

BLACK HISTORY MONTH SPECIAL SECTION, PART II

United States

Blacks have been involved in the defense of the United States from colonial times. They have fought against the Indians, Spanish, French and English forces. The earliest recorded death of a black in an encounter seems to be 1689. Blacks were also the first to shed their blood during the Revolutionary and Civil Wars: Crispus Attucks in the former, and Nicholas Biddle in the latter. The distinction of firing the first shot at the Battle of Manila Bay during the Spanish-American War belongs to another black man, John Jordan.

Often the first to volunteer for the militia or armed services, the authorities' acceptance or rejection of this willingness depended upon the depth of the crisis. Fear of arming slaves or free blacks rose during peacetime or minor skirmishes, and ebbed when the peril was real. This attitude, with laws to support the dichotomy, would persist well into the twentieth century.

The Revolutionary War

After the Boston Massacre in 1770 in which Attucks was killed, the escalation of hostilities for the next five years saw blacks enlisting as Minute Men and participating in a number of contests against the British. In the Battle of Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775 (marking the official beginning of the war), Prince Estabrook, Lemuel Haynes (later a minister of renown and a fierce abolitionist), Barzilai Lew and Peter Salem were part of the militia. Salem has been credited with killing the British Major Pitcairn at the Battle of Bunker Hill. Lew, Haynes and Salem Poor were also part of a small force under Ethan Allan and his Green Mountain Boys who captured Fort Ticonderoga from the British in 1775. Despite their evident bravery and ability to fight, in the early stages of the Revolution wholesale acceptance of blacks in the military was not countenanced.

Two major factors forced a change. The initial enlistment time for members of the militia was drawing to a close, and the British offered any black who joined their forces freedom and equality. While reenlistments in the Continental Army were meager, thousands of blacks accepted the British terms.

The North was quick to match the British and a regiment of blacks was formed in Rhode Island. Eventually, all of the North and Middle Atlantic States authorized the enlistment of blacks. Two states, South Carolina and Georgia, refused to allow the slaves to become part of the continental Army at any time; however, they were allowed, on a very limited basis and under armed supervision, to build or repair roads. Consequently, many runaways joined the British forces in those states and were instrumental in the loss of Augusta and Savannah, Georgia to the British. During the siege of Savannah, men who were to become important figures in their own revolution: Chevannes, Andre, Christophe, Rigaud, Villette, and Beauregard, were part of the 800 Haitian infantrymen and officers serving under the French allies who covered the retreat of the Continental Army.

Spain also joined in the cause and a force of blacks, both slave and free with black line officers, drove the British from Louisiana, Mississippi, Mobile, Alabama, and Pensacola, Florida. Six of the officers received medals of honor from the King of Spain.

Ironically, the area in which blacks faced the least discrimination (ironically because this would change drastically in the late 19th and early 20th century) was the navy. Pilots on a number of vessels, blacks also served in every capacity. One young cabin boy, James Forten, was later to become wealthy from the invention of a sail that would revolutionize shipping.

Perhaps one of the most important functions of blacks during the war was as spies. Often masking their innate intelligence with service behavior, they were able to infiltrate the British to gain important information. In one incident, **Mammy Kate** rescued the Governor of Georgia from a British prison by placing him in a large laundry basket under soiled clothing and carrying him out on her head. **James Armistead** was a courier between Lafayette, who commanded the forces of the French Allies, and infiltrators of the British forces. Without Armistead, Lafayette felt that he would not have been able to be so victorious against the British. Armistead was manumitted by Virginia in 1786 in gratitude for his services.

One of the more romantic episodes involved a slave named **Pompey Lamb**. When Fort Fayette, New York fell to the British, much of the state, including West Point, was threatened. Lamb, acting as a vendor, gained entrance to the fort. He did so for about two weeks, winning confidences and the password in the process. With this information, Continental forces were able to regain the fort.

At the end of the war, only three states, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont, abolished slavery outright. The rest of the North did so gradually until by 1820, all states admitted north of the 36° 30' (the Mason-Dixon Line) were free states. Those blacks who were veterans, were generally granted their freedom. However, except for a limited number of menial tasks given to blacks, the edict of "Whites Only" in the militia returned.

War of 1812

Basically, this war was fought to guarantee freedom of the seas. On the Great Lakes and all along the Atlantic coastline, England began harassing American shipping and impressing American seamen. Included in the capture of England's first impressment in 1807 were three black sailors.

Sailors, then, were important in this war. Difficulty in recruiting whites for service in the navy forced the government to accept black recruits, and they constituted about twenty per cent of the total.

