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THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL: RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SLAVE LABOR

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, NOVEMBER 7, 2007

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THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL: RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SLAVE LABOR

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2007

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 1:00 p.m., in Room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Robert A. Brady (chairman of the committee) Presiding.

Present: Representatives Brady, Capuano, Gonzalez, Davis of California, Davis of Alabama, Ehlers, Lungren, and McCarthy.

Staff Present: Liz Birnbaum, Staff Director; Teri Morgan, Deputy Chief Counsel; Diana Rodriguez, Professional Staff; Matt Pinkus, Professional Staff/Parliamentarian; Kyle Anderson, Press Director; Kristin McCowan, Chief Legislative Clerk; Matthew DeFreitas, Staff Assistant; Fred Hay, Minority General Counsel; Bryan T. Dorsey, Minority Professional Staff; and Salley Collins, Minority Press Secretary.

The CHAIRMAN. I would like to call the hearing on the United States Capitol Construction: Recognizing the Contribution of Slave Labor to order. And I would like to make my opening statement.

The United States Capitol is a well-known symbol of freedom and liberty, yet the stories of America's slaves who built the symbol have been omitted from our history. Only a few documents remain to piece together the story. Whether it is Treasury Department pay slips at the National Archives or photos from the Architect of the Capitol's archives, we have evidence that slave laborers toiled in a harsh environment. Today we are here to shed some light to the true laborers, African American slaves.

While the story of Philip Reid has been documented—he is best known to be the mastermind in casting and placing the Statue of Freedom atop the Capitol Dome—there are countless other slaves whose stories are untold. These stories are in the quarries of Stafford County, Virginia, where the most burdensome and back-breaking labor was cutting stone with pickaxes. Their stories are in the sawmills where pit and stone sawing were grueling jobs. These slave laborers have been lost to the ages, but their skills and craftsmanship endure.

The next time you walk through the Nation's Capitol, pause for a moment and reflect on the hardships these men must have endured. Without modern-day equipment, equipped with only pickaxes and saws, think about the intensity and hardship these slave

laborers faced. Take the time to marvel and appreciate the strenuous work that created the beautiful columns in National Statuary Hall. These quarried stones, bricks and mortar and hand-crafted carpentry continue as a living history of the slaves who fashioned them.

During today's hearing, we will hear one panel comprised of the Slave Labor Task Force members, on their recommendations of how we move forward to secure a befitting memorial. The second panel of historians will provide background information and further insight into this untold chapter of American history.

No piece of legislation or memorial stone will compensate for those who labored under slavery. A memorial, a commemorative plaque or exhibit will never right the wrongs of the past, but it could serve as a reminder of the story behind the significant contribution of an oppressed people. And it will serve for generations to come as a reminder that freedom and liberty are not always free.

I would like to thank all of today's panelists for coming before us today, and I look forward to your testimony. And I now would like to recognize the Ranking Member Mr. Ehlers for his opening statement.

[The statement of Mr. Brady follows:]

Opening Statement of Chairman Robert A. Brady

Hearing on "The Construction of the United States Capitol: Recognizing the Contributions of Slave Labor"

Wednesday, November 7, 2007

- The United States Capitol is a well known symbol of freedom and liberty. Yet the stories of the American slaves who built this symbol have been omitted from our history. Only a few documents remain to piece together their story. Whether it's Treasury Department pay slips at the National Archives or photos from the Architect of the Capitol's archives, we have evidence that slave laborers toiled in a harsh environment. Today, we are here to shed some light to the true laborers, African American slaves.

- While the story of Philip Reid has been documented -- he is best known to be the mastermind in casting and placing the Statue of Freedom atop the Capitol Dome -- there are countless other slaves whose stories are untold. Their stories are in the quarries of Stafford County, Virginia, where the most burdensome and back-breaking labor was cutting stone with pick axes. Their stories are in the saw mills where pit and stone sawing were grueling jobs. These slave laborers have been lost to the ages, but their skill and craftsmanship endures.

- The next time you walk through our Nation's Capitol, pause for a moment and reflect on the hardships these men must have endured. Without modern day equipment, equipped with only pick axes and saws, think about the intensity and hardships these slave laborers faced. Take the time to marvel and appreciate the strenuous work

that created the beautiful columns in National Statuary Hall. These quarried stones, bricks and mortar, and hand-crafted carpentry, continue as a living history of the slaves who fashioned them.

- During today's hearing, we will hear panel 1- the slave labor task force members, on their recommendations of how we move forward in securing a befitting memorial. The second panel, the historians, will provide background information, and further insight into this untold chapter of American History.

- No piece of legislation or memorial stone will compensate for those who labored under slavery. A memorial, a commemorative plaque, or an exhibit, will never right the wrongs of the past; but will serve as a reminder of the story behind the significant contributions of an oppressed people. And it will serve for generations to come as a reminder that freedom and liberty are not always free, but that the will of the human spirit prevails.

- I would like to thank all of today's panelists for coming before us today. I look forward to your testimony. I now recognize Ranking Member Ehlers for 5 minutes for his opening statement.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for that beautiful statement you made. I thank you very much for convening today's hearing to discuss the use of slave labor in building the Capitol.

It is easy to forget, as we craft legislation with a goal of preserving and protecting our freedom, that the very floors and walls that surround us were constructed by those who knew no liberty. The recognition of slaves as an important part of the fabric of our Nation's history is long overdue, and I am pleased that this committee is able to play a role in that effect.

Recently I had the opportunity to climb the Capitol Dome with some friends, and, as most of you know, it is constructed of cast iron, incredibly heavy cast iron, and I couldn't imagine how that was done back 150 years ago. And how it was done, I know that horses and pulleys were used. But even so, it is incredible work to move all that cast iron in place and hang it appropriately and accurately along with the stone laying that you mentioned, Mr. Chairman. It is just an unimaginable amount of work done by people who, as I say, did not know liberty at that time.

Our Nation still bears the scars of slavery, and we will never completely recover from its impact. Rather than try to forget what transpired, we must honor the sacrifice of those brave men and women who gave so much to our Nation even when they were told they had no worth of their own. My hope is that today's proceedings will be an important step in that process, and that we may work towards a fitting tribute to memorialize the contribution of slave labor in the construction of our Nation's Capitol.

We are joined today by Congressman John Lewis. In addition to being the Chairman of the Slave Labor Task Force, Representative Lewis is a most distinguished pioneer in the civil rights movement, and we are honored and delighted that he could join us.

Just recently he came to my hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and spoke at the Ford Museum about his experiences. Incredibly eloquent, meaningful, and I and many in the audience sat there with tears streaming down our cheeks as we listened to his moving words.

We also have with us another task force member, former Congressman J.C. Watts. He also caused tears to fall down my cheeks when he left the House of Representatives. He was such a great Congressman and contributed so much. But I also have to acknowledge that he placed his family above his own personal desires and our desires, and I commend you for that.

Mr. WATTS. Thank you.

Mr. EHLERS. To each of the task force members, I thank you for the tremendous work that you have done in putting together this report. I am extremely pleased with the extensive and well-thought-out recommendations it contains, which include additional training for the Capitol Guide Service on this topic and an on-line resource for historians and scholars on the use of slave labor in the Capitol. I am impressed with your work. I look forward to receiving additional information today on your findings.

Thank you very much, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

[The information follows:]

Opening Statement

[After Chairman Brady's Opening Statement]

I thank the Chairman for convening today's hearing to discuss the use of slave labor in building the Capitol. It is easy to forget, as we craft legislation with the goal of preserving and protecting our freedom, that the very floors and walls that surround us were constructed in part by those who knew no liberty. The recognition of slaves as an important part of the fabric of our nation's history is long overdue, and I'm pleased that this Committee is able to play a role in that effort.

Our nation still bears the scars of slavery, and we will never completely recover from its impact. Rather than try to forget what transpired, we must honor the sacrifice of those brave men and women who gave so much to our nation, even when they were told they had no worth of their own. My hope is that today's proceeding will be an important step in that process, and that we may work towards a fitting tribute to memorialize the contribution of slave labor in the construction of our nation's Capitol.

We are joined today by Congressman John Lewis. In addition to being the Chairman of the Slave Labor Task Force, Rep. Lewis is a most distinguished pioneer of the civil rights movement, and we are honored and delighted that he could join us. We also have with us another Task Force member, former Congressman J.C. Watts. Welcome back Congressman, it is a great pleasure to have you appear before us today on this important issue.

To each of the Task Force members, I thank you for the tremendous work that you have done in putting together this report. I am extremely pleased with the extensive and well-thought out recommendations it contains, which include additional training for the Capitol Guide Service on this topic and an online resource for historians and scholars on the use of slave labor in the Capitol. I am impressed with your work, and I look forward to receiving additional information today on your findings. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Anybody else have an opening statement?

Hearing none, then, I would like to welcome our panelists, the Honorable John Lewis, United States House of Representatives, Georgia Fifth District; the Honorable Blanche Lincoln, United States Senator, Arkansas; the Honorable J.C. Watts, former Representative from Oklahoma. And I am not sure that I cried when you retired, but I am sorry—I do miss him; Dr. Bettye Gardner, professor associate for the study of African American life and history, Coppin University; Mr. Currie Ballard, task force member; and Ms. Sarah Davidson, task force member.

I ask that the panelists summarize their statements within the initial 5 minutes allotted to the witnesses. Without objection, all written statements from witnesses will appear in the record of the hearing.

We will start with Congressman Lewis, and then Senator Lincoln and move down the line.

In Philadelphia we have a major newspaper, the Philadelphia Inquirer, and they do profiles, and in the profiles they ask certain people, what their likes & dislikes are, what they read, what is on the bed table, what their favorite movies are. And they also asked who are your heroes. And it was about 7, 8 years ago, I was only here for a couple years, and I mentioned Mr. John Lewis as my hero. And I appreciate and thank you for participating today. And I would like to open with you, sir.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. JOHN LEWIS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA

Mr. LEWIS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for those kind words.

Chairman Brady and Ranking Member Ehlers, thank you for hosting me in Grand Rapids. And, other Members, thank you for your leadership and for calling this important hearing today.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize other members of the Slave Labor Task Force at the table with me. As Chairman of the task force, I would like to thank each and every member for their hard work and dedication to bringing the truth to light about the use of slave labor in the building of the Capitol.

Mr. Chairman, imagine building the Nation's Capitol with your own two hands. Imagine in Washington the oppressive summer.

The CHAIRMAN. Excuse me, sir. I hate to interrupt you, but we want to hear you. Would you please just push that button to turn your microphone on?

Mr. LEWIS. Thank you very much, sir. I don't get a chance to testify too much.

Many years ago when I was much younger, I had all my hair and a few pounds lighter, I testified in a few courts, but I don't get to testify on this side of the table.

But, Mr. Chairman, imagine building the Nation's Capitol with your own two hands. Imagine in Washington oppressive summer heat, to toil under the sun without the help of a crane, a lift, without any of the modern tools that we have today; to fight through the bone-chilling winter and to shiver through the chilling days of January as you cut, chisel and pull massive stone out of a quarry to build the foundation, the base of this Nation's Capitol.

This Capitol, this symbol of our democracy, was not built overnight. It was not built by machine. Laborers, including African American slaves, struggled to erect this massive building brick by brick, stone by stone. Mr. Chairman, thanks to the report by the Architect of the Capitol titled History of Slave Laborers in the Construction of the United States Capitol, we have now compiled and documented the work of African American slaves in the construction of the Capitol. We now know for certain that African American slaves were used to construct our Nation's Capitol. This building, from which we project the ideas of freedom, democracy, and, in my own mind, that idea, that concept of the beloved community, the interracial democracy, stands grounded in a foundation laid by slaves.

We look back today not to open old wounds, but to ensure that we tell the story, the complete story, the whole story of those slaves so their toils are never forgotten. Slavery is a part of our Nation's history of which we are not proud; however, we should not run away or hide from it. The history of the Capitol, like the history of our Nation, should be complete.

As thousands of visitors walk through our Nation's Capitol, they leave without knowing the true history of its construction. As visitors walk through the halls of the Nation's Capitol Building, this building, they do not see anything that tells the story of African American slaves who have built this magnificent building; no drawings, no murals, no statues, nothing. We cannot allow our citizens to leave without an appreciation for the efforts of slaves who helped build our "Temple of Freedom."

The mandate of the Slave Labor Task Force is to study and recognize the contribution of enslaved African Americans in building the U.S. Capitol. Mr. Chairman, we have accomplished the first part of this mandate. We have a study, and we know the facts. Mr. Chairman, the time is now to commemorate what for too long has been unrecognized. It is time to commemorate the role of slave laborers in the construction of the Capitol. As Chairman of the Slave Labor Task Force, I am proud of the recommendation we are making today, and I ask that we will all work to ensure that these recommendations are implemented without delay.

In conclusion, I will request that the study and recommendation be submitted in the record. And I thank the Chairman for his leadership and for holding this hearing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Lewis.

[The statement of Mr. Lewis follows:]

Chairman Brady, Ranking Member Ehlers, thank you for your leadership and for calling this important hearing today. I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize the other members of the Slave Laborers Task Force at this table with me....As Chairman, I would like to thank each and every member for their hard work, and dedication, to bringing the truth to light about the use of slave laborers in the building of the Capitol.

