

# From the Baobab Tree

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## Popes Creek Tribute/ Servants' descendants honor their ancestors

Sunday, October 10, 1999

BY KIRAN KRISHNAMURTHY  
Times-Dispatch Staff Writer

VIRGINIA FOCUS WASHINGTON'S BIRTH-  
PLACE

Anita Wills' journey to her mulatto ancestors' home at George Washington's birthplace began 20 years ago. It's a voyage that spans nearly 270 years and is rooted in two people -- Mary Bowden and her daughter, Patty, both mixed-race in-



Anita Wills

dentured servants at the Washington family's plantation near the Potomac River in Westmoreland County. National Park Service officials say Wills is the first black person they know of who has traced her family history to the site, which the park service administers. Yesterday, she and about 16 other Bowden descendants paid tribute to their ancestors during ceremonies at the 550-acre plantation along Popes Creek. "From the moment I was a child, my mother told me about my ancestry," said the 53-year-old Wills, who lives near Oakland, Calif. "It has been a

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*"From the moment I was a child, my mother told me about my ancestry. It has been a spiritual quest and has opened my eyes"*

### Editorial Staff

Thom Allison  
Carole E. Neal  
Ranie Smith

## Juliet's Genealogy Gems

by Juliet Culliver Crutchfield, Ed.D.

Slave schedules are a valuable source of information for those with an interest in African American genealogy. This article provides insights into their use by looking at instructions given to census enumerators and a sample slave schedule. The Seventh and Eight Censuses of the United States, i.e., 1850 and 1860 are arranged by state, thereunder divided into free and slave schedules. The slave schedules give the name of each slave's

owner, with a listing of slaves by age, sex, and color. Slaves over 100 years may be listed by name. Microfilm copies of schedules are available at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., its regional archives in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Chicago, Kansas City, Fort Worth, Denver, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, state historical archives, and the Family History Library in Salt Lake City.

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## AFRICAN-AMERICAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO AMERICAN LIFE

by John P. Schmal

On November 11, we will celebrate Veteran's Day to honor those Americans, both living and dead, who have served with the United States armed forces during wartime. The contributions of such people cannot be truly appreciated until one realizes that the ranks of those who have served and died are as diverse as this country is. Of the various ethnic groups, the African Americans are no exception and, from the opening salvos of the Revolutionary War to Operation Desert Storm, they have contributed their fair share, frequently against a backdrop of segregation, discrimination, and racism.

In the Revolutionary War (1776-1783), 10,000 African Americans -- some of them slaves -- served in the continental armies, participating in the defeat of the British at several famous battles. In one case, a female African American disguised herself as a man and served in the Fourth Massachusetts Regiment. She was later cited for bravery. Black Americans also helped defend American

sovereignty in the War of 1812 and made up between ten and twenty percent of the fighting navy. On January 8, 1815, as General Andrew Jackson met the British army outside of New Orleans, six hundred Black soldiers in his ranks held their end of the line under massive British attack, then surged forward to help inflict a mortal blow on the enemy.

In the American Civil War (1861-1865), the Confederacy declared that captured Black Union soldiers would be hanged or pressed back into slavery. In spite of that declaration, 186,000 soldiers of African descent served in 150 regiments of the Union Army, making up about almost 13% of the Union army's combat manpower. Another 30,000 were in the Navy. In four years of fighting, it is believed that 37,000 African Americans died in battle or from disease. Twenty Black soldiers were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for their services in the Civil War.

In the Indian Campaigns (1866-1890), African-American soldiers  
*(Continued on page 3)*

## Popes Creek Tribute

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spiritual quest and has opened my eyes." Mary Bowden was born into servitude in 1730, the child of a white woman and a man of either African or American Indian descent, according to Wills, whose research was aided by local and park service historians. Mary Bowden served George Washington's father, Augustine Washington, as a cook, cleaning woman and family caretaker. George Washington was born at the plantation just two years after Mary Bowden and, of course, went on to become the country's first president. Washington lived at Popes Creek plantation until age 4, when his family moved to Ferry Farm near Fredericksburg, but he returned to his birthplace often as a teenager. Around 1750, Mary Bowden gave birth to a daughter, Patty, who also was raised on the Washington family plantation. Court records show Mary Bow-

den ran away from the plantation twice after giving birth to her daughter. By then, Augustine Washington Jr., George Washington's older half-brother, had inherited the estate from their father, who died in 1743.

