GREENBURY HOWARD
of old Montgomery County family

The Johnson family: a Montgomery County tradition

By Bryan D. Holt

"I think that if we were to look back far enough or long enough, we'd find that we're all related. We'd probably never get to the end."

This is what Samuel H. Johnson of Montgomery County told the AFRO, and by all indications of his own search, he's probably right. By following his family tree, Mr. Johnson has found himself to be related to former NAACP President Walter White and AFRO founder Mrs. Martha Howard Murphy, among others.

Mr. Johnson said with a laugh, "I remember when old President Johnson said that all Johnsons were related. I used to joke that whenever I saw him, I would say, 'Hey Cousin Lyn,' and if he slapped me in the mouth, I would say, 'Well, you said it!'"

Born Feb. 27, 1899, Mr. Johnson still lives on the land where he was born, along with his wife, Mrs. Annie Johnson who has quite a family tree as well.

Mr. Johnson began to trace his family line many years ago. He told the AFRO, "As a teenager, I was always interested in where my people came from and just who they were.

"I took history in school, but it was always a wonder to me that I couldn't find anything about my people. I used to hear that Africans were man-eaters, but I didn't think that was true."

Talking to his grandmothers, Mr. Johnson found that his immediate family came from Scotland. He remembers the name "Quanda," but has yet to find that particular connection.

Mr. Johnson traced his family back to their settling in Montgomery County. On his mother's side, Enoch George Howard was the pioneer in 1814, and Garrison Johnson, 1817, on his father's side.

Mr. Howard's daughter, Martha, later became Mrs. John H. Murphy Sr. It was she who saved up the $200 to buy the press to run the first AFRO-AMERICAN Newspaper in 1892.

Mr. Johnson told the AFRO, "My grandfather, Greenbury Howard, was employed by a Quaker named Arthur Stabler as a teamster for fifty cents a day. Quakers didn't believe in slavery.

"He used to always encourage the workers to buy land for their homes. They (the Quakers) loaned us the money, we bought the land. Greenbury Howard bought 10 acres from his half brother at the age of 19 for $15 an acre."

That land was handed over to Mr. Johnson after the death of his mother, Mrs. Florence Howard Johnson. He has sold five acres of it, but maintains the rest.

On his father's side of the family, two of Mr. Johnson's great aunts, born slaves, went to Liberia after emancipation, never to return. Mr. Johnson stated that Maryland was the first state from which slaves left to go to Africa.

When he and his wife visited Liberia in 1967 and 1972, they found a hotel, The Carlton, that had reportedly been built by the Johnson family and also a Johnson Street.

They visited the area where the first freed slaves landed. It was dedicated "Rhode Island." Mr. Johnson also said that there is a Liberian city called Maryland.

A former follower of Marcus Garvey, the father of the Back-to-Africa Movement, Mr. Johnson hopes that someday blacks will return to Africa.

He explained, "I believe that it was Providence (God) that brought our black people over from Africa. And I do believe that one day black Americans will go back to build up Africa."

Mr. Johnson told the AFRO that a major problem with young blacks today is that too many lack a vision. He stated, "I remember when I was a child, my mother once told me that the day will come when all nations and races will go back home.

"I was amazed and wondered why she would say such a thing, but I see it happening now with the Jews and the Greeks and others."

Mrs. Johnson, the former Annie Williams, traced her family back seven generations to her great-grandmother Mrs. Melissa Russ.

She related the story "Melissa was a slave and her master had told her that he wouldn't sell any of her children. Annie Maria Russ was born April 1, 1855. She was sold and at the slave market, her master fell dead after the bid.

"After Emancipation, Annie Maria was set free. She was at a railroad station in Taylor, N.C. when a boy came along. She asked him if he knew Melissa Russ in Wilmington. He said yes, that she was his mother. That's how the family was reunited."

Annie Maria later married Benjamin Merrick, a relative of John Merrick, one of the founders of the North Carolina Mutual Insurance Co. She was also the "Mother" of the Mt. Zion AME Church in Wilmington, N.C.

The Merricks had three children, Julia, William and Margaret.

The oldest, Julia married George Williams and taught school. She was the mother of seven, including Mrs. Johnson.

