

# Tuskegee experiment leaves suspicions

NEWHOUSE NEWS SERVICE

Blacks who are familiar with the infamous Tuskegee syphilis experiment are less inclined than whites to participate in health research projects, according to a soon-to-be-published study by a University of Alabama professor.

"African Americans need to be involved in these research studies," said Lee Green, assistant professor of health studies at Alabama. "There may be some differences in how we respond to treatment,

and we need to know that. If we are not part of these studies, we can't get that information."

In a recent interview, Green said he believes Clinton's apology will help bring closure to the incident, which has helped to fuel a mistrust of government in the black community. That, in turn, should pave the way for greater participation by blacks in health care clinical trials, Green said.

As part of his 1994 doctoral dissertation, Green conducted a telephone survey of 421 adults in Jefferson County,

Ala. He sought to study the effect of the Tuskegee syphilis experiment on health research activities among blacks.

The study, which Green said will appear in an upcoming issue of the Journal of Health Education, showed that blacks in general reported less interest in participating in medical research because of their knowledge of the Tuskegee experiment, and that black males in particular were especially skeptical.

"This distrust and suspicion continues to hamper health

promotion and health education efforts, particularly HIV and AIDS education," the study said. The distrust existed across age, gender and education levels.

"This finding seemed to support other studies which have shown that African Americans make less use of health services, and are least likely to seek preventive health care, and are less likely to use services such as health information seminars, health screenings and promotions compared to whites," the study said.

# Zaire is still shaky under Mobutu

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KINSHASA, Zaire — Shops were closed, streets deserted and the city eerily silent today as millions in Zaire's capital observed a one-day general strike to demand President Mobutu Sese Seko's ouster.

Soldiers who last week violently dispersed an opposition march kept a low profile today, restricting themselves to patrolling key intersections and firing shots into the air to break up a crowd outside opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi's house. No injuries were reported.

The strike increased pressure on Mobutu in his last major stronghold in Zaire, where rebels have seized half of the country and said they are advancing on the capital itself.

"We want change — we're willing to accept anyone, even the devil should he arrive, if it will bring change," said Willy Kashama, a Kinshasa resident who headed the general strike.

Struggling to hold onto power as the rebels close in, Mobutu fired Tshisekedi last week and named an army general to replace him as prime minister. Tshisekedi had sought to undermine

Mobutu's 31-year rule by dismissing Parliament and scrapping the constitution.

Amid the political turmoil last week, rebels had stopped fighting for three days to give Mobutu time to think over their demand for his resignation.

"We want him to leave the country and then we can negotiate a cease-fire," rebel spokesman Bizima Karaha told reporters Sunday in the eastern city of Goma. "They want war, and they will get it."

Laurent Kabila's forces have been fighting for seven months to topple Mobutu. They now claim to have reached the city of Bandundu, 155 miles northeast of the capital.

Rebels took Lubumbashi, Zaire's second-largest city, on Friday. Red Cross workers cleared bodies Sunday from the airport, which was littered with wrecked vehicles and spent cartridges.

After considerable international pressure, Mobutu said over the weekend he was willing to meet rebel leader Kabila face to face — "if he asks politely."

Karaha, however, said the rebels still want Mobutu's resignation.

"We have decided we won't give Mobutu another chance," he said.

Japan has evacuated some of their citizens from Kinshasa. U.S. Ambassador Daniel Simpson said there was no heightened readiness for an evacuation at the U.S. Embassy.

Meanwhile, the airlift of up to 100,000 Rwandan refugees from the jungles of Zaire to their homeland will begin late this week, said U.N. refugee agency spokesman Peter Kessler.

A small outbreak of a mild strain of cholera among the refugees should not delay in the evacuation, Kessler said. The outbreak has sickened 150 people in the camps in recent weeks and killed nine, Kessler said.

The Rwandan Hutus fled to eastern Zaire in 1994 after extremists among them slaughtered at least 500,000 minority Tutsis.

As Zairian rebels seeking to oust Mobutu have moved west — backed by the Rwandan

Tutsi-led government and fighting armed Hutus as they went — refugees have fled deeper into the jungles of north-central Zaire.

Despite food and medical aid, many refugees are dying in makeshift camps strung out along the Zaire River, Kessler said.

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# Black park proposed in Wilmington area

By Aaron Hoover  
STAR-NEWS OF WILMINGTON

WILMINGTON — H.D. Hales doesn't have a college degree in history or archaeology, and he isn't a descendant of the people who once lived in an all-but-forgotten black settlement in New Hanover County.

But Hales, a Pender County developer, is a long-time champion of turning the remains of Pocomoke into a state or national park.

The site west of U.S. 421 near Sutton Steam Plant is historically important and must be rescued from oblivion, he says.

But with such monuments as the Moores Creek National Battlefield nearby, it's also the right thing to do.

"African Americans have been here as long as we have," he says. "I reckon you call that basic decency."

Hales, 50, speaks with the drawl of the country-born Southerner he is.

Originally from Sampson County, his family moved to New Hanover County in the 1930s. His family lived in a now-vanished home on the Pocomoke land.

But he has strong memories of Pocomoke's vacant buildings and the tales of people who lived there.

"Your daddy, your granddaddy, knew them. You hear talk about them. It's almost like you knew them," he said.

So little remains of Pocomoke today, you might notice only the live oaks and pines.

Hales tromps through the woods, stopping frequently to rebuild the settlement in his mind's eye for a visitor.

"The barn was sitting this

way. It was like this right here," he says, his hands boxing out an imaginary foundation in the scrub.

He comes to a place in the woods where he says a church stood, a site oddly barren of trees and other growth.

"I don't know why. Nobody knows," he says.

Though Pocomoke remains somewhat mysterious, it is known to have existed from the Civil War through at least the 1930s.

Mariel Rose, a University of North Carolina at Wilmington anthropology student who studied the town, believes it was linked to rice plantations that once thrived along the Cape Fear before the Civil War. After the decline of the plantations, which needed hundreds of slaves to maintain numerous ditches, freed slaves stayed on.

Hortense Moss, one of many residents Ms. Rose interviewed, told her she remembered her mother and grandmother cooking for employees of the Pocomoke Guano Factory in later years.

Ships returning with logs from the Caribbean were filled with guano for ballast, and workers fill sacks with it and sold it as fertilizer.

Moss remembered Pocomoke having 30 households, a livery stable, a stage line, and a restaurant.

Hales says Wilmington residents depended on Pocomoke residents to maintain the road.

As he walks, he points out small holes in the sandy soil where artifact hunters with metal detectors have worked.

While he scorns the hunters as "scavengers," he says Pocomoke remains a rich historical site.



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