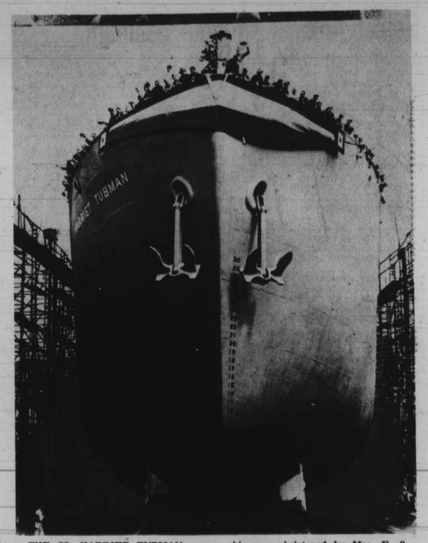
MRS. ANNIE ROSS, a distant cousin of Harriet Tubman, had the unique distinction of being the oldest living Baltimorean for many years. She died in 1955 at the age of 116. Her brother, Andrew Camphor lived to be 106 and another family member saw his 122nd birthday.

HARRIET TUBMAN, the Moses of her people, is the nation's, Maryland's, and Baltimore's most distinguished woman. From 1850 to 1857, she led 20 freedom drives that carried 300 slaves out of bondage.



THE SS. HARRIET TUBMAN was launched at South Portland, Maine on June 3, 1944. The first Liberty Ship to be named in honor of a black woman, the ship was christened by Mrs. E. S. Northup, a grandniece of Mrs. Tubman.

A LOT OF THE BUBBLY— Champagne splatters everywhere as Mrs. E. S. Northup, a grandniece of Mrs. Harriet Tubman, christens the ship named after her famous aunt. In the background is Mrs. Marie K. Stewart, also a Tubman relative, who died last April after receiving her fondest wish — an AFRO story about her Harriet Tubman family.

Harriet Tubman

In the midst of all the current fights for Women's Liberation and Black Liberation, it is fitting to remember the nation's foremost black woman liberator, Mrs. Harriet Ross Tubman.

Born in about 1821 in Bucktown, Maryland, she suffered health problems as a child, the result of much beating. A slave, she was made to work diligently under a white mistress and was never allowed a day of schooling.

Her marriage to John Tubman, a free black, gave her a new awareness of the privileges of freedom and she began to be extremely curious about legal matters.

Investigation uncovered the fact that her mother had been freed, but was never informed of that freedom. This discovery of the slaveholder's trickery strengthened Mrs. Tubman's drive to "find a way out of this whole military and legal system."

In 1849, Mrs. Tubman made her flight to freedom. A year later, she returned to Baltimore with her sister and two children. It was here that, in the face of many dangers, she began to outwit the law, slave agents, the press, and even the bloodhounds.

Realizing the beauty of her own freedom, Mrs. Tubman made it her lifetime work to lead others to freedom. She is affectionately known as "The Moses of the Black People."

Mrs. Tubman's system, The Underground Railroad, was highly successful, leading over 300 slaves to freedom. She carried a pistol under her skirts while leading blacks through the wilderness. If anyone got scared and decided that they wanted to turn back, Mrs. Tubman offered the alternative to "move or die." She was a firm believer in the words of the old spiritual, "And before I be a slave, I'll be buried in my grave."

Using the North Star to guide her up the Eastern Shore and across the Mason-Dixon line, Mrs. Tubman made over 18 trips into Maryland to get slaves between the years 1850 and 1857.

A nurse in the Union Army, 1862-1863, she took care of black men and women, preparing life-saving root medicines, and aiding those seized with smallpox and malignant fevers.

She became director of the Intelligence Service as a spy assigned to the Department of the South.

After the war, Mrs. Tubman went to Auburn, N.Y. where her parents lived. There she opened the Harriet Tubman Home for the Aged and Indigent. She died there on March 10, 1913.

