

Happy Holidays

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NJ-AAHGS Newsletter

New Jersey Chapter: Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, Inc.

Route of Civil Rights March Named National Historic Trail



John Lewis

A National Trail designation of the 54 mile Selma-to-Montgomery highway

will bring thousands of tourists and history enthusiasts to the two-county Alabama area. "I am excited and happy," said Rep. Earl Hilliard (D., AL), who for years championed the cause on Capitol Hill. The bill's other sponsor was rep. John Lewis (D., GA), who was beaten during a confrontation with state police on the road.

After President Clinton signed the measure, Alabama's first Black lawmaker in a century noted the spiritual and economic implications. "Spiritually, the bill recognizes and honors all of the

participants of the original march, both Black and White," said Hilliard. "It recognizes the blood, sweat and tears which were shed in both Dallas and Montgomery Counties." On March 7, 1965, aides of Martin Luther King, Jr., along with John Lewis, then a member of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), began a Selma to Montgomery march to protest the slating of Black civil rights worker Jimmie Lee Jackson and the arrest of hundreds of demonstrators who attempted to register to vote in Selma. As they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, 200 state troopers and sheriff's deputies attacked them. Thousands viewed the assault on television. A second march was attempted two days later. It was also halted.

However, on March 17, 1965, a federal court order upheld the right of King to stage a 50-mile march from Selma to Montgomery. President Lyndon Johnson federalized the Alabama National Guard and dispatched U.S. troops to accompany the demonstrators on another march that began on March 21 and ended four days later with a rally at the Alabama state capitol. Plans call for "interpretive trail displays" and other markers to dot the entire course which has received the highest designation of the U.S. Department of Transportation. (Reprinted from Jet Magazine)

The name Africa comes from the ancient Egyptian word AF-RUI-KA

PROBATE RECORDS: All records that relate to a deceased person's property after such person's death can collectively be called probate records. These may include will, letters of administration, inventories and sales of real and personal property, appointment of guardians and guardian accounts, powers of attorney related to the estate, and final settlement.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Holiday season is upon us. By the time we see each other again, a new year will have arrived - 1997. This holiday season presents the members of NJ AAHGS with a new opportunity to be thankful for having shared another year with your loved ones - whether they be your spouse, children, grand children, or close friends. Also, we have had the opportunity to share our interest in genealogy and African-American history with AAHGS members who enjoy the same pursuits. The upcoming year will enable you to start anew. You will have a fresh opportunity to visit that archive or county courthouse that can reveal so much about your family history. Or, perhaps, you can dust off those old records sitting in your closet or file cabinet, and review them with a new fervor. Maybe you can find the time to read that history book you've bought, but never opened. Hopefully, you'll get another relative or friend interested in this great hobby. That's what new years are all about - resolving to get things in order.

I wish you all a **very merry Christmas**, a **splendid Kwanzaa** and a **happy New**

Year. May God bless you.

State Historical Soc. to move

After 66 years of collecting, preserving and displaying New Jersey's history at its 230 Broadway building in Newark's North Ward, the New Jersey Historical Society will be moving from its to a new location. But fear not. The Society is setting up shop at a newly renovated facility at 52 Park Place, formerly the Essex Club Building, also in Newark. The doors of the new building should be open by June 1997. See you there!

Lest We Forget! An Important Publication

There's a great quarterly publication dedicated to the preservation of African-American history and the education of its readers. I have subscribed to this publication for the past three years, and I have never been disappointed. "Lest We Forget" is published by LWF Publications. Sandra M. Ostling is both the Editor and Publisher.

A sampling of the articles which

have appeared in past editions are as follows:

- Bass Reeves: A legendary lawman of the western frontier.
- Ninety Second Infantry Division: World War 11 Buffalo Soldiers.
- Montford Point Marines: Working and fighting on Iwo Jima.
- The Gettysburg of Indian territory: The battle of Honey Springs.
- Before the Tuskegee Airmen: National Airmen's Association of America.
- Cherokee Bill: the toughest of them all.

Interested in subscribing? Contact LWF Publications, P.O. Box 26148, Trotwood, OH, 45426, or call 513-837-1358.