Mr. Chairman, imagine building this nation's Capitol with your own two hands. Imagine in Washington's oppressive summer heat, to toil under the sun without the help of a crane, a lift or any of the modern tools we have today. To fight through the bone-chilling winter, and to shiver through the blustery days of January, as you cut, chiseled and pulled massive stones out of a quarry to create the foundation, the base, of this Nation's Capitol. This Capitol, this symbol of our democracy, was not built overnight, was not built by machines. Laborers, including African-American slaves, struggled to erect this massive building brick by brick, stone by stone.

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We look back today, not to open old wounds, but to ensure that we tell the story of those slaves so their toils are never forgotten. Slavery is part of our Nation's history of which we are not proud. However, we should not run away or hide from it. The history of the Capitol, like the history of our Nation, should be complete. As thousands of visitors walk through our Nation's Capitol, they leave without knowing the true history of its construction. As visitors walk through the halls of this building, they do not see anything that tells the story of African-American

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[The information follows:]

The CHAIRMAN. I would also like to recognize Zach Wamp, Member of Congress, from the great State of Tennessee. Thank you.

Senator. Senator Lincoln.

STATEMENT OF BLANCHE LINCOLN, A UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF ARKANSAS

Senator LINCOLN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And to Chairman Brady and Ranking Member Ehlers, who I served with in Congress here in the House, I want to thank you all for holding this hearing today to examine what we all believe is a very important issue that has gone unrecognized for far too long.

The eloquent statement of my friend and former colleague John Lewis, so grateful to his passion as well as, I think, the way he presents our responsibility here to make sure that we complete history, is very, very important. And I, too, was delighted to have Congressman Lewis in Arkansas as we dedicated Central High and the incredible place that it holds in history. And I think that as members of the task force, that is what we want to see happen here is to make sure that there is a place in history where these toils and certainly talents are recognized.

Even though our majestic Capitol has served as a meeting place for both the House of Representatives and the United States Senate for nearly two centuries, it was only more recently that the public attention has been given to the fact that slave laborers were involved in constructing the building, which is the center of our legislative branch of government. And, of course, that was discovered through some old records that were actually in the Architect's office.

As a member of the task force to study the contribution of slave laborers in the construction of the Capitol, I am honored and humbled to take part in this process to move forward the recommendations to honor and recognize slave laborers who were instrumental in constructing the building which is recognized as a symbol of freedom and democracy here at home and certainly around the world.

Here the hopes and the dreams of the people of this Nation are presented through their elected Representatives in Congress. The concerns and priorities of the constituents we serve are voiced and debated. Here democracy sets the course for the future of our great Nation. And the slave laborers who helped build the Capitol are part of that story, and it is a story that we must tell.

When we started this task force, one thing I wanted to make sure we did was to include a variety of viewpoints. In addition to including Members of Congress on the task force, I thought it was very important to include citizens who don't live and work in and around the Capitol on a regular basis. I wanted to ensure that we considered the vantage point of a visitor to the Capitol and what manner of recognition they thought would be effective in telling the story. In that spirit, I was very pleased that Curtis Sykes, a respected historian and native of North Little Rock, Arkansas, was appointed to serve on this panel. Sadly, Mr. Sykes passed away in September, but I am grateful he was able to contribute to the work of the task force before his passing.

In addition to the many other accomplishments as an educator and community leader, Mr. Sykes was an original member of Arkansas' Black History Advisory Committee that was established in 1991 and faithfully and diligently served as its chairman from 1993 until his death. Mr. Sykes' recommendations on this task force were focused on wanting to ensure that as many citizens as possible be made aware of the contributions of enslaved African Americans in building the Capitol, whether they were visiting Washington or learning about the Capitol from afar. Mr. Sykes also thought it was important to put a human face on the experience of slaves who helped build the Capitol, and that visitors should be able to get a sense of who they were and what their work and daily life was like.

I am so proud that Sarah Davidson, also a native of North Little Rock, is here, who has worked extensively both with Mr. Sykes and in the task force, and I am so grateful for her efforts.

I think those are constructive recommendations, and I certainly believe the recommendations we are putting forward embody these goals today. As we move forward, I hope historians and researchers can incorporate genealogical and other records which will shed light on the enslaved individuals we are focusing on and their families so current and future generations can learn about these workers and better understand who they were and what they were facing.

I also believe we should utilize technology to produce an interactive presentation that can be an effective teaching tool. In bringing this subject to light, I think it is helpful to engage as many senses as possible in terms of sight, sound and touch to actually bring people back to the circumstances that these slaves were in in the building of the Capitol, to bring them back to the time and the environment that the Capitol was built in. By incorporating interactive features on line or in an exhibit, it can help transport students of all ages to a place in time that might otherwise be difficult for them to envision.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I think it is important that we recognize and acknowledge this subject in the Capitol Building itself. That is the building slave laborers helped to construct, and I think that there should be a recognition within the building to reflect that. We know at least four places on the Senate side of the Capitol where slave labor contributed to the construction of that Capitol Building. Slave laborers contributed to completion of columns in the old Senate Chamber, and exposed original stonework we know of on the first, second and third floors on the Senate side in what is now known as the East Front Extension of the Capitol.

I am also very supportive of focusing attention on this issue in the new Capitol Visitor Center and believe that will provide an opportunity to reach a large number of visitors who come from all over the world and our great country to see this beautiful building every year.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you again for holding this hearing today, and I want to thank my colleagues on the task force. They have done a tremendous job. Congressman Lewis has been tireless as our leader. His staff has done a tremendous job.

Congressman Watts, Dr. Gardner, and Mr. Ballard, and, of course, Sarah Davidson, all of those have worked hard with their efforts.

I want to make a special expression of appreciation to the Clerk of the House, Lorraine Miller. She and her staff are helping us with this project and really making available for us the time and the energy of her staff as well as bringing us together in coming to conclusion. They have all been terrific to work with, and they should all be commended.

It has been a real honor to work with this distinguished group, and I will always be grateful for that opportunity, and I look forward to what visitors will see as we move forward.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

[The statement of Senator Lincoln follows:]

Opening Statement of U.S. Senator Blanche Lincoln
Committee on House Administration
Wednesday, November 7, 2007
1:00 p.m.

Chairman Brady and Ranking Member Ehlers, I want to thank you for holding this hearing today to examine a very important issue that has gone unrecognized for far too long. Even though our majestic Capitol has served as a meeting place for both the House of Representatives and the United States Senate for nearly two centuries, it was only more recently that public attention has been given to the fact that slave laborers were involved in constructing this building which is the center of our Legislative Branch of Government.

As a member of the task force to study the contributions of slave laborers in the construction of the U.S. Capitol, I am honored and humbled to take part in this process to put forward recommendations to honor and recognize slave laborers who were instrumental in constructing the building which is recognized as a symbol of freedom and democracy here at home and around the world.

Here, the hopes and dreams of the people of this nation are presented through their elected representatives in Congress. Here, the concerns and priorities of our constituents are voiced and debated. Here, democracy sets the course of the future of our great nation and the slave laborers who helped build the Capitol are a part of that story and it's a story we should tell.

When we started this task force, one thing I wanted to make sure we did was include a variety of viewpoints. In addition to including Members of Congress on the task force, I thought it was important to include citizens who don't live and work in and around the Capitol on a regular basis. I wanted to ensure we considered the vantage point of a visitor to the Capitol and what manner of recognition they thought would be effective in telling this story.

In that spirit, I was pleased that Curtis Sykes, a respected historian and native of North Little Rock Arkansas, was appointed to serve on this panel. Sadly, Mr. Sykes passed away in September but I am grateful he was able to contribute to the work of the task force before his passing. In addition to many other accomplishments as an educator and community leader, Mr. Sykes was an original member of Arkansas' Black History Advisory Committee established in 1991 and faithfully and diligently served as its chairman from 1993 until his death.

Mr. Sykes recommendations on this task force were focused on wanting to ensure that as many citizens as possible be made aware of the contributions of enslaved African Americans in building the Capitol whether they were visiting Washington or learning about the Capitol from afar. Mr. Sykes also thought it was important to put a human face on the experience of slaves who helped build the Capitol and that visitors should be able to get a sense of who they were and what their work and daily-life was like.

I think those are constructive recommendations and I believe the recommendations we are putting forward embody those goals. As we move forward, I hope historians and researchers can incorporate genealogical and other records which will shed light on the enslaved individuals we are focusing on and their families so current and future generations can learn about these workers and better understand who they were.

I also believe we should utilize technology to produce an interactive presentation that can become an effective teaching tool. In bringing this subject to life, I think it is helpful to engage as many senses as possible in terms of sight, sound and touch. By incorporating interactive features on line or in an exhibit, it can help transport students of all ages to a place in time that might otherwise be difficult to envision.

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We know of at least 4 places on the Senate side of the Capitol where slave labor contributed to the construction of the Capitol building. Slave laborers contributed to completion of columns in the Old Senate Chamber, and exposed original stone work we know of on the first, second and third floors on the Senate side in what is known as the East Front Extension of the Capitol. (near S 104-108; near S 203-206 and near S 303-307).

I'm also very supportive of focusing attention on this issue in the new Capitol Visitor Center and believe that will provide an opportunity to reach a large number of visitors who come from all over the world and the country to see this beautiful building every year.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you again for holding this hearing today. I also want to thank my colleagues on the task force, Congressman Lewis, Congressman Watts, Sarah Davidson and others for their hard work and efforts. I also want to express my appreciation to the Clerk of the House, Lorraine Miller, and her staff for helping us with this project. They've been terrific to work with and they should be commended. It's been a real honor to work with this distinguished group and I will always be grateful for the opportunity.

The CHAIRMAN. Honorable J.C. Watts.

STATEMENTS OF J.C. WATTS, FORMER REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA; BETTYE GARDNER, PROFESSOR, ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LIFE AND HISTORY, COPPIN UNIVERSITY; CURRIE BALLARD, TASK FORCE MEMBER; AND SARAH DAVIDSON, TASK FORCE MEMBER

STATEMENT OF J.C. WATTS

Mr. WATTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to say to Chairman Lewis and Senator Lincoln, as you all know, as Members of Congress and, of course, as a former Member of Congress, initiatives like this and efforts like this never work unless someone takes ownership in them and it becomes part of their DNA to see it through. And Congressman Lewis and Senator Lincoln have continued to chip away at this thing as current Members of the United States Congress, and we all are grateful for your efforts. Thank you very much.

Chairman Brady, Ranking Member Ehlers and other members of the House Committee on Administration, I am honored to have the opportunity to speak to you today regarding the Slave Labor Task Force and to introduce you to several of my colleagues who have dedicated their efforts to securing the proper recognition for our brothers and sisters whose forced labor more than 200 years ago built the United States Capitol.

Abraham Lincoln once said, "Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history." The era of slavery when one man can own his fellow man is no doubt an era that many would like to escape. But as Lincoln said, we cannot. It is documented in the very stones of the United States Capitol, a monument to the freedom of a Nation, constructed by the members of that Nation who cannot enjoy its gift of freedom.

As someone who is committed to studying the past and applying its lessons to change the future, I believe it is important for our Nation and for our community to be educated on the contribution that the enslaved Africans made to the U.S. Capitol. To that end, in 2000, while I was a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, I, along with my good friend John Lewis, and Senator Lincoln, and Senator Santorum at the time and others, created the Slave Labor Task Force to study the contribution of enslaved African Americans in building the U.S. Capitol and to make recommendations of the Congress concerning appropriate recognition of these contributions.

The task force was officially established on October 24, 2000, through a congressional resolution. Since that time many talented men and women have lent their efforts to the work of the task force. And I would particularly like to thank again Senator Lincoln of Arkansas; The Clerk of the House Lorraine Miller; Congressman Lewis; and historical experts Currie Ballard, Bettye Gardner and Sarah Davidson, who will be speaking in a few minutes.

To complete the first part of its mission, the Slave Labor Task Force directed the Architect of the Capitol to create a documented history of the slave labor that contributed to the Capitol's construction. This history brought to light the full scope of their labor.

From 1795 to 1801, and likely beyond this period, the builders of the Capitol rented the labor of Africans forced into slavery by their owners. These borrowed workers completed the hardest task, including quarrying stone and casting bricks by hand, hauling stone from the quarry to the work site, and felling trees. Today the work of these individuals is documented most clearly in the walls on the original East Front of the Capitol. This stone was quarried and transported by African American slave laborers more than 200 years ago. Their work also deserves the credit for the columns in Statuary Hall and the Old Senate Chamber.

Sadly, we know the names and stories of only two of the African American slave laborers who worked on the Capitol. Nevertheless, their stories give us a glimpse into the reality of their contributions, and give us a human context into which we cast our recognition of the total efforts made by the enslaved laborers. The first of these two individuals was George Pointer. Mr. Pointer was an enslaved man who purchased his freedom and later captained a boat that carried stone to the Capitol construction site. The second individual was Philip Reid. Mr. Reid was a slave laborer whose contribution to the construction of the Capitol included assisting in casting the statue "Freedom." Later in this hearing, historian Felicia Bell will tell Philip Reid's story.

The Slave Labor Task Force has done an outstanding job in documenting the history of the slave laborers who contributed to the U.S. Capitol construction. In 2007, the task force began developing recommendations to fulfill the second of its responsibilities. After extensive review of legislation and documentation, as well as consultation with history and museum studies experts, the task force is pleased to present to you today its recommendations for the most appropriate means of honoring the African Americans who made such an important contribution to the United States.

