

WASHINGTON, D.C.: Black history marks slavery, freedom and beyond

By Derrill Holly

WASHINGTON (AP) - About 60 percent of Washington, D.C.'s 572,000 residents are black, and their history in the area predates the 1791 creation of the federal district by Congress. That makes the nation's capital rich in black heritage, from the Colonial era to the antebellum and Civil War eras, to contemporary urban life.

"There was always a sizable free black population in the District of Columbia," said James Horton, the Benjamin Banneker professor of American Studies and History at George Washington University.

Yet for decades after the capital was established, slave markets flourished in the area that is today the National Mall, particularly along what is now Independence Avenue.

Slaves and free blacks helped build the White House and U.S. Capitol as both laborers and craftsmen. Slaves and free blacks helped build the White House and U.S. Capitol as both laborers and craftsmen.

Although President George Washington personally took part in placing the south cornerstone for the future capital at a spot known as Jones Point, 8 miles north of his Mount Vernon estate, it was the surveyor Banneker who performed the calculations needed to position 39 other stones along a route measuring 10 miles on each side. Banneker was a well-known black inventor, mathematician and astronomer who had been born free.

"Washington was dedicated to having high quality craftsman and workmanship," said Stephanie Brown, a Mount Vernon spokeswoman. Many of the 316 slaves living at his estate at the time of his death were trained as coopers, millers, blacksmiths, carpenters and shoemakers and distillers.

Washington housed many slaves in the "House for Families," a communal quarters. Although the original building burned early in the 20th century, it has been reconstructed.

Neighborhoods created by and for blacks in the capital, including shops, churches and homes, survive today. Some were sometimes intricately involved in surreptitious escape plots. The Georgetown section of Washington had several "safe houses" used by conductors on the Underground Railroad.

"It's really only on the black history tours that slavery is discussed in any detail," said LaNelle Daughtry, spokeswoman for the Guild of Professional Tour Guides of Washington, D.C.

According to Daughtry, a village established for runaway and freed slaves was located on the grounds of what is now Arlington National Cemetery. It once had a population of 30,000. Section 27 of the cemetery contains their graves, and those of the U.S. Colored Troops, the Union Army's official designation for its black units during the Civil War.

Anderson Cottage, the summer retreat where President Lincoln spent about 25 percent of his presidency, was declared one of America's Treasures at Risk in 2000. The 14-room home on the grounds of the Soldier's Home in Northwest Washington is where Lincoln wrote the final draft of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1865.

The home where abolitionist and orator Frederick Douglass lived during the last 18 years of his life is also a national historical site. The Victorian mansion sits on an 8-acre site overlooking the city from one of the highest points in the district east of the Anacostia River. Records indicate that Douglass did much of his civil rights work during Reconstruction in the house's small library.

"In that room, you would find the cane that Mary Todd Lincoln gave to Douglass after the death of President Lincoln," said Bill Clark, a spokesman for the National Park Service.

The Park Service also administers the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House, where the National Council of Negro Women was founded. Bethune, who founded Florida's Bethune-Cookman College, was a confidante of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt.

The district is also home to the African American Civil War Memorial. The 15-foot bronze statue features the images of black troops and sailors as well as so-called contraband slaves liberated by union forces during the war. Stainless steel plaques are inscribed with the names of 209,145 soldiers and 19,000 sailors who served with Union forces.

"Virtually every black family in the United States has a name on this wall," said Frank Smith, executive director of

the African American Civil War Museum. The home of Carter G. Woodson, the educator considered the "father" of black history month, is undergoing preservation nearby.

Cultural Tourism D.C. has worked with the city government, the National Park Service and others to promote a local African American Heritage Trail.

"There are more than 60 museums off the National Mall that people seldom find," said Kathryn S. Smith, consulting historian on the project.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the landmark Brown v. the Board of Education decision. The 1954 Supreme Court decision declaring "separate but equal, inherently unequal," cleared the way for integration. During the Civil Rights era and the Vietnam War the Lincoln Memorial and surrounding National Mall were the rallying points for Americans fighting for social justice.

The Lincoln Memorial was the site of opera singer Marian Anderson's Easter concert, after she was barred from performing at DAR Constitution Hall.

"The steps of the Lincoln Memorial were just etched last year with the words from Martin Luther King's 'I Have a Dream' speech," said Victoria Isley, spokeswoman for the Washington, D.C., Convention and Tourism Council.