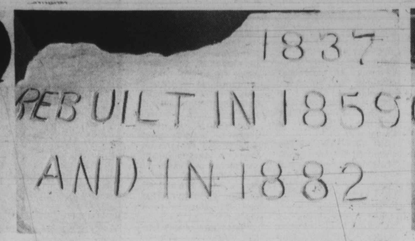
Upon her death, she was awarded a medal from Queen Victoria for her humanitarian work. The citizens of Auburn erected a public monument in her memory and in 1944, the United States Maritime Commission named a ship after her.

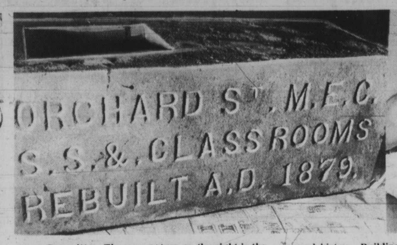
The First Colored People's Baptist Church was started in an old school house near Belair Market in East Baltimore in the year of 1836. Moses Clayton, an ex-slave who had come from Norfolk, Va. in 1834, was installed as pastor and five "sober, discreet persons" were elected to the church's first Board of Trustees. Now simply known as The First Baptist Church, the present site (Caroline and McElderry Sts.) was purchased in 1875. Five years later, the church building was completed at the total cost of $16,500. The church now maintains one of the largest and most dedicated memberships in the city. The Rev. Dr. Leroy Fitts is the pastor.

SEVEN GENERATIONS ago, this family photo would have also featured the great liberator, Harriet Tubman. Her Baltimore descendants shown are Front row (L to R) Kevin Thomas, 5; the late Mrs. Marie K. Stewart; Marshall C. Booze III, 2; Vanise T. Joy, 6; and Miss Bertha M. Briscoe. Back row (L to R) Marshall C. Booze Jr., Corporal Jonathan L. Booze, Staff Sgt. Harold E. Stewart, Miss Anita Stewart, Harold Stewart Jr., 14 months; Mrs. Mamie L. Stewart, Mrs. Annabelle Cherry, Charles Keene, Anthony Booze, Louis Keene, Miss Lucia Wright, Miss Constance Thomas, and Mrs. Dorothy S. Booze.

(AFRO Staff Photo by Roman Hankewycz)

COLONIAL DRESS will be the order of the day when the Committee for the Preservation of Orchard Street Church Inc. opens the Bicentennial Season soon. Director of Programs, City Councilwoman Mary B. Adams is shown in front of the old slave church built in 1827, wearing her authentic copy of a pre-Civil War frock, fashioned, in pink and white floral cotton and white gusset and flared sleeves.





TWO BICENTENNIAL HIGHLIGHTS are the Orchard Street Church cornerstones shown off above by Mrs. W. A. C. Hughes, president of the Committee for the Preservation of Orchard Street Church and Mrs. Chessie Brailey, chairman of the Bicentennial Gift-Shop Committee. The cornerstone on the right is the most recent discovery in the old slave church's unusual history. Building began on the church in 1828 and was completed in 1837.

Overcoming neglect: building a present and a future

By Carroll Greene, Jr.
Acting Executive Director, Md. Commission on Afro-American History & Culture

" . . . we are now forced to wrestle with the dire consequences of neglect."

W. E. B. Dubois

One of the more positive aspects of this Bicentennial era, and especially this Bicentennial year, is that it provides a long-needed impetus and momentum to accomplish some major historical and cultural projects of profound significance to the black community.

It is a welcome turn of events, for truly we had arrived at the "eleventh hour" where many of the remnants of black history were about to be lost forever. Encouraging, to be sure, but this is no millenia.

Preservationists must continue to work hard, others must join them and their concern must be conveyed to public officials.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Two invaluable historic sites and structures — the Mount Moriah Church in Annapolis, and the two buildings of the Orchard Street Church illustrate my point.

These buildings have been entered in the U.S. register of Historic Places. Both are symbols of struggle and the overcoming of tremendous odds, in the first instance when they were originally built and, in the second instance, when they were being threatened by vandalism and demolition.

But it is not enough merely to save old buildings; they should be preserved, maintaining their architectural integrity, and put to contemporary uses, to meet present day needs.