Glenn D. Cunningham

The first African American Newspaper?

On March 16, 1827, **Freedom's Journal** began publication in New York City. The paper was started by John Russwurm and Samuel Cornish. Cornish left after one year, but later returned. Russwurm graduated in 1826 from Bowdoin College, in Maine, one of the first African-Americans to receive a college degree.

degree.

Dr. Williams was first to perform 'open-heart' surgery



In 1893 an African-American doctor named Daniel Hale Williams made history when he opened the chest of a man who had been stabbed in a fight, repaired the hole in the membrane surrounding his heart, and saved his life. Williams was born in Pennsylvania in 1856. Supporting himself with various jobs, he learned the barbering trade as a teenager. He later worked as an assistant to a medical doctor, who sponsored his admission to Chicago Medical School. In 1883 he opened an office in Chicago, where his practice grew. In 1891 Dr. Williams founded Provident Hospital (Chicago), the first hospital with an inter-racial staff.

A A H G S VETERAN IN THE NEWS

Billy Pruitt, our Family Reunion Coordinator, and Viet Nam era veteran, was one of three veterans interviewed for a recent Star-Ledger article on the condition of veterans in America. The other two veterans represented World War II and the Gulf War.



Pruitt was attending a Veterans Day Health Fair, where the interview took place. He served in the U.S. Army during the 60s, including 1965-66 stint in Germany. Pruitt gave his views on women in the Gulf War, the difficulty of the veterans transition upon coming home, and why the health fair was important.

NOTICE-NOTICE

In last months 'Positive Image In Profile' Dr. Gene-Ann Polk Horne was featured. The spelling of the doctor's last name was incorrect. The correct spelling is H-O-R-N-E (as in Lena Horne) - not Home. The newsletter staff would like to apologize for this error.

DEEDS OF PROPERTY

If your ancestor owned or rented land, a record of such is likely to appear in the county deed books. Slaves could not legally own land, but free African-Americans could, so these people would have generated land records. Generally, there are two indexes to the deed books. In one, the buyers (grantors) are listed alphabetically, by surname, or sometimes in chronological order. In the second, the sellers - or grantors - are similarly listed. The listings show either the date the deeds were registered, the date of the transaction, or both. Often the deed contains the name of a wife, and sometimes other relationships may be shown, especially when the transaction is a 'deed of gift.' The location of the land is described in terms of boundary lines - including waterways, roads, neighbors property lines, landmarks, etc.

KWANZAA PRINCIPLES

UMOJA (UNITY) - To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race.

KUJICHAGULIA (self determination) - To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for our selves instead of being defined, named, created for and spoken for by others.

UJIMA (collective work and responsibility) - To build and maintain our community together and make our sister's and brother's problems our problems and to solve them together.

UJAMAA (cooperative economics) - To build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses, and to profit from them together.

NIA (purpose) - To make our collective vocation the building and developing our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

KUUMBA (creativity) - To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.

IMANI (faith) - To believe with all our hearts in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

MUSEUM CELEBRATES KWANZAA ON DECEMBER 27TH

Mr. Theodore Brunson, has announced that the Afro-American Historical Society-Museum will sponsor it's annual KWANZAA celebration on Friday, December 27th. The celebration will take place at 7:00 p.m. at the Museum, 2nd floor, Greenville Public Library, at 1841 Kennedy Boulevard, in Jersey City. This Canso event is the biggest and most popular celebration of its type in Hudson County, drawing a standing room only crowd (for latecomers).

Mr. Brownstone and his staff have worked hard to ensure the success of this year's celebration. There will be African and African-American dancing; poetry reading; music; and of course the lighting of the candles. Come on out and enjoy the festivities.