Patty Bowden primarily served Elizabeth Washington, the eldest daughter of Augustine Washington Jr. Both women were about the same age, and Patty Bowden continued to serve her mistress after Elizabeth Washington's marriage to Alexander Spotswood, the grandson of Gov. Alexander Spotswood. Mary and Patty Bowden were eventually freed from their servitude because of their partially white lineage, and settled in Fredericksburg. Patty Bowden married, and two of her sons defended America against the British in the War

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## Juliet's Genealogy Gems

*(Continued from page 1)*

They may also be found in some local and research libraries. Marshals and Assistant Marshals were given detailed instructions on how to take the slave census (Instructions to the Marshall and the Assistant Marshall were taken from U.S. Department of Commerce, 200 Years of U.S. Census Taking: Population and Housing Questions 1790-1900 (1989), p. 23.) and

these instructions are valuable in understanding slave schedules The first column of the slave schedule lists the full name of the slaveholder. If a slave was owned by more than one person, the name of at least one owner was required. If a corporation or trust estate was the owner, the name of the trustee or corporation may be indicated. The second column shows the number of

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## African-American Contributions to American Life

took part in many of the hostilities and twenty of them were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for service above and beyond the call of duty. Several years later, the Buffalo soldiers of the 9th U.S. Cavalry Regiment fought side by side with Teddy Roosevelt's celebrated Rough Riders in Cuba during the Spanish-American War of 1898. Eight Black soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor for their role in that war. During America's participation in World War I (1914-1918), 367,000 Black Americans served their country both at home and overseas. Eventually they would comprise 11% of the troops that went overseas. The two thousand African-American soldiers of the 369th Infantry Regiment served in France along the Western Front. The 369th won the respect and admiration of their French comrades for their tenacity in fighting off incessant German attacks. The men of the [3]69th called themselves the Black Rattlers, but their German adversaries, in recognition of their ferocity, called them the Hellfighters. Suffering heavy casualties after 191 days in combat -- more than any other American unit -- the 369th was awarded 170 medals by the French for their courage and perseverance.

### Popes Creek Tribute

of 1812. Other descendants went on to fight in the Civil War. Dwight Pitcaithley, the National Park Service's chief historian in Washington, said that yesterday's ceremony is part of a growing recognition of the roles blacks have played in shaping America's history. Until recently, America's history often focused only on famous figures, he said, and not on the "common" people. "A broadened understanding of the past is coming into focus," he told the audience of about 100 people. Indeed, blacks' roles in Virginia are being more closely examined at both Thomas Jefferson's Monticello home and at Colonial Williamsburg. Monticello has added to its programming Jefferson's probable fathering of at least one child with slave Sally Hemings. Colonial Williamsburg is re-enacting the harsh treatment of blacks during Colonial times. "The purpose of the program is to educate. It's not to make anyone feel guilty or put 20th century values on it," Lorraine Brooks, a Colonial Williamsburg spokeswoman said last week. Dianne Swann-Wright, a historian at Monticello, said at yesterday's event that she and others are trying to put together the lives of not only Hemings but of some of the other slaves that Jefferson owned. To date, they have talked with more than 100 people who are descended from Hemings and other Jefferson slaves. As for the possibility of a Washington family scenario similar to the probable Jefferson-Hemings liaison, Paula S. Felder, a Fredericksburg-area historian

In the years preceding World War II, Black labor battalions in the Army were assigned to loading ships and general maintenance. When war finally came in December 1941, most African-American volunteers were initially placed into segregated Army units and denied overseas combat duty. According to Ulysses Lee of Howard University, author of "The Employment of Negro Troops," Black Americans "asked with increasing frequency for the opportunity that they believed to be rightfully theirs in the first place: the opportunity to participate in the defense of their country in the same manner ... as other Americans." Under pressure from African-American leaders and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, the military was persuaded to change its policy and, by the end of the war, 500,000 African-American soldiers had been sent to overseas duty. In all, 1,154,720 Black soldiers served in the armed forces, 909,000 of them in the Army.

At the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, a group of highly-talented, college-educated Black soldiers attended a special flying school. In April 1943, the graduates of this school, later known as the Tuskegee Airmen, crossed the Atlantic into the war zone. Flying escort for heavy bombers over European skies, the pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group flew 15,533 sorties in the course of 1,578

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who assisted Wills, said she doesn't believe Patty Bowden was fathered by a Washington family member. "No, I don't think that would be the case," she said. Robert Watson, a history professor at Hampton University, said that slavery is often a sensitive topic for both blacks and whites but that America should not be afraid to examine all aspects of its history. "Slavery is a chapter in our history," he said. "You don't start reading a book on chapter three." Wills plans to continue digging into her family's history and says she harbors no ill feelings about her family's past. "They were extraordinary people," she said. "They never passed on a legacy of hate, only one of love."

Anita Wills is a member of the African American Genealogical Society (AAGSNC) and a contributing author to the AAGSNC Newsletter and Web Site.