Difficulties were also experienced in recruiting enough whites for the militia to satisfy the quotas set by the Federal Government; still the fear of revolt by armed blacks once again prevented some states from accepting blacks in large numbers as soldiers. New York raised two regiments of black volunteers only when the city was endangered. Elsewhere, the volunteers were utilized as laborers (road and fortification building, etc.) or as musicians.

Those who did become part of the fighting military were peerless. Specific or individual acts of heroism are meager at best; but, as a group, the dispatches indicate their courage. Perhaps the lack of communiques on individuals may be due to the practice of sending a slave in place of the master and the master collecting the slave's pay and honor. The major engagements on the Great Lakes, along the Eastern coast, and in New Orleans indicate that without the black servicemen, the war would have been lost.

Indeed, the Southeast was, in effect, lost because of the black man. Once more, England offered freedom to slaves in exchange for their services; once more hundreds accepted the offer. Surely the information slaves possessed about American fortifications, strength, etc., led to the stunning defeat the British handed American forces throughout the South and as far north as P.

these victories where they had burned and captured much of the South, including the capital, Washington, D.C., the British turned to New Orleans.

Louisiana, admitted as a state in 1812, had free blacks in its militia (now known as the National Guard). Governor Claiborne has the distinction of commissioning three blacks as second lieutenants, the first black commissioned officers in the militia of any state in the Union. Promised all of the rights of white servicemen, i.e., rations, clothing, bonuses, pensions and land, 600 free blacks with their own line officers were involved in the Battle of New Orleans. Led by Andrew Jackson who exhorted them to do battle for their country, they helped to soundly defeat the British. The promises that were made to them were slow in coming; and, once the war had ended, their suffrage ended.

The blacks under the British fared little better; for, after losing the war, England rewarded many of her black soldiers with reenslavement in the West

Indies or resales as slaves in the South.

The Seminole Wars

Little has been reported concerning black involvement in the Seminole Wars which were fought after the War of 1812. Publicly, it has been stated that it was to remove the threat of continuing a war with England as result of that country's arming the Indians in Florida (which was, at that time, a Spanish colony). In reality, it was to prevent a rebellion among the slaves in the Deep South.

Long a source of irritation to the Georgia slaveholders, the Seminole Nation in North Florida had been a haven for Maroons (slave runaways). When an abandoned British fort was occupied by about 300 blacks and some Indians, it was the last straw. In 1819, American troops attacked "Negro Fort" as it came to be called. An American shell exploded the ammunition dump, destroying the fort and killing most of the inhabitants. Those who survived were returned to slavery. This was just the beginning.

Statistics are unavailable as to the actual number of Maroons in Florida, but it would not be until 1842 that the rebellion could be said to have ended. During the ensuing years the Maroons (black and Seminole Indians) engaged the Union Army (regulars and volunteers) who used traditional strategies, in a guerrilla war that threatened to demoralize the nation and eventually cost the Federal government some \$5 million. The fear that was caused by the victories of the Seminole/Maroon forces; fear that a general slave uprising would be encouraged by these victories, forced the army to change tactics. Osceola, one of the Seminole Chiefs, led the guerrilla forces, but the Army's all-out offensive, where whole villages were torched, all Indians who were caught were immediately shipped to Oklahoma, and those slaves (Maroons) who were captured were resold into slavery, broke the back of the resistance. However, many hundreds of the Maroons escaped into Mexico where they continued their guerrilla warfare against the Texans.

North Carolina's First Black Physician

By Hubert A. Eaton, M.D.

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The first black physician who was a graduate of a regular medical school to open an office in North Carolina was Dr. James Francis Shober.

Prior to 1885, the North Carolina Board of Medical Examiners was required to admit to its examinations anyone who cared to take them, and as a result, some nongraduates held licenses to practice in the state. This explains the significance of the qualifying term, "who was a graduate of a regular medical school".

There are several facts and events to substantiate the claim of "first" for Dr. Shober. The majority of black physicians in N.C. during the last decade of the nineteenth century and the early part of this century were graduates of the Leonard Medical School which was a part of Shaw University in Raleigh. Inasmuch as this school was not founded until 1882, four years after Dr. Shober opened his office in Wilmington, all graduates of Leonard Medical School are automatically ruled out with respect to the claim of "first".

Meharry Medical College was founded in 1876, just two years before Dr. Shober opened his office in Wilmington, hence it was impossible for a Meharry graduate to claim the honor as "first".

The most important and reliable evidence in support of the assertion that Dr. Shober was the "first" is the recognition of his accomplishment by the all-black Old North State Medical Society, organized in 1887. On June 1, 1937, meeting in Durham to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the organization, the president-elect of the society, Dr. Max King, paid tribute to Dr. Shober for his achievement.