In presenting these recommendations, we as a task force, are pleased to have Dr. Bettye Gardner, Sarah Jean Davidson and Currie Ballard to testify on the importance of preserving this significant piece of history. Dr. Bettye Gardner is an accomplished professor of history whose work has raised awareness of the contributions of the African American community throughout history. She received a bachelor's and master's degree from Howard University and a Ph.D. from George Washington University. She has been honored for her work with numerous awards, including the Outstanding Educator Award in 2005 and the Bethune Service Award in 2006.

Sarah Jean Davidson has been a force for positive change throughout her life. At age 15 Ms. Davidson organized the North Little Rock, Arkansas, NAACP Youth Council and served as its president. The council was responsible for the change in segregation policies at public facilities in North Little Rock. Ms. Davidson has worked tirelessly to preserve African American history in North Little Rock, documenting and preserving history so others have the opportunity to learn from them. She received a bachelor's degree from Howard University as well as a master's degree in education from Catholic University.

And last, Mr. Chairman, Currie Ballard has worked throughout his career to preserve a record of African American accomplish-

ment, serving on the Presidential commission responsible for the African American Museum here in Washington, D.C. He also served as the historian resident at Langston University in Oklahoma for 12 years. We are all likely familiar with Currie's extended family. He is a descendent of the two African American slaves who wrote the song "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot."

In conclusion, I would like to thank the committee once again for the opportunity you have given the task force to share with you the history of the African American contribution to the U.S. Capitol and our recommendations for recognizing their labor. After 200 years it is time for America to recognize these individuals who contributed to our Nation's symbols of freedom while never having the opportunity to cherish it themselves. Their history is a part of all our history, and we all can learn from their contribution.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Congressman Watts.

[The statement of Mr. Watts follows:]

Honorable J.C. Watts
Slave Labor Task Force Hearing
Testimony

Chairman Brady, Ranking Member Ehlers, and other honorable Members of the House Committee on Administration: I am honored to have the opportunity to speak to you today regarding the Slave Labor Task Force and to introduce to you several of my colleagues who have dedicated their efforts to securing proper recognition for our brothers and sisters whose forced labor more than 200 years ago built the United States Capitol.

Abraham Lincoln once said, "Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history." The era of slavery, when one man could own his fellow men, is no doubt an era that many would like to escape. But, as Lincoln said, we cannot. It is documented in the very stones of the United States Capital, a monument to the freedom of a nation, constructed by the members of that nation who could not enjoy its gift of freedom.

As someone who is committed to studying the past and applying its lessons to change the future, I believe it is important for our nation and for our community to be educated on the contribution that the enslaved Africans made to the U.S. Capitol. To that end, in 2000 while I was a Member of the House of Representatives, I, along with my good friend John Lewis of Georgia and others, created the Slave Labor Task Force to

study the contribution of enslaved African Americans in building the U.S. Capitol and to make recommendations to the Congress concerning appropriate recognition of these contributions. The Task Force was officially established on October 24, 2000, through a Congressional Resolution. Since that time, many talented men and women have lent their efforts to the work of the task force, and I would particularly like to thank Senator Lincoln of Arkansas, Clerk of the House Lorraine Miller, and historical experts Currie Ballard, Bettye Gardner, and Sarah Davidson, who will be speaking later this afternoon.

To complete the first part of its mission, the Slave Labor Task Force directed the Architect of the Capitol to create a documented history of the slave labor that contributed to the Capitol's construction. This history brought to light the full scope of their labor. From 1795 to 1801, and likely beyond this period, the builders of the Capitol rented the labor of Africans forced into slavery by their owners. These borrowed workers completed the hardest tasks, including quarrying stone and casting bricks by hand, hauling stone from the quarry to the work site, and felling trees. Today, the work of these individuals is documented most clearly in the walls on the original East Front of the Capitol—this stone was quarried and transported by African American slave laborers more than 200 years ago. Their work also deserves the credit for the columns in Statuary Hall and the Old Senate Chamber.

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In presenting these recommendations, we as a Task Force are pleased to have Dr. Bettye J. Gardner, Sarah Jean Davidson, and Currie Ballard to testify on the importance of preserving this significant piece of history.

Dr. Bettye Gardner is an accomplished professor of History whose work has raised awareness of the contributions of the African American community throughout history. She received a Bachelor's and Master's degree from Howard University and a Ph.D. from George Washington University. She has been honored for her work with numerous awards, including the Outstanding Educator Award in 2005 and the Bethune Service Award in 2006.

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Currie Ballard has worked throughout his career to preserve a record of African American accomplishment, serving on the Presidential Commission responsible for the African American Museum in Washington, D.C. He also served as the Historian-in-Residence at Langston University in Oklahoma for 12 years. We are all likely familiar with Currie's extended family—he is a descendant of the two African American slaves who wrote the song "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot."

In conclusion, I would like to thank the committee once again for the opportunity you have given the Task Force to share with you the history of the African American contribution to the U.S. Capitol and our recommendations for recognizing their labor. After 200 years, it is time for America to recognize these individuals who contributed to our nation's symbols of freedom while never having the opportunity to cherish it themselves. Their history is part of all our history and we all can learn from their contribution.

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Gardner.

STATEMENT OF BETTYE GARDNER

Ms. GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee.

During the 200th anniversary of the building of the U.S. Capitol, national attention was focused on the role that slaves played in its construction. A task force was established in May of 2005 to determine ways to recognize the tremendous contributions that slave laborers made in the construction of the Capitol.

The writer Alex Haley commented that history has been recorded by the winners, stored by the winners and written by the winners. As a result, the American story is generally told in a way that enhances and dignifies some while omitting others. American history cannot be understood without African American history, and so if we are to understand the role which slavery played in the building of this Nation, then this is an excellent opportunity for the task force to broaden the conversation on slavery and race.

The Members of Congress have acknowledged the contradictions inherent in the founding of our Nation. Hence, the task force must help to center the African American experience squarely in the American experience, providing an alternative viewpoint that both illustrates and contradicts the promise of America.

By recognizing the slaves who built the Capitol, we shine the light of historical truth on the institution of slavery and the racism that justified it. Like so many aspects of the African American story that have remained on the back pages of our historical consciousness, the story of the slaves who built the Capitol must certainly be told here.

Once Washington was selected as the Capital City, slavery became an accepted part of the new Capitol. By 1800, the population was almost one-quarter black, both slave and free. It is in this context that the founding of the new Nation must be seen and our Founding Fathers must be judged.

By whatever devices we employ, both the image and the irony of African slaves constructing the most enduring and formidable symbol of democracy in the world must be at the center of our consciousness. Up to now, both the image and the irony have been left out.

Carter G. Woodson, the founder of the African American Historical Association, once said that while we should not underestimate the achievements of our Nation's greatest architects, builders and industrialists, we should also give credit to those slaves who so largely supplied the demand for labor. Our history omits both their mention and their record. Our historical images have excluded their depiction. Our consciousness involves only certain well-known names. But the numbers and the physicality of black men slaving in this city, the size of this very place and the permanence of it, and the time and lives it took black men to make it can no longer be ignored.

These men, enslaved and building this monument to freedom and the rights of men, have become the ones to tell us who we are, and in so doing, they have given us not just the symbols of democracy, but the thing itself. However, it is not enough that only those visi-

tors to this building know the story. What we must do now is make certain that every venue that carries our history, also carries that story. This is your moment to do that.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Doctor.

[The statement of Ms. Gardner follows:]

Congressional Hearing
Testimony
November 7, 2007

Good Afternoon

I am Dr. Bettye Gardner, Professor of History, Coppin State University, a member of the Executive Council of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, and a member of the Task Force.

I have been asked to give a statement on the "Mission and Importance" of the Task Force. During the 200th anniversary of the building of the U. S. Capitol, national attention was focused on the role that slaves played in its construction. A Task Force was established in May 2005 to determine ways to recognize the tremendous contributions that slave laborers made in the construction of the Capitol. Several recommendations have been made including:

(1) A commemorative plaque and building stone quarried by slave labor, placed in or adjacent to the Capitol Rotunda.

(2) Training of the Capitol Guide Service on interpreting the experience of African Americans as slave laborers and members of Congress.

(3) Online publication of the Task Force's report on the history of slave laborers at the Capitol.

(4) Naming the Great Hall of the Visitors Center, Emancipation Hall.

The writer, Alex Haley, commented that" history has been recorded by the winners, kept by the winners and written by the winners." As a result the American story is generally told in a way that enhances and dignifies some, while omitting others. American History cannot be understood without African American History, and so if we are to understand the pivotal role which slavery played in the building of this nation, then this is an excellent opportunity for the Task Force to broaden the conversation on slavery and race. The members of Congress have acknowledged the contradictions inherent in the founding of our nation; hence, the Task Force must help to center the African American experience squarely in the American experience providing an alternative viewpoint that both "illustrates and contradicts the promise of America."

By recognizing the slaves who built the Capitol we shine the light of historical truth on the institution of slavery and the racism that justified it, thereby giving the lie to the American rhetoric of liberty and equality. Like so many aspects of the African American story that have remained on the back pages of our historical consciousness, the story of the slaves who built the Capitol must certainly be told here. Once Washington was selected as the capital city, slavery became an accepted part of the new capital. By 1800 the population was almost ¼

black, both slave and free. It is in this context that the founding of the new nation must be seen and our founding fathers must be judged.

By whatever devices we employ, both the image and the irony of African slaves constructing the most enduring and formidable symbol of democracy in the world must be at the center of our consciousness. Up to now, both their image and that irony have been left out.

Our history omits both their mention and their record. Our iconography has excluded their depiction. Our consciousness involves only white men's well-known names. But the numbers and physicality of black men slaving in this city, the size of this very place and the permanence of it, and the time and lives it took black men to make it, can no longer be ignored. Once little noted, they can no longer be ignored.

But most of all, in these small efforts, the irony's redeemed. These men enslaved and building this monument to the freedom and rights of men have become the ones to tell us who we are. And in so doing, they have given us not just the symbols of democracy, but the thing itself. They have given us ourselves. There is nothing that compares. However, it is not enough that only those visitors to this building know the story.

But what we must do is make certain every venue that carries our history carries that story. This is your moment to do that.

Thank You

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Ballard.

STATEMENT OF CURRIE BALLARD

Mr. BALLARD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The following recommendations were voted unanimously by the Commission:

Commemorative plaques and building stones quarried by slave labor placed in or near the Capitol Visitor Center and/or the U.S. Capitol.

Pamphlets on the history of slave labor in the Capitol, focusing particularly on the kind of work assigned to the slaves.

Exhibition in the U.S. Capitol on the experience of the 19th century African Americans, both as slave laborers and as Members of Congress.

Educational informational brochures highlighting individual 19th century African Americans in the Capitol, slave laborers, Members of Congress and staff members.

On-line exhibit that creates a virtual version of the Capitol exhibition, with the addition of educational materials for students and teachers.

Training of the Capitol Guide Service on interpreting the experience of African Americans as slave laborers and Members.

On-line publication of the Task Force Report on the History of Slave Laborers at the Capitol.

Black Americans in Congress, scheduled to be published by the House of Representatives in 2008, providing extensive materials and experiences of African Americans in the Capitol, and be accompanied by a Web site and educational materials.

Designation of the Great Hall of the Capitol Visitor Center as Emancipation Hall.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Ballard.

[The statement of Mr. Ballard follows:]

"Laying the Cornerstone of Healing History"

Statement to Congressional Hearing

By Currie D. Ballard

November 7, 2007

The foundation of America's history was poured by my people too. African Americans are the only race of people to come to this country against their will, but that did not stop us from working to build the United States. From being present at the construction site of the Revolutionary War craftsmen like Peter Salem and Caesar Brown were present at the Battle of Bunker Hill.

Even during the planning of Washington D.C. an African American played a major role. In 1792 when Pierre Charles L Enfunt resigned and took all of his plans back to France, it took two days for his assistant Benjamin Banneker to reconstruct from his photographic memory.

African Americans have pulled their weight enriching this great society. We have labored under all weather conditions, although living in an environment that did not welcome us.

"The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few." To this grand building of freedom to the world that shines like a light to rid the nation of darkness, this would not have become a reality without the slaves help. From the statue of Freedom to the foundation, the healing of history can commence when America learns that African Americans help build the United States as well.

Slave Labor Task Force
Summary of Recommendations

- **Commemorative plaques and building stone**, quarried by slave labor, placed in or near the Capitol Visitors Center (CVC) and/or the U.S. Capitol

- **Pamphlet** on the history of slave labor in the Capitol, focusing particularly on the kinds of work assigned to slaves

- **Exhibition in the U.S. Capitol** on the experience of 19th century African Americans both as slave laborers and as Members of Congress

- Educational/informational **brochure cards** highlighting individual 19th century African Americans in the Capitol (slave laborers, Members of Congress, staff members)

- **Online exhibit** that creates a virtual version of the Capitol exhibition (above), with the addition of educational materials for students and teachers

- **Training of the Capitol Guide Service** on interpreting the experience of African Americans as slave laborers and Members

- Online **publication of the Task Force's report** on the history of slave laborers at the Capitol

- ***Black Americans in Congress***, scheduled to be published by the House of Representatives in 2008, providing extensive material on the experience of African Americans in the Capitol, and be accompanied by a website and educational materials

- Designation of the great hall of the Capitol Visitor Center as **Emancipation Hall**

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Davidson.