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**WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

Harriett A. Jackson  
Herbert Nelson Mitchell

**4TH QUARTER BIRTHDAYS**

**OCTOBER**

14 Fred Blanchard  
14 A. Chinita Trotter  
20 Shirley Evans  
24 Lisa Lee  
27 Arthur Stewart  
29 Harriett Jackson

**NOVEMBER**

8 William Reed  
14 Marcheta Mines  
15 Mignon Brown  
18 Karim Aldridge-Rand  
21 Jim Neal

**DECEMBER**

2 Jackie Stewart  
2 Albert Mayfield  
3 Herbert Nelson Mitchell  
4 Janet Keys Benson  
12 Carole Neal  
14 Samuel Golden  
14 Ranie Smith  
15 Ralph Evans  
17 Cornell Celestine

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

It's that time of year again! Membership dues should be renewed by March 31, 2000. Members who do not renew will have their name and information removed from AAGSNC's membership roster and mailing list. For your convenience, an application is included with this newsletter.

We strongly encourage members to renew and also, if you haven't yet done so, to support the society with your active participation and talents by joining one of the established committees. Your enthusiasm and creative talents will help AAGSNC to grow and achieve its goals.

COMMITTEE	CHAIRPERSON	E-MAIL
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Membership	Carole Neal	membership@aagsnc.org
Nominating	Rev. Adolph Kelly, C.G	nominate@aagsnc.org
Newsletter	Thom Allison, Editor	newsletter@aagsnc.org
Web Site	Jim Neal, Webmaster	webmaster@aagsnc.org

I am inviting you to review my genealogy tool called The Obituary Links Page at <http://www.geocities.com/cribbswh/obit/> > or its mirror site at > <http://www.cribbs.net/obit/> This page contains hundreds of links to online obituary resources, both current and archived, arranged by state and county. Secondly, there are links to cemetery inscriptions, mortality schedules, marriage, birth, and death notices. Recently, a section devoted to online surname obituary archives was added. I am looking forward to your review and hopefully that you will help me "spread the word" to the family researchers in your society. Thank you for your consideration.  
*Bill Cribbs - The Cribbs-Krebs-Creps-Kribbs Family History Page*

## African-American Contributions to American Life

and general maintenance. When war finally came in December 1941, most African-American volunteers were initially placed into segregated Army units and denied overseas combat duty. According to Ulysses Lee of Howard University, author of "The Employment of Negro Troops," Black Americans "asked with increasing frequency for the opportunity that they believed to be rightfully theirs in the first place: the opportunity to participate in the defense of their country in the same manner ... as other Americans." Under pressure from African-American leaders and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, the military was persuaded to change its policy and, by the end of the war, 500,000 African-American soldiers had been sent to overseas duty. In all, 1,154,720 Black soldiers served in the armed forces, 909,000 of them in the Army.

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In the Battle of the Bulge (December 1944), Nazi forces launched a fierce winter counterattack and broke through the Allied defenses in the area of Belgium and Luxembourg. In desperation, the American military recruited and sent 2,500 black soldiers into the First Army's counterattack to replace lost soldiers. According to Colonel John R. Ackor, these

## Juliet's Genealogy Gems

slaves. The number of the slave was entered, even if the slave was temporarily absent from the area. The owner was the person who employed the slave or on whose plantation the slave worked. The purpose of column two was to obtain the number of slaves, rather than the number of owners. The third, fourth, and fifth columns indicate the age, gender, and color of the slave. The sixth column reveals the number of fugitives from the state. This column included slaves who fled during the year and had not returned, been captured, or held for return. The seventh column displays the number of slaves manumitted or freed during the year. If an owner did not possess slaves on the first of June, no entry was made. [T]he eighth column lists deaf and dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic slaves. If a slave was imprisoned, that information was recorded, along with the conviction date. The ninth column, an additional column for the 1860 slave schedule, shows the number of slave houses. Understanding slave schedules is made easier when the researcher makes note of the number of slaves owned by an individual. Streets states that millions of slaves lived either as the sole Black inhabitant or in a small unit on small farms scattered throughout the slave states (David H. Streets, *Slave Genealogy: A Research Guide with Case Studies*. (Bowie, Maryland: Heritage Books, 1986) p. 2. ). Genovese asserts that only half of the slaves in the South lived on "plantations" with twenty slaves and only

one-fourth of the slaves lived on large plantations with fifty slaves (Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), p. 7.). To complicate matters for the researcher, slaveholders may not have lived on the land. They may have lived in another county or state. Some slaveholders employed an overseer or manager and the census taker may have reported the person who lived on the land and managed it as the slaveholder. Similarly, the administrator of an estate may be listed as the owner of the slaves. Other difficulties for the researcher are age, color, and multiple slaveholders. The age given may be an estimate, as many slaves and their owners did not know the correct age. The color of the slave had a great deal to do with the perception of the enumerator and may not have been the true color of the slave. [As a digression, this researcher has found many fugitives from the state to be mulattos and wonders if a mulatto had a greater chance to escape slavery than others did. For example, the escape of William and Ellen Craft was facilitated by Ellen's light skin. The couple masqueraded as slave and master to escape bondage. Ellen convincingly played the role of a white slaveholder traveling with a slave (William Craft, *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom: The Escape of William and Ellen Craft from Slavery*. Louisiana State