At the Smithsonian's Anacostia Museum, the photo-essay "Crowns" includes 30 portrait-quality black-and-white photographs of black women. Although the subjects were homemakers, domestics, and others who did menial jobs, they used their day of worship to add fashion and flair to their lives.

"Sunday was a day that they could really get dressed up," said Michael Cunningham, the photographer who produced the work. Five of the hats, passed down from one generation to the next, are also included in the exhibit.

The Recorder of Deeds office features murals that depict eminent blacks including Douglass, Banneker, Revolutionary War patriot Crispus Attucks, North Pole explorer Matthew Henson, and the Massachusetts 54th Regiment, a decorated Union Army unit that included Sgt. William H. Carney, the first black American to earn the Congressional Medal of Honor. The murals were painted during the Great Depression by artists employed in the New Deal's Works Progress Administration. Since 1881, when Frederick Douglass was appointed Recorder of Deeds, that position has been held almost exclusively by blacks.

At Lincoln Park, the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln was financed with donations from freed slaves, primarily those who'd served in the Union Army. It depicts Lincoln cutting the chains of slave symbolizing his issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. The slave depicted in the work is believed to be Alexander Archer, the last man captured under the Fugitive Slave Act.

Also at Lincoln Park is the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial, the first statue of a black woman erected in a public park in the nation's capital. Dedicated in 1974, it depicts Bethune surrounded by children, symbolizing her role as an educator.

If You Go...

BLACK HISTORY IN WASHINGTON, D.C.: Information on black history month events and the African American Heritage Trail at www.culturaltourismdc.org. A brochure about the trail is free at many sites, or can be ordered for \$4.75 from (202) 661-7581.

MOUNT VERNON: George Washington's estate in nearby Alexandria, Va., includes the restored "House for Families" communal slave quarters. Open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily through February; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in March and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. starting April 1. Admission: adults, \$11; seniors, \$10.50; children, 6 to 11, \$5; under 5, free. Call (703) 780-2000 or visit www.mountvernon.org.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS HOUSE AND NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE: 1411 W St., SE. Hours: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily; closed for maintenance March 1 to 12. Admission: \$2. Visit www.nps.gov/frdo or call (202) 426-5961.

MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE COUNCIL HOUSE: 1318 Vermont Ave., NW. Free admission. Hours: Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Visit www.nps.gov/mamc or phone (202) 673-2402.

Unshakeable 'Blues' Or Depression May Put You At Higher Risk for Type 2 Diabetes

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) - Symptoms of depression are associated with a modest increase in the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, the results of a large study of female nurses suggest. This finding identifies individuals "who may benefit from increased screening and/or interventional strategies," researchers report in the January issue of *Diabetes Care*.

Dr. Cassandra Arroyo, of Morehouse School of Medicine, Atlanta, and colleagues analyzed data for more than 72,000 female nurses between 45 to 72 years of age who had not been diagnosed with diabetes at study enrollment in 1992.

The researchers report that 973 cases of type 2 diabetes were identified over four years of follow-up. Women with depressive symptoms had a 22 percent in-

creased risk of developing type 2 diabetes, after taking into consideration age, weight and other potentially contributing factors.

In an analysis that excluded women diagnosed with diabetes between 1992 and 1994—to eliminate existing subclinical diabetes at study entry—472 cases of type 2 diabetes were identified. Women with depressive symptoms included in this analysis had a 29 percent increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

"These findings require further corroboration but suggest that depressive symptoms may identify a group at increased risk of subsequent type 2 diabetes," Arroyo and colleagues conclude.

They also point out that the subjects in the study were mainly white women, and that the results may not apply to other groups.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION'S ANACOSTIA MUSEUM AND CENTER FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE: 1901 Fort Place, SE. Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Free admission. Visit www.anacostia.si.edu or call (202) 287-3306.

AFRICAN AMERICAN CIVIL WAR MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM: Museum located at 1200 U St., NW; memorial two blocks away intersection of Vermont Street and U Street NW. Hours: Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free admission. Visit www.afroamcivilwar.org or call (202) 667-2667.

LINCOLN PARK: Massachusetts Avenue, NE and East Capitol Street.