MRS. MARY B. HOWARD
wife of Greenbury Howard

Dates to remember

JUNE 3

Birth of Dr. Charles R. Drew in Washington, D.C. in 1904. He was a pioneer researcher in the field of blood plasma. During World War II he was responsible for the shipment of blood plasma to the Allies in Europe.

JUNE 4

Birth of Samuel L. Gravely in Richmond, Va. in 1922. He was the first black man to command two U.S. warships; the U.S.S. Falgout and the U.S.S. Taussig.

JUNE 5

Oliver Cromwell, black soldier who served during the Revolutionary War, receives an honorable discharge signed by George Washington, 1783.

President Jefferson Davis had black grandchildren

On Feb. 18, 1861, Jefferson Davis was elected president of the Confederacy. He believed in the superiority of the white race and that whites should not mix with blacks at all.

While Davis was off working to the detriment of black people his son, Garait, was off fathering black children in Plains County, Georgia. Some descendants of these children now live in Baltimore.

Elder Riley M. Davis, associate minister at the Baltimore First Apostolic Church, told the AFRO that his father, Lucious Davis Sr., was the son of Garait Davis. His father's mother was a "slave servant in the big house."

Elder Davis recalled, "My father was of a very light complexion and one of his sisters could pass for white, although their mother was very dark. So, you see there was a lot of integration a long time ago."

Lucious Davis was nine years old when freedom was declared. At the age of 19, he married 14-year-old Miss Mary Lou Solomon. They had 14 children of which Elder Davis is fourth.

Mr. Davis was a successful farmer who raised livestock and grew cotton until 1917. The beginning of World War One, when "the boll weevils made farming very hard."

In 1916, Elder Davis left Georgia and came to Baltimore. Beginning in November of that year, he was employed at the Sparrows Point Shipyard.

His brother, Lucious Jr., soon followed him to this city while two sisters went off to college. Lucious Davis Sr. then decided to give up farming. He sold everything and he and Mrs. Davis came to Baltimore. They lived at 1218 Druid Hill Ave.

Mrs. Davis died soon after arriving in Baltimore and her husband took her back to Americus, Georgia to be buried. Before her death, she told Elder Davis to take care of the five children younger than himself and to look after his father. (The other brothers and sisters died very young.)

One sister became Mrs. Viola Black of Gaston, Alabama; another, Miss Willie Mae Davis attended Albany State Univ.; Miss Geneva Davis attended Howard, and the youngest brother, Walter Clift, married Miss Ella Patterson. To this union were born seven children.

Lucious Davis Sr. died in 1919. Of his children, there are only three living. They are Lucious Jr., 78; Mrs. Willie Mae Griffith, Brooklyn, N.Y., 75, and Elder Davis, 82.

REV. NATHANIEL MONROE CARROLL was one of the founders of the Aged Men and Women's Home in 1869. The Rev. Mr. Carroll died Oct. 24, 1931.

N. M. Carroll Home is 106 years old

A home for the aged was founded in 1870 on East Street at the residence of the late Mrs. Matalda Wilson, a member of Sharp Street Methodist Church, by the late Rev. Nathaniel Monroe Carroll for whom the institution was named.

The N. M. Carroll Home is now located at 822 N. Carrollton Ave., with 31 residents ranging from 62 to 95-years-old.

A date has not been set for groundbreaking of the new N. M. Carroll Home that will be located at Harlem and Arlington Ave., where St. Pius Catholic School was for many years.

The new Carroll home will have accommodations for 100 senior citizens. The late Rev. Mr. Carroll was assisted by the late Rev. John H. Bruce and Mrs. Sarah Hutchins.

The home is supported by the United Methodist churches and in 1872 a building was purchased at 214-216 W. Lee St., and the Rev. Henry Carroll became the first president.

A charter was granted in 1893 and the home was incorporated under the title of the Aged Men and Women's Home of the Washington Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The Lee Street houses were sold in 1910 for $3,100 and the structure at 1620 Druid Hill Ave., purchased for $3,350. In 1928, the present site at 822 N. Carrollton Ave., was bought for $22,500 and the Druid Hill Avenue property disposed of for $5,000 which was applied to the purchase price of the present home.