Also, a 1954 quarterly journal of this society was dedicated to the "Old Timers" and under the caption, "The First Negro Practitioner in North Carolina", Dr. Shober's achievement was again recognized.

After Dr. Shober's graduation from medical school, he opened an office in 1878 in the coastal city of Wilmington.

Several questions immediately arise concerning this young man. Who were his parents? How and where did he receive adequate education before and immediately after the end of slavery to enable him to enter a college in 1871, a scant eight years after President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation? Since slaves had no money, how was his college and medical education financed? What evidence supports this claim of first?

A study of his genealogy and an investigation of his life story revealed answers to these and other questions which should be recorded in history in as much detail as possible for time has already taken its toll of many details of his life.

James Francis Shober was born in or near Salem, (now Winston-Salem) North Carolina in 1853. His 1881 marriage license to Anna Marie Taylor in Wilmington indicated that his mother's name was Betsy Ann. A niece of Dr. Shober's wife, Mrs. Carrie Wright of Wilmington, revealed that his mother died when he was young and he had been reared by an uncle whose last name was Waugh.

With this paucity of information, a search was made of the Moravian Records — eleven volumes of Moravian history, and other related books. In due time, it was discovered that "a Negro named Betsy" was sold by a P. Transou to Brother John Henry Schulz.

In September, 1831, Brother John Henry Schulz was notified by the Aufseher Collegium, Board of Overseers, in charge of secular affairs, to "get his Negro woman out of town." (Salem). Brother Schulz resisted this order by appeals and accusations of unfair treatment. It was only after he was threatened with exclusion from the congregation that he finally sold her for \$200 on April 1, 1832 to Brother Theodore Schulz for service in the Springplace, Georgia Mission for Cherokee Indians.

It is unlikely that Betsy was sent to Georgia since forcing a slave to leave her home region would have violated Moravian customs. Miss Mary Creech, archivist, Moravian Archives, said, "She would not have been sent there if she did not want to go." As a result, eighteen years later, the 1850 Slave Schedule of Forsyth County showed Elizabeth Waugh of Woughtown (near Salem) to be the owner of one mulatto female slave, age 45. This slave, in all likelihood, was Betsy.

The 1850 Slave Schedule of Forsyth County revealed ownership by Elizabeth Waugh of another mulatto female slave, age fifteen. The Memoir files of the Moravian Archives reveal that a slave, Betsy Ann, was born in 1835, so by 1850 she would have been fifteen years old. This slave, also in all likelihood, was the daughter of Betsy and the mother of James Francis Shober. She was eighteen years old when he was born.



DR. JAMES FRANCIS SHOBER

father of the mulatto slave, Betsy, but the reluctance with which John H. Schulz parted with Betsy, coupled with the community's insistence that he do so, strongly suggests that the father of her mulatto daughter was her previous owner.

Having established beyond a reasonable doubt the identity of Dr. Shober's mother, the next question is, who was his father?

The patriarch of the Shober family in Salem was Gottlieb Shober. He was born in the Moravian settlement in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and came to Salem in 1768. He was the father of seven children, one of whom was Emanuel Shober, who was married to Anna Hanes. They also had seven children, one of whom was named Francis Edwin, born in March 1831.

Francis Edwin Shober received his early education in Pennsylvania but he attended college at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, graduating in 1851. He then studied law and was admitted to the Bar in 1853.

Using a combination of documented facts and the chronological sequence of events, it is a reasonable conclusion that the paths of Betsy Ann and Francis Edwin Shober crossed near Thanksgiving time in 1852 and James Francis Shober was born on August 23, 1853. The fact that James Francis Shober's middle name is the same as Francis Edwin Shober's first name would seem to be significant rather than coincidental. This conclusion could also explain how James Francis Shober's college and medical school education was financed.

When James Francis Shober was two years old, Francis Edwin Shober separated himself from the Moravian congregation by marrying a non-Moravian, Mary Wheat, of Chapel Hill without permission of the church. He then made his home in Salisbury, N.C., where he became an outstanding and successful politician and businessman.

He was a member of the N.C. State House of Commons in 1862 and 1864, served in the N.C. State Senate in 1865, elected as a Democrat to the 41st and 42nd U.S. Congress in 1869 and 1873, County Judge of Rowan County in 1877 and 1878, appointed Chief Clerk of the United States Senate in the 45th Congress and Acting Secretary of the Senate serving from October 24, 1881 to March 3, 1883. He was also a co-partner in the oldest mercantile house in Salisbury, Bingham and Company, established in 1866.