STATEMENT OF SARAH DAVIDSON

Ms. DAVIDSON. Mr. Chairman, in the interest of time, I deferred my testimony to my distinguished colleagues. However, I did submit written testimony which will be a part of the official record. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

[The statement of Ms. Davidson follows:]

"The Construction of the United States Capitol: Recognizing the Construction of Slave Labor"

Good Afternoon, my name is Sarah Jean Davidson and I reside in Silver Spring, Maryland. I am here today because Curtis Sykes, a former Slave Labor Task Force member, recommended that I serve in his stead due to his illness. Mr. Sykes subsequently died in September 2007 and Senator Blanche Lincoln permanently appointed me to the Slave Labor Task Force.

Furthermore, I have done extensive historical preservation work and I am the founder and president of the Association for the Preservation of North Little Rock, Arkansas African American History (APNLRAAAHistory) in my native city, North Little Rock. The APNLRAAAHistory was formed in 2000 to promote and preserve the culture, heritage and history of African Americans who live and/or have lived in North Little Rock. In addition, the organization works closely with the North Little Rock History Commission. Most recently, we produced a 13-panel exhibition entitled *"Black Life on the North Side of the River 1850-2000."* The exhibit received favorable reviews in the local news media. Moreover, I am a contributing researcher to On the Opposite Shore, the Making of North Little Rock," by Cary Bradburn, North Little Rock's first effort to include African Americans' historical contributions, published in 2004

I am honored to submit written testimony on a subject that addresses the injustices to enslaved blacks and to African American history. Drawing upon my experience as a descendant of slaves and as a history preservationist, today I share my sentiments regarding why a memorial to slaves who helped construct the United States Capitol is an honorable act for all Americans.

Why Honor Slaves Who Helped Build the United States Capitol With a Memorial?

Memorializing slaves who helped to build the U. S. Capitol, "the shrine of freedom," presents an incredible opportunity to not only broaden the public's understanding of African American contributions to the United States, but also to right an appalling wrong.

The United States owes an enormous debt to slaves upon whose backs this country was built. University of Texas historian Gerald Horne notes in an article in the Summer 2006 *Journal of African American History*, "The question of slavery looms large in consideration of the founding of the nation with understandable emphasis on how Africans, enslaved and otherwise, played a crucial role in bringing into being the nation now known as the United States of America. This has been an important research question in the field, not least since it helps to bolster the claim that this nation owes a profound debt to African Americans."

Even though my ancestors were slaves, their talents and skills were recognized by white society. Both Walter Hill, senior archival and African American history specialist at the National Archives, and C.R. Gibbs, Washington, DC historian, in a February 2007 *USA*

Today news article noted that "some slaves who helped to build the US Capitol were skilled artisans and were respected for their work."

History has frequently distorted slavery in the United States. Thomas Sowell in Black Education: Myths and Tragedies notes that even up until the 1950s, history books in America still promoted stereotypes of the Negro, and I quote, "The slave system... did harm to the white people of the South, and benefited nobody but the Negro, in that it served as a vast training school for African savages. Slavery taught... slaves discipline, cleanliness and conception of moral standards."

Indeed, slavery was a hideous atrocity and cruel injustice to people of color. Slaves were their master's property, mere chattel, and were considered brutes, literally and in reality stripped of their humanity. Slave owners, as with the building of the Capitol, reaped the financial benefits of slavery. Nevertheless, overtime, America began to recognize that blacks were not, "part of the animal kingdom and devoid of souls," as reported in the *Arkansas Gazette* in 1867.

The Importance of Preserving Slaves' Contributions to Building the U. S. Capitol

Many blacks and other Americans believe that there is a disconnect between institutions that stand for America and its heritage. If Philip Reid, one of the few slaves identified by name associated with the actual building of the Capitol, and the other slave laborers were alive today, they would say, as the Harlem Renaissance poet and novelist Langston Hughes stated, *"I, Too, Sing America."*

Because slaves were considered property, records of slaves' labor in the construction of the Capitol are elusive and few, as reported by William C. Allen in the "*History of Slave Laborers in the Construction of the United States Capitol.*" Nonetheless, this limitation of information does not negate the need for a memorial but rather makes a case for inclusion.

Some may ask why we cannot simply say that Americans built the U. S. Capitol. Current events such as the confrontational behavior between white and black youth in Jena, Louisiana, and the preponderance of nooses that are being displayed around the country, highlight the need for a better understanding between the races and the realization that all people contributed significantly to the development of this country. Prior to the Jena 6, many people did not understand the significance of a noose and the frightening images it invokes for African Americans. As my late mentor, Curtis Sykes used to say, "If you don't know your history, you are doomed to repeat it, and I don't want to go back into slavery again." It is important for all people both young and old to learn their history, and for all Americans to understand how we are all connected. Recognizing the involvement of slaves helps to close important gaps in history and informs this country about the roles of African Americans during slavery and beyond. Memorializing this contribution will create a better understanding of race relations, especially for the younger generation.

Various recommendations suggested by the Slave Labor Task Force are as follows: a commemorative plaque and building stone to be placed in the Capitol Visitors Center; an online exhibition detailing the contributions and recognizing the slaves' work; and, a pamphlet on slave labor -- among others suggestions. These suggestions are just examples of fitting tributes to the memory and free labor provided by the slaves who helped to construct the United States Capitol.

This recognition will provide its audience with an enriching educational experience. Students, historians and visitors will have an opportunity to learn more about African American history, about Africans who were brought to this country unwillingly, in bondage and their vital involvement to building the U.S. Capitol. Visitors will leave informed with an increased awareness of the contributions of African American slaves who resided in the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge Ed Hotaling, a retired Washington, DC TV reporter, who according to *USA Today* was among the first to widely publicize the US Capitol slave labor issue; and those upon whose shoulders I stand and who looked upon me with favor and helped to make my contributions to America possible.

I begin with Curtis Sykes, who even in illness, saw in me the ability to serve as his representative on the Slave Labor Task Force; my deceased parents, Earnest Jefferson Davidson and Alice Sanders Davidson who recognized early on, that their teenage daughter had a calling and allowed and encouraged me to step out in the midst of racial hatred and segregation to help right society's wrongs; my late brother, Earnest Davidson, Jr., who supported my teenage civil rights initiatives and my history preservation efforts until his death in August of 2007; Daisy Bates, the late civil rights icon who mentored me during my teenage civil right years; Dr. O.C. Jones, my childhood pastor; and, members of the Association for the Preservation of North Little Rock, Arkansas African American History. Finally and most importantly, I would like to acknowledge all my enslaved ancestors for without their perseverance and survival skills during slavery I simply would not be.

As a tribute to Philip Reid and the many, yet to be identified slaves who helped to build the U.S. Capitol, I close with the last stanza of Maya Angelou's poem, "And Still I Rise".

"I rise, bring forth the gifts
That my ancestors gave
I am the dream of hope
Of the Slave
I rise, I rise, I rise.
I rise."

Thank you for your consideration.
Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Jean Davidson.

The CHAIRMAN. We will now entertain questions. I just have a few quick questions, and I think that Mr. Ballard may have already answered them.

I don't want to see just a plaque on a stone. I would rather see the story told in whatever way it could be told, maybe attach it to some benches that are cut out of the quarry stone mined by the slaves that visitors can sit and see and feel and touch to appreciate the story of those who labored to build the building. That was kind of my question. But I think that you answered it in some of the things that you are doing. I appreciate that.

After today's hearing, what is the next step? Where do we go from here? What has to happen? What do we do? Do you need any legislation? Do you think you need legislation to be able to further what your end result may be?

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Chairman, as directed by our mandate, we represent the work of the task force, the study and the recommendation to the Speaker and the president pro tem.

Last night at our conclusion meeting, I must tell you, Mr. Chairman, we had seven members of the Appropriations Committee there, and we are going to need a sizable appropriation to do the work that we must do, and the Committee on House Administration can be very helpful and supportive in seeing that we get the necessary resources to carry out the recommendations.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. LEWIS. The Chair of the full Committee on House Appropriations and Mr. Wamp, I think, is here. The Ranking Member has been very helpful and very supportive.

The CHAIRMAN. They were the right people to go to for your appropriations, and we will try to hold their feet to the fire for that. Thank you.

Mr. Ehlers, any questions?

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As you are well aware, we are developing a new Smithsonian National Museum of African American History, and I am sure a number of you have been involved in that. How do you see the correlation between that museum and what we are proposing to do in the Capitol Visitor Center? And do you imagine interchanging displays and artifacts between the two? Are you planning one set of things for one and one for the other?

Mr. LEWIS. Well, I believe, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member and other Members, Lonnie Bunch, who is the Director of the new museum, will be testifying later, and we may just let him speak.

Mr. EHLERS. Okay. So your Commission hasn't come up with any recommendations on that or correlated with them at all?

Senator LINCOLN. Well, Mr. Chairman, I think one of the things that we could say is that the work that they are doing would be very complementary because the experience there in terms of learning more about African American history leads to what the Chairman mentioned, and that is making sure that people begin to really understand the history, and hopefully through both that effort there and what we are doing here, there will be a real interactive circumstance where people will be able to maybe experience the sounds or the sights and the feel. I hope that will be there particularly for schoolchildren as well as a learning tool of—as Con-

gressman Lewis mentioned, I mean, these laborers used their hands, they didn't use the cranes that children see today when they drive down, the construction that goes on. They can learn basic physics and the simple machines that were used, whether it was pulleys or levers or a whole host of different things.

So I think that there will be a complement between the two, and an opportunity to really provide good education.

Mr. WATTS. And I think, Congressman, I think most of the recommendations that have been made by the task force are things that will be done in and around the Capitol complex. So you could actually have people that would show up at the Capitol that may not go to the museum, but could get a hands-on feel and a good feel and good flavor for what the task force has put together in terms of recognizing the slave labor.

There will obviously be ties. As Congressman Lewis said, you know, Director Bunch can speak to that. But, you know, if no one ever went to the museum, in spite of the fact that you will have some links, you can have links to the museum, you can have ties to the museum in terms of the labor task force and the African American Museum, but if people didn't go to the museum and they went to the Capitol, they could still get a good flavor of what the recommendations are today, or they could get a flavor of the slave labor based on the recommendations that have been made by the task force.

Mr. EHLERS. Well, I certainly support your effort to have these on display in the Visitor Center, but it is just unfortunate we didn't think of all this 5 years ago. It would have been easier but I am sure we can work it out somehow.

Mr. WATTS. We thought about it 5 years ago. We just didn't complete it 5 years ago.

Mr. EHLERS. That seems to be the story of our lives here in Congress.

One other thing. One recommendation you make, I believe, is that the Capitol tour guides be trained in this information. Did you come up with any specific suggestions on what topics they should be trained in, or is this something you want us to work out?

Mr. WATTS. I think, Congressman, in terms of tour guides being trained, I think the people that give tours through the Capitol today, I mean, they have got a pretty good understanding of what has happened in the Capitol and the history of it. You know, I see this being pretty minor in adding this component to the history of the Capitol as they walk people through it.

When I was in Congress, you know, I had staff and interns that—you know, that would guide tours and had a tremendous history of the Capitol. So I think that would be a pretty smooth transition to add this component to it. But that is done—I don't know who handles that, this will just be a new component to that tool.

Senator LINCOLN. I think it is through the Office of the Architect. I am not sure. But I think the idea is that we just want to make sure they have a thorough background of the history themselves so that when they take tours through the Capitol and through the Visitor Center, that they will have that information thoroughly prepared.

Mr. EHLERS. I guess what I am driving at is not so much book knowledge, but the sensitivity to be able to translate this to the people with heart. Maybe they have to go through Congressman Lewis's Selma march as part of their training and really understand what it meant to be a slave and to be forced to build this citadel of liberty without experiencing it themselves. I mean, that has to come through somehow.

My time has expired. I yield back. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Capuano.

Mr. CAPUANO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, I want to congratulate you. I think this is great work. It is difficult work, and I think what Mr. Watts said earlier was exactly right. Without somebody taking ownership of these things, they just kind of wither and die on the vine. And the fact that this Board has not, I think, deserves our congratulations and our thanks.

I also want to say two things. Number one is I guarantee you this committee does know who gives tours over the Capitol, over the CVC, and who will continue to give tours over the Capitol and the CVC, and they should all be educated appropriately on this and other matters as well.

When I listen to testimony about the history of slavery, lots of things come to mind, obviously. Number one is it is always, I think, one of this country's great shames. We came to the movement to get rid of slavery late in world history. It wasn't unique to this country, but we were one of the last major countries to get rid of it, and I think it is important that we acknowledge that. And it is important that we remember it.

I also think it is critically important to learn from history, and I think it is overseen by too many people that there is slavery in this world today, actual honest-to-God buying and selling of human beings going on right now as we speak.

Today we just heard some words from the President of France, and they were all wonderful, and that was very moving. This afternoon I had a meeting with Salva Kiir, who is the President of Southern Sudan, and in that conflict in Sudan, slavery has been a significant component of it. And I think if this world stayed silent on slavery anywhere in the world, not just in America—again, our history is important, but if we don't learn from our history and just learn not just the facts, but also the outrage that we should all feel from it, and then express that outrage and enlighten and, if necessary, force the rest of the world to do the right thing, I think we have done nothing other than simply read a book.

And it is not just slavery. Many places in this world also participate in indentured servitude, in de facto slavery. They may not buy and sell people, but they take their passports so they can't leave and keep them locked up. And I think it is critically important that as we discuss history, which is important, and recognize history and embrace history and learn from it, that we also make sure that we speak out through the lessons we have learned and to continue to fight until every single person in this world is free from the threat and the fear of the denigration that slavery brings to them.

