biography of a Race*, brought forth the importance of the work started by the Niagara Movement on these grounds ninety years ago—work started then, but continuing today.

From left to right: Dr. David Levering Lewis, Dr. Du Bois Williams, and Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. at the 90th Anniversary of the Niagara Movements's 1906 Conference at Harpers Ferry, WV. Photo courtesy Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

"Niagara Remembered," a panel discussion moderated by Dr. Lawrence Hogan, Professor of African-American studies at Union County College, included Dr. Gates, Dr. Lewis, and special guest, Dr. Du Bois Williams, grand daughter of W.E.B. Du Bois.

Dr. Du Bois Williams reminded those in attendance that now is a time for commitment and action so that the work of our families before us will not have been in vain.

The 90th anniversary of the Niagara Movement at Harpers Ferry was indeed a time for all to look back and yet move forward with renewed spirit, conviction, and courage.

—Marsha Starkey
Harpers Ferry National Historical Park

Steven D. Smith

A Civil War Cemetery and African-American Heritage

Salvage archeology is almost synonymous with loss in Cultural Resource Management. Working just ahead of the bulldozers, archeologists are placed in a tense situation attempting to save the past from the present. Usually no one wins, the archeologist saves only a fraction of the site, the developer is put behind schedule, and the public looses yet another part of their heritage. This was the situation that the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology found itself in during May of 1987 when a private developer uncovered an unmarked cemetery of African-American Civil War soldiers on Folly Island, South Carolina. With no modern cemetery protection laws at that time, the site being located on private property, and no funds available for salvage, it looked like yet another example of America's heritage being lost to progress. But in the case of the Folly Island, the Institute took a chance and conducted salvage excavations without assurance of financial assistance or ultimate success, and over the years we believe that it has paid-off in largely a win-win result for everyone.

Folly Island was the staging area for the Federal siege of Charleston, South Carolina, during the Civil War. From April 1863 until February 1865, thousands of Union soldiers camped, built gun emplacements, and fought on Folly Island, transforming the six-mile-long, half-mile-wide sandbar from a quiet, forested, barrier island into a barren, treeless fortification. Among the soldiers who performed the hard, grueling siege work were a number of African-American units, the foremost being General Edward A. Wild's "African Brigade." This unit consisted of the 55th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry and 1st North Carolina Colored Infantry. The 55th Massachusetts was the sister regiment of the more famous 54th Massachusetts. The recruitment of northern free black men to form the 54th had been so successful in Massachusetts that officials decided to form a second regiment. The 55th mustered in at Readville, Massachusetts, in the spring of 1863. After training they were shipped to New Bern, North Carolina, and brigaded with the 1st North Carolina Colored Infantry. This unit was made up of culturally quite different men. They were slaves who had escaped through the Confederate lines or who had been "recruited" during Union raids into the North Carolina countryside. Together they were sent to Folly Island and were immediately ordered to perform the heavy labor of building forts and gun emplacements on Folly and Morris Islands. These units worked incessantly through the fall and winter of 1863. In February 1864, both units were shipped to Florida and participated in the Olustee Campaign, but afterwards the 55th returned to Folly Island to perform more fatigue and guard duties, and eventually fight during the long siege of Charleston. During those two years, many of these soldiers died of various camp related diseases like typhoid, fevers, consumption, and pneumonia, and were buried on the island. When the island was abandoned after the war, so were those who died.

There the soldiers rested until that spring day when a relic collector found the disturbed graves as the site was being cleared for development. He called the Institute. With the bulldozers rumbling in the background, the Principal Investigator met the Mayor of Folly Beach, South Carolina, and the developer on site. While public pressure may have eventually forced the developer to avoid or otherwise preserve the cemetery, at the time there was no legal means by which to stop the site clearing from continuing, and continuing it was. The time to act was now. In a tense meeting in which no one was sure of the future or each other, a private, public, and research partnership was formed with a simple handshake. The developer agreed to a construction delay to allow the Institute to salvage the graves for study and with the promise that the soldiers would be reburied. For two weeks the Institute worked to recover 14 burials. Later, another four were recovered by another archeological group, bringing the total to 18 burials, plus miscellaneous bone which could not be assigned to a particular burial. Eventually in May 1989, two years after the excavations, the soldiers were reburied in a Memorial Day ceremony at Beaufort National Cemetery, Beaufort South Carolina, that brought together hundreds of people and made national news.

But it wasn't nearly that easy. During the two years in which the Institute worked on this project, nothing seemed to go right. The developer, having moved from site clearing to the construction phase of the project, applied for permits and the SHPO correctly required additional survey of the property. More sites were found which were potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and a legally-binding Memorandum of Agreement was signed for data recovery. The SCIAA began data recovery but these excavations only proved that the site was one vast campground of many regiments spread over the entire project area. As the SHPO, the

developer, and SCIAA grappled with this problem, the project became mired in controversy.

Restless preservationists who thought that nothing was being done let their feelings be known in the press. A relic collector saw the opportunity and chastised the archeological community, stating that collectors do a better job of preserving sites by collecting it. At one point the data recovery was close to being stopped when, during a site visit, representatives from the SHPO and the developer were set upon by an angry dissenter.

The cordial partnership was close to unraveling. But the developer again allowed additional time for more work beyond that prescribed by the MOA. Funds were promised by the state of South Carolina and SCIAA began this additional work. Then right at the end of fieldwork, the decision to fund the project was reversed. SCIAA was now left with an unfunded, unfinished project and a promise to rebury the soldiers. But feeling an obligation to keep going, SCIAA absorbed the loss, completed its analysis, wrote a report, and contacted officials in Beaufort, South Carolina to arrange reburial at the National Cemetery there.

Sometimes the fruit of such exertions are only seen after some time has passed, and in reexamining the effort from the perspective of 1996, we now feel much good came out of the project either directly or indirectly. First, archeologists were able to learn much about the lives of African-American soldiers on Folly Island and in the Civil War, despite the fact that conditions and time worked against them. Government agencies within South Carolina whose job it is to preserve cultural resources became aware of the vast Civil War resources on the island and surrounding the city of Charleston. Such awareness led to additional salvage work at another Civil War site by The Charleston Museum when Hurricane Hugo hit the island. Awareness of the problems of protecting burials led the Institute to work with the state legislature to modify the state's Abandoned Cemetery law. Broadening the terms defining a cemetery has helped protect all buried human remains. The effort to find funding for the excavations, while ultimately unsuccessful, forged a partnership between a conservative white senator and a liberal black senator who worked together for a common cause.

But the big winner was the public, especially South Carolina's African Americans. While it cannot be said that no one in South Carolina knew about African-Americans' contribution to fighting the Civil War before Folly Island, it can be said that Folly Island excavations and reburial ceremony brought a greater awareness of this contribution to many residents. Through countless public presentations to historical, community, and educational groups still being presented today, South Carolinians are being reminded of this heritage. Through popular publications, South Carolina's African-American community is reading about their ancestor's contribution to winning the Civil War. The reburial ceremonies in 1989 folded into an important traditional African-American holiday in Beaufort, in which local church and civic organizations, both black and white, pulled together to bring off a successful remembrance. Included also were a large contingent of white and blacks from urban Boston, Massachusetts who worked with rural whites and blacks from South Carolina. At the cemetery today, a plaque honors the men of the 55th Massachusetts and 1st North Carolina, serving as a constant reminder of their contribution to visitors and tourists.

Today in Charleston, South Carolina there is a preservation group working hard to preserve the Civil War battlegrounds around the city. At one of Charleston's Civil War battlegrounds on James Island, an earthwork has been purchased and set aside for preservation. There is an African-American Civil War re-enactment group now active in the community. The Charleston Museum is working on an exhibit of Civil War archeology combining their work with the Institute's which will bring additional awareness. Of course, the Folly Island excavations cannot take credit for all these developments. But at the same time, the project was the first large-scale, well publicized, archeological effort to salvage a piece of Charleston's Civil War past. Certainly as a result of the Folly Island excavations more people in South Carolina today know that archeological remains of African-American heritage lie at their feet. In that sense, we who worked on the project would like to think that our work somehow assisted in affecting these positive developments and helped in bringing about the current state of the public's awareness of African-American heritage.

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Gerard T. Altoff

African-American History at War of 1812 Sites

BRITISH WARFARE IN 1812, 1837-38.

Pick up a history book. More precisely, open a school text book on American history and turn to the War of 1812 section. Should you be fortunate to find such a section, recounted will be brief accounts of battles at Fort McHenry, New Orleans, and Lake Erie. Conveniently forgotten in American texts is the fact that the United States lost most of the battles and did not clearly win the war. This lack of knowledge makes the War of 1812 not only one of the least known, but also one of the least understood conflicts in American history. Paralleling this lack of knowledge is the little known role of African Americans in the War of 1812.

African-American men freely volunteered during the war, but their services were not readily accepted. Prior to the war, the United States maintained a standing army of fewer than 7,000 men. Such being the case, the country was dependent upon the various state militias to cope with military emergencies. The Federal Militia Act of 7 May 1792 stipulated that every "free able-bodied white male citizen...who is or shall be of the age of eighteen years, and under the age of forty-five years...shall be enrolled in the Militia..."[1] Service by black Americans was not specified, so each state adapted its own interpretation. Many black volunteers served in state militias before the war, but their role was largely relegated to that of servants or laborers. However, the lack of military success in 1812 and 1813 soon changed perspectives. By 1814, northern states like Pennsylvania and New York were recruiting entire regiments of black troops, and even some southern states like Louisiana and North Carolina were mustering black soldiers.

Black enlistment in the U.S. Army was banned by law prior to and during the first year of the war, and the U.S. Navy likewise issued directives against enrolling black sailors. Despite the ban, many naval recruiters ignored the prohibition. The social fabric of life at sea evolved differently from that on land. Seafaring was "a partly separate subculture with its own mores and traditions" which "could offer minority men opportunities not available in the mainstream."[2] Obtaining crewmen was ultimately the commanding officer's responsibility, and the availability of skilled seamen was more important than skin color. Black sailors served in the Quasi-War with France and the Tripolitan Wars against the Barbary pirates, and throughout the War of 1812, black seamen comprised between 15 and 20% of all enlisted men on all ships and all stations in the United States Navy.[3]

Both the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Army were integrated during the War of 1812. On 3 March 1813 Congress passed an act officially opening the naval ranks to "...citizens of the United States or persons of color, natives of the U. States..."[4] The U.S. Army followed suit shortly thereafter. By no means can it be stipulated that equality or lack of prejudice existed since both slavery and racism were endemic in the U.S. Nevertheless, by 1814 black soldiers and sailors fought and died side by side in line of battle and on warship gundecks. Moreover, in official records and documentation, black soldiers and sailors were treated exactly the same as their white counterparts.

And therein lies the interpretive challenge. Attempting to identify those brave black soldiers and sailors, or ascertaining the roles they played in specific engagements, has proven extremely difficult. Unlike the American Civil War period, for which official and unofficial documentation abounds, few such resources are available for the War of 1812. The problem is no less formidable north of the U.S. border. Large numbers of black sailors and soldiers fought with the British Navy, the British Army, and the Canadian Militia. Embroiled in a cataclysmic struggle against the Napoleonic Europe and desperately short of sailors, British ship captains appeared to harbor no concern for skin color. The British Army, akin the U.S. Army, was greatly affected by 19th-century racial attitudes; many black Canadians served with British regiments, and while some black regulars were assimilated into infantry companies, for the most part they served as pioneers, musicians, and servants. Canadian Militia regiments also enlisted black soldiers. Still, the racial climate in the Canadian Militia was no different from that in the British Army. Unique among Canadian militia organizations was an outfit designated in unit

returns as the Colored Corps, sometimes referred to as Captain Runchey's Company of Colored Men.

While in-depth research is lacking on both sides of the border, Canadian War of 1812 parks appear to be pursuing black history interpretation with slightly greater vigor than U.S. sites. Fort York in Toronto, managed by the Toronto Historical Board, is making considerable interpretive progress.

In 1993, the board approached the Ontario Black History Society in an effort to incorporate African-Canadian history into the Fort York interpretive story. Developed as a result of this partnership was an exhibit entitled "African Canadians in the Defence of Canada." The exhibit and accompanying slide presentation have been widely displayed. Similarly, the experiences of black soldiers have been detailed in several workshops conducted by Fort York. Historian Wayne Kelly disclosed that Fort York interpretation generally focuses upon the settlement of black Loyalists in Canada, the limitation of slavery in 1793, the contributions of African Canadians to the defense of the province, and the impact of the war upon the black population.

The Niagara River Region of Ontario encompasses several sites, plus historical plaques and markers, which interpret the role of black Canadians in the War of 1812. Fort George, a Parks Canada site situated at the northern end of the Niagara River, formulated a plan to actively present a more equitable history of the war. As explained by Superintendent Ron Dale, the interpretive emphasis at Fort George has tended to be Eurocentric, a story about "dead white guys." Personal presentations at Fort George have recently offered a more balanced story, and some interpretation about Runchey's Colored Corps has been incorporated into A/V productions, exhibits, and historical plaques. Fort George has also established an alliance with local black history groups in order to develop relative themes throughout the Niagara Region.