The struggle to save these buildings also provides an invaluable lesson for all who would protect historic structures.

Research is the key, for it must be done, and thoroughly done, to document the authenticity of a building. In other words, every effort must be made to separate fact from hearsay and legend. These sometimes provide a feasible place to begin, but evidence must rest on researched documentation.

For example, the basic structure of the Orchard Street Church should not be disturbed until a team of specialists — archaeologists, architectural historians, paint specialists and others can do this work, so that the full history of the Orchard Street Church can be preserved and told, before thoughtless renovations irrevocably destroy this basic kind of evidence.

The same is true of Mount Moriah in Annapolis, though to a far lesser degree, since this building functioned as a place of worship until January, 1973, and it is a considerably smaller structure.

An important lesson was learned from both of these experiences: if you want to protect a building, don't vacate it, don't abandon it.

A VARIETY OF PROJECTS

In St. Mary's County, I discovered a fascinating cookbook: "Three Hundred Years of Black Cooking in St. Mary's County." The original idea had come from black women of the county, who suggested this project to the St. Mary's County Bicentennial Committee.

Such delicacies as stuffed ham (originated in St. Mary's County), oyster stew, sour milk biscuits, Maryland apple cake and many others abound in this attractive book. The cookbook contains 122 pages of recipes and sells for $4 plus tax. It is available from the Citizens for Progress, Rt. 1, Box 25, Leonardtown, Md. 20650.

In Hagerstown, Mrs. Marguerite Doleman, who has been researching black history in Washington County for the past three years has made an impressive collection — five rooms full — of furniture, costumes, and household items used by blacks in the past.

Mrs. Doleman continues to research local black history in the hope that some day there will be a local facility where these artifacts can be shown to the public.

An old school house in Dorchester County in Christ Rock will serve as a local center for meetings and exhibits, according to William H. Kiah, president of the Christ Rock Improvement League. The former Stanley Institute opened its doors for pupils in 1868.

The Banneker Memorial Foundation of Oella, Baltimore County, headed by the Rev. Roland Howard, has been carrying on a valiant effort to establish a permanent memorial to Benjamin Banneker at Mt. Gilboa Chapel, an 1859 stone church which sits on a quarter acre adjoining the former Banneker farm.

In Carroll County, over 400 people attended a dinner-dance held on May 21 by former students of Moton School. Money was raised to give scholarships to three black students.

In Frederick County, Kathleen Snowden is writing a book on blacks in Maryland. In May, there was a Black Bicentennial Review held with talent provided by community people.

As part of Frederick's "Bell and History" celebration the weekend of June 26-27, there was a free exhibit of local black artifacts and history, at the Frederick Community Information Center, 100 South Market Street.

In Montgomery County, two commemorative programs are planned; one in July, "Blacks and the Bicentennial in Montgomery County" to be sponsored with cooperation of the churches.

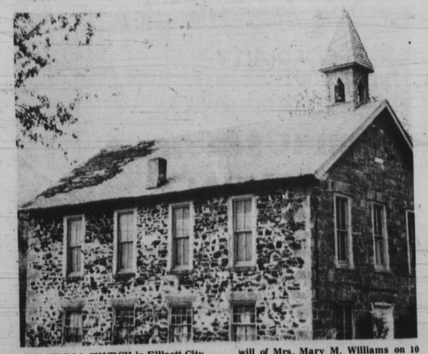
The fall program will specifically involve the youth. For further information on either of these activities call Dr. James Moone in Rockville, 762-1822 (evenings).

In the historic district of Annapolis, a walking tour will include, in addition to Mt. Moriah, the Asbury M.E. Church, an early private school run by the Methodist Church and the Gallilean Fisherman, the homes of leading black merchants of the nineteenth century and the city docks where Alex Haley's ancestor arrived as a slave from Africa in 1767.

An exhibition "Look Back, Ponder and Move On" — a photographic memoir of black history in Anne Arundel County is being featured at the AFRO-AMERICAN Bicentennial Center, 20 Dean Street, Annapolis.