When Bishop A. P. Shaw came to Baltimore in 1940 and found a $16,000 mortgage on the N. M. Carroll home long overdue, he called the district superintendents, leading pastors and laymen together and said, "Let's get rid of this debt."

The N. M. Carroll Home is a three-story brick structure with 25 rooms, sufficient to comfortably care for 35 persons, although a peak load of 45 was once reached.

The citizens residing in the home are given three meals daily, their clothing is provided and they are given adequate medical and nursing care, religious counsel and upon death, given a decent Christian burial.

The Carroll Home admits persons on an interdenominational basis. Its present enrollment includes not only Methodist, but Baptists, Catholics, Episcopalian and Seventh Day Adventists.

Dates to remember

JAN. 10

Georgia House of Representatives refuses to seat black legislator Julian Bond because of his opposition to U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War in 1966.

JAN. 11

Black sculptress Augusta Savage was commissioned to sculpture an exhibit for the World's Fair held in New York in 1939.

Augusta Building and Loan has confidence in downtown

For many years a fixture in the downtown retail district, Augusta Building and Loan Association has affirmed its confidence in the vitality of downtown Baltimore by continuing to improve its principal office at 420 North Howard Street.

New interior decoration, new furnishings and the installation of an up-to-date computer system contribute to better customer service and testify to Augusta's faith in the well-being of the inner city.

Augusta has also expanded its home mortgage lending within the city. Latest figures show that a considerable percentage of all home mortgage loans by Augusta are made on properties within the city even though Augusta's five branch offices are located outside the city limits.

The principal office on downtown Howard Street is actively helping Baltimoreans toward individual home ownership. Funds with which we make these home loans are generated through the savings of thousands of Baltimoreans whose savings accounts at Augusta benefit from Augusta's generous dividend policy in a selection of savings plans.

Each member's account at Augusta is insured up to $40,000.00 by Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation, a Government agency.

Thus savings are safe at Augusta while earning dividends computed daily for fast growth from day in to day out. Therefore, branches of Augusta Building and Loan Association are in Annapolis, Dundalk, Havre de Grace, Rosedale and Westminster.

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Bicentennial 1776–1976

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The Bicentennial: A proper observance for black Americans

By Dr. Benjamin Quarles

By Benjamin Quarles
(Reprint by permission of AFRAM '76)

My topic will be treated under three headings. First I shall briefly note the reservations blacks have had concerning any celebration of the Revolutionary War. Then I shall take note of the reasons for black participation in the Bicentennial, despite these reservations. In my concluding remarks I shall touch upon the kind of ways in which blacks might observe the Bicentennial.

In a Fourth of July address at Framingham, Massachusetts in 1860, a young black orator advanced a novel reason for the cracking of the Liberty Bell the first time it had been cracked. The bell cracked, said H. Ford Douglas, because it simply did not have enough brass to tell the lie conveyed by its inscription, **"Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."**

This quip struck a responsive chord inasmuch as the audience was made up of a group of reformers, the racially mixed Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. But the date on which this speech was given, July 4, was one which the foes of slavery made it a point of ignore, as a rule. To blacks in pre-Civil War America the Fourth of July simply was not a day for poetry and song.

While white Americans were moved to patriotic demonstrations on the 'Glorious Fourth,' the blacks were moved to bitter reflection. They could hardly fail to note the disparity between the rhetoric and the reality, between America's lofty professions of liberty and equality and the existence of slavery and the high wall of color.

The National Colored Convention of 1834 voted against holding any kind of celebration on July 4 and urged blacks not to join in public rallies.

In 1838 a black newspaper suggested that on July 4 a large slave whip should be unfurled in place of the Stars and Stripes. Another black weekly proclaimed the Fourth of July as **"the bleakest day of the year. We wish we could blot it from the calendar."**

In a Fourth of July oration in 1852 the black spokesman Frederick Douglass arrested a white audience in Rochester, New York, with the words: "This Fourth of July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn. To drag a man in fetters into the grand illuminated temple of liberty, and call upon him to join you in joyous anthems, were inhuman mockery and sacrilegious irony."

With the abolition of slavery in the Civil War, black Americans dropped their organized opposition to their celebration of the Fourth of July. But even to those blacks who did join in such post-war celebrations, their participation was likely to be more subdued than exuberant in its expression.