At a point in time not available, Betsy Ann (Waugh) was married to a slave by the name of David Shober. Miss Mary Creech is of the opinion that in 1855 Betsy Ann and David were moved from the Salem area to Salisbury. In 1859, when her son James Francis was between six and seven years old, his mother, Betsy Ann, died. Following her death, this young boy was, in all likelihood, moved back to the Waugh plantation where his grandmother, Betsy, at least one uncle and Betsy Ann's other siblings were located. To support this conclusion, the 1860 Slave Schedule of Forsyth County identifies a 56-year-old mulatto female and a seven year old mulatto male. The former would have been Betsy and the latter, James Francis Shober. Betsy Ann could not be identified as she had died in 1859.

The background and accomplishments of James Francis Shober are closely intertwined with the Moravian Church which evolved as a result of the persecution of Christians by Roman Catholics during the 15th century in what is now called Czechoslovakia. Seeking religious freedom, the early Moravians moved

America in 1742 and settled in Pennsylvania. Their goals were to preach the gospel to the inhabitants of Pennsylvania and do missionary work among the Indians. In the fall of 1753, the Moravian community of Salem was established.

Contrary to the laws of North Carolina, the Moravians taught the children of slaves reading and writing in their Sunday Schools. This practice, without question, played an important role in laying the educational foundation for James Francis. He was a graduate of Lincoln University, Oxford, Pennsylvania in the class of 1875, finishing with a final average of 95.5. He then enrolled in the Howard University School of Medicine, Washington, D.C., and was one of the 48 graduates in the class of 1877-78. He was the only student in his class from North Carolina.

After his graduation from Howard Medical School in 1878, Dr. Shober opened his office in Wilmington, the largest city in North Carolina at the time. Wilmington was a large export-import center.

After Dr. Shober had been in Wilmington for approximately three years, he was married to a member of a prominent and well-known family in the city, Anna Maria Taylor. Two daughters were born of this marriage, Mary Louise Taylor Shober and Emily Lillian Shober.

As an interesting side note, this marriage ceremony was performed by David J. Sanders, principal of the City Schools for Negroes from 1875 to 1890, and also pastor of the Chestnut Street Presbyterian Church in Wilmington for fifteen years. He [Sanders] later became president of Biddle University (now Johnson C. Smith University), in Charlotte, from 1891 to 1907.

Scanty but reliable information reveals that Dr. Shober was well-liked and respected, and was an elder in the Presbyterian Church. On the other hand, information regarding his personality, hobbies, and participation in community affairs was not available.

Being the only black physician in the city with a black population of 10,504, his heavy work load undoubtedly contributed to his early and unfortunate death on January 1, 1889, at the age of 34. Dr. Shober's death left Wilmington without a black physician for ten years.

Among the large oak trees in the Pine Forest Cemetery in Wilmington, a burial plot may be found on which are located four flat, unpretentious, granite stones marking the burial sites of Dr. Shober, his wife and two daughters. There is no epitaph on his grave marker.

It has been nearly a century since his death. North Carolina will soon erect a state marker near his home and office to recognize and honor Dr. James Francis Shober.

Facts For Consumers

By Dr. H. J. Bridgwater, Jr. NNPA

The skyrocketing cost of medical care is hitting everyone hard, especially senior citizens. Prescription drug costs are rising fast. In 1977, U.S. consumers paid \$8 billion. In 1978, the last year for which accurate figures are available, Americans paid \$9 billion for prescription drugs.

A prescription drug may have three different names — its "chemical" name, its "brand" name chosen by the manufacturer, and its "generic" or official name for active ingredients. (Non-prescription example: aspirin is the generic name for acetylsalicylic acid sold under brand-name such as Bayer, etc.). Consumers who purchase generic drugs could save some money on their medicine. Generic drugs are low cost effective substitutes for brand-name prescriptions medicines. The amount of money you save depends of the drug, but could be as much as fifty per cent. Before having your prescription filled, discuss with your pharmacist the facts on generic drugs.

A generic drug is called by its basic chemical name as forestated, instead of a registered brand-name chosen by the manufacturer. Generic drugs have the same active ingredients as brand-name drugs. One difference between them is in the name; another usually is in the price. If your pharmacist gives you a generic drug in place of a brand-name product, it will be both generically and therapeutically equivalent. If your doctor writes on the prescription form that a specific brand-name drug is necessary, the prescription must be filled exactly as written. Thus, your pharmacist must give you the medicine prescribed by your doctor.

There is not a generic drug equivalent for all drugs. Some drugs are protected by patents and are supplied by only one pharmaceutical company. After the original patent expires, other manufacturers are permitted to produce a generic equivalent, which is often sold at a lower cost to consumers. Presently about half the drugs on the market are available generically, offering you the possibility of substantial savings. You can request that your doctor, whenever possible, write a prescription permitting substitution of a generic drug product. You also have the right to ask your physician and your pharmacist whether a generic drug would be as effective, and less costly.