Fort Erie, located at the southern end of the Niagara River, is managed by the Niagara Parks Commission. By the late summer of 1814, when the seven-week siege of Fort Erie occurred, black soldiers dotted the ranks of both armies, a fact that has become a regular feature of Fort Erie's interpretive programs. Site supervisor Jim Hill related that Fort Erie will be expanding its exhibits, and currently under development is an exhibit relating to the black Canadian experience. Fort Erie has also become the site of a popular annual re-enactment. Like the armies themselves in 1814, the ranks of Canadian and American re-enactment units are becoming sprinkled with black soldiers.

In addition to established sites, a number of historical plaques pepper the Niagara region. By the Isaac Brock monument, site of the battle of Queenston Heights near Queenston, Ontario, a Provincial plaque extols the formation of Runchey's Colored Company and heralds its accomplishments. The Colored Corps was the vision of Samuel Pierrepoint, a Canadian veteran of the American Revolution. A plaque denoting Pierrepoint's contribution is located in St. Catherine's, Ontario. Robert Runchey was the first commander of the Colored Corps, and the remains of Runchey's Tavern in Jordan, Ontario are also marked by a Provincial plaque.

As with some Canadian parks, several sites south of the border are also making progress. Recent research at Fort McHenry in Baltimore has revealed considerable participation by black soldiers, sailors, and civilians, free men and slaves, in the various Chesapeake campaigns. Personal programs increasingly communicate the story of African Americans to Fort McHenry visitors, and both general and specific handouts are available. Additionally, Fort McHenry historian Scott Sheads has published a number of articles and papers pertaining to African-American involvement in the Chesapeake theater of operations.

The USS *Constitution* Museum in Boston, while lacking details about individuals, is well aware that 15 to 20% of all U.S. sailors in the War of 1812 were African Americans, thus they have initiated special programs to convey their black history theme. Berthed in Erie, Pennsylvania is the U.S. Brig *Niagara*. The *Niagara* is administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, which on September 10, 1996, dedicated a historical marker in Erie commemorating the African-American seamen who served with the Lake Erie squadron.

Perry's Victory & International Peace Memorial, on South Bass Island, Ohio, embraces the same themes as the U.S. Brig *Niagara*. A handout pertaining to black sailors is available, and the role of black seamen is discussed in personal programs at every opportunity. Park staff have also presented papers recounting the role of African Americans in the War of 1812 at three history symposiums, and specific off-site programs are in the offing. Most significant is the 1996 publication of *Amongst My Best Men: African Americans and the War of 1812*. Published by the Friends of Perry's Victory & IPM, this 200-page book is the first comprehensive work to chronicle the subject.

Without doubt the best documented episodes of African-American involvement in the

war are found during the New Orleans campaign. On the British side both the 1st and 5th West India Regiments were engaged, while American forces included two battalions of Free Men of Color, three independent companies, and numerous individuals intermingled with other Louisiana Militia units. African-American sailors fought for both sides in the naval engagement on Lake Borgne, and black soldiers and sailors battled in each of the other five distinct engagements of the campaign.

Slaves and free men alike helped construct fortifications around New Orleans—as they did at cities all along the east coast. Chalmette National Historical Park interprets their black history theme in a variety of ways. A handout is also currently being produced, and an exhibit illustrating the different fighting units depicts three black soldiers: two British and one American. Without doubt, Chalmette's best asset is the five active volunteers who portray Free Men of Color soldiers in living history demonstrations.

Overall, great strides are being made at War of 1812 sites toward interpreting the role of African Americans in the war. Yet each and every individual surveyed agreed that much has yet to be accomplished; most pressing is the need for more research. It is incumbent upon those sites to enlighten the public about this forgotten war, and in the process, present a balanced story of the soldiers, sailors, and civilians whose lives were affected.

Notes

1 Quoted in Jesse J. Johnson (ed.), *The Black Soldier Documented (1619-1815), Missing Pages In United States History* (Hampton, Virginia: Jesse J. Johnson, 1970), 64.

2 W. Jeffrey Bolster, "'To Feel Like a Man': Black Seamen in the Northern States, 1800-1860," in the *Journal of American History*, Volume 76, Number 4, March 1990, 1174.

3 Christopher McKee, *A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession, The Creation of the U.S. Naval Officer Corps, 1794-1815* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 219.

4 *Baltimore Federal Gazette & Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 15 March 1813.

Gerard T. Altoff is currently the National Park Service Chief Ranger and historian at Perry's Victory & International Peace Memorial. He frequently presents programs on the Battle of Lake and The War of 1812 to clubs, organizations, and schools. His most recent published work is Amongst My Best Men: African Americans and the War of 1812, *Ohio: The Perry Group, 1996.*

Joseph P. Reidy

The African-American Sailors' Project
The Hidden History of the Civil War

Anonymous sailor on the USS North Carolina. *Photo courtesy US Army Military History Institute, Carlisle, PA.*

The Civil War shows no signs of relinquishing its place as the most dynamic topic in United States history. Historians keep finding new topics to investigate, even as the general public displays broad interest in all facets of the conflict. To be sure, genealogy has played a large part in the war's popularity. More than 3 million European Americans fought on both sides of the contest, and some 200,000 African Americans served in the Union's armed forces. Incalculable numbers of present-day American citizens descend from Civil War veterans.

Four years ago, Howard University, the Department of the Navy, and the National Park Service formed a partnership to investigate the experience of American sailors in the Civil War Navy. The Department of Defense Legacy Cultural Resources Program has served as the primary source of financial support. Despite the vast knowledge of Civil War armies, comparatively little is known about the navies, and next to nothing about the lives of ordinary sailors. Few know that black men may have constituted as much as 25% of the Navy's enlisted force and that on some ships they represented 75% or more of the crewmen. Fewer still appreciate that a number of black women were enlisted—mostly as nurses—and that eight black sailors won medals of honor for their heroism. The natural starting point of the research involved identifying by name every African-American sailor who served in the Civil War. Such an enumeration would help resolve the mystery surrounding the number of African-American sailors who served (low-range estimates hover around 10,000 men while high-end estimates

assume 30,000 of the estimated 118,000 enlistees were black men). It would also provide a point of entry into naval records for the Civil War Soldiers' and Sailors' that will eventually included information about every person who fought in the Civil War.

This process of identification has proven remarkably challenging. Unlike the Union Army, which created a Bureau of Colored Troops to administer affairs concerning the approximately 179,000 soldiers who served in the racially segregated black regiments, the Navy neither segregated African-American sailors nor created a separate administrative bureau. Personnel records indicating such physical characteristics as color of hair, eyes, and skin offer a point of entry. Although such terms as "Negro," "Colored," and "Mulatto" seem straightforward, other descriptions are far more ambiguous. Men who were professional mariners frequently were described as "black" complected regardless of their ethnicity or nativity. By the same token, light-skinned African Americans at times appear in the records as "dark."

However subjective, these physical descriptions are the necessary starting point for investigating the African-American naval experience in the Civil War.

In an attempt to overcome the biases in the sources, the research team (consisting of advance students in the graduate history program at Howard University led by the author) undertook to enter into a computerized database the name and all descriptive information of every man whose physical description connoted African ancestry. Researchers examined surviving enlistment records—the weekly returns of enlistments at recruitment depots—as well as the surviving quarterly muster rolls of the 600-plus vessels in the Union fleet. At present, the database contains some 100,000 individual records representing approximately 19,000 men.

The database, like the personnel records from which it was constructed, holds great interest to historians of the Civil War and of the U.S. Navy as well as to genealogists and descendants. Preliminary analysis of the data reveals a number of fascinating trends, as the demographic profile of the men illustrates. Most enlistees were young men, particularly in their twenties. A majority was born in the southern United States, and of that group perhaps four-fifths escaped from slavery prior to enlisting. African-American enlistees from the free states of the North came from far and wide, although the majority hailed from the seaboard states of the north-Atlantic coast. A good number had had prior seafaring experience—for perhaps 10% this included a stint in the U.S. Navy prior to the war. Men of African ancestry from offshore points also served in the U.S. Navy during the Civil War. Although most of these men came from the West Indies, others came from Africa and Europe and from the islands of the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans. Once enlisted, the men

African-American History in the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors (CWSS) Partnership

On September 10, NPS Director Roger Kennedy held a press conference to announce that NPS had completed the first phase of the CWSS Names Index project by putting over 235,000 African-American Civil War soldiers' names on the Internet. The Internet site <http://www.nps.itd.gov/cwss> includes regimental histories of 180 African-American Union regiments, with hyperlinks between soldiers' names, regiments they served in, and the battles the regiments fought in.

On September 12, at an event with General Colin Powell as the featured speaker, former NPS Field Area Director Robert Stanton presented a computer file of these name records to D.C. Councilmember Frank Smith for use on the African-American Civil War Memorial, which, when completed, will be in the National Park System as part of the National Capital Field Area.

For more information, contact the NPS Project Manager, John Peterson, at 202-343-4415 or NPS cc:Mail or John Peterson@nps.gov

—John Peterson

Photo © Milton Williams.

were rated and paid according to their skill and experience.

Over the course of the war, the numbers of African-American sailors increased, and so, correspondingly, did their percentage on board naval vessels. Whereas in 1861 they may have constituted at best 5% of any given vessel's crew, by the closing months of the war the average figure was closer to 25%, and on some ships it was more than 50%. Ironically, informal segregation helps account for the large proportions of African-American crewmen on certain vessels. Black men accounted for disproportionately large numbers of the crewmen on board storeships and supply ships. These men tended to occupy the low-paid, low-prestige enlisted ratings. This pattern of informal segregation also extended to sailing craft generally, but often with unforeseen results. On 1 April 1865, for instance, the complement of the mortar schooner *Adolph Hugel* numbered 48 men, 46 were rated as landsmen (or raw recruits), there were 3 seamen, 3 cooks and 1 steward.

Most significantly, black men held four prestigious petty-officer ratings: boatswain's mate, captain of the hold, master at arms, and quartermaster. As this case suggests, vessels where de facto segregation prevailed also offered opportunities for advancement.

Unlike their counterparts in the army, black sailors stood no chance of gaining commissioned office during the Civil War. The Navy did not commission African-American officers until World War II. Moreover, not a single warrant officer of the Civil War era appears to have been African American, despite the fact that any number of men had the requisite skills and experience. Most African-American sailors occupied the lowest enlisted ratings, and of those who were rated petty officers, most were cooks and stewards.

In seeking to move beyond a mere demographic understanding of the black naval experience, the research team has begun exploring the pension records to the veterans and their eligible survivors. Only three diaries of black sailors are known to have survived, and, though illuminating, these documents provide but a small glimpse into the bigger picture. As researchers have been delighted to discover, the depositions, letters, medical reports, and other documents in the pension files offer a panoramic perspective on the men's and their families' lives before, during and after the war.

In 1862, Congress authorized pensions for men who suffered debilitating wounds while in service. In 1890, eligibility was expanded to included any affliction that interfered with a man's ability to support himself and his family by manual labor.

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Lifesavers' Courage and Duty Went Hand-in-Hand

On the night of October 11, 1896, nine people aboard the schooner *E.S. Newman* learned first-hand about courage and dedication to duty. With their ship forced into the raging breakers by a fierce storm, they clung to life on its battered remnants with little hope of rescue. Yet they lived to tell about one of the great stories in the annals of local lifesaving.

Fate brought the *E.S. Newman* ashore just two miles south of the Pea Island Lifesaving Station. Though recognized as the only all-black crew in the U.S. Lifesaving Service, the lifesavers at Pea Island also had a well-deserved reputation for excellence under their veteran Keeper, Richard Etheridge. Their response upon sighting the distress signal from the *E.S. Newman* was immediate.

Keeper Etheridge later noted in his log that "the voice of gladden[ed] hearts greeted the arrival of the station crew" at the site of the wreck. He quickly realized, however, that he would have to improvise the rescue. Though the ship lay just 30 yards offshore, the flooded condition of the beach prevented the use of standard lifesaving procedures. He decided to forego the familiar equipment and practiced methods, relying instead on his crew's bravery and endurance. Securing a heavy line to two of his men, he instructed them to head out to the wreck and return with someone if they could. Plunging into the thundering surf, they fought their way out toward what was left of the schooner. Though holding tightly to the line, the men on the beach could do little else but wait. Then, emerging from the storm-tossed night, came the two lifesavers...bearing with them a crewman from the *E.S. Newman*! Places were quickly exchanged, and two more men went out into the huge waves. They, too, returned successful. Ultimately, all nine people were saved from the wrath of the storm, including the captain's wife and three-year-old son. The men of the U.S. Lifesaving Service had merely done their duty once again.