And I again want to thank you for your work on this, and I know that we will work together. I know, obviously, several members of the panel. I know you work just as hard on doing things to make sure that these thoughts and these lessons, are not just put on a plaque, but they are also lived every single day, and that we understand the real problems of humanity that we ourselves as human beings have both imposed and allow others to impose. So again, thank you for your work.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Capuano.

Mr. Lungren.

Mr. LUNGREN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Twenty-seven years ago, I served as the Vice Chair of the commission to study the treatment of Japanese nationals and Japanese Americans during World War II. And one of the challenges we had was to both look at the history of our Nation in that regard, because that was a stain on our country's history, to try and establish what the historical facts were. But also I thought it was extremely important for us to create educational tools for the future so that we could continue to look at that experience, not to beat ourselves on the back but to try and take from that experience what the lessons were and make it real to particularly students today but all of us today so that we could hopefully avoid similar problems in the future.

Because it is easy to look back and say, we never would have done that; those people were different. The question is, how do you look back and say what is it there that caused them to do that? Why did that exist and how do we fight against those things today?

So my question would be this: In terms of the content of the plaques, in terms of the pamphlets on slave labor, in terms of the brochure cards, in terms—the training, has any thought gone into how do we extract the lessons from that time that might be applicable to now? Not just the ability to look back at history and acknowledge history and understand, but how do we take lessons from that, number one, and how do we connect to the triumph of the civil rights revolution which shook this Nation and caused us—well, also the blood and sweat that—and sacrifice that went through the Civil War, but then all the way up to the civil rights revolution.

I know you can't do all of that, and I don't want to give you a charge that is more than what this is for. But how does the recommendations that you make fit into that?

Mr. LEWIS. It is my feeling and belief that with the visitor center, the African American museum and what we are doing as a task force, they all tend to come together. The literature, the material will tell us the distance we have come, the progress we have made and help to educate, sensitize and bring us to the point that we will never, ever repeat these blunders again.

And Senator Brownback used to talk about, Congressman Watts, the whole idea maybe this would help lead to reconciliation. Teach us, yes. We are, too, for teaching, for future generations but also to build a greater sense of community and to create a more perfect union.

Mr. WATTS. And, Congressman, we don't submit today that we have found the perfect answers for how all this should be laid out.

But I think we are in a stage of this that those type of things can be thought through in a way that, you know, we thought through in a way that we do it the right way. And I think that the recommendations that have been made by the task force, I think we cheat ourselves if we don't point to Birmingham, Alabama, and the civil rights museum there by way of the African American museum here or the Slave Labor Task Force and what is around the Capitol; and I think we have got a chance to tie it into Memphis, Tennessee, and the civil rights museum there; Cincinnati, Ohio, the underground railroad. I mean, this could be a very comprehensive effort—that the pamphlets and the plaques and all the things in the Capitol are just a component.

But, again, I would not submit to you today that we have thought through word-by-word how it should be, wordsmith. But these are the recommendations that have been made.

Senator LINCOLN. Congressman, I think one of the things we have all agreed on here is that we want it to be engaging. And one of the ways that we would also like to make it available to schoolchildren, perhaps, that can't visit Washington is through an interactive Web version. And through that, hopefully, there will be links to the civil rights museum in Memphis and to the other places where we can really re-emphasize a lot of the struggle that occurred and how important it is, you know, to learn those struggles and to learn them in a way that you feel and you see and you better understand what those struggles were. And I think through the interactive Web piece, you will see a great ability to be able to do that, particularly for schoolchildren. But, for children and adults, it will be a great availability.

Mr. WATTS. Congressman, if I can just add one more thing; and I hope that I am not speaking out of turn here. I don't think what the task force—what they have recommended, that they are trying necessarily to tell the comprehensive story of slavery and how we should not repeat it. But their challenge was to recognize the contribution that slave labor made to building the Capitol. And I think, in that, it obviously points to a lot of different things. It can take you into a lot of different arenas from Birmingham to Memphis to Selma to the African American museum that Mr. Bunch is heading up. But this, again, is a component that the task force addressed concerning the slave labor, the contribution that labor made to building the Capitol.

Ms. DAVIDSON. Mr. Chairman, just a few minutes. I am a product of the civil rights movement in Arkansas. The way I see it, the memorial to the slaves will show a connection for African Americans and others who do not feel that they are connected to the institutions that stand for America like the U.S. Capitol. So, if there is a memorial to the slaves, you can say we are connected to the Capitol. Our ancestors—I am the daughter of slaves, a great, great granddaughter of slaves. We can now say our ancestors helped build the Capitol. So when we look at it, it is not your building—the majority—it is our building because we were a part of it. So I think in that respect it creates a connection to our history.

It will be a connection not just for African Americans but also for immigrants that come here from all around the world who don't feel a part of America. Once they start feeling we are connected,

then we become one. We are more alike than we are different. And I think that is one of the things the memorial will show.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Gonzalez.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I thank the witnesses for their testimony, and I am going to piggyback pretty much on what Congressman Capuano and Congressman Lungren were pointing out.

But it is also a statement from former Congressman Watts; and I think you stated something about the past, the history of this particular lesson, applying it to change the future so that it is what Ms. Davidson points out, people taking ownership of this American experience and such. And I think that is very, very important.

My question goes to—and I know that we are not going to settle this today, because we are all in agreement that we are going to move forward with what you are proposing and the next panel may better address my question. But when people come through and they see this and they recognize that it was slave labor that was responsible in large measure for the building of our Capitol, I would like that somehow there is a reason for telling this story.

Why are we telling this story? I think it needs to be recognized and I think, as Ms. Davidson pointed out, an important aspect of it. But why do we tell these stories? And I would love somehow, some direction; that there is a lesson to be learned there and that this Nation is still a work in progress and that we are still trying to form this more perfect union and so on. But what does it mean? I think I want to take it up with—not to get real, real political, but it is about slavery, and it is not about slavery.

And Mike brought out that we have slavery today. But as far as the American experience, this is not about slavery in America today. But it is, in essence, the discriminatory practices that exist in America today and so on. In other words, we are not through that.

And I am not going to politicize this whole thing. But it would be a very interesting thing to say, think in terms of the Capitol where it is situated and today that the residents of the District of Columbia don't have a voting representative on the House floor. I mean, these are the lessons that I would like to somehow get people to start thinking in those terms. So——

And I think, J.C., you said, well, we may not be able to get that far today. But do you think there will be a component as to why we tell this story, why it has a modern-day application and a future application?

Mr. WATTS. Well, as Ms. Davidson said, I think it points to the fact that Americans—red, yellow, brown, black and white—made a contribution to trying to perfect this union. I don't—and I agree with you on—concerning D.C. voting rights. I think it is a travesty, and I think that is a part of perfecting our union in my opinion that people of the District should have the right, that their representative should have a vote on the floor of the United States House of Representatives.

So, again, we are not going to perfect the union in this one effort, but I think again it points to, I think, a part of our history that we can learn from, we can take pride in, that school kids can come

and know that the people who look like you made a contribution, that people who look like me made a contribution, people that look like Blanche, they made a contribution.

So I think we have got a chance to shape this and form this in a way that it could be very, very significant along with the African American museum, I think the resources that we already have available to us that we mentioned, Birmingham, Cincinnati, and so forth. So I see your point, and I think it is a valid point, but we have to continue to work on that.

Mr. LEWIS. Congressman, could I—it is good in itself to tell the story for history's sake. But as a Nation and as a people, we are still evolving. We are not there yet. We are in the process of becoming.

And I often think when I go to the Capitol, 44 years ago, when I came here with Martin Luther King, Jr., and stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, I was looking up at the Capitol. That was 44 years ago. Now I can look down from the Capitol on the third floor of my office and look at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. That tells somehow the distance we have come.

Maybe it is not a great distance. But we are still in the process of becoming. And that is why I think it is important for the task force to do what we are doing. It is not perfect, it is not complete, but it is another step down a very, very long road to recognize all Americans, what they did and the contribution they made.

Mr. GONZALEZ. I couldn't agree with you more. We want to tell a story. I just want people to understand also why we tell the story.

Thank you very much. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. McCarthy.

Mr. MCCARTHY. One, I want to thank this task force. I will tell you the work that was done is tremendous, and just reading it moves me. And I will tell you, the education given—when you look at the payment to individuals, if you are not moved by that on this building—is tremendous.

My question, I guess, drives from some of your answers that you were giving earlier. Now that you have made the recommendations, what do you envision for the task force on moving forward, on how you stay together or what you work on?

Senator LINCOLN. I am so sorry, Congressman.

Mr. MCCARTHY. How do you envision the task force moving forward now?

Senator LINCOLN. Well, as Congressman Lewis mentioned, we will have to move forward in terms of ensuring that the resources are there to be able to do what we want to do.

I also believe that not only should we have a real presence in the Visitors Center but that we also need to make sure that the actual—at least finding one of the actual places in the Capitol where the work was done by the slave labor should be recognized; and I hope that we can do that as well. Because I think that, again, it allows you to touch the stone and to look at the awesome pieces of stone that were quarried and how they may have been carried and, you know, the difficulty of that.

I am excited as well about the educational aspect, and I want us to move forward with that.

Maybe it is something that we can start and then continue to grow, as Congressman Lewis mentioned, particularly in terms of the interactive ability of kids, schoolchildren and others who want to learn. I just know, with twin boys that are 11 years old, it is amazing what those interactive videos do for them in terms of learning—what the chairman was talking about, not just the history of it, but, you know, to really kind of jump inside the picture as it were and realize or at least begin to understand the oppressive heat that Congressman Lewis mentioned, the weight of those stones, that the stones that would be out there are stones left that are—yeah, you have read about those—I am sure that were in the quarry at the time that can be used open the front Capitol.

When kids see those and they think somebody moved those with their hands—you know, all they are used to seeing are cranes these days. Not only is it awesome and an unbelievable thought, but there is educational tools there. I mean, the tools of the day were basic simple machines of physics. There is so much that kids can learn from this, both socially as well as scientifically and a whole host of other things; and I hope we won't stop at the brink, that we will continue to grow in our ability to use it as a learning tool.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Is there any chance that we can maybe dismiss this panel and direct questions to the next panel? If you want to direct this to this panel, we will have to bring them back or maybe you can submit them to the record.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. I have a really quick question, And I think this is following up on what Congressman Watts has said, that the researchers, despite all the wonderful efforts—and I want to thank each and every one of you for your tremendous contribution in bringing this forward to identify—I believe he mentioned only two of the slaves who were there, two of the individuals. And I am wondering if we have been able to find their decedents in any way or—and if we can bring that story in and if that research is continuing to be done as well.

Senator LINCOLN. Well, that was one of the things that I brought up, because I have been particularly interested—you know, the genealogy department at the Library of Congress is phenomenal, and they do a tremendous job, and our hope is that we can continue on that.

I don't know. Some of the others on the panel—but I expressed that concern as well, that there is unbelievable tools in terms of genealogy and what can be done. And I don't know. I have just seen certain programs. I have recommended constituents over to the Library of Congress. They go up to—I think it is the third or fourth floor, wherever. They can get assistance. You can do it on line. There is a host of things.

We want to encourage that is a part of it as well in terms of actually, as you said, finding not only decedents, not only those we know, but also from the records that exist perhaps finding more of those actual individuals that did participate in the work.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. The other thing, just to suggest, is that it may be carried beyond the Capitol as well. Those of us who

live on the Hill know that people who were living there, under what conditions, and I think that might be another story that would be interesting to tell, too, and we might be able to do it in some way that is not necessarily all in the Visitors Center but also outside.

Thank you very much.

Senator LINCOLN. I am so sorry, Mr. Chairman. I am taking up all this time.

The women Senators had dinner with the women Chief Justices or the justices of the court last night, and there was a lot of that discussion that came up about the history of the buildings around the Capitol at the turn of the century before and some of the measures that went to secure those for the buildings that we have, like the Supreme Court and the Library of Congress. So there is a lot of interesting things that we could get into and talk all day about, but I won't.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Mr. DAVIS OF ALABAMA. Mr. Chairman, I will be extremely brief. Let me just make a couple of observations.

One of them, Mr. Lewis, it is always good to see my fellow native Alabamian here. One of my highlights in the Congress was during the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act debate in 2005. Normally, as the Senator knows, Members don't tend to really hang around on the floor unless you are speaking or waiting to speak. I made the decision to sit down on the floor during the entire 2½ hour length of the debate. And for an hour of that time, I got to sit next to John Lewis. And getting to sit next to John Lewis during a debate on the Voting Rights Act remains and will continue to be one of the seminal events in my career.

I want to make two quick observations. The first one, what is so helpful about this exercise, it should remind the American people that if you understand the contributions of African Americans, there is a seamless Web, a seamless connection between what African Americans have done and every seminal moment in this country's history, bar none. There is no part of the American story that is not built in part on the backs and sometimes literally on the backs and sweat and labor of people of African American descent, and it is helpful for us to know that.

The last observation, I will make, Mr. Chairman, is this. Senator Lincoln, you can appreciate this; and, Congressman Lewis, you can appreciate it as a southerner. There are always a few people down south in our States that have this mindset that, well, you don't want to pick at these old bones; you don't want to spend too much time looking at what has been. I hope that those individuals realize that if you look at the story of this country, good and evil, noble and ignoble, it is ultimately a story of triumph, it is ultimately a story of ascent, and we are never running from exploring or examining history. We ought to embrace it.

And I thank you all for being here.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you all of you for the great work you have been doing, and thank you for the great work you will do. This hearing is in recess until we come back from our couple of votes, probably within about 45 minutes. Thank you.

[Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. I am going to call the hearing back to order while we are waiting for some members to come back from the vote; and, without objection, the report of the task force will be printed in the record of the hearing today.

I would like to welcome the panel in front of me: Mr. Lonnie Bunch, Director of the National Museum of African-American History and Culture at the Smithsonian Institute; Mr. William C. Allen, Architectural Historian, Office of the Architect of the Capitol; and Ms. Felicia Bell, U.S. Capitol Historical Society. I welcome you to our hearing today.

STATEMENTS OF LONNIE BUNCH, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION; WILLIAM C. ALLEN, ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN, OFFICE OF THE ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL; AND FELICIA BELL, U.S. CAPITOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The CHAIRMAN. I would ask, Mr. Bunch, if you would please start.

STATEMENT OF LONNIE BUNCH

Mr. BUNCH. Mr. Chairman, thank you for this opportunity to talk to the Committee on House Administration.

Slavery and the history of the enslaved Africans is one of the most troubling and most difficult episodes in American history. It is a period that does not reflect well on America and its stated ideals of equality and liberty.

In many ways, slavery is the last great unmentionable in American life, something that is better unspoken and forgotten; and yet we cannot escape the shadow of slavery just by ignoring that history.

In his important novel, The Fire Next Time, James Baldwin wrote that, quote, history does not refer merely or even principally to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways and that history is literally present in all that we do.

If that is true, then it is important, rather, it is essential that America confront its slave past in order to help us understand the impact of slavery on us all and through this understanding find reconciliation and healing.

As a historian, I have dedicated my whole life to helping people to remember, to remember our history not simply out of nostalgia, because history, especially African American history, matters. It provides tools and lessons that help people navigate contemporary life. Yet not everyone believes that this Nation should remember, especially when those memories include and are fundamentally shaped by slavery.

So while my colleagues here are to talk about the history of slave labor and the act of the building of the Capitol, in this statement I want to explore why the interpretation and the preservation of the history of the enslaved is so important and so relevant for an America still struggling with the legacy and the impact of race and

why it is so important for America to remember the contributions of the enslaved.

I think you can tell a great deal about a country and about a people by what they deem important enough to remember, what they build monuments to celebrate, what graces the walls of their museums. But I think you can even tell more about a country by what it forgets, by what it chooses to omit. This desire to forget disappointments, moments of evil and great missteps is both natural and instructive. But I would suggest to you that it is often the essence of African American culture that is forgotten and downplayed. And yet, in some ways, it is the African American experience, the experience of slavery that is a clarion call for us to remember.

A good example of this clarion call is the intersection of race and memory through the story of slavery. We must remember that for nearly 250 years slavery not only existed but it was the most dominant force in American life. Political clout and economic fortune depended upon the labor of slaves. Almost every aspect of American life, from business to religion, from culture to commerce, from foreign policy to westward expansion, was formed and shaped by the experience of slavery.

American slavery was so dominant globally that 90 percent of the world's cotton was produced by slaves in the American South. In a way, we were the OPEC of the 19th century when it came to cotton. By 1860, the monetary value of slaves outweighed all the money invested in this country's railroads, banking and industry combined; and the most devastating war in American history was fought over the issue of slavery.

And so therefore I was struck when I read into a survey that was taken in the early 1990s that assessed the public's understanding of slavery. The results were fascinating. Over 80 percent of white respondents felt that slavery, even if it was important, was a history that mattered little to them. And even more troubling was that 56 percent of the African Americans surveyed expressed either little interest or some level of embarrassment about slavery.

There is a great need, I would suggest, to help Americans understand that the history of slavery matters. It matters because so much of our complex and troubling struggle to define racial equality in this country has been shaped by slavery. Until we use the past to better understand the contemporary resonance of slavery we will never get to the heart of one of the central dilemmas in America and that is the relations among the races.

But it is also important, I would suggest, to help America combat the notion of embarrassment. I am not ashamed of my slave ancestors. In fact, I am in awe of their ability, in spite of the cruelties of slavery, to maintain their culture, their sense of family, their humor and their humanity.

I wish more people knew the words of a former slave who was asked during the Depression what will people remember about slavery. He said, they will remember that we were sold but not that we were strong. They will remember that we were bought but not that we were brave.

Thus, it is crucially important that we remember slavery to draw inspiration, to help make America better. In many ways, slavery is

a wonderful but unforgiving mirror that illuminates all the dark corners of the American experience. It is a mirror that reminds us of America's ideals and promise and how difficult it is to live up to those ideals. But it is also a mirror that makes those who are often invisible more visible. It is a mirror that gives voice to the anonymous. It is a mirror that challenges us to be better but to work to make our countries and communities better. If we use the mirror of slavery effectively, we will find common ground to allow us to struggle together as the abolitionists once did to make America better.

Another reason why it is so important for us to remember slavery is that if we can illuminate the contributions of the enslaved who built the Capitol, because this will have a great impact nationally, by recognizing those who worked within our highest legislative body, Congress will stimulate, legitimize and encourage other projects to examine and understand the slave experience. I can only imagine an array of projects like the President House project in Philadelphia, the African burial ground that will find support and encouragement because Congress has recognized the important contributions of the enslaved.

Ultimately, slavery is important because we must remember because it is the right thing to do. It is a powerful lens to explore issues of race, power, economics and social change. This history is powerful but too important to our ability to find reconciliation and healing to be ignored.

America understands the importance of the struggle for freedom and equality only when they look through slavery. Where better than understanding our slave past can we help Americans wrestle with issues of morality, activism and racial change?

Let me close simply by giving a quotation from a former slave who said, in 1939, when asked once again why we should remember, he said, though the slavery question is settled, its impact is not. The question will be with us always. It is in our politics. It is in our courts. It is on our highways. It is in our manner, and it is in our thoughts all the day, every day.

What a gift Congress can give the American people by helping them to remember the enslaved by commemorating the contributions that slave labors made in the building of the Capitol all the day, every day.

Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Bunch.

[The statement of Mr. Bunch follows:]

Statement of Lonnie C. Bunch,

Director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture

Smithsonian Institution

Committee on House Administration Hearing on

"The Construction of the United States Capitol: Recognizing the Contributions of Slave Labor."

November 7, 2007

Early in my career I crafted an exhibition at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History that was to explore the role and history of American slavery. I traveled throughout the American south searching for an extant slave cabin that I could use in the exhibition. Ultimately, I found a cabin on the old Friendfield Plantation that was located in the rice producing area of the Wacamaw Neck near Georgetown, South Carolina. After driving past an array of swamps, I came to a "slave street," an area that contained twelve slave cabins and a small church. There I met Mr. Johnson. Mr. Johnson was the grandson of a slave who had resided in one of these cabins from the 1850s until her death in the 1930s. Mr. Johnson talked about how the slaves did a "hard sweep" that eliminated the grass and weeds that were the home to vermin. And then we walked to the side where the chimney was located and he spoke about the role that slave children played in maintaining the chimneys to prevent fires. And then we moved to the rear of the cabin where he explained how slaves used that space to grow food crops that supplemented the food that was provided by the owners. Finally, I walked to the fourth side but Mr. Johnson did not follow me. After repeatedly asking him to accompany me, I demanded to know why he left me alone on that side of the cabin. Finally he looked at me and said that he would not move in my direction because the area "was full of poisonous snakes." After I stopped running, I asked why he did not warn me. He said that everyone around here knows the history of that spot. And then he said "people need to remember not just what they want, but

what they need. It pains the ancestors when we forget." His words—"people need to remember"—have never left me.

Ultimately, Mr. Johnson called for people to remember not simply out of nostalgia but because history—especially African American history—provides useful tools and lessons that help one navigate contemporary life. The best museum presentations can help people find that meaningful and useable past. Yet not everyone believes that this nation should remember, and especially when these memories include and are fundamentally shaped by African American history and culture.

The notion that African American history has limited meaning should be a concern for all Americans. We would be better served if we remember the words that James Baldwin wrote in his novel, The Fire Next Time:

> "History does not refer merely or even principally to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and that history is literally present in all that we do."

So in this statement, I want to explore why the interpretation and preservation of African American History and Culture in museums are so important and relevant for an America still struggling with the legacy and impact of race. And what are the challenges that museums face as they struggle to help the people to remember a fuller, richer, and more complex history.

You can tell a great deal about a country or a people by what they deem important enough to remember; what they build monuments to celebrate; and what graces the walls of their museums. Throughout Scandinavia there are monuments and museums that cherish the Vikings as a proud symbol of Nordic curiosity, exploration, and freedom. In Scotland, much is made of the heroic struggles of William Wallace to throw off the yoke of British

domination. Until recently, South Africa was dominated by monuments and memories of the Vortrekker, while the United States traditionally revels in Civil War battles or founding fathers, with an occasional president thrown into the mix.

Yet I would argue that we learn even more about a country by what it chooses to forget. This desire to omit—to forget disappointments, moments of evil, and great missteps—is both natural and instructive. It is often the essence of African American culture that is forgotten or downplayed. And yet, it is also the African American experience that is a clarion call to remember.

A good example of this nexus of race and memory is one of the last great unmentionables of public discourse about American history—the story of slavery. For nearly 250 years, slavery not only existed but was one of the most dominant forces in American life. Political clout and economic fortune depended upon the labor of slaves. Almost every aspect of American life—from business to religion, from culture to commerce, from foreign policy to western expansion was informed and shaped by the experience of slavery. American slavery was so dominant globally that 90 percent of the world's cotton was produced by slaves in the American South. By 1860 the monetary value of slaves outweighed all the money invested in this country's railroads, banking, and industry combined. And the most devastating war in American history was fought over the issue of slavery.

And yet few institutions address this history for a non-scholarly audience. And there are even fewer opportunities to discuss—candidly and openly—the impact, legacy, and contemporary meaning of slavery.

I remember a small survey from the early 1990s that assessed the public's knowledge about slavery. The results were fascinating: 81 percent of white respondents felt that slavery was

a history that had little to do with them; 73 percent felt that slavery was an important story but that its real relevance was only to African Americans. Even more troubling was the fact that the majority of African Americans surveyed expressed either little interest or some level of embarrassment about slavery.

There is a great need to help Americans understand that the history of slavery matters because so much of our complex and troubling struggle to find racial equality has been shaped by slavery. And until we use the past to better understand the contemporary resonance of slavery, we will never get to the heart of one of the central dilemmas in American life—race relations. But it is also important for those who preserve and interpret African American life to help combat the notion of embarrassment. I am not ashamed of my slave ancestors, I am in awe of their ability—in spite of the cruelties of slavery—to maintain their culture, their sense of family, their humor and their humanity. I wish more people knew the words of William Prescott, a former slave who when asked about slavery by a WPA interviewer in the 1930s said, "They will remember that we were sold but not that we were strong; they will remember that we were bought but not that we were brave."

There is a great need and opportunity to draw inspiration, sustenance, and guidance from African American culture. And from this inspiration, people can find tools and paths to help them live their lives. As America continues its internal debates about who we are as a nation and what our core values are, where better to look than through the lens of African American history and culture. If one wants to understand the notion of American resilience, optimism, or spirituality, where better than the black experience. If one wants to explore the limits of the American dream, where better than by examining the Gordian knot of race relations. If one wants to understand the impact and tensions that accompany the changing demographics of our

cities, where better than the literature and music of the African American community. African American culture has the power and the complexity needed to illuminate all the dark corners of American life, and the power to illuminate all the possibility and ambiguities of American life. One of the challenges before us, whether we write, preserve, exhibit history or consume culture, is to do a better job of centralizing race.

A final reason why African American history and culture are still so vital, so relevant, and so important is because the black past is a wonderful but unforgiving mirror that reminds us of America's ideals and promises. It is a mirror that makes those who are often invisible, more visible, and it gives voice to many who are often overlooked. It is a mirror that challenges us to be better and to work to make our community and country better. But it is also a mirror that allows us to see our commonalities. It is a mirror that allows us to celebrate and to revel but also demands that we all struggle, that we all continue to "fight the good fight."

So the question before us is how have museums done and what are the challenges that they face today? When all else fails, historians can always rely on a quotation from W.E.B. DuBois. His oft quoted line that the problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line, is quite appropriately applied to the state of museums in the 21st century.

One of the key challenges that cultural institutions face is how to effectively wrestle with and cross the color line. If museums are to truly be institutions that the public admires and trusts, then more should expend the political and cultural capital, take the risks, to help their visitors find a useful, usable, inclusive, and meaningful history that engages us all.

Gone are the days when cultural institutions could argue that there was little public interest in illuminating the slave presence in America. No longer are museums silent about slavery.

Just look at the recent wonderful array of scholarship and interpretation produced by museums and historic sites. Plantations like Monticello, which once never uttered the word "slave," now support innovative research on Mulberry Row - the site of cabins and homes of the enslaved, that has, along with the story of Sally Hemmings, reshaped the interpretation of Jefferson's home. Many of the significant plantations from Drayton Hall to Mt. Vernon have rethought the place of slavery within their institutions. And Somerset Plantation in North Carolina, with its privileging of the experience of the enslaved, is a beacon of what is possible. The work at Somerset demonstrates the transformative power of history when the past is made meaningful and useful to contemporary audiences. The pioneering work of Rex Ellis at Colonial Williamsburg has brought the interpretation of slavery to the world of living history. Now millions of visitors to Williamsburg begin to see a re-created world that more closely approximates the tensions and racial dynamics of 18th Century Virginia.