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University Press. 1999.). Lastly, it is a problem for the researcher, when a slave was owned by more than one person and the surname being studied is not recorded on the slave schedule. A popular strategy used in the study of slave schedules is to compare the number of slaves owned by a slaveholder in 1850 and 1860 to determine whether the owner acquired or lost slaves between the two census years. This strategy should be coupled or complemented by information on the owner in the federal census for those years. If the slaveholder acquired or lost slaves, there is the possibility that a record of the transaction is extant. The 1860 Madison County, Mississippi Slave Schedule, page 114 (The page number was written on the schedule by the enumerator. In some cases there is a hand written number and a stamped number. The researcher should make note of both numbers.), is the example for this article (This article has been written so that the 1860 Madison County, Mississippi Slave Schedule may be viewed separately from the article. Links have been provided when reference is made to the slave schedule. For example, when the article refers to line 12, the highlighted text reading line 12 is a link to the image.) The date of enumeration is August 3, 1860. Line 12, on the left side of the schedule, shows that the owner on the previous page has slaves living in nine slave houses. On the left side of the page, line 13, the researcher will find slaveholder Clanton. He owns twenty slaves. Clanton's slaves appear to be grouped by age in descending order. Unfortunately it is unclear whether the groups are for family units. The researcher should look at the entire slave schedule for the county, as a slaveholder may have slaves scattered throughout the county or there may be other slaveholders in the county with the same surname. Slaveholder Cheek has one Black female slave at line 15 on the right side of the schedule. This female slave is deaf and dumb. Other slaveholders enumerated are Lockett with twelve slaves, Cheek with twenty-two slaves living in five houses and Culipher with one slave. Lines 33 and 34 read "Minor Heirs Est. Greenwood Mrs. S.A. Lockett, Guardian." There are a number of slaves for this estate continuing on the next page. Information on these two lines serves as a clue to the researcher to look for probate and guardian records. Mrs. Lockett's maiden name may yield a lead. Although it is a great deal of work, the researcher should study the collateral relatives of the slaveholder. Collateral relatives consist of the families of spouses, brothers, sisters, and cousins. The researcher should look at such members of the slaveholder's family because a slave may have been

passed from one family member to another. In addition, one should look at neighboring slaveholders, as some slave families were separated and lived on nearby or adjoining plantations. There is a table at the bottom of the slave schedule that provides total figures. The information includes the total number of owners, houses, male and female slaves, and fugitives, along with numbers on those manumitted, deaf and dumb, blind, insane, and idiotic. Although Assistant Marshal Nickols had sloppy handwriting, the researcher will notice that this page has a total of forty-eight male slaves and thirty-two female slaves. These tabulations and the sometimes-random notes left by the slave counter should not be missed. Although slave schedules do not identify slaves by given or surname and may contain errors and omissions, they must not be overlooked. Slave schedules can be interpreted by corroborative information gleaned from tax lists, federal census records, deeds of gift, mortgages, Freedmen's Savings and Trust Company records, and the records of private institutions and individuals. Other corroborative information includes probate court records, which may contain the name of a buyer, and a bill of sale. These records may list the name and value of the slave. Frequently an analysis of a slave schedule in conjunction with such other records will reveal information that would not be found if each record were analyzed separately. Thorough slave research involves the examination of a variety of records, as no single record will reveal all. True family history research is not just a matter of completing a family tree, but of tracking down information and analyzing it. It is connecting a variety of data into a plausible conclusion. Thus slave schedules play a supplementary or supporting role in a family historian's

Dr. Crutchfield is a member of the African American Genealogical Society of Northern California

**The Baobab Tree** The Baobab tree, one of the largest trees in the world, is one of the few trees found on the African Savanna. Legend has it that, in a frivolous mood, the gods planted Baobabs upside down with their roots exposed to the sky. Other legends identify the Baobab tree as the one true African American Genealogical Society of Northern California Baobab Tree as its symbol. The name of the AAGSNC Quarterly Newsletter is **From the Baobab Tree. Now you can have your very own T-shirt that proudly displays the AAGSNC Baobab Tree Logo.**



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of Northern California Inc.  
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## From the Baobab Tree

### African-American Contributions to American Life

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The all-Black 761st Tank Battalion fought 183 consecutive days

Mr. Schmal is a Senior editor at a publishing company in Chatsworth, California. His hobby and passion, is that of a genealogist who specializes in African-American Southern lineages as well as Puerto Rican and Mexican lineages. He has written several articles about ethnic contributions to American life, usually military contributions or American holidays.