Wayside exhibits now mark the site of the Pea Island Lifesaving Station and this famous rescue. You may view them in the Pea Island Wildlife Refuge Headquarters parking area.

—Chris Eckard
Ranger Historian

Antoinette J. Lee

Magnificent Achievements
The M Street High School

View of auditorium, M Street High School, 1986 (Perry School). Photo courtesy Sumner School Museum and Archives.

In his prize-winning biography of author and civil rights leader W. E. B. Du Bois, historian David Levering Lewis described his subject's efforts to secure the prestigious position of assistant superintendent of the District of Columbia Public Schools for the "colored" schools of the nation's capital city during the first decade of this century. Although Du Bois was unsuccessful in this quest, and in any case would have chafed under the weight of bureaucratic demands, he maintained close contacts with many who administered and taught at the city's public schools that served African-American students. The jewel in the crown of the "colored" schools in Washington, DC was, as Lewis described it, "the famous M Street High School" known throughout the city and the nation.[1]

In the winter of 1902-03, Du Bois spoke at the M Street High School.[2] For the audience, the school was a most appropriate setting for Du Bois's advocacy of academic training for African-American youth. M Street High School boasted an outstanding faculty that had been educated at the nation's leading colleges and universities in the North and the Midwest. After graduation, an unusually large percentage of its students went on to attend similarly rigorous institutions of higher learning and many later pursued illustrious professional careers. M Street High School defied the stereotype of the typical black high school under a segregated system. As one of its graduates and later professor of history at Morgan State University, Harry S. Robinson, stated, the M Street High School "provided excellent educational opportunities for its black youth."[3]

Few other public school buildings so fully exemplify both the achievements and the limitations of the segregated public schools in the nation's capital city.

The M Street High School is located on a site overlooking the busy thoroughfare of New York Avenue, just a few blocks west of North Capitol Street at 128 M Street, NW. Constructed 1890-91, the three-story brick building housed high school classes for African-American students under the dual system of public education that prevailed in the city until 1954. Its function as a high school lasted only a quarter of a century. It became overcrowded and its facilities proved inadequate to the demands of a rising enrollment. In 1916, a new high school for black students, named Dunbar High School, was completed a few blocks to the north where a cluster of black schools developed. Thereafter, the old M Street High School building was renamed the Perry School, in honor of educator Leon L. Perry. As Perry School, the building served as a junior high school for black students and then an elementary school. Today it is abandoned, but not forgotten by many long-time area residents.

The high school for African-American students opened its doors in 1870, when Congress defeated a bill sponsored by Senator Charles Sumner for an integrated school system for the nation's capital city. While reaffirming the principle of a dual system of education for the nation's capital, Congress promised equal standards and proportional representation on the governing body over the school system. Shortly thereafter, goaded by friends of those who were recently freed from slavery, Congress established the Preparatory High School for Negro Youth. High school classes for black students were located in a number of existing school buildings, including the Charles Sumner School at 17th and M Streets, NW, between 1872 and 1877.

A large brick structure generally in the Romanesque Revival style, the building was designed by the Office of the Building Inspector, the central municipal design and construction

M Street High School, 1986 (Perry School). Photo courtesy Sumner School Museum and Archives.

agency, to house 450 students. The Engineer Commissioner supervised this office, among others, during a time when the city was governed by three appointed commissioners. The three-story brick building provided a number of special rooms appropriate to the offerings of the high school. They included a "drill room" in the basement, scientific laboratories, and a number of study halls at the rear of the building. A large assembly hall was situated in the front portion of the third floor, which provided a stage and rows of opera chairs. At the time of its completion, the M Street High School building was "the first colored high school ever constructed from public funds. Other houses have been put up from private subscription, but this building was built from an appropriation made for that purpose...."[4]

Within the walls of the school, the curriculum included college preparatory, business, and vocational classes. Educator Booker T. Washington espoused manual training and vocational education for the black population, a view that ran contrary to that of Du Bois, who saw such training as an attempt to restrict educational and thus future professional opportunities for black students. During the period 1901-1906, the principal of M Street High School, Anna Cooper, resisted efforts to include vocational training. Her invitation to Du Bois to speak at M Street High School bolstered her efforts. With the construction in 1902 of Armstrong Manual Training School, located in the cluster of black schools a few blocks to the north of M Street High School, the college preparatory goals of the latter school were more easily reaffirmed.

Credentials of the M Street High School faculty were formidable. Because the school system's providing equal and relatively high salaries for all teachers regardless of gender or race, the nations best black educators were attracted These teachers faced limited professional opportunities elsewhere. The M Street High School faculty was arguably superior to the white public schools, whose teachers usually were graduates of normal schools and teachers' colleges. With the school's emphasis on the classics, the M Street High School and its successor Dunbar High School were viewed as the equivalent of the public Boston Latin School or other exclusive prep schools. In fact, graduate and historian Rayford W. Logan declared the M Street High School to be "one of the best high schools in the nation, colored or white, public or private." [5]

Eclipsed by Dunbar High School, M Street High School's reputation declined. Dunbar served as the academic high school for black students from 1916 to 1954, when the segregated system formally was abolished. Its graduates made their mark upon the city and the nation. After 1954, Dunbar High School served all high school students within its district. The elegant Collegiate Gothic building that housed Dunbar was demolished in 1977 to make way for modern sports facilities attached to a larger new Dunbar High School. It is ironic that the M Street High School building survives to this day, albeit in deteriorated condition, while its better known successor succumbed to the wrecking ball.

Over the years, a number of new uses have been proposed for the M Street High School building, a testimony to its significance in the eyes of the community. Most recently, an advocate for a community health center proposed that the building be used to house this facility. A recently-appointed commission to study and make recommendations about the revitalization of New York Avenue may also suggest ways in which significant historic properties along the thoroughfare, including M Street High School, might be reused. However, while M Street High School was situated in the midst of strong community ties at the beginning of the 20th century, its surroundings today are similar to those of other central cities that suffer from disinvestment and abandonment.

As the public and private sectors debate the future of central cities, the importance of older and historic school buildings should not be overlooked. They are great assets to their communities because of their architectural and historical significance. They often are of architectural distinction and were built for the ages. Many individuals define themselves according to the schools they attended and maintain strong emotional ties to the buildings that house these memories.

The history of the M Street High School enriches the story about African-American education, segregation, the strivings of the African-

Dunbar High School. Photo courtesy Sumner School Museum and Archives.

American middle class and the history of Washington D.C. It is a part of the national historical themes of public education for African Americans and other minority groups. The school offered a top-rated classical education for students under a system of racial segregation, even though the physical facilities were inferior to those for white students in the city. Within a radius of several city blocks, the cluster of historically-related elementary, vocational, and high schools represent the range of educational facilities available to African-American students under the segregated public school system. The interpretive possibilities of M Street High School and its related institutions are extraordinarily rich.

Despite the inequities of the segregated system, M Street High School offered an enviable curriculum that was known throughout the nation. For academically-inclined black students, the school had no peer. Its graduates left a legacy of "magnificent academic achievements." [6] Today, the lessons provided M Street High School are still vital. The building can continue to instruct and inspire the public, as policy makers and community leaders seek to upgrade public education and offer outstanding educational opportunities for all students.

Notes

1. David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of A Race* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993), p. 249.
2. Henry S. Robinson, "The M Street High School, 1891-1916," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, Vol. 51, 1984, p. 123.
3. *Ibid*, p. 119.
4. "Colored High School, Contractor McCartney Completes His Work Within the Specified Time," *Washington Post*, September 11, 1891, p. 2.
5. Rayford W. Logan, "Growing Up in Washington: A Lucky Generation," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, Vol. 50, 1980, p.503.
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The African-American Discovery Trail

A Boy Scout Project in Washington, DC

The African-American Discovery Trail is a hiking trail entirely within the District of Columbia. Totaling about 17 miles, it passes 31 sites significant to African-American history in Washington—houses of well-known persons, churches, schools, parks and statues, cemeteries, and national monuments.

Just as interesting are the neighborhoods to walk through—Georgetown, still looking much as it did in the early 19th century; Anacostia, with its historic Uniontown district ("no coloreds or Italians" was the original covenant in the 1870s); Capital Hill; downtown Washington; LeDroit Park, home to many well-to-do African Americans at the turn of the century; and especially U Street, the "Black Broadway" of Washington in the 1920s and '30s. Although the trail commemorates African-American history, it is not confined to African-American figures, but includes a number of white friends who supported the life of the black community in Washington and the nation as well.

The history of the trail itself is interesting. Boy Scout Troop 98 has met regularly in northeast Washington, DC, for over 50 years, and maintains one of the most active camping schedules in the area. The troop numbers about 15 scouts and has long been racially mixed. Every year the troop takes a hike of at least 20 miles, using various historical trails established throughout Washington.

Scouts walking the African-American Discovery Trail. Photo courtesy Boy Scout Troop 98.

In 1988, the troop learned that the National Park Service had just adopted the Black History National Recreation Trail originally proposed by an earlier scout, Andre Hutt, as his Eagle Scout project in a different troop; and it decided to be the first troop actually to hike the trail. In visiting the sites, we realized that we were passing many other interesting places; and we drew up a longer trail as a troop project. Seven years and several hikes later, the National Park Service, working with the Parks and History Association and the Humanities Council of Washington, DC, have made this trail a reality.

—Hayden M. Wetzel, Troop 98 BSA

Rachel Franklin Weekly

From Segregation to Preservation
Monroe Elementary School

Cultural resources provide the backdrop to otherwise intangible deeds by linking them to their human agents and placing them within the contexts of time and space. The medium can be the message, convey it, or do both. Monroe Elementary Schoo in Topeka, Kansas, joins a growing number of cultural resources significant for their association with the civil rights movement of the 20th century. This field traditionally has been underrepresented in the system, but in recent years, the National Park Service (NPS) has placed greater emphasis on its contribution to the historical record. It constitutes only one category of historic resources affiliated with the legacy of African Americans in the United States, but an extremely important one. The potential value of these resources can only be realized if they are protected and interpreted. This does not mean that they must be under public ownership. Extant cultural resources associated with the school desegregation campaign and the broader civil rights movement are safeguarded by the NPS, state historic preservation offices, local governments, private groups, and individuals who want to share the momentous accomplishments which the resources represent.

The record of events leading to Monroe's preservation provides a model for the protection of related resources. This venerable building has had three lives: first, as an elementary school for African-American children; secondly, as a warehouse and storage facility; and thirdly, as a unit in the National Park System. Monroe Elementary, now comprising the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site, bears distinction as a National Historic Landmark (NHL) for its association with the 1954 landmark school desegregation case and connection to the broader civil rights movement of the 20th-century. It provided crucial evidence for the Kansas case and became most famous for association with lead plaintiffs, Oliver and Linda Brown. Although no longer a public school, Monroe stands as a monument to honor those who labored for racial equity and to educate all Americans about the importance of their work.

Ten-year-old Linda Brown sitting in front row of her fourth-grade classroom of segregated Monroe School inn Topeka, Kansas, March 1953. Photo by Carl Iwasake courtesy Time-Life.