And the array of museum exhibitions that explored the slave past has been impressive - if not staggering. Most southern state museums have developed interesting collections and dedicated exhibition space that illuminates the history of the "peculiar institution". And an array of exhibitions has introduced untold audiences to the issues surrounding slavery. Unlikely institutions like the Valentine Museum - whose innovative work in the late 1900's and 1990's raised the visibility of the history of urban slavery. The Museum of the Confederacy brought together an impressive array of scholars to produce "Before Freedom Came." At the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, two permanent exhibitions explore slavery in the 18th century Chesapeake and the role of enslaved and free blacks in low country South Carolina. The Library of Congress mounted "Behind the Big House" while the Mariner's Museum in Newport News imported the important Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Exhibition from

Liverpool. All these exhibitions and many others that I did not mention seemingly demonstrate that slavery is no longer the last great unmentionable in American museums. The silence, the deafening silence, that once greet the visitors who sought to better understand the slave past, has been replaced by a fleeting cacophony of exhibition and interpretive vehicles.

And there are exciting possibilities on the horizon. There are serious discussions and attempts to create museums of slavery in Charleston, S.C. and one effort led by the former Governor of Virginia, Doug Wilder that would be located in Fredericksburg, VA. And the Smithsonian is creating the National Museum of African American History and Culture. I think that one of the most intriguing installations is the Underground Railroad Museum and Freedom Center. Under Spencer Crew's leadership, this institution should provide new insights into the history of race in America, but it also has the potential to give its audience tools to find a useful and useable history that can inform their daily lives. Thus the future of the interpretation of slavery in museums and historic sites seems bright.

Clearly the world of museums and historic sites is undergoing important change. Clearly there is increased visibility and awareness of the need to explore slavery in America's cultural institutions. Clearly slavery can no longer be ignored. But I would suggest not enough museums and historic sites have embraced the need and the challenge of interpreting the slave past. Too many historic sites view the discussion of slavery as a necessary evil. Something that is now required but still not central to their institutional mission. And too few museums have dedicated the space, expended the intellectual and scholarly capital, and made the public commitment to explore slavery in a way that is comprehensive, accessible, and able to grapple with both the historical legacy and contemporary meaning of slavery. And even where the change is drastic and even in institutions that have crafted many of the exhibitions that I have mentioned, there is

the need to transcend this "first generation" of interpreting slavery. Even the best of these exhibitions struggle to simply acknowledge and introduce the public to slavery. I would suggest that the time for simple acknowledgement is past.

And why is this so important? Because museums are one of the important sources of historical knowledge. Recent surveys and anecdotal evidence suggest that Americans are still ambivalent at best, but often hostile to discussions about slavery. There is a lack of understanding about the history, meaning, and contemporary resonance of slavery. Museums and historic sites have an important role to play if they are able to transcend this simple acknowledgement of the slave past.

There is an array of recent scholarship that examines the dynamic and fluid nature of the institution of slavery. Scholarship that helps us better understand that slavery was not static. And that chronological and regional considerations contributed to a very diverse and changing institution. Yet rarely do museums capture more than a frozen moment. This static nature of museum interpretation also limits the public's understanding of the interdependencies and interrelationships that were essential to slavery. Few exhibitions explore the interconnectivity among free blacks and the enslaved. Yet it is clear that people married, worked, collaborated, and disagreed across boundaries. This would allow the public to experience more of the diversity and dynamic nature of the slave experience. We have all heard the phrase, "think globally and act locally." Well I would suggest that America's museums and historical sites always think locally and act locally when it comes to the interpretation of slavery. With the exception of a map depicting the triangular trade routes or an illustration of slave ships, American museums rarely grapple with the international or global dimensions of slavery. Slavery is a wonderful lens to explore broad, global issues of race, identity, trade, power, and commerce. But it is a lens that

is closed to most American visitors. What better subject than slavery to help Americans rethink their place and their role in a global economy. What better subject than slavery to allow Americans to break down the parochialisms that shape our lives daily. More importantly, it is difficult to understand the origins, evolution, and legacy of slavery unless one sees the international dimensions.

But this tendency to look inward also limits the American museum's ability to benefit from some of the important work on slavery that is occurring throughout the globe. While there have been great changes in whom and what museums interpret, it is much too soon to be satisfied with the American museum profession's efforts in exploring African American culture. Often the rhetoric of change fails to match the realities of every day life in museums. My major concern is that museums are too often crafting exhibitions that simply say that "African Americans were here too," rather than examining the complexities, interactions and difficulties of race in America. In essence, much of what institutions create today is better suited to the world of forty years ago - when blacks, in the words of Novelist Ralph Ellison, "were invisible men and women, " and whites needed to be reminded that African American history and culture mattered - rather than the presentations for the 21st century that need to better reflect the clashes, compromises, broken alliances, failed expectations and contested terrain that shape the perspectives of today's audiences.

Despite two decades of substantive progress and change, whiteness is still the gold standard in museums. While there have been many exhibitions and many moments to celebrate, I am not convinced that these exhibitions have as far reaching and as permanent an impact as one might believe. While many of these presentations introduced newer, more diverse audiences to cultural institutions, the relationships are not often nurtured or sustained. And often museums

"check off" the African American exhibition and return to business as usual once the exhibition has closed. And business as usual is celebrating whiteness.

So, in closing, it is important to acknowledge that African American culture has a permanent home in America's museum, but there is still much to do to reach the promised land. Let me close with a quotation from a former slave, Cornelius Holmes, who said in 1939: "Though the slavery question is settled, its impact is not. The Question will be with us always. It is in our politics, in our courts, on our highways, in our manner and in our thoughts—all the day—every day."

What a gift it will be when museums help the public understand that they are shaped and touched by African American history—all the day, every day.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Allen.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM C. ALLEN

Mr. ALLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

On December 8, 2004, Congress directed the Architect of the Capitol to study the contribution of slave laborers in the construction of the Capitol and to provide a report within 180 days. As the agency's architectural historian and someone who has researched and written about Capitol history for many years, I was given the responsibility of preparing the report.

I began my research at the National Archives, where the Capitol's earliest construction records are kept. From past experience, I knew that research into the records from the 1790s would yield the information I needed. The records of the Office of Public Buildings contain the financial records of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia, who were the officials in charge of building the Capitol, the White House and other early government buildings in Washington. The ledgers list every expense incurred by the Commissioners, and it is there that one sees the names of hundreds of local residents receiving payments for the work of their slaves.

From 1795 to 1801, there were 385 payments for slave labor for the Capitol. Rarely was the type of work enumerated or explained. Rather, the ledger recorded payments simply as "Negro hire." Payments for food, provisions and medical care were also recorded in these ledgers. In 1795, the Commissioners declared that they needed 100 slaves for the next year's work on construction projects throughout the city. The owners would be paid $60 a year, a sum of money that was raised to $70 in 1797.

In the course of my research, I discovered that renting slaves was a fairly common practice in the Potomac region. George Washington, for instance, sometimes found it necessary to rent slaves from his neighbors to help with harvests or spring house cleaning. Slaves with construction skills, such as carpenters and bricklayers, were highly sought after. For example, James Madison's father managed a sideline construction business based on his slaves sawing planks, making clapboards and building fences.

Historical documents tell us that slaves worked at the quarries which supplied sandstone for the Capitol and White House. The principal contractor at Aquia Creek, Virginia, advertised for "60 strong, active Negro men" and promised their owners that "they shall be well used and well fed." Another contractor, who was supplying foundation stone for the Capitol in 1793, was instructed to keep his hands at work from sunrise to sunset, "especially the Negroes."

Another backbreaking job that seems to have been done mainly by slaves at the Capitol was sawing, both stone sawing and timber sawing. Sawing stone was slow work, with the steel blade making the cut with wet sand providing the abrasion. One of the Commissioners suggested purchasing slaves to work in the stone cutting business and to reward their work with freedom after 5 or 6 years of service. This idea, however, was not approved and the Commissioners continued to rent slaves throughout this period.

While cutting stone was hard work, timber sawing was worse. After they were stripped of bark, logs were rolled over pits dug into

the earth. A slave down in the pit would have one end of a 5- or a 7-foot-long whipsaw, and his partner on top would have the other end. Chalk lines guided each pass of the saw, which rained down a shower of sawdust on the top of the head of the hapless person in the pit. Wearing a hat or a veil offered the only protection available. Payment records indicate at the Archives that the rented slaves were able to earn their wages by sawing timber on Sundays or holidays. This was money paid directly to the slaves, not to their owners—a very rare instance of this happening—and they were thereby able to purchase little luxuries and perhaps even their freedom.

The brick business was also heavily dependent on slave labor. Black women and children were used to mold the clay before it was stacked in kilns. Skilled slaves laid bricks, while their unskilled brethren delivered brick in hods carried up ladders on their shoulders. White bricklayers at the Capitol were paid $2.26 cents per 1,000 bricks laid, but the earnings of their employees or slaves was not recorded.

Of all the construction work performed by slaves at the Capitol, perhaps carpentry was the most significant and ultimately the most influential. Slave carpenters were numerous on large plantations in the region. At Mt. Vernon, Washington had at least four slave carpenters making farm implements and building simple wooden structures and fences. Carpentry was a useful skill that was taught to slaves, passed down to succeeding generations and grew more marketable as the city of Washington developed. A good carpenter could learn a living long after public quarries had closed and pit sawers had been replaced by sawmills.

It is no doubt true that slaves continued to contribute their skill and labor in the construction of the Capitol well after the 1790s. But with the advent of a private construction industry in 19th century Washington, their names and accomplishments recede into the shadows. Rarely is there a mention of slave labor in the Capitol's later period, but the earlier records illustrate the critical roles played by African American slaves in the building of our country's temple of liberty.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Allen.

[The statement of Mr. Allen follows:]

The Construction of the United States Capitol:
Recognizing the Contributions of Slave Labor

Statement by William C. Allen
Office of the Architect of the Capitol
November 7, 2007

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slaves from his neighbors to help with harvests or spring house cleaning. Slaves with construction skills, such as carpenters or bricklayers, were highly sought after. For example, James Madison's father managed a side line construction business based on his slaves sawing planks, making clapboards, and building fences.

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History of Slave Laborers in the Construction of the United States Capitol

by William C. Allen
Architectural Historian
Office of the Architect of the Capitol

Foreword by
Richard Baker
Historian, U. S. Senate
and
Kenneth Kato
Chief, Office of History and Preservation
U. S. House of Representatives

June 1, 2005

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Richard Baker
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Chief, Office of History and Preservation
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No one will ever know how many slaves helped to build the United States Capitol Building—or the White House; or the homes of founding fathers George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison; or Philadelphia's Independence Hall. Indifference by earlier historians, poor record keeping, and the silence of voiceless classes have impeded our ability in the twenty-first century to understand fully the contributions and privations of those who toiled over the seven decades from the first cornerstone laying to the day of emancipation in the District of Columbia.

Ten years ago, official celebrations of the Capitol's two-hundredth anniversary focused national attention on earlier Americans who had no cause to celebrate: the slaves who quarried the stone, cut the timber, and formed and fired the bricks that became our nation's Temple of Freedom. As plans proceeded for construction of a Capitol Visitor Center in the 1990s, members of Congress and others expressed increasing concern that a great opportunity to tell this story might be missed.

The following report responds to that opportunity. It offers a balanced and well-reasoned account, based on the surviving sources, of a significant chapter in American history. By infusing this story with its broader historical and architectural context, the author has added a dimension never before available. While we will never know as much about the slave laborers who built the Capitol as we do about their free counterparts, we now know a good deal more than before this project began.

Illustration Credits

Page 6, *Quarrying*: From Lee Nelson, *White House Stone Carving*.
Page 10, *Pit Sawing*: Courtesy of the Library of Congress.
Page 10, *Stone Sawing*: From *White House Stone Carving*.
Page 11, *Bricklaying*: Courtesy of the Library of Congress.
Page 14, *Loading Potomac Marble onto a Canal Boat*: Detail of a sketch by B. Henry Latrobe, 1817. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Introduction

Soon after it was finished in the 1820s, the Capitol began to be called the "Temple of Liberty" because it was dedicated to the cherished ideas of freedom, equality, and self determination. How, then, can a building steeped in those noble principles have been constructed with the help of slave labor? The first step in the Capitol's evolution was taken in the last decade of the eighteenth century and was, in fact, assisted by the toil of bondsmen—mainly slaves rented from local owners to help build the Capitol and the city of Washington. They were an integral component of the city's workforce, which otherwise would have suffered from a severe shortage of hands. In every colony north and south, from the seventeenth century on, the building trades drew upon slave labor to augment the available supply of free workmen. This was especially true in the Potomac region, where the population was sparse and the concentration of slave laborers was the highest in the nation.[1]

The irony of slaves helping to build America's "Temple of Liberty" is potent. It is instructive, however, to recall that other landmarks of American freedom were also built with a similar labor force or in other ways intertwined with the institution of slavery. Faneuil Hall—Boston's celebrated "Cradle of Liberty"—, for instance, was given to the city by a slave owner whose fortune was founded on the slave trade. America's oldest lending library, the Redwood Library in Newport, Rhode Island, was founded in 1747 with the help of New England's largest slaveholder, Abraham Redwood. Two well-known Massachusetts leaders, Cotton Mather and John Winthrop, were also slave owners.[2] Independence Hall was built at a time when slavery was widespread in Pennsylvania. Indeed, the colony's Quaker founder, William Penn, was a slave owner. The homes of George Washington (Mt. Vernon), Thomas Jefferson (Monticello), and James Madison (Montpelier) were constructed with the help of slaves. Bondsmen helped construct the three principal public buildings in Williamsburg, Virginia: the Capitol, the Governor's Palace, and the Wren Building at the College of William and Mary.[3] Indeed, it is highly unlikely that any eighteenth-century building now standing in Colonial Williamsburg was built without the assistance of slave labor. By the time of the American Revolution slavery had existed in every state for generations. When the Capitol was begun in the 1790s slave labor had a well-established record in the building trades, a record that would only expand with the work necessary to build a capital city on the Potomac.