HISTORIC OCCASION — The Committee for the Preservation of Orchard Street Church Inc., receives $200,000 from the State of Maryland on the occasion of the signing of the bill by C. v. Marvin Mandel at the Slave House in Annapolis, May, 1976. The old church, built by slaves in 1827, received the funds for restoration through the efforts of Senator Clarence M. Blount. (L to R) standing, Mrs. Mary Carter Smith, Restoration Committee and board member; Glasco Ryales, board member and general manager; Mrs. W. A. C. Hughes, president; Leon Joseph Clayton, member, Board of Treasurers; Mrs. Mary B. Adams, director of programs; Mrs. Troy Brailey, chairman, Gift Shoppe Committee; Elizabeth Murphy Oliver, chairman, Restoration Committee; Sen. Blount. Seated (L to R) Senate President Steny Hoyer; Gov. Mandel handing the pen to Mrs. Hughes and John Hanson Briscoe, leader of the House of Delegates.

FAMED OLD CHURCH which dates pre-Civil War, 1837, Orchard Street Church is a fine example of Gothic architecture although built by torchlight held by the wives of the dedicated slaves. Underneath are tunnels used in the Underground Railroad freedom movement led by Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman.



MT. GILBOA CHURCH in Ellicott City is reportedly the oldest black church in the Baltimore metropolitan area. It was built by slaves set free by the 1786 will of Mrs. Mary M. Williams on 10 acres of the Mt. Gilboa Tract. A "Coloured Meeting House" formerly stood where the present structure now stands.

Dates to remember

JULY 4
200th birthday of the United States Bicentennial. Louis Armstrong, King of Jazz born in New Orleans 1900.

JULY 10
Mary McLeod Bethune, educator and leader born in South Carolina, 1875.

JULY 12
Dr. Lillie Mae Jackson known as "Baltimore's greatest lady" died in 1975.

JULY 21
Mary Church Terrell organizes National Association of Colored Women 1896, Washington, D.C.

JULY 24
Baltimore School Board fires Dr. Roland Patterson 1975.

JULY 26
President Harry S. Truman ends segregation in Armed Forces 1948.
U.S. Postal System begins 1775.

JULY 27
Martin Luther King Sr., after 44 years as pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia retired in 1975.

JULY 28
World War I began 1914

JULY 31
Walter Carter pioneer human rights leader dies 1971.

AUGUST 5
President Lyndon Johnson signs Voting Rights Bill 1965.

AUGUST 8
Matthew A. Henson Arctic Explorer born in Baltimore 1866.

AUGUST 10
Richard Nixon refusing to repent resigns presidency 1974.
Gerald Ford takes oath as president.

AUGUST 13
First issue of the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers hit the street in 1892.

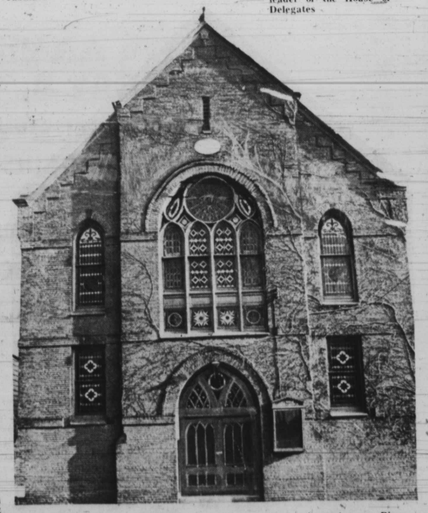
AUGUST 23
National Negro Business League organized 1900.

AUGUST 27
W. E. B. DuBois, historian and freedom fighter dies 1963.

AUGUST 28
March on Washington 1963.

SEPTEMBER 1
George Washington Carver begins career at Tuskegee, Ala. 1896.

SEPTEMBER 3
Frederick Douglass escapes slavery 1838.



CENTURY-OLD MT. MORIAH IN ANNAPOLIS stands as a mute reminder of the job yet to be done to preserve historic buildings and sites. The building may yet become Bicentennial Center on the black and Indian heritages for all Marylanders. But strong citizen support is needed.

3 JUL 3