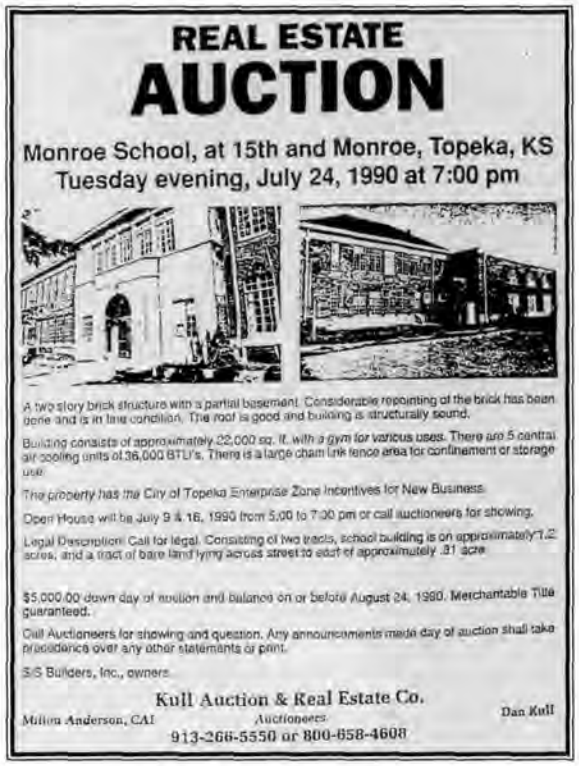
Built as one of Topeka's four segregated black elementary schools, Monroe served its community well. It functioned as an educational facility and community center for a broad segment of Topeka's African-American population from 1927 to 1975. Thomas Williamson's classical Italian Renaissance design provided a wonderful setting for both purposes. While its architectural components and styling are a bit understated when compared to schools built during the same period for white students, it was touted upon completion as one of Topeka's "million dollar schools." Through this period, its constituency was segregated, first by law and then by custom. The African-American community, however, formed loyal ties to Monroe School and took great pride in the skill and dedication of its faculty, many of whom possessed Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees. Teachers offered core curricula in nine classrooms, in addition to kindergarten, manual arts training, and instruction in home economics. Alumnus Joe Douglas recalls, "The teachers here exuded love and trust, which was inductive to learning. The idea that separate is inherently unequal is correct, but here, there was a very strong substitute for what we didn't have."[1] They engendered a strong sense of community with the residents who lived near the school and among Monroe alumni, which, in turn, led to deep loyalty for this institution. The facility's dual auditorium/gymnasium housed a wide array of segregated extracurricular activities for high school students and community events, as well.[2]

Although famous for association with Linda Brown and the issue of school desegregation, Monroe Elementary School represented much more to its constituents. It stood as an institution of learning which fostered successful accomplishment in spite of the social stigma of exclusion and racial separation. Perhaps this explains some of the disappointment felt when Monroe's existence was challenged, first by desegregation, itself, and second, by declining enrollments. Rather than integrate black elementary schools, the board of education built new facilities and transferred African-American children to former white schools. As a result, Monroe's student population remained predominantly African American and slowly declined until 1975, when the school board closed the facility.[3]

For Monroe, the 20-year anniversary of *Brown II* marked the end of its days as a grade school. Administrators used the facility as a warehouse for the next five years, 1975 through 1980. Maintenance staff with USD-501 transformed Monroe's playgrounds into parking lots for buses and maintenance vehicles. The school board sold the property in 1980 to Richard C. Appelhans. By this time, city managers had rezoned the area for light industrial/commercial use, which significantly changed the character of the surrounding neighborhood. Commercial warehouses, businesses, and parking lots replaced residential housing through the next decade.[4] Appelhans' plans for the building fell through, so two years later, he and business partner, Richard L. Plush, Jr., sold the property to the Church of the Nazarene. From 1982 to 1988, the building functioned as an inner-city church, which served religious and humanitarian needs of the community. Apparently disappointed with the limited impact of their work, the Church of the Nazarene sold the property in 1988 to S/S Builders, Inc., owned by Mark A. Steuve. Monroe again became a warehouse for construction materials and equipment. As others had found, Monroe required relatively high maintenance costs and did not accommodate the needs of the construction firm, so in 1990, S/S Builders offered the property for sale at public auction.[5]

By doing so, Steuve put the historic school in a very vulnerable position. Public sale raised the real possibility of demolition because the building had proven to be unsuitable for its most recent owners and the surrounding neighborhood increasingly had gained an industrial character. For the first time, it seems, people began to publicly recognize the building's historical significance, structural integrity, and design. From 1975 to 1990, Monroe's role in the *Brown v. Board of Education* desegregation suit received little, if any, attention. When the property was threatened with potential demolition, however, Brown family members, Monroe alumni, and others rallied to save the building. The cause drew upon their appreciation for the quality education received in the segregated elementary school and its significance to the reversal of discriminatory policies across the United States. Concerted action to underscore the importance of these intangibles would launch the third phase of Monroe's existence, that as a national historic site.

Jerry Jones, a Brown Foundation board member, first called attention to the "For Sale" sign posted on the fence at Monroe Elementary in June 1990. It announced Steuve's plans to auction the 22,000 square foot building and adjacent tracts of land. Jones informed Cheryl Brown Henderson, President of the Brown Foundation, of the impending sale and, in doing so, unofficially began the campaign to save Monroe. Henderson



REAL ESTATE
AUCTION

Monroe School, at 15th and Monroe, Topeka, KS
Tuesday evening, July 24, 1990 at 7:00 pm

A two story brick structure with a partial basement. Considerable repointing of the brick has been done and is in fine condition. The roof is good and building is structurally sound.

Building consists of approximately 22,000 sq. ft. with a gym for various uses. There are 5 central air cooling units of 36,000 BTU's. There is a large cham link fence area for confinement or storage use.

The property has the City of Topeka Enterprise Zone Incentives for New Business.

Open House will be July 9 & 16, 1990 from 5:00 to 7:00 pm or call auctioneers for showing.

Legal Description: Call for legal. Consisting of two tracts, school building is on approximately 1.2 acres, and a tract of bare land lying across street to east of approximately .31 acre.

$5,000.00 down day of auction and balance on or before August 24, 1990. Merchantable Title guaranteed.

Call Auctioneers for showing and question. Any announcements made day of auction shall take precedence over any other statements or print.

S/S Builders, Inc., owners.

Kull Auction & Real Estate Co.
Milton Anderson, CAI — Auctioneers — Dan Kull
913-266-5550 or 800-858-4608

Flyer announcing the impending auction. Illustration courtesy Brown Foundation Collection, University of Kansas Libraries.

had three points of connection to Monroe Elementary; first, as a daughter of Oliver Brown and sister of Linda, secondly as a former teacher at the elementary school, and thirdly, as an African American. With her mother and sisters, Henderson formed the Brown Foundation for Educational Equity, Excellence and Research in 1988, a non-profit organization dedicated to honor the work of those involved in the *Brown* case, aid minority students, support educational research, and promote multicultural awareness.[6] Members now added a more immediate cause to their broad agenda. The foundation formed a community coalition and organized a national fund-raising

campaign for the purchase of the building. Henderson, who led the charge, concisely expressed the importance of their cause in appeals for support. "Monroe Elementary School, the other half of the equation in *Brown vs. The Board of Education of Topeka*," she wrote, "is going on the auction block. If sold chances are great that the building will be destroyed or forever changed and therefore lost to present and future generations who know it to be a symbol of what we have overcome."[7] The coalition suggested instead that the former school house a museum and resource center for African-American history, but first supporters had to safeguard Monroe. Appeals for private patronage met with little success, so the Brown Foundation turned to public sources of support.[8]

Preservation of the building as a historic property hinged on official designation to the NRHP, preferably as an NHL. Monroe's historical significance seemed unquestionable, even though it lacked official designation. Sumner, on the other hand, was listed on the NRHP in 1987 as an NHL. It had functioned as the white complement to Monroe during the school desegregation suit because Linda Brown would have attended Sumner Elementary School if segregation policy had not forced her to commute to Monroe. In essence, each played important, but opposing, roles in the litigation of the Kansas case. "By denying Linda Brown the right to enroll in the Sumner Elementary School," the nomination states, "the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, started the chain of events that led to the Supreme Court and the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*."[9] It seemed logical, therefore, that the segregated school, which Linda attended, merited equal status. Dr. Harry Butowsky, who had written the Sumner nomination, amended the NHL in 1991 to include Monroe Elementary School.[10]

A high school dance held in Monroe gym during the 1940s. Photo courtesy Merrill Ross Collection, University of Kansas Libraries.

Although the idea already had been broached, advocates now had sufficient ammunition to request the addition of Monroe Elementary to the National Park System. Timing was critical in this preservation process, but each step fell in line. Henderson had contacted the Trust for Public Lands (TPL) while the NHL nomination ensued. This non-profit organization purchases land threatened by development in order to protect natural and cultural resources. In this case, TPL helped relieve Mark Steuve of the financial burden of maintenance costs and facilitated the subsequent real estate transfer to the NPS. The Brown Foundation petitioned governmental leaders within Kansas, as well as its Congressional delegates, to save the property. Many helped during the two-year effort; namely, former *Brown* plaintiffs and other supporters, the Black Historical Society of the Topeka Metropolitan Area, the Kansas SHPO, the Trust for Public Lands (TPL), Senators Robert Dole and Nancy Kassebaum, Representatives Dan Glickman and Jim Slattery, and the National Park Service (NPS). Preliminary suitability and feasibility studies, conducted by the NPS in 1991, confirmed Monroe's potential contribution to the National Park System and expedited its acquisition. President George Bush signed the enabling legislation on October 26, 1992, which established the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site, with the mandate,

> to preserve, protect, and interpret for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations, the places that contributed materially to the landmark United States Supreme Court decision that brought an end to segregation in public education; and to interpret the integral role of the Brown v. Board of Education case in the civil rights movement; to assist in the preservation and interpretation of related resources within the city of Topeka that further the understanding of the civil rights movement.[11]

Ownership officially transferred to the NPS in December 1993, and plans began for staffing and rehabilitating the new park.[12]

Within a relatively short time, the former Monroe Elementary School went from the auction block to national historic site. The Brown Foundation played an instrumental role in this transition, largely through the hard work of its president, Cheryl Brown Henderson. And, its work continues. "The Brown Foundation," Henderson proclaims, "is working cooperatively with the NPS and has the unique distinction of being one of a handful of non-governmental agencies that provide researchers, educators, museums, etc., with primary source information about the *Brown* case."[13] This park is an important addition to the National

Park System because it is one of few units which honor the achievements made by and for African Americans. Park staff hope to inform, challenge, and inspire visitors to look beyond stereotypes and pat stories. In particular, the Brown v. Board of Education NHS will focus its interpretive programs on all five school cases, their participants, local histories, and the broader, national context of the modern civil rights movement. This new park symbolizes the long, hard fight to gain civil rights for African Americans, first, and by extension, the attainment of human rights for all peoples throughout the world.[14]

Measures to stabilize and rehabilitate the building facility are currently underway, with its formal opening targeted for 1998. As the park's only building, Monroe must serve several capacities; primarily, as administrative headquarters, visitor center, interpretive media center, and as an educational/research facility. While linked to other sites associated with the civil rights theme, Brown v. Board of Education NHS will provide a specialized focus on desegregation in public education and endeavors to bring dual, segregated societies together. Like its juridical namesake, this historic site harkens to past injustices, praises hard-won accomplishments, and presages future attainments left for others to mark.

Notes

1 Quoted in Kristen Hays, "Dedication Recalls Era of Segregation, *Topeka Capital Journal* (TCJ), 18 May 1992, A-1.

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3 Oral History Project, Brown Foundation in cooperation with the Kansas State Historical Society and "Monroe School" clipping file, Topeka-Shawnee County Public Library.

4 Sherda Williams and David Barnes, "Monroe Elementary School, Topeka, Kansas," Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI), Levels I & II, USDoI, NPS, February 1995; "Monroe Elementary School" file, Unified School District-501, Topeka, Kansas; and letter of inquiry, *TCJ*, 25 May 1980.

5 Williams and Barnes, CLI, 27, 29; Smith, et. al., "Monroe School," HABS Draft Report No. KS-67, 2; Anne Elizabeth Powell, "Unfinished Business," *Historic Preservation* 46, no. 3:101; Shawnee County, Kansas, Deed Book 2096, 91, 93 (27 June 1980); Deed Book 2120, 161 (10 December 1980); Deed Book 2458, 123 (29 November 1982); and Deed Book 2490, 247 (4 August 1988).

6 Powell, "Unfinished Business," 58-59; "Position Paper: Brown vs. The Board of Education Management Alternative," NPS, 25 June 1991; "Cooperative Agreement Between the National Park Service and the Brown Foundation," Agreement No. CA6000-3-8050, September 1993; and Randall Baynes, *et al.*, "Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka: Sumner and Monroe Elementary Schools," Management Alternatives Study, USDI, NPS, March 1992, 32.

7 Cheryl Brown Henderson to Congressman Dan Glickman, 26 July 1990, Brown Foundation Collection, Kansas Collection, University of Kansas.

8 Powell, "Unfinished Business," 101; Kristen L. Hays, "Unchaining History," *TCJ*, 13 February 1994, 1-E; Leslie Guild Moriarty, "Former Pupils Hope to Preserve Monroe School, *TCJ*, 4 September 1990, 1-A, 2-A; Hays, "Dedication Recalls Era of Segregation, *TCJ*, 18 May 1992, A-1; and Hays, "Effort Would Restore Monroe of '54," *TCJ* 15 June 1994, 3-A.

9 Harry Butowsky, "Sumner Elementary School," Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas, National Register of Historic Places Nomination (NRHP), USDoI, NPS, 1987, 8:2.

10 Ramon Powers to Randall K. Baynes, 26 July 1991, "Monroe School" file, Kansas SHPO; Harry A. Butowsky, "The U.S. Constitution: A National Historic Landmark Theme Study," USDoI, NPS, December 1986; Roger Aeschliman, "Sumner Named National Landmark," *TCJ*, 23 July 1987, 18; "Historic Designation Earned by Sumner," TCJ, 13 May 1988, 7-C; Leslie Guild, "Sumner Dedicated as Historic Landmark," *TCJ*, 18 May 1988, 1-A; and Butowsky and Martha Hagedorn-Krass, "Sumner Elementary School and Monroe Elementary School," NRHP, 6 November 1991.