From the last A A H G S meeting

A lively exchange took place at the last NJ Chapter meeting. Member participation was enthusiastic and lively. **AMANDA EDWARDS** challenged the Chapter to set up a special panel to research and prepare a special report on an African-American family. **EARL WILLIAMS** spoke about his "Uncle Buck" who was a respected and skillful blacksmith in East Orange in the 1920's. He "shoed" the horses belonging to the milk companies in the area. According to Earl, "the milkmen drove the horses up to the yard for his services. **LISA CRAWLEY** who has completed her graduate studies in Museum Science at Hampton University. Lisa has also completed her graduate project, an oral history of Inettie Banks Edwards, entitled "A Life in Newport News." Lisa provided us with interesting insight into her work. Copies of the publication are available for sale. Lisa will have order forms at the next meeting. **TED BRUNSON** gave us an update on the repair work taking place at the Museum, and upcoming Museum events.

Cohabitation Records

In North Carolina, from March 1866 to January 1868, those former slaves who lived together as man and wife before March 1866 could file a cohabitation certificate with the county clerk, who would recognize such marriages from the beginning of the cohabitation. These certificates may be found in the marriage category of some county records at the North Carolina State Archives. Most other slave states have similar records.

THE SOUNDEX SYSTEM

Most of us have heard about the Sandiest census records, but we are often intimidated by this relatively simple census research technique. There are sounded indexes for the 1920, 1910 (not all states), 1900 and 1880 censuses (only households with children under age 10 for the 1880 census). Here's how to use the sandiest records:

- Write down the last name.
 - Cross out the vowels.
 - Find the first 3 consonants.
 - Use the first letter and 3 numbers from the list
- 1= BPFV
2= CSKGJQXZ

3= DT (Ignore vowels)
4= L A,e i,o,u, w,y
5= MN and h)
6= R

For example, JONES will code as J520.

Find your ancestors fast on CD Rom

Family Tree Maker has produced a new CD which contains an alphabetical list of more than 660,000 African-American individuals who were enumerated in the 1870 federal census returns from Georgia, NC, Pennsylvania, SC, Virginia, and West Virginia., New York City, St. Louis and Baltimore. As the first U.S. census that noted all African Americans by name, the 1870 Census is a key milestone in African American research. With this CD you can look up ancestors by name without knowing what county they lived in. For the individuals listed, you will find information such as birthplace, age, and where the original census record can be found. Anyone interested in purchasing this CD should be prepared to spend \$29.95. You can call 1-800-474-1933 for purchase information.

Don't forget to pay your 1997 membership dues.

African American



Medal of Honor Winner - Indian Wars/1879

As most of us know, more than 188,000 African Americans fought in the Civil War. However, many black soldiers continued to serve in the armed forces after the war. Many served in the all-black 9th Cavalry. One who did was **Sergeant Henry Johnson** who received the Medal of Honor for heroic action while fighting Indians at the Battle of Milk River, on September 2, 1879. Sergeant Johnson voluntarily left his post and carried instructions under heavy fire to an outpost, and also carried water to the wounded.

Support Your Newsletter

Riding the rails of history

(By Betsy Peoples -Essence magazine)

Toney Cohen traveled 400 miles on foot and 400 miles by train his year, retracing the paths of runaway slaves on the Underground railroad. As he came to the end of his journey, crossing the Niagara River into Canada, he carried a bag of mixed emotions. "It was just so sad because everybody who had stayed with me through the weeks of travel were gathered at the edge and saying goodbye. I just imagined that the slaves were leaving the only homes they'd known and going to a strange place. It must have been bittersweet."

Cohen's quest began three years ago when he was researching his family tree. The search came to a standstill when he looked for census records and archival information on his slave ancestors. I order to understand more about his forebears, the 32 year old turned to books that depicted the lives of blacks during slavery. His interests lead him to an intensive study of the Underground railroad, which became the subject of his senior thesis in American Studies at American University in Washington,

D.C.

His actual journey started last May, when Cohen, eager to uncover the history of the lose network of people who helped slaves escape, set out on a 9-week trek along the Underground railroad sites from Maryland to Canada. Along the way he discovered six routes for escaped slaves through his home in Sandy Spring, Md., outside Washington. He began the journey carrying an Ethiopian walking stick, an Indian medicine bag, a first aide Kit, maps and a days worth of food. His modern companions included a Swiss army knife and a cellular telephone. He traveled by foot, horse, boat, buggy, train and boat. Once Cohen shipped himself as Amtrack freight from Philadelphia to New York, enduring 125 degree temperatures.