DECATUR HOUSE: 748 Jackson Place, NW, one block from the White House. Hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. Admission is by donation. This small museum houses one of the last intact slave quarters in downtown Washington. Call (202) 842-0920 or visit www.decatourhouse.org.

RECORDER OF DEEDS OFFICE: 515 D St., NW. Hours: Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

WASHINGTON, D.C. CONVENTION AND TOURISM CORP.: Call (202) 789-7000 or visit www.washington.org.

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The City of Durham will open sealed formal bids submitted by pre-qualified bidders at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 24, 2004 for Contract SW-14 Fayetteville Road Sidewalk (NCDOT E-4530) in the Engineering Conference Room, Third Floor, 101 City Hall Plaza, Durham, North Carolina. The project involves construction of 3,200 linear feet of sidewalk on Fayetteville Road. This project is partially funded by NCDOT under enhancement project E-4530.

Specifications may be examined in the Department of Public Works (919) 560-4326 and may be purchased for \$30 (non-refundable). City of Durham Street Specifications are \$5 and Water and Sewer Construction Specifications are \$10.

Bidders are strongly encouraged to attend the pre-bid conference at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 3, 2004 in the Third Floor, Engineering Conference Room. Only bids submitted by pre-qualified bidders will be considered. The deadline for submitting completed Contractor Pre-Qualification Forms will be Wednesday, March 10, 2004.

Each Bidder must be licensed under Chapter 87 of the NC General Statutes as a General Contractor and holding a Highway classification. The City Council of the City of Durham reserves the right to reject any or all bids. All bids must include a non-collusion affidavit.

ROOM FOR RENT

Room for rent for a woman on the bus line. Call 919-423-7787.

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ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT I — Provides proactive administrative leadership and assistance in an intense, multiple-deadline environment for Production and Technical Operations Divisions at UNC-TV, RTP, NC. Supervises Administrative Secretary and plans, implements, monitors, and reconciles annual departmental/project budgets. Utilizes micro-computer to initiate and manage work-flow, maintain project databases;

budgets, contracts, personnel, purchasing, and travel information and to compile, edit/proof, compose and dispense reports, and contracts/correspondence for multiple directors/executive producers and statewide production projects. Service-orientation, attention to detail, and strong facilitation/organizational and computer skills and strong writing, verbal and proofreading skills are musts. Contract development/administration (personnel, production and licensing agreements), and University and/or State government administration and procedures knowledge are essential. Requires high school graduation and 4 years related experience or equivalent combination of education/experience. College background and knowledge of television production preferred. Salary Range: \$22,921 - \$36,447. Completed State of North Carolina Application for Employment (PD 107) must be received in the UNC Center for Public Television Human Resources Office no later than 5:00 PM Friday, February 27, 2004, Human Resources Office, UNC-TV, PO Box 14900, RTP, NC 27709-4900. Application form may be downloaded from www.unctv.org. Federal law requires that upon being hired an applicant must present, upon request, satisfactory evidence to verify employability and identification. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER. WOMEN AND MINORITIES ENCOURAGED TO APPLY.

PUBLIC INFORMATION ASSISTANT V (On-Air Promotions & Traffic Assistant) — UNC-TV, RTP, NC seeks experienced On-Air Promotions and Traffic Assistant. This position would be responsible for acquiring and maintaining database information needed to produce station break and programming elements for inclusion in digital broadcast logs for multiple UNC-TV digital program services. The ideal candidate should have excellent On-Air promotional writing skills (i.e., continuity), and knowledge of on-air traffic procedures. Candidate should be able to demonstrate scheduling expertise in the implementation of interstitial elements within daily logs and maintain break flow with regard to target audience. Working knowledge of ProTrack scheduling software and Master Control environments is preferred. Requires high school graduation and three years experience or equivalent combination of education and experience. Prefer four-year degree and at least two years experience in television, preferably Public Television, working knowledge of computer systems, database management and exceptional communication skills. Salary Range: \$21,219 - \$33,562. Completed State of North Carolina Application for Employment (PD 107) must be received in the UNC Center for Public Television Human Resources Office no later than Friday, February 27, 2004, Human Resources Office, UNC-TV, PO Box 14900, RTP, NC 27709-4900. Application form may be downloaded from www.unctv.org. Federal law requires that upon being hired an applicant must present, upon request, satisfactory evidence to verify employability and identification. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER. WOMEN AND MINORITIES ENCOURAGED TO APPLY.

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