11 Public Law 102-525, One Hundred Second Congress, 26 October 1992.

12 Powell, "Unfinished Business," 101; Baynes, *et al.*, "Brown v. Board of Education," Deed Book 2857, 227; and Robert A. Pratt, "Segregation Overruled," *National Parks* 67, nos. 9-10:34-39.

13 Cheryl Brown Henderson, "The Brown Foundation Story: Developing Resources to Interpret Public History," *CRM* 19, no. 2:8.

14 Mike Bureman, *et al.*, "General Management Plan: Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site," USDoI, NPS, August 1996.

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Steven A. Davis

Civil Rights in Orangeburg County, South Carolina

The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s is one of the most important chapters in the history of African Americans. Therefore, as the nation's preservation community identifies properties for their associational value to African-American heritage, civil rights sites should be included.

Orangeburg County, South Carolina, provides an excellent case study concerning resources that played a role at the grassroots level of the of the state's civil rights activities, including the Orangeburg Massacre in 1968. Orangeburg County's civil rights sites reveal much about the types of properties associated with the movement as well as the preservation issues and problems presented by such resources.

Due to its rich agricultural heritage and African-American majority, Orangeburg County was a significant part of South Carolina's black belt during the 1950s and 1960s. Two historically African-American colleges, South Carolina State and Claflin, were located in the city of Orangeburg, the state's principal center of higher education for blacks. The county's civil rights campaigns followed the patterns of the national movement: school desegregation efforts during the 1950s, sit-ins in 1960, large-scale protest movements during the early 1960s, and disillusionment mixed with violence in the late 1960s.

All Star Bowling Lanes, Orangeburg. The whites-only policy of the bowling alley sparked the civil rights protests that culminated with the Orangeburg Massacre. Photo by the author.

In 1955 following the Brown decision, two Orangeburg County school districts received desegregation petitions from African-American parents. The reaction in the Elloree district of the county was quick: whites formed the state's first citizens council to pressure blacks who advocated desegregation. When whites in the Orangeburg district organized a citizens council, blacks responded by boycotting white-owned businesses and creating a relief fund. This school desegregation effort ended in a stalemate during 1956. In 1960, the national civil rights movement turned to direct action as African Americans, especially college students, staged lunchcounter sit-ins. After several sit-ins at Orangeburg's Kress Department Store, black college students held South Carolina's largest demonstration of the year. Inspired by Martin Luther King's successful Birmingham campaign, local blacks picketed downtown stores, staged mass demonstrations, and boycotted the school system in 1963 and 1964. Despite mass arrests, protest activities ended only with the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

By 1968, Orangeburg's African-American college students were irritated by the whites-only policy of All Star Bowling Lanes. On the night of February 6, several hundred students arrived at a demonstration in the parking lot of the shopping center that included the bowling alley; around one hundred law enforcement officers were present. A disturbance broke out and officers with riot batons began beating students. Cars and shop windows between the bowling alley and the colleges were damaged by retreating students. The following day, city officials unsuccessfully tried to calm the situation as state highway patrolmen and national guardsmen were deployed. On the night of February 8, a group of students gathered at the edge of South Carolina State's campus to build a bonfire; some students hurled objects at nearby law enforcement officers. Patrolmen accompanied a firetruck to the bonfire as the students moved into an open field. As tensions mounted, a group of patrolmen at the edge of the field suddenly opened fire into the crowd of students. The results were devastating: three students dead and twenty-seven others wounded.

The controversy over the campus shooting, known as the Orangeburg Massacre, began imme-

diately as state officials and civil rights activists outlined different versions of the event. The impact of the Orangeburg Massacre on the nation was limited due to inaccurate reporting by the media, which claimed that students had fired at the patrolmen immediately before the shooting. The event is significant as one episode in the string of violent campus confrontations that culminated with the anti-war protests at Kent State University in 1970, and in Orangeburg County, the Orangeburg Massacre was a dramatic climax for the civil rights movement.

As the scene of important civil rights activities, Orangeburg County possesses many buildings and structures associated with the movement, and a civil rights site typology is a useful tool for evaluating these resources. Based on a property's role in the movement, Orangeburg County's civil rights sites may be grouped into four types: African-American organizing sites, confrontation sites, white resistance sites, and commemorative sites. This typology was recently used by the author in a successful National Register of Historic Places multiple property submission for Orangeburg County's civil rights resources.

African-American organizing sites are buildings where civil rights activities were planned and mass rallies were held. Since blacks were denied the use of publicly-owned and white-owned facilities, African-American organizing sites were usually black-owned properties, especially churches. The most significant of these sites in Orangeburg is Trinity Methodist Church, which served as the principal meeting place for local blacks throughout the civil rights movement.

The second civil rights site type is the confrontation site, a property associated with protest activities and conflict. Since many demonstrations targeted whites-only business practices, confrontation sites may be commercial structures. For example, Orangeburg's Kress Department Store was the target of sit-ins during 1960; All Star Bowling Lanes was the focus of protests that led to the Orangeburg Massacre in 1968. In addition, confrontation sites may include segregated publicly-owned facilities where demonstrations occurred. In 1964, African Americans staged wade-ins at Orangeburg's swimming area for whites. Lastly, black schools may be confrontation sites. School officials fired the African-American teaching staff at the Elloree Training School in 1956; black students boycotted Whittaker Elementary School in 1963 following the firing of a black teacher.

Trinity Methodist Church in Orangeburg is an African-American organizing site. The church served as a meeting place for local black activists during the civil rights movement. Photo by the author

White resistance sites are the third civil rights site type and include two subtypes: sites associated with official white resistance and sites associated with private white resistance. Official white resistance sites include buildings used by authorities as holding facilities or trial locations for protesters, like Orangeburg County's jail, courthouse, and armory. Private white resistance sites are properties that served as meeting places or rally sites for the citizens councils and the organizers of private schools, which were a response to desegregated public schools. White resistance groups frequently used lodge halls. For example, Orangeburg's citizens council was founded in 1955 at a Woodmen of the World hall. Additionally, white resistance groups had access to publicly-owned facilities. Orangeburg's citizens council held a mass rally at the city's ballpark in 1955.

The last civil rights site type is the commemorative site, a structure built as a memorial to people or events associated with the movement. Orangeburg's only example of a commemorative site is a simple granite monument in a landscaped square on the South Carolina State campus. Dedicated in 1969, this commemorative site honors the three students killed in the Orangeburg Massacre.

Steps should be taken in the near future to preserve the various types of civil rights sites across the United States. Why should preservationists worry about resources with recent periods of significance? The answer is simple: resources of recent significance may be threatened. Orangeburg County has already lost a number of its civil rights sites, including the open field where the Orangeburg Massacre occurred and the American Legion hall where South Carolina's first citizens council was formed. In addition, the physical integrity of some local civil rights resources has been compromised by alterations.

Two issues may hamper efforts to preserve the nation's civil rights sites: nontraditional properties and properties that are associated with controversial events. Nontraditional properties are resources that would typically not be the objects of

preservation efforts. Civil rights sites acquired their significance during modern times. Furthermore, many of these resources are vernacular buildings constructed after the Second World War. The quintessential nontraditional site in Orangeburg is All Star Bowling Lanes, part of a 1960s strip shopping center. Such resources are worthy of preservation not for their architecture or aesthetics, but for their association with important modern events.

A second preservation problem for Civil Rights sites is their association with controversial events of modern history. For example, the Orangeburg Massacre occurred only 28 years ago and remains among the most controversial events in the state's history. The local community may feel uncomfortable dealing with the Orangeburg Massacre, in part because some of the participants are still living. Another potentially controversial issue involves targeting for preservation sites associated with white resistance. Opponents of recognizing these sites may argue that such actions would honor the individuals who tried to maintain a society based on white supremacy and racial segregation. However, select white resistance sites should be preserved in order to tell the entire story of the civil rights movement. White resistance was a formidable barrier to the goals of the civil rights movement, especially in majority-black counties like Orangeburg. The movement can not be fully understood without some knowledge concerning white resistance.

Despite potential problems, preservation steps are available for the nation's civil rights sites. The first priority should be to educate the public about the significance of civil rights resources. The National Register is a useful tool in recognizing such sites. This past August, Orangeburg's All Star Bowling Lanes was listed on the National Register at the national level of significance as part of the author's multiple property submission. In addition, communities like Selma, Alabama, have marketed civil rights resources for heritage tourism. The developing South Carolina Heritage Corridor could include Orangeburg County's civil rights sites. Such efforts are necessary in order to provide future generations with a complete material record of the African-American experience.

Steven A. Davis is a recent graduate of the Applied History Program at the University of South Carolina. This article is a summary of one of three case studies in his thesis, Historic Preservation and the Social History of the New South.

Continued from p. 33

African-American Sailors' Project

Applicants had to authenticate their service, demonstrate their debility did not result from vicious habits, and undergo examination by a board of surgeons who would attest to the degree of disability. Given that a surviving dependent became eligible for the veteran's pension upon his death, the files of widows and minor children contain even more detailed accounts of marriages, births, and deaths, and of family and community relationships generally, than the files of the veterans do.

The pension files of black sailors (together with the much more voluminous record of their counterparts who served in the U.S. Colored Tropps) provide a rich and largely untapped source of first person testimony into late-19th-century African-American history. The picture is a mixed one that included cases of duplicity and greed as well as generosity and self-sacrifice.

Among the myriad details that emerge from the files is a clear sense that the sacrifices of the veterans and their families merited the thanks of the nation and that the modest pension payments were the least form that the thanks might take.

Certainly at the dawn of the 20th century in the cities and the neighborhoods where naval veterans lived, knowledge of the African-American contribution to the naval history of the Civil War lived too. But as the veterans died and their children themselves had children, that understanding grew less and less distinct. What persists in the considerable numbers of families where photographs, papers, or artifacts survive is the knowledge that great-grandfather served in the Civil War Navy. But the broader pattern of service that he and his comrades configured has largely been lost.

The prospects for restoring the balance have never looked brighter that they do at present. As the recent events marking the dedication of the African-American Civil War Memorial make clear, descendants of the sailors are every bit as proud of their ancestors as are the descendants of soldiers.

Although the public at large may not fully appreciate the Civil War at sea, the descendants have no doubt that the navy contributed as mightily as the army to saving the Union and destroying slavery. As scholars, the researchers of the African-American Sailors' Project operate with a clear sense of shared purpose to understand the experience of African-American sailors in all its diversity and complexity. For despite all that is known about the Civil War, there is still much to learn.

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Stephanie L. Batiste-Bentham, Michele Gates Moresi,
Teresa Anne Murphy, and Marguerite Carnell Rodney

Forging Partnerships, Creating Contexts

Interpreting controversial aspects of American history and culture poses a significant challenge to historians. Standing on the front lines of public history, interpreters at the National Park Service are faced with this challenge every day.

At several historical sites managed by the National Park Service, this dilemma is particularly clear. Interpreters are grappling with questions about how to tell the history of plantations which were homes to prominent Americans including George Washington's Birthplace and Robert E. Lee's home. While these sites were established to memorialized the famous men who lived there they were also homes to many others, including slaves. An ongoing question for the National Park Service is how to interpret the story of these inhabitants in exhibits and tours? How much of the site's story should be devoted to them? How can their stories be interwoven with those of their white owners?

One of the ways in which National Park Service historians are approaching these questions is by drawing on the academic specialization of faculty and graduate students at The George Washington University. Members of the American Studies Department there produced a lengthy bibliographic essay for the Park Service on slavery and the South.

The sites that participated in the project were Hampton National Historic Site in Towson, Maryland; Booker T. Washington National Monument in Hardy, Virginia; George Washington Birthplace National Monument in Washington's Birthplace, Virginia; and Arlington House (the Robert E. Lee Memorial), in Arlington, Virginia. All four are well aware that slavery existed on their sites, and currently include discussions of slavery in their tours and presentations. However, most staff agreed they would benefit from a consolidated source of background information on African-American history.

George Washington Birthplace National Monument, VA. NPS photo.

The American Studies team observed the specific problems the National Park Service encounters in interpreting slavery. Because it confronts all Americans with the conflicts and paradoxes of their heritage, the interpretation of slavery is controversial. These challenges are evident in the interpretive language at some sites. For instance, the term "servant" instead of "slave" has been used. However, interpreters realize that this euphemism misrepresents the experience of all inhabitants at the site.

NPS interpreters wrestle with the issue of using the language of the former inhabitants—whose lives they are interpreting—versus using the terminology of current historical scholarship. If slave owners consistently referred to their slaves as servants, which term should interpreters use? If a landowner did not call his or her estate a plantation, but the site fits the modern definition of the term, what should they call it?

Such matters are compounded by the popular notions held by visitors; for example, some Park Service staff are reluctant to use the term "plantation," believing that the word conjures up images of "Gone with the Wind" cotton plantations. Nonetheless, this problem can be seen as an opportunity to re-educate visitors about the diversity of southern plantations and farms. These dilemmas remain an ongoing challenge.

