—Old slave church

(FROM PAGE ONE)

servation of Orchard Street Church, received the plaque from the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The struggle of long years ended when Mayor Schaefer and Housing Commissioner Robert C. Embry decreed that the building would be saved from being torn down.

The keys were given to Mrs. Hughes in August 1975, but the pre-Civil War structure remained the property of the city of Baltimore.

The church also noted another milestone during the Bicentennial year when General Manager Glasco Ryales discovered the underground tunnel which had been talked about since its closing over 100 years ago.

Dr. Quinroe will be working in the tunnel researching soil and bricks and articles and the building as a whole to determine age and types of materials.

The tunnel is protected by a steel door given by the Bethlehem Steel Corporation.

The only black monument in Baltimore listed on the United States Register, the church has been assigned an armed security guard around the clock in a certificate signed by Police Commissioner Donald Pomerleau.

That there was an underground escape route for slaves at Orchard Church and in other churches in the vicinity was recorded as far back as 1939 in AFRO stories and a half century earlier in Bethel AME church history.

Further history was revealed by Baltimore relatives of Harriett Tubman who recalled in an AFRO story how the "Moses of her people" resided with them during her many trips here on her Underground Railroad.

Also highlighting the church's 1976 events was the gift of an original newspaper clipping dated December 1, 1877

Given to Orchard Church by the owner, Ernest Barnes, a Department of Education official, the clipping detailed the life history in the obituary of Orchard Church Founder Father Truman Pratt.

Mayor Schaefer in a recent statement has assured that the historic church will be restored "first class".

Through efforts of staunch supporter State Senator Clarence Blount the 1976 General Assembly okayed a $200,000 grant to begin restoration.

A contractor for the city of Baltimore completes today, Friday, the Gift Shop inside the main building off Orchard Street.

The three houses along side the church will be completely revamped by March into offices and a caretaker's residence.

The life of Truman Pratt and his establishing the church is told thus in the 1877 clipping found by Mr. Barnes:

(From a Biographical Sketch in Possession of the Family)

"It is stated that Truman Pratt was born March 22, 1775, at Hild's Light on West River near Hope Chapel, Anne Arundel County, Md.

"Truman Pratt was a slave. His first master was Col. Howard of Revolutionary fame, who bought him for his son, John Howard, with which son, Pratt was present at the Battle of North Point.

"After the Battle of North Point, Truman was sold to John Roy, who kept a hardware store, corner of Baltimore and Holliday Sts., from whom he ran away to Boston, and for several years following a seafaring life, but getting homesick returned to Baltimore.

"Here through negotiations while he was yet hiding, and the good offices of Mr. Brice, banker, at the corner of Charles and Lexington Sts., the slave purchased his freedom from Mr. Roy and worked out the purchase money on the farm of Mr. Brice. Truman had at times worked at shoemaking.

"When he gained his freedom, he became a cartman and pursued that avocation in his city.

"He was early given to Religious Exhortation among the Colored People, and began regular prayer meetings in 1825. Truman Pratt was always regarded as the founder of the church, and he died within the shadow of its walls.

"The church was rebuilt in 1859, and the congregation is one of the largest in the city.

"When it was founded Truman Pratt was 62 years of age. He continued to be a Class Leader until 1868, when on account of failing eyesight succeeded by total blindness, he resigned after 40 years as a Leader.

"He continued up to the time of his death an honored member of the Board of Trustees."

Mandel budget Wednesday

Governor Mandel will submit the 1977-78 Budget to the Maryland General Assembly on Wednesday, Jan. 19 the day he also will deliver the State-of-the-State Message to a Joint Session of the General Assembly.

As is customary, Governor Mandel along with State fiscal officials will conduct a budget briefing for members of the news media on the previous day, Tuesday, Jan. 18, at 11 a.m.

All material from the briefing will be attributed and quoted directly.

Although the briefing is on the record, it is understood that the embargo time on the budget is to be strictly observed.

Release time will be set at the budget briefing. The briefing is open only to members of the news media.

The State-of-the State Message on the following day will be for release at 2 p.m. the hour at which Governor Mandel will deliver the message to the Assembly.

HUD, Md. realtors okay fair housing agreement

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Maryland Association of Realtors signed a voluntary affirmative fair housing marketing agreement Thursday at a ceremony held at the HUD Baltimore area office.

The Maryland Association of Realtors is one of the first state organizations in the nation to enter into such an agreement.

Executing the agreement on behalf of HUD were James H. Blair, assistant secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity; William J. Pelle Jr., representing Philadelphia Regional Administration; Everett H. Rothschild, director of the Baltimore Area office, and George O. Walkeer, representing the Washington, D.C. area office.

James P. O'Connor, president of the Maryland Association of Realtors, signed the agreement on behalf of the realtors.

Also in attendance at the ceremony was Maxine B. Cunningham, director of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity for the HUD Baltimore area office.

The Fair Housing Marketing agreement outlined social policies to guarantee the rights of all persons to freedom of choice when purchasing or renting housing regardless of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

* * *

In endorsing this agreement the Maryland Association of Realtors commits itself to encouraging its 18-member boards of realtors throughout the state to become parties to a similar document on the local level.

Local realtor boards that have executed affirmative marketing agreements include the Greater Baltimore Board of Realtors, the Southern Maryland Board of Realtors, the Greater Hagerstown Board of Realtors, the Coastal Board of Realtors of Maryland, the Montgomery County Board of Realtors, the Howard County Board of Realtors and the Harford County Board of Realtors.

Under the local agreements the boards are establishing programs to specifically inform the minority community of homes listed for sale or rent by realtors.

They also stress the services offered by realtors and the availability of housing and brokerage services on a nondiscriminatory basis.

This action by the state association is in support of a similar agreement adopted by the National Association of Realtors on Nov. 11, 1975.

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