Just as the blacks of antebellum America were critical of celebrating July 4, so today many blacks are critical of celebrating the Bicentennial. In both cases the reasoning is much the same. How can blacks get excited over the two-hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence when they are still excluded from the full promise of American life? Blacks who are cool toward the Bicentennial point out that most whites still cling to the idea that America was meant for them, and not for blacks.

As critics of the Bicentennial point out, this attitude that blacks should remain a permanent underclass is still prevalent. It was this attitude that in 1967 led to the riots in Newark and Detroit, and to the creation by President Johnson of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders.

The full text of the Commission's report, published in March, 1968, ran to over 600 pages. Its key finding, however, was summed up in a single sentence. "This is our basic conclusion: Our nation is moving toward two societies," wrote the Commission, "one black, one white — separate and unequal."

In light of this long-continuing pattern of color prejudice, it is understandable that many blacks are decidedly cool toward the Bicentennial. They feel, in the words of Langston Hughes, that **America has never been America to them.** Grounded in harsh and bitter experience, their negative sentiments as to the Bicentennial are neither illogical nor untenable.

There is, however, an equally sound, and perhaps more persuasive, case for taking the position that the Bicentennial should be observed by blacks.

This affirmative attitude of becoming bicentennial-minded may be based on three considerations: (1) the participation by blacks in the Revolutionary War itself, (2) the role played by blacks in American life in the two centuries since the war, and (3) the concept of that war as an ongoing revolution, a continuing experience. We may view these points in turn.

Black Americans can in good conscience celebrate the Bicentennial when they contemplate the significant role of their forbears in the war that witnessed the birth of our nation. To celebrate the Bicentennial is to celebrate the efforts of those black soldiers who bore arms in that struggle. In the Revolutionary War the black people were participants, not onlookers or sideline figures.

The richly varied role of blacks in that conflict can only be suggested in this brief presentation. We can do little more than to mention a few things out of many. Not one of the points worth noting is that the involvement of blacks in the Revolutionary War went back to the incident that touched off the outbreak. This was the Boston Massacre of March 5, 1770, in which the first of the five Americans to die was a forty-seven-year-old mulatto, Crispus Attucks.

In the early weeks of the war, that is, in the Spring and Summer of 1775, blacks served in the minutemen companies at Lexington and Concord and at Bunker Hill in Massachusetts.

Blacks later were enlisted in the state militias in the northern states, and in the Continental forces. Blacks in the Continental Army saw action at Monmouth in June, 1778, the last major battle in the North, at which they comprised more than five per cent of General Washington's command.

Blacks saw military service with the allies of the Americans, the French and the Spanish. The French army that took part in the siege of Savannah in the Autumn of 1779 included 545 blacks. Recruited in Santo Domingo, these troops included the youthful Henri Christophe, later King Henri of Haiti.

In the same year (1779), the Spaniards under Bernado de Galvez began to operate against the British posts on the Gulf Coast, the soft underbelly (to use Churchill's phrase) of the British possessions in mainland America. Using a total of 373 black soldiers and officers, Galvez successfully struck at Baton Rouge, Mobile and Pensacola, thus markedly contributing to the closing of the gateway through which the British planned to strike at the western flank of the Americas.

The morale of the nearly 5,000 blacks who fought in the Revolutionary War was likely to be good, especially since many of them were former slaves who had purchased their freedom by joining the armed forces. Despite the many discriminations against them, the black soldiers regarded military service as a stepping-stone both to freedom from slavery and to advancement in civilian life after the war.

The fighting contribution of black Americans to the Revolutionary cause was not confined to action on land. Blacks were found in the naval service from the outbreak of hostilities. The navies, Continental and State, suffered from a chronic manpower shortage and hence drew no color line. The use of blacks as sailors in wartime aroused no apprehension, colored seamen having been an everyday sight in colonial America.

In the Revolutionary War the use of black pilots in the Chesapeake waters of Maryland and Virginia was not uncommon. Blacks were to be numbered, too, among the more than 20,000 seamen aboard the armada of American privateers.

Recently it has been discovered that at least two blacks served in the Continental Marine Corps, founded in November, 1775, by the Continental Congress.