One of the main challenges for the American Studies team was to make a large body of scholarship useful to each site which, although linked by the practice of slavery, differ widely in size and interpretive focus. We attempted this by tailoring specific aspects of the bibliographic essay directly to the sites; for example, general information about the architecture and landscape of plantations and farms in the South and Mid-Atlantic region was linked to specific buildings and landscape features at each site. We also discussed studies in material culture, slave family and domestic life, slave and free black communities, and Reconstruction in the South while making

Hampton National Historic Site in Towson, MD. NPS photo.

connections between the scholarship of these topics and each site's history.

Many valuable lessons were learned from this experience. The most favorable reaction came from the Booker T. Washington site in which the team worked on a specific project with a tangible outcome. Members of the American Studies team reviewed label text for a new exhibit and provided substantive suggestions for revision. As a result of this collaborative effort on a specific aspect of the site's interpretation, the uses of the assessment and essay were readily apparent. This experience may signal a useful way to structure future collaborations between the National Park Service and The George Washington University.

National Park Service sites are faced with practical problems in seeking to revise and expand interpretive programs; they are often under-staffed and short of funds. This is why collaborative efforts such as our project provide a unique opportunity for both the Park Service and members of the academy. By forging extensive relations with the Park Service, we gain the practical experience of interpreting history to the public at the same time that we assist the National Park Service in its effort to teach history grounded in the best and most current scholarship. We hope to continue to develop professional partnerships with these and other sites to enhance historical interpretation at the National Park Service.

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Teresa Anne Murphy is Associate Professor of American studies at The George Washington University.
Marguerite Carnell Rodney, a Ph.D. candidate in American Studies at The George Washington University, is writing a dissertation on 19th-century urban churches in America and works as an independent historian.

Joanne Blacoe, Anna Coxe Toogood, and Sharon Brown

African-American History at Independence NHP

Independence National Historical Park recently had the opportunity to incorporate African-American history into its interpretive program. To commemorate the bicentennial of the devastating yellow fever epidemic that struck Philadelphia in the summer of 1793, the park highlighted the heroic volunteer efforts of two local African-American leaders—Absolom Jones and Richard Allen. Both preachers, Jones and Allen called on their community to nurse the sick and bury the dead. They labored in a climate of public panic and revulsion, because yellow fever, which brought on black bile vomiting, was generally considered highly contagious. At first thought to be immune, the black volunteers succumbed with whites to the mosquito-borne virus.

After the epidemic ceased in November, the African community's heroic efforts received little recognition. In fact, the first published account of the epidemic that month accused some of the black nurses of stealing from their patients and gouging them with high prices. Richard Allen and Absolom Jones countered by publishing their own account, *A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Black People During the Late Awful Calamity in Philadelphia in the Year 1793*, which included a refutation of the charges.

Independence National Historical Park republished the Jones and Allen *Narrative* and mounted an exhibit explaining the strategic role black Americans played during the crisis in the nation's capital. The park invited members of local institutions that dated back to 1793 and had associations with the epidemic, including representatives from the nation's first African Methodist Episcopal church, to share in a city-wide observation of its bicentennial. The park also featured the story in special tours, drawing on a letter in its own collections written by an apprentice who,

while dying of the fever, wrote his family, "I don't know what the people would do if it was not for the Negroes, as they are the Principal nurses."

This 1993 bicentennial provided one avenue to tell African-American history at Independence National Historical Park, a site Congress set aside for its "outstanding national significance" in the American Revolution and the founding and growth of the United States. Here the park exhibits and interprets the world renowned Liberty Bell, and tells the story of the nation's most significant political documents—the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, and Constitution of the United States—adopted in Independence Hall. Benjamin Franklin's Philadelphia home site is also part of the park, set aside by Congress to honor his many contributions to the creation of the nation.

Despite such nationally-significant themes, park staff have continued to bring African-American history into the park's interpretation. Park historians have probed recent research on Philadelphia's 18th- and early-19th-century black population to supplement park themes. As early as the 1740s Benjamin Franklin assisted the Bray Associates, an Anglican Church missionary group, to establish schools for African Americans in Philadelphia. During his far-flung travels as postmaster general of the colonies, he helped establish similar schools outside of Pennsylvania. Through his efforts, Franklin became sensitized to the equality of the races and the power of education to change unequal circumstances. A slave owner as a young man, Franklin served as the president of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society during his last years of life.

A recent park research report on Independence Square's history discussed the struggle African Americans in the neighborhood faced when they tried to build their own church and burial ground. Throughout most of the 18th century Independence Square's adjoining square, (now known as Washington Square and a property slated to be incorporated into Independence National Historical Park), served as a Strangers' burial ground and the only sanctioned place for African-American internments. After the heroic efforts during the yellow fever epidemic, white opposition to a separate black church dissolved, and the Free African Society purchased a site half a block south of Independence Square.

Early in the 19th century, however, Philadelphia succumbed to a reactionary climate which led to a city ruling in 1814—a generation after the Declaration of Independence was adopted— to ban African Americans from partaking in the Fourth of July celebrations on the square (then known as the State House Square). In 1837, Pennsylvania's legislatures denied African Americans the right to vote. As the city's electorate cast their ballots at Independence Hall, Philadelphia's blacks again were excluded from participation at the seat of local politics, Independence Square.

In other areas, Philadelphia's African-American community flourished, supplying talented and successful caterers and businessmen for the larger population. At the same time, scores of refugees from slavery arrived in Philadelphia, some of whom risked their freedom by seeking justice in the courtrooms on Independence Square.

These aspects of Philadelphia's history have not yet received much attention, in part because they are difficult and painful chapters of our collective story. As at other parks in the system, Independence National Historical Park has only begun to consider the many means of bringing a more inclusive point of view to its exhibits, tours, and publications. The recent revisiting of the park's

Another Kind of Glory

Celebrating the Centennial of the Memorial to Robert Gould Shaw and the Massachusetts Fifty-Fourth Regiment

There will be a major conference, "The Massachusetts Fifty-fourth Regiment and Memorial Monument: History and Meaning," from May 28-May 30, 1997. The conference, which will be free and open to the public, will begin on Wednesday evening, May 28, at Harvard University's Sanders Theater. Colonel Shaw attended Harvard and the university played a central role in the installation of the Memorial in 1897. The remainder of the conference will be held at Suffolk University on Boston's Beacon Hill, only a few blocks from the Memorial and the African Meeting House. The entire conference program will be easily accessible for all in attendance as organizers have stressed to presenters that a broad, general audience will be attending. To keep the conference lively, individual sessions will vary in format and presentation styles. A special Thursday evening session at Faneuil Hall, to be moderated by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., DuBois Institute, Harvard University, will examine the best path to empowerment for African Americans. The conversation will reflect upon the historical examples of W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington, who spoke at the dedication of the monument in 1897. Potential panelists include Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr. and former Congressman Gary Franks.

—Martin Blatt
Chief of Cultural Resources/Historian
Boston National Historical Park

primary and secondary interpretive themes for a forthcoming general management plan gave a new chance to address the issues. Contributions of Philadelphia's diverse (religious, ethnic, and racial) population were incorporated into the park's planning documents —into its interpretive themes and its management goals—giving new energy to the park staff's ongoing social history programs.

One such program, *The Silent Majority* walking tour, focuses on African Americans, women, children, and people of different faiths and economic levels. Actors hired by the park performed vignettes of 18th-century African street vendors who offered such eatables as pepper pot soup, a dish with African origins. The goal was not to create a separate slate of programs with minority themes, but to incorporate this information into the mainstream of interpretation. The Liberty Bell, for instance, besides being an international symbol of freedom, also has a story as an abolitionist and civil rights symbol. Special topic tours which focus on servants and women include information on the African servants who toiled in obscurity. Visitors have been pleased with the new tours, and the park has enjoyed requests for these special tours from audiences new to the National Park Service.

Highlighting the contributions of African Americans, or any minority, is controversial, not just with visitors but with park staff, regardless of racial makeup. While many interpreters appreciate the richness that diversity brings to interpretation, others are reluctant to tell the stories of less famous people. There are complaints about the scarcity of source material for "diversity" tours, discussions about the relative merit of political accomplishments over social history, and nagging claims that programs based on social history are somehow forced or false.

Ongoing, vigorous debate among interpreters weigh the value of telling the stories of the "silent majority" who are mostly missing from mainstream texts. The anniversary of the yellow fever epidemic coincided with the 250th anniversary of Thomas Jefferson's birth, so that several Independence staff members lobbied hard to reserve the park's focus and energy for a traditional observance centered on the life of the author of the Declaration of Independence. On another occasion the search for a contemporary image of an African-American Continental soldier for a park publication and exhibit generated lively discussion among interpreters, historians, and curators about context, the benefits of using a contemporary image, 18th-century attitudes and 20th-century suitability. These debates were, in themselves, an enlightening measure of our own times, values, and attitudes.

To make history relevant to an increasingly diverse American population, the National Park Service needs a more inclusive vision. It is indeed headed in that direction and at Independence National Historical Park the challenge remains to present a balanced and accurate narrative of the events and people that shaped the founding of the nation.

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Christopher D. Geist

African-American History at Colonial Williamsburg

Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, restored Capital of England's largest, most populous, and wealthiest colony is the most expansive and comprehensive museum village in the nation. Spread over 173 acres with about 500 restored and reconstructed homes, dependencies, shops, taverns, public, and government buildings—88 are original structures—and hundreds of costumed visitors' aides, artisans, and character interpreters the village represents an unparalleled opportunity to interpret the complex social fabric of an important colonial legislative, cultural, and commercial center on the eve of the Revolution. Until fairly recently that promise was imperfectly realized. In 1775, Williamsburg's population was just short of two thousand, about half of them white. The "Other Half," to use the title of a popular walking tour offered to visitors, was African or African American, most of them slaves.

From early restoration efforts in the 1920s through the 1960s it was the rare visitor who encountered evidence that African Americans had played any role at all in Williamsburg society. Early editions of the village's *Official Guidebook* offered discrete references to "servants," but generally slavery and the major role played by slaves in 18th-century Williamsburg was not evident. By

1972, the *Guidebook* acknowledged slavery here and there, notably in the introduction where slaves were mentioned several times and a brief paragraph was devoted to their lives. But there was still no evidence of the major African-American contributions to the culture and society of Virginia's capital and the colony in general, no attention to how and under what circumstances the slave and free black residents of Williamsburg interacted with and influenced the white population, no mention of the realities of living as a slave or of the complexity of a society forged in the crucible of racial slavery.

In 1979, interpretive programming offered by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, the not-for-profit entity which administers every aspect of the village, was expanded to include first person interpretations to supplement the third person, costumed tour guides and historic trades interpreters who had been typical of the village's interpretations. This initiative included a few character interpreters who portrayed slaves. Visitors encountered the first person interpreters as they walked through the town in a random and rather unstructured fashion. Almost immediately it became apparent that there were problems inherent in this program strategy. While visitors to the village generally adapted to the role playing necessary to interact with white character interpreters, this was not always the case when visitors encountered black interpreters. At least a few visitors meeting slave interpreters believed they were modern Colonial Williamsburg employees complaining about working conditions at the Foundation rather than interpreters in 1770's character commenting on their masters. Quite probably these misunderstandings drew from the nearly complete absence of the portrayal of slavery and African Americans in general throughout the interpretations in Williamsburg to that time. Not having been properly prepared to experience African-American interpretation, the visitors were missing sufficient context with which to accept, evaluate, and learn from such encounters. With rare exceptions, they had not encountered African-American characters before and heard only few and fleeting references to slavery at the various sites they had visited.

These difficulties were not fully remedied until the early 1980s and the founding of the Department of African-American Interpretation and Presentations (AAIP), initially headed by Rex Ellis and now by Christy Matthews. Since its founding, AAIP has developed a comprehensive plan to present the social and cultural history of African Americans in 1770s Williamsburg through living history presentations which are researched, planned, and staged by the Department throughout the village. Additionally, sites and presentations not specifically attached to AAIP have been encouraged to incorporate aspects of the African-American story whenever possible within their own interpretive repertoire, often using first person character interpretation. Lives of household slaves are now interpreted at all major domestic sites, how the various Royal Governors responded to the reality of slavery is interpreted at the Governor's Palace (one of the village's most popular sites), comparisons of slave artisans and indentured servants are offered at many of the village's 14 historic trades sites, and the legal status of free blacks and slaves, including punishment under law, is interpreted at the Public Gaol and the Courthouse. Evidence of slave life is encountered even when live interpreters are not present, as exhibit sites have been filled with the material culture of slavery—clothing, the master's discarded furniture and household artifacts, and the slaves' own personal items recreate environments in which slaves lived and worked.