I DREAM OF GENEALOGY

If you've had your e-mail address listed in any public directory, you've probably been hit up for information by someone researching your family genealogy. Overall, the Internet has provided incredible opportunities for genealogists world wide, and there are plenty of services online that make seeking out

your family tree a bit less overwhelming. The Genealogy Home Page (<http://ftp.Cac.Psu.edu/sawgenealogy-full.html#searching>) is a great first step where you can get acquainted with the incredibly deep and sophisticated world of genealogy, and perhaps find contacts for your own family research.

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

NJ AAHGS past President **LLOYD WASHINGTON**, has, once again, demonstrated his commitment to our organization.

Lloyd is a frequent lecturer on historical and genealogical subjects. Most recently, he spoke before the Westfield Genealogy Club. Lloyd has donated \$25.00, part of the speaker's fee he received, to the NJ AAHGS treasurer. His donation helps our Society to remain solvent and continue projects, e.g. this newsletter. Thanks, Lloyd.

Genealogy Tip

While conducting an interview, remember that you are trying to get the other person's story, not yours, even though the other person may tell you a lot about yourself.

Afro-American Alumnus of Princeton

(from The Princeton Alums Journal)

Freed slave, missionary, trailblazer, teacher, church leader, community matriarch, **Betsy Stockton**, the first woman educated at Princeton Theological Seminary accomplished much more with her life than anyone when she was born a slave of uncertain parentage in 1798.

Betsy's mother was a slave in the household of Robert Stockton, a prominent Princeton citizen. He gave Betsy to his daughter Elizabeth, first wife of Ashbel Green, was later President of the College of New Jersey, now Princeton, University. Though Stockton served as a nurse, cook and seamstress in the Green household, Green's son and others tutored her and taught her to read.

After the Green family freed Stockton at the age of twenty, she joined Stewart and his wife in 1822 as a missionary to the Hawaiian Islands. On the island of Maui, she established schools for children and adults. She also worked as a nurse, and saved the lives of two children.

Beginning in 1835 she helped start the First Presbyterian Church of Colour

of Princeton, and taught Sabbath School. By 1837 she was teaching black children at a Princeton public school. She had earlier organized schools for Native Americans in Canada.



photo: Donald Breza, from a portrait painted by Kevin Stanton that hangs in Luce Library

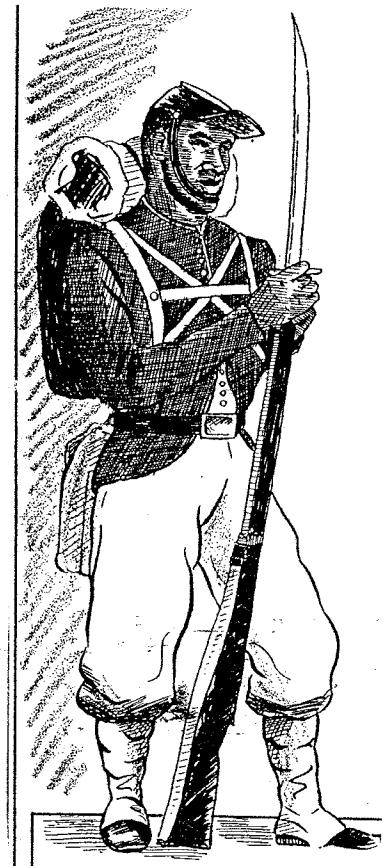
Stockton died in 1865 and is buried in the Stewart family plot in upstate New York.

NOTE: Look for another 'positive image in profile' in next month's Newsletter.

GENEALOGY TIP

One of the best ways to practice putting together the story of your ancestors is by

telling your own story. You may not think you have much to tell, but you do. Think of someone 100 years from now wondering about your life. Sit down, grab a pen or computer, and try to write about yourself.



History fact: The 62nd Regiment, United States Colored Infantry fired the last shot in the Civil War, at Brownsville, Texas, on May 13, 1865.

Celebrate KWANZAA