The records of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania have revealed a payroll of Philadelphia's first marine company, which lists two blacks as having been signed on, one of them on August 27, 1776, and the other on October 1, 1776.

There can be no question that blacks played a substantial role in the war that won this country's independence. Their lifeblood intermingled with that of others who fought so that America might be free. Hence black Americans of these times would have good reason to commemorate the birthday of a significant historical event in which the black presence made itself felt.

The observance of the Bicentennial, however, is not confined to celebrating the Revolutionary War only. It is also an occasion to take note of the ways in which individuals, groups and communities have contributed to the building of America after she became a nation. The Bicentennial time is a good time to take note anew of those who contributed to the shaping of the American nation. Hence the observance of the Bicentennial could furnish an occasion for demonstrating afresh that blacks not only were there at the creation, but that they also were there at every step of the way since then.

Blacks helped to make America what it has become. The Afro-American stamp is indelibly etched on the United States. But of all the contributions made by black Americans (which W. E. B. DuBois describes in his THE GIFT OF BLACK FOLK), none is more worthy of note in these Bicentennial times than their passionate advocacy of human rights.

Of immeasurable importance has been the black American's unwavering efforts to implement the concepts of liberty and equality upon which this country was founded. The central theme in Afro-American history is freedom. This is the central theme in United States history as a whole. No voices however, have more consistently sounded this note than those of America's black sons and daughters.

"The American Negro is the only group in our nation that consistently and passionately raises the question to be free," wrote college president Richard R. Wright at the turn of the century. This sentiment by slave-born Wright was echoed by W. E. B. DuBois: "The black slave by his incessant struggle to be free has broadened the base of democracy in America and the world."

In their struggle for human rights and social change, black Americans have enlarged the meaning of freedom, giving it a new vitality. To them the Revolutionary ideals endured as a living tradition. These black seekers after freedom and full citizenship were lured by the language of the Declaration of Independence, particularly the pregnant phrase, "All men are created equal."

This edict of 1776 was, in truth, a revolutionary freedom document, which over the decades gave to millions the world over the vision of a more equitable social order. It is to be noted, however, that the extent to which this vision has retained its validity in the United States, much of the credit must go to Americans of African descent. For two hundred years, in season and out, they have been reechoing the Revolutionary War premise that all men were born with certain inalienable rights and that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.

Hence if the Declaration of Independence has been a lodestar for blacks, it in turn owes much to them. For liberty lies less in a proclamation than in the human heart. And no hearts and minds have been more receptive to freedom's beck and call than those of America's black sons and daughters.

In addition to observing the Bicentennial because their forbears took part in the Revolutionary War and in the subsequent shaping of America, Blacks might celebrate on the grounds that the Revolutionary War was and is an ongoing movement, a process still in ferment.

When the Founding Fathers of our nation met in Philadelphia in 1787 to draft a Constitution, they paid little attention to the rights of men as proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence. In a recent article, John Hope Franklin rightfully brings these men to task for their moral blindness as to blacks. "Having achieved their own independence," writes Franklin, "the patriots exhibited no great anxiety to extend the blessings of liberty to those who did not enjoy it."

Like the great majority of the whites of their day, the Founding Fathers subscribed to an equation of equality which did not include non-whites. They thought of black people as being "outside the political community to which the tenets of the Declaration of Independence and the state bills of rights applied." Hence the blacks of that day could hardly have construed the Revolutionary War as a social movement.

It is to be noted, however, that the ideals and goals of the Revolutionary War were tardiously humane and that they would remain a

(Continued on A-8)

AFRAM '76-1, a two day conference sponsored by the Maryland Commission on Afro-American History and Culture in October, 1975, brought together several leading scholars on Afro-American history to explore the theme, AFRO-AMERICANS AND THE BICENTENNIAL: PROSPECT AND RETROSPECT.

Funded by the Maryland Committee on the Humanities and Public Policy, the unique event designed for 90 conferees attracted over 200 persons—black and white—from throughout the State, according to Conference Director, Carroll Greene Jr. **This conference marked the first time that black citizens in any state had come together to explore their role in regard to the Bicentennial.**

The Papers and Proceedings of AFRAM '76-1 have been edited and will be printed and made available in late summer.

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J. Owen Cole
Chairman of the Board

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