AAIP also collaborates with other units to offer living history presentations, as when AAIP and Military Programs reenacted the raising of the Royal Ethiopian Regiment organized by Royal Governor Dunmore in 1775 to enlist, on promise of freedom, slaves of rebellious Virginia masters. Experimental programs and one-time-only events, including 1994's controversial reenactment of a slave auction during the village's "Publick Times" program, take advantage of unique and emerging opportunities to present material to large numbers of visitors. And in 1989, interpretation began at the reconstructed slave quarter at Carter's Grove Plantation which is owned and operated by the Foundation. Because it is situated between the entrance to the plantation site and the mansion itself, all visitors to Carter's Grove are funnelled

"Jumping the Broom" at Carter's Grove Slave Quarters. Photo courtesy Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, VA.

through the slave quarter interpretation, the nation's only reconstructed 18th-century slave quarter on an original site..

Through trial and error, tireless research, and creative initiatives AAIP, in concert with other Colonial Williamsburg interpretive units, developed the comprehensive program for African-American interpretations now permeating the restored village. It is unlikely that any visitor, no matter how brief the stay, will leave Williamsburg without some understanding of African-American history and culture. The longer the visit the greater the learning, and repeat visitors—CWF estimates that 64% of annual visitors are returning at least the second time with about 18% the ninth—are afforded many opportunities to enhance and expand their understanding of African-American issues in the 1770s. African-American interpretations are available every day of the year with multiple programs on many days, especially during peak summer and Christmas seasons.

Visitors locate these opportunities in the weekly *Visitor's Companion*, a day-by-day guide to special events and evening programs. The "Other Half" tour, essentially a walking lecture set against the backdrop of the restored village, provides orientation on the history of African Americans in Virginia from 1619 through the Colonial Era and has become a popular staple of AAIP presentations. Initially offered at an extra fee but now included with the most popular ticket option, this daily tour provides deep background and context for visitors wishing to explore African-American life in the colonial capital. "Neither Seen nor Heard—Life Under the Master's Roof" is a one-hour tour of the Brush-Everard House told solely from the point of view of Everard's slaves, an opportunity unique within the village. This tour extends beyond the material related to the Everard slaves to include a good deal of the information related on the "Other Half" tour and is open to all general admission ticket holders at no additional cost.

Each AAIP program—only a few selected examples are mentioned here—develops and reinforces key themes central to understanding the lives of slave and free black men and women of 18th-century Williamsburg. Many visitors encounter these themes on several occasions during their stay. First and foremost, black colonists—both slave and free—are portrayed as a community of *individuals* drawing on traditions maintained from their homelands to forge a distinctive community and culture within Colonial Virginia by melding folk beliefs, foodways, entertainments (especially music, storytelling and dancing), family structure, social organization, and religions of Africa with those imposed by their new situation. This is not a monolithic presentation. Care is taken to demonstrate that Africans arrived in the colonies with very different backgrounds, depending on their social circumstances and point of origin.

Among the best of the programs is "Jumpin' the Broom," a representation of a slave marriage ceremony which is nearly derailed when the groom learns that the woman he plans to marry was once molested by a white man. He does not wish to enter a situation wherein he would be helpless to protect his wife—his father had suffered similar humiliation helplessly. "Affairs of the Heart" deals with the impact of interracial sexuality as a planter's new wife learns that he has a son by his slave mistress and lover. The program explores the impact of this revelation on both master and slave, including a variety of slave responses toward the mother, some sympathetic and others not. "She should have stayed with her own kind," one male slave comments.

"Prime Time History Hour," staged not within the historic village but in a modern theater, brings together three black characters from the 1770s to participate in a modern television talk show, complete with host, cameras, commercials, and an audience composed of Williamsburg's visitors who are invited to participate as in "real" talk shows. Characters include an urban house slave who repeatedly insists that women "keep to their own place and station in life," a field slave from a large plantation who had been born in Africa, and a free black woman who successfully supports herself while raising the free children she bore with her slave husband. The latter character helps to illustrate that in the 18th century the children of African Americans held the status of the mother, a point made in "Affairs of the Heart," where the mulatto child of the master becomes a slave. In the initial interview by the talk show's "host" and in the audience's question-and-answer session which follows, all of the major themes of African-American interpretation at Colonial Williamsburg are developed.

This brief essay only begins to outline the rich and highly effective African-American programming throughout Colonial Williamsburg. Constantly building on past successes and learning from each new initiative, the AAIP Department has developed what is certainly the most comprehensive and effective interpretation of 18th-century African-American life in the United States.

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Bob Moore

Museum Programs at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial

What is the best way to teach the history of African Americans in a museum whose themes are not specific to African-American heritage? Should the faces of important African Americans, along with quotes, be placed in a special exhibit, perhaps near the entrance, for all to see? Or should a more integrated approach be taken, in which general museum exhibits are used to tell the African-American story?

At Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (JEFF), we have chosen to blend information on African Americans into our themes, which encompass the entire sweep of Western American history. In the Museum of Westward Expansion under the Gateway Arch, interpreters present generic and specific exhibits and educational programs on African-American themes.

The inclusion of the African-American story, along with stories of other ethnic and national groups, provides a larger context for programs and information unfamiliar to most visitors. Inclusion of all groups associated with the West makes each visitor feel that the history reflects a diversity of peoples and not just an exclusive set of Americans. The museum is not dedicated to the "great men" of history, but to the average "Joes" and "Janes" who settled the American West. In fact, the museum utilizes reflective text panels throughout, in an effort to make visitors see themselves, literally, in American history.

Photo of JNEM interpretive program courtesy NPS.

Although an effort is made to include all groups in interpretive programs about the West, the story of African Americans is a recurring theme. Why highlight African-American heritage in a general museum on American history? The answer lies in the unique experience of African Americans, which is different from that of any other group. No other group suffered the degree and longevity of exclusion and prejudice. Further, the experience of African Americans has been seen as the acid test of democracy. The saga of African-American heritage forces us to take a long, hard look at what America stands for and how well we live up to our high ideals.

While we do not include a separate section on African-American heritage in the Museum of Westward Expansion, that heritage is nonetheless represented in the exhibits. Since African Americans were such an integral force in the exploration and settlement of the West, a special exhibit would divert attention from one of the most important facts: that African-American heritage is so intertwined with Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, and Euro-American heritage in the West as to make these individual stories inseparable.

For example, at least one out of every five cowboys who participated in the "long drives" from Texas to the railheads in Kansas were African Americans. One of every five cavalrymen in the U.S. Army between 1866 and 1900 was an African American. In addition, African Americans explored, trapped, and homesteaded beside people from every corner of the globe in the American West. The very first American exploration of the far West, led by Lewis and Clark, included an African-American slave named York, who enjoyed the full privileges open to the other men, even receiving an equal vote when decisions affecting the group were made. Thus, African-American heritage is unique enough to be discussed as an important aspect of westward expansion; yet its importance cannot be seen if it is removed from its place within the context of the entire westward movement.

The Museum of Westward Expansion, created in 1976, was purposely designed without

labels, leaving interpreters with the responsibility of answering questions and elaborating upon the individual stories of the westward experience. The staff at JEFF is confronted with unique challenges. Some exhibits address African-American heritage directly through the use of historic photographs and quotes, while other, more general exhibits, such as a replica of a sod house of the Great Plains, do not. Yet the sod house exhibit is used by interpreters to tell the story of the "Exodusters," African-American pioneers during the 1870s and '80s. The house itself need not be the dwelling of a Euro-American pioneer, but could just as easily be the home of an African-American settler.

In a similar manner, the Mountainman exhibit is used to talk about the experience of African-American mountainmen, who used the same types of traps, clothing, saddles, and accoutrements as Euro-American mountainmen. The Lewis and Clark exhibit can be used to discuss York, the cowboy exhibit to discuss African-American cowboys, and the exhibit on the military to talk about Buffalo Soldiers. Altogether, a very impressive overall program dealing with the hardships and triumphs of the African-American experience in the West can be presented. In a program on a distinct group, such as cowboys, the African-American experience can be contrasted with other groups who worked as cowboys.

Thus, interpreters in the Museum of Westward Expansion use the overall exhibits creatively. The treatment tends to mainstream the African-American experience. The path to mainstreaming can be followed in a variety of museum settings bringing the African-American experience to life. Initiative rests on the shoulders of the individual interpreter to ensure that African-American experiences are discussed. At JEFF, writing individual outlines for each program, and having these outlines reviewed, gives supervisors an opportunity to comment on areas where interpreters might include information on African Americans. In addition, our audit process has been helpful in identifying places where inclusive language can be added. The park historian has encouraged the use of inclusive information in interpretive programs by presenting history sessions, written reports, and bibliographies of sources on ethnic and national groups in the West. Armed with the necessary information and the interpretive skills to use it, the staff is better-prepared to present accurate, informative, and inclusive programs.

The basic interpretive technique used at JEFF is that of the verbal inclusion of information on African Americans in programs covering each aspect of westward expansion. Verbal inclusion is used in informal visitor contacts as well. Enlargements of historical photographs of African Americans are used in each of the major areas of the museum, allowing visual and verbal information to be presented. Demonstrations of historic clothing and tools are often made with the stipulation that these tangible objects were used by African Americans as well as Euro-Americans. This type of comparison can be made with subtlety. For instance, an interpreter can spend a bit of time in his/her mountainmen program talking about the famous African-American trapper Jim Beckwourth. When demonstrating how a beaver trap worked, the interpreter can say that, "when Jim Beckwourth and other mountainmen trapped a beaver, they followed these steps to trap and kill the animal for its pelt."

JEFF has also followed this mainstreaming model in its educational programs. Teacher Activity Guides (TAGs) have been prepared by the staff for each program. These TAGs contain three pre-visit activities and three post-visit activities for each age group. The TAGS provide exercises for students which are inclusive and mention the importance of the African-American experience. In the "African Americans of the West" TAG, for instance, students in grades 7-12 actually set up a frontier town government and infrastructure and, in a cooperative learning exercise, decide such important matters as whether the town will segregate its African-American citizens and commercial districts. Historically, segregated, integrated, and even all-black towns existed in the West. As a result, actual historical fact allows educational programs to deal with controversial issues in a non-threatening and positive way.

Programs similar to these, which contain material of an inclusive nature, should be possible at virtually any NPS historical areas. African-American heritage need not be interpreted only in February, or in special exhibit areas set apart from the "mainstream" of history. Existing exhibits and programs can easily weave African-American heritage, as well as the heritage of other ethnic and national groups, into a story line, presenting a balanced and inclusive interpretation of history. This type of balanced interpretation brings us one step closer to fulfilling the high ideals upon which our nation was founded.

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Qefiri Colbert

Peanut Man or Educator
The Legacy of Booker T. Washington

"Was he the one who worked with peanuts?" first-time visitors to Booker T. Washington National Monument frequently ask. Park interpreters thus begin a discussion of Booker T. Washington by explaining that he is not George Washington Carver. With that taken care of, we can then begin to help visitors understand just who Booker T. Washington was and what he contributed to the American story.

Booker T. Washington gained international attention in the late-19th and early-20th centuries as an educator, administrator, orator, and author. Tuskegee Institute, the secondary school for blacks he founded in 1881, today is a well-endowed university and the site of Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site.

Publicly accommodating on the issue of segregation, Washington is regarded by many as an "Uncle Tom." Few are aware that he used his influence to challenge Jim Crow laws in the courts.

Booker T. Washington National Monument, in Franklin County, Virginia, marks the site of the Burroughs tobacco plantation where Washington lived for the first nine years of his life. Born a slave in 1856, Washington experienced both the rigors of slavery and the struggle for freedom that followed for African Americans.

Early Preservation Efforts

The effort to preserve the site of Washington's birthplace as a historical memorial began in 1945, when the land was purchased by Sidney J. Philips, a Tuskegee alumnus. Philips was a friend a neighbor of Booker T. Washington's daughter, Portia, who had initiated the drive to create a memorial to commemorate her father's life.

By 1946, Philips had established and become first president of the Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial. This non-profit organization proposed "to establish a perpetual memorial in commemoration of the life and character of Booker T. Washington" and to set the property apart as a "National Shrine... that the Industrial Education and Interracial Good Will which Washington envisioned...may be preserved...."

The Burroughs home was modified to accommodate the organization's administrative headquarters and a post office. A replica slave cabin, erected on the presumed site of Washington's birth, was the only attempt to recreate the historic scene.

Sydney Philips had big plans for the Memorial. His objective was to make the Memorial a "center of unselfish service" to help the Negro. Ultimately, Philips wanted to create a full-scale industrial school in the model of Tuskegee Institute. He was able to use his political influence and personal charisma to accomplish many of his short-term goals. But bringing these plans to fruition proved too costly. The organization declared bankruptcy in 1955 and was forced to auction much of the property.

Transfer to the National Park Service

In 1953, Philips had written the Director of the National Park Service offering to donate the 214-acre birthplace tract to the government. The Park Service conducted a Historic Site Survey and a study of the site's recreational potential. After reviewing these reports, the Secretary of Interior's Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments determined that the birthplace site was not worthy of inclusion in the National Park System.

Sydney Philips was undeterred by this rejection. After the Memorial failed, he managed to repurchase the birthplace tract and convey it to a new organization with a very specific purpose. The Booker T. Washington National Monument

Booker T. Washington National Monument, VA. Photo courtesy NPS.

Foundation was created to "promote legislation which will provide for the establishment of the Booker T. Washington National Monument located at his birthplace in Franklin County, Virginia...."

After an intensive letter writing campaign, Philips succeeded in persuading six representatives to introduce identical bills for the establishment of a national monument. Following a hearing in February 1956, the measure was swiftly passed by Congress. President Eisenhower signed the bill authorizing establishment of the Booker T. Washington National Monument on April 2.

The government did not actually take title to the land until June 18, 1957. The condition of the site was far from pristine. The first superintendent found the buildings filthy, the grounds overgrown with weeds, and several years' accumulation of trash dumped into the streams.

The Park Service embarked upon restoring the historic landscape to provide an appropriate setting in which Booker T. Washington's story could be interpreted. Eighteen truck loads of trash were removed from the grounds. The wishing well, buildings constructed by the Memorial, as well as several turn-of-the century tobacco barns and sheds were eventually removed.

Archeological work in the area of the cabin reconstruction confirmed the location of a cabin to the southwest of the big house. A photograph of this cabin had been featured in the first edition of Washington's autobiography, *Up From Slavery*. However, other evidence indicated that this was not the location of the cabin in which Washington was born.

Booker T. Washington. Photo courtesy Library of Congress.

Nevertheless, a cabin was reconstructed on the southwest side. Speculation that Washington's family may have moved into the southwest cabin during his boyhood was used to justify the decision. The cabin's exterior matched the photo illustration used in Washington's autobiography. The interior was modeled on his description of the birthplace cabin in the same work.

It was decided not to reconstruct the Burroughs house, but the site of the birthplace cabin and big house are identified on the grounds and in the park map and guide. A tobacco barn with some logs from an original Burroughs barn remains on the site. The Park Service constructed a modern visitor center overlooking the historic area in 1966. Portia Washington Pittman cut the ribbon at the dedication ceremony.

Interpreting the Site

Interpretation of the site has evolved over the past 40 years. The park at first relied upon audio stations with recorded messages and paintings of plantation scenes. When the visitor center was built, interpretation was primarily done by means of an audio-visual presentation and exhibits. This interpretation attempted to steer clear of the controversial aspects of Washington's life.

Park planners had some very real concerns about public reaction to the interpretation of Booker T. Washington's life. A Ku Klux Klan rally near the park on the night before the visitor center dedication was an indication of the attitudes of some in the local community. Booker T. Washington continues to be a controversial historic figure among black and white Americans.

In the late 1960s, the park Interpretive Prospectus was changed to include the development and interpretation of the site as a living history farm. Additional buildings were reconstructed to recreate the plantation scene including a smokehouse, blacksmith shed, privy, and corn crib.

The park hired a farmer to plant crops and maintain a small number of livestock and other domestic animals that would have been raised in the mid-19th-century. Costumed interpreters provided information on Washington's experiences as a slave on the Burroughs plantation.

The living history farm concept proved to be both a blessing and a curse. It was a dynamic approach to interpretation that made the site come alive. Increased activity at the site attracted visitors in larger numbers than ever before and did much to alleviate the negative attitude of the community toward the park.

On the other hand, it became all too easy for the park to focus on farm life and crafts to the exclusion of slavery and other relevant subjects. As the park became a more popular attraction, it sacrificed substance for showmanship. The park is now in the process of getting back on track interpretively.

Current Trends

There are hundreds of living history farms where crafts such as candle-making and basket weaving are appropriate to the themes and purpose of the site. Doing generic farm interpretation would be a waste of our site's unique opportunities.

Booker T. Washington National Monument is one of a small number of African-American historical sites in the national park system. It is unique in that the interpretation of slavery is a primary theme. The significant story the park was created to tell is not about the people in the big house; its about those who lived in back of the big house.

The park still uses costumed interpretation, but it is just one of many interpretive methods. In the summer of 1996, the park installed a new permanent exhibit in the visitor center. The exhibit, "The Great Educator," does not shy away from controversial issues nor do the newly installed wayside exhibits.

An academic symposium comparing and contrasting the philosophies of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois is scheduled for the fall of 1997.

The institution of slavery, emancipation, the Reconstruction era, racism, and the African-American quest for education are important themes in our interpretation of Washington's life. These are historic issues with which many feel America has not yet come to terms.

Perspectives on American history have changed considerably since the 1950s. Critical viewpoints on Booker T. Washington continue to be revised. As interpreters, we strive to present a variety of historical perspectives in keeping with current research. Our interpretation at Booker T. Washington National Monument must continue to evolve if it is to remain useful.

We will probably always get questions about peanut butter. But now we are also getting more questions about slavery, Washington's critics, and the Jim Crow era. The current interpretive thrust has led to a more in-depth discussion of issues and to provocation.

Qefiri Colbert is a park ranger and living history coordinator for Booker T. Washington National Monument. Previously she was a distinguished interpreter at the Frederick Douglass NHS in Washington, DC.

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Charles Pinckney National Historic Site

The mission for Charles Pinckney National Historic Site calls for the interpretation of the lives of all the members of the farm community, black and white, slave and free, poor and rich. That interpretation surrounds the story of Charles Pinckney, statesman, politician, signer and significant author of the United States Constitution.

In an era when politicians were unpaid and expected to support themselves on family income, Charles Pinckney was enabled by the vast wealth amassed by him and his family on South Carolina plantations which produced indigo and rice long before planters thought of turning to cotton. While these colonial aristocrats were excellent merchants and businessmen, amazingly they possessed neither the proper seed for this "Carolina Gold," as rice was known, nor the skills required to plant and harvest. They turned to Africa for both. Madagascar provided the seed and West Africa the skilled laborers who produced the foodstuff marketed by the white merchants in Europe.

Today the contributions of people of African descent are being unearthed by National Park Service archeologists. Historians, working behind the scenes, are developing the threads of African contributions in the fields of language, food, agriculture, mechanics, and craftsmanship. These are illuminated for visitors through exhibits, park literature, periodic archeological investigations, and a video presentation.

Charles Pinckney's "Snee Farm" is set apart from the bustling community surrounding it. Here a visitor is given a quiet view of a late 18th century farm and an opportunity to discover how all the people who once inhabited this site came together with the peculiar institution of slavery to unite and form a new order.

While at the park visitors may review many publications describing the black experience in the era from 1770 though the end of slavery which are available for purchase. Periodically history comes alive as a volunteer basket maker from the local community demonstrates her considerable talents in the making of sweetgrass baskets. As her nimble hands deftly sew marsh grass, pine straw, and bulrush into works of art, we learn that this skill, too, came with slavery, from Africa.

—Michael A. Allen
Park Ranger

Claudia Polley

Fox Lake
A Resort Like Many Others

In the extreme northeastern corner of Indiana near the Steuben county seat of Angola, five miles from the Michigan state line and just three miles from Ohio's, is the historic African-American resort community of Fox Lake. Nestled in country dotted with clear lakes and healthy pines, for some 70 years blacks from Indianapolis, Detroit, Toledo, Columbus, and Chicago have been coming to "The Lake." Its history and importance to those families who call it their "home-away-from-home" cannot be measured in mere dollars and cents. So with a thank you to those who came before, the current families of Fox Lake are now eagerly looking forward to its listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Fox Lake came about, as did many other black resort communities of the late-19th and early-20th centuries, because segregation prevented people-of-color from enjoying as owners or guests any resort areas frequented by whites. Many resort communities were further segregated by class and/or economic status, but all were closed to African Americans, except if they were servants. Following the end of the Civil War, when blacks were able to go to college, own businesses, farm their own land, teach, pray, and die in their own institutions, there was a considerable rise in the number of black families who had enough disposable income to afford a "house in the country." Unwelcome in existing white summer communities, African Americans planned and built their own. Between 1850 and 1890, these communities grew all along the Atlantic seaboard, Oak Bluffs on Martha's Vineyard, Highland Beach near Annapolis. They also could be found in the West, just outside Denver at the height of the Colorado Gold Rush which spawned many a black millionaire, and in California, Washington state, and British Columbia.

Fox Lake summer house. Photo by Paul Madar courtesy Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana.

In the midsection of America and in the south, black resorts began to spring to life in greater numbers just after World War I. In Indiana, with a booming black community in Indianapolis, businessmen, teachers, doctors, lawyers, dentists, railroad porters, hotel workers, barbers began to look around for a place in the country where they could take their families. Though Indiana was largely-controlled by the Ku Klux Klan, African Americans were not the KKK's first target. Catholics and Jews were their prime focus. And as much as the Klan made its presence known, their were thousands of Quakers in the state who were working just as hard to have Indiana be a welcome place for its black citizens. The first family to settle at Fox Lake, the family of Viola Reynolds, secretary to Madam C. J. Walker who had her manufacturing base in Indianapolis, were invited to visit the site at the request of the Boyd family, the white landowners of much of the area surrounding the 1-mile lake. The cabin they first rented in 1927, then bought, is the oldest extant structure on the southwest shore of the lake. Densely wooded with gentle hills sloping to the water's edge, the shoreline was indeed an inviting place. Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds began to go up on weekends to Fox Lake, and soon other black families from Indianapolis followed suit.

In the ensuing years, an aggressive marketing campaign was set up by the African Americans who called Fox Lake their home away from home and people from Detroit, Columbus, Toledo, and Chicago began to build new structures alongside the cottages moved to Fox Lake from a nearby conservation camp. The Fox Lake Property Owners Association was formed as people began to own more land, buying principally from the Boyd family. By 1945, there was quite a community of people and houses, including a community center near the beach. The area under consideration for National Register nomination contains the rustic cabins, camp cottages, and vernacular summer houses that typify older resort communities. Some of the structures date from well before the turn of the century while others were built between the wars. If successful in its quest for official historic status, Fox Lake will be the first African-American resort community listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Claudia Polley is President of the National Association for African-American Heritage Preservation, Inc. She writes frequently on subjects pertaining to African-American history and culture.

The National Archives for Black Women's History

The mission of the National Archives for Black Women's History (NABWH) is to identify, collect, and preserve the individual and collective history of African-American women with specific emphases on Mary McLeod Bethune, the National Council of Negro Women, and African-American women's organizations. In accordance with its mission, the NABWH assists researchers in locating materials in the archives and refers them to other appropriate repositories. Although access to the archives is by appointment only, simple reference questions are answered in writing and over the phone.

The collections housed in the archives cover a wide range of issues including civil rights, consumer issues, education, employment, health, housing, international issues, religion, and women's issues. The collection consists of more than 600 linear feet of manuscripts, a small library and vertical file on African-American women's history, and over 4,000 photographs and other audio-visual materials.

An abbreviated list of the holdings of the NABWH might include the following: the records of the National Council of Negro Women which examines many issues of interest to African Americans; the National Council on Household Employment which deals with domestic workers, once the largest component of African-American women workers; the records of the National Alliance of Black Feminists, which discusses the African-American reaction to the National Organization of Women and the Equal Rights Amendment; several collections relating to African-American women in the woman's auxiliary army corps; and materials from the affiliates of the NCNW, including several professional sororities.

The largest collection in the archives, the records of the National Council of Negro Women, consists of audio tapes, correspondence, memoranda, photographs, publications, and reports. This collection shows the wide influence that Mrs. Bethune had in both the African-American community and in the administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Other topics with significant coverage are the NCNW's role in the Civil Rights movement and its use of Great Society programs to foster self-help initiatives in the rural south. The correspondence offers evidence of the regular interaction between the four presidents of the NCNW and the White House and the leaders of other African-American and women's organizations. Among the audio tapes, there are radio programs featuring interviews of Mrs. Bethune, including one by Eleanor Roosevelt.

The idea for an archives dedicated to the study of African-American women's history dates back to the 1940s when historian Mary Beard founded the World Center for Women's Archives. She asked Mrs. Bethune to serve as one of two African-American sponsors of the World Center. Mrs. Bethune then appointed Dorothy Porter of the Moorland Foundation at Howard University as the National Council of Negro Women's representative on the World Center's Negro Women's Committee on Archives. When the World Center disbanded in 1940, the NCNW took up the initiative and set up its own archives committee with Dorothy Porter as National Chairman. At this time, the NCNW also began promoting the study of African-American history through exhibits at its national headquarters, history kits, and radio programs.

The archives committee continued to function for over 30 years before the NCNW realized its dream of establishing a national archives. The NCNW inaugurated the Bethune Collection on Black Women's Organizations in 1976. The NCNW achieved its goal of establishing a national archives on November 11, 1979, with the dedication of the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial Museum and the National Archives for Black Women's History.

—Susan McElrath
Archivist
Mary McLeod Bethune Council House

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