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[1] In 1790 there were 753,430 African-Americans living in the United States; over half lived in Maryland and Virginia. While the vast majority were enslaved, 13 percent in Maryland were free, and the number stood at 21 percent in Virginia. Letitia Woods Brown, *Free Negroes in the District of Columbia, 1790–1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 17.

[2] William D. Pierson, *Black Yankees: The Development of an Afro-American Subculture in Eighteenth Century New England* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988).

[3] Marcus Whiffen, *The Public Buildings of Williamsburg* (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg, 1958).

It is not possible to examine the documents at the National Archives relating to the Capitol's early construction without being impressed by the sheer number of references to "Negro Hire" (see the appendix). These vouchers record payments to owners for time their slaves spent working on the Capitol, the President's House, and elsewhere in the emerging city of Washington. Today it may seem negligent on the part of early historians of the Capitol that they failed to include the story of slave labor in their accounts. Surely they were aware of the fact; however, their failure to incorporate slaves in their Capitol histories should be seen as a typical disinterest in the working classes in general. In years past, the labor of everyday workmen of all races and ethnicities was not considered a subject worthy of scholarly notice. The issue of slavery in particular was an embarrassing topic that did not sit well with squeamish writers. Early histories of the Capitol by George C. Hazelton (1897), Glenn Brown (1900, 1902) and I. T. Frary (1940) were focused on architecture, architects, and superintendents and not on the workmen who actually implemented the plans and orders. This situation has changed dramatically in more recent accounts, which reflect a new respect for all who played a role in the Capitol's history—including lower-class laborers and slaves. This is the result of a more inclusive view of history by modern scholars and a relatively new interest in multi-cultural subjects. A glance at the index to Bob Arnebeck's authoritative examination of the city's formative years, *Through A Fiery Trial,* reveals no fewer than 89 entries for slave labor.[4] In 1993 Robert Kapsch completed a landmark dissertation on the workmen who built the President's House during the period 1793–1817.[5] Another example of this new interest in workmen is found in the February/March 1995 issue of *American Visions*, a magazine of Afro-American culture. It contains a series of articles about blacks in Washington history and includes two narratives on slaves helping to build the Capitol and the President's House. The most recent history of the Capitol (2001) contains numerous references to slaves and other workmen.[6] The documents that made such scholarship possible have never been lost, have never been "discovered," and have in fact been available to the public for generations, yet only in the last fifteen years have they captured the interest of historians of Washington's early days.

This study on slave labor and the construction of the Capitol has been prepared at the request of Congress.[7] Here, the focus will be on the construction of the Capitol from the early 1790s until it was occupied in 1800. This period contains the most comprehensive documentation relating to slave labor in the history of the Capitol, and while later materials will be discussed, the bulk of the story belongs to the 1790s.

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[4] Bob Arnebeck, *Through A Fiery Trial: Building Washington 1790–1800* (Lanham, Maryland: Madison Books, 1991).

[5] Robert James Kapsch, "The Labor History of the Construction and Reconstruction of the White House, 1793–1817," PhD dissertation, University of Maryland, 1993.

[6] William C. Allen, *History of the United States Capitol: A Chronicle of Design, Construction, and Politics* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2001).

[7] "The Committee directs the Architect of the Capitol, working with the Historians of the Senate and House and the Librarian of Congress, to study the history and contributions of slave laborers in the construction of the U. S. Capitol, and provide a report within 180 days of the enactment of this Act." Report 108-307, accompanying S. 2666, p. 28. The Act passed on December 8, 2004.

I. Manpower, Money, and Materials: The Capitol's Faltering Start

The authority to construct the Capitol was granted to the president by Congress in the Residence Act of July 16, 1790. This law gave George Washington broad powers to oversee the construction of a new city on the Potomac River, complete with buildings necessary to house the chief executive and the legislature. (A home for the judicial branch would have to wait.) To facilitate matters, the law granted the president the authority to appoint a three-man board of commissioners to act as his representative on the spot.[8] The government, after all, would be in Philadelphia while the new federal city was being prepared. Commissioners had been appointed to lay out cities in other places during the colonial period, when new towns were needed for county seats or state capitals. What set this venture apa rt was the breathtaking scale of the new city and the vastness of the public buildings that would be built there. Washington's vision for this national metropolis reached far into the future: at eleven square miles the planned capital would be many times bigger than Philadelphia, then America's most populous city, which at the time covered approximately one square mile. Indeed, the federal city was (on paper, at least) larger than London's eight square miles.[9] The President's House promised to be the largest residence in America, and the Capitol would surpass the size and scale of any contemporary public building in the country. (The Capitol design that Washington eventually approved covered an area 10 times larger than Independence Hall.)

What makes Washington's vision for America's capital city all the more remarkable is where it was to be situated: rural Tidewater Maryland. Such ambitious plans might have been more practical in areas near Boston, New York, Philadelphia, or Charleston—areas with well-established building industries—but the sparsely populated agrarian context of the Maryland countryside could do little but throw roadblocks in the path of a city's rapid or orderly development. Most of the human elements necessary to build a great city were missing: there were too few carpenters, bricklayers, plasterers, or roofers; there were virtually no stone cutters or carvers; and surveyors, architects, and engineers had to be brought in from elsewhere. The only human resource that the neighborhood could supply in abundance was unskilled labor—mostly slaves, but a smattering of free blacks and whites as well. Basic building materials, such as lumber, brick, and stone, could be procured locally, but the vast quantities needed to build the Capitol and President's House strained resources to the breaking point. Another vexing problem was the city's finances, which were always in a state of disarray. Proceeds from the sale of building lots were intended to pay for construction activities, but the anticipated real estate bonanza never materialized. (The first sale of lots in October 1792 netted only $2,000.) In desperation the city commissioners sought loans

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[8] Washington appointed three members of the local slave-owning aristocracy to the first board: Daniel Carroll and Thomas Johnson of Maryland and Dr. David Stuart of Virginia. These were replaced in 1794 by Gustavus Scott, William Thornton, and Alexander White. Unlike the first board, they were salaried and expected to look after the city's affairs full time. Both Scott and Thornton (a Quaker) were slave owners.

[9] Allan Greenberg, *George Washington Architect* (London: Andreas Papadakis Publisher, 1999), p. 112.

from Dutch capitalists, Congress, and the Maryland legislature. After the initial optimism regarding the city's finances turned sour a few years into the project, decisions affecting the Capitol and President's House were made with economy foremost in mind. Scaling back the grand designs was never an option, but building piecemeal was. Therefore, while the Capitol was begun in 1793 with the expectation that it would be finished in seven years, it would not be completed until 1826. (Admittedly, the Fire of 1814 imposed an unexpected and excusable setback.) During the initial phase of construction (1793–1800) only the Capitol's north wing was completed.[10]

Even before the Capitol's design had been decided upon, the city commissioners realized that they were facing a long-term labor problem and took steps to solve it. The secretary of state, Thomas Jefferson, advised them in March 1792 to investigate the possibility of importing Germans and Highlanders.[11] Three months later the commissioners sent a letter to a Dutch merchant asking his assistance in procuring 100 unmarried Germans to help build the public buildings in the new city. They were particularly anxious to have stone masons, stone cutters, and bricklayers.[12] (There is no evidence that any Germans actually emigrated as a result of this letter.) In October 1792 they sent the head of the stone department on a scouting mission looking for stone cutters who might be among the redemptioners aboard a recently arrived ship.[13] Redemptioners were essentially indentured servants who promised to repay—or redeem—the cost of their passage to America with future earnings that would be paid to the ship's captain. The commissioners wished to purchase fifteen to twenty contracts if the redemptioners possessed the construction skills they needed. It is doubtful, though, that the commissioners realized any benefit from this scheme: the people who were obliged to secure transatlantic passage in this manner rarely possessed valuable skills.

President Washington had decided that the Capitol and the President's House would be faced entirely with stone, a decision that caused the commissioners considerable anxiety over the years. The best local buildings were brick, and if stone were used at all it was usually relegated to the trim around doors and windows. The federal city was located below the fall line, and stone architecture was an exceedingly rare sight in the neighborhood. Scarce, too, were the men who knew how to cut and carve stone. This situation did not deter Washington, however, whose admiration for stone architecture was amply demonstrated at Mt. Vernon: his frame dwelling was made to look like a dressed masonry building by its exterior sheathing of boards cut, beveled, painted, and sanded to imitate stone blocks. As nature's most durable building material, stone would contribute to the sense of grandeur and permanence that Washington wished the public buildings to impart.

The first stone mason to arrive in the federal city was Colin Williamson, a Scot who was a relative of John Suter, the proprietor of the Fountain Inn in Georgetown where the

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[10] Construction of the President's House proceeded with similar setbacks: the great audience chamber known as the East Room was not finished until Andrew Jackson's administration.

[11] Jefferson to the Commissioners, March 6, 1792, Saul K. Padover, *Jefferson and the National Capital* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 106.

[12] Commissioners to Herman Hind Bamen, July 4, 1792, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, Record Group 42, National Archives.

[13] Commissioners to Adrian Valk (spelling uncertain), October 3, 1792, ibid.

commissioners held their meetings. He took charge of the stone department in 1792 and oversaw the laying of the foundations of the President's House and the Capitol. During a trip to Great Britain, George Walker scouted Masonic lodges (at the commissioners' behest) looking for recruits. He had little luck in London but was able to sign on several experienced masons from Lodge No. 8 in Edinburgh. George Blagden of Yorkshire, England, began his career in the federal city in 1794 and was employed there until his death thirty-two years later. Many other masons, however, found it difficult to persevere in the infant city due to the high cost of living and the lack of urban amenities.

On December 2, 1791, the commissioners paid $6,000 for a sandstone quarry on Aquia Creek in Stafford County, Virginia. Other nearby quarries with the same stone deposits were leased during this period. The quarry purchase was the first major outlay of funds for the benefit of the new capital city and predated actual construction activities by almost a year. But the commissioners knew the new city would demand a great deal of stone and determined to operate the quarry themselves rather than rely on stone delivered from far away. Contracts with various quarriers document the efforts to extract stone from several different quarries simultaneously. Robert Brent, a quarrier from Stafford County, was hired in 1792 to work the public quarry. In the fall of that year, just as operations at the quarry would have slowed down, he was authorized to hire forty "stout-armed" Negro men at £12 [$32] a year, pay their taxes, and feed and clothe them.[14] It is likely that the commissioners wanted the slaves hired quickly in order to keep the quarry in operation throughout the winter months. It is also likely that Brent already had a crew of slaves at work. In a letter to the secretary of state written at the beginning of 1793, the commissioners referred to their prior use of slave labor, which was employed at the quarries or in felling trees lying in the paths of city streets:

> . . . as to laborers, a part of whom we can easily make up of Negroes and find it proper to do so. Those we have employed this sumer [sic] have proved a very useful check and kept our affairs cool.[15]

By referring to slave laborers keeping "our affairs cool," the commissioners indicated that white laborers tended not to express dissatisfaction with their pay or working conditions, knowing that slave labor could easily replace them.

The commissioners hired William Wright to operate a quarry and authorized him to hire as many as twenty workers, who would be fed pork, beef, and bread. Housing was also provided. Wright's workmen were, no doubt, also slaves.[16] The firm of Brent & Cooke used slave labor, as the following newspaper advertisement attests:

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[14] Commissioners to Robert Brent, November 6, 1792, Record Group 42.

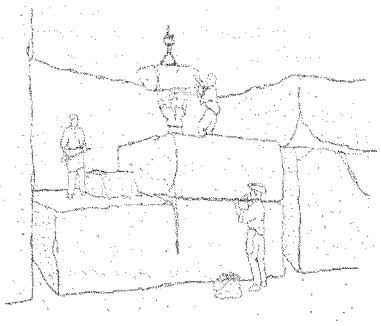
[15] Commissioners to Thomas Jefferson, January 5, 1793, *Jefferson and the National Capital*, p. 166.

[16] Commissioners' Proceedings, April 10, 1792, Record Group 42.

> Wanted to Hire, For the next year, to work on the FREE-STONE QUARRIES lately occupied by the Public, on Aquia Creek, Sixty strong, active NEGRO MEN, for whom good wages will be given - They shall be well used and well fed.[17]

Coaxing stone from the earth without power tools of any kind was demanding work. Transporting, hauling, cutting, and carving were also difficult tasks, but the operations at the quarry were the most burdensome and backbreaking in the entire stone business. To make matters worse the quarries were located on a snake-infested island and in nearby areas that swarmed with mosquitoes during the summer months. Free and enslaved workmen had to endure isolation and loneliness in addition to their rigorous labors. From August 1 to September 15 the commissioners allowed each worker a half-pint of whiskey per day to help them cope.[18] Stone workers in the city were better off, although not by much. They occupied huts similar to those at the quarries, and they ate a diet of pork, beef, and cornmeal, but they had a more hospitable environment and rudimentary medical care. To care for sick workmen, the commissioners operated a hospital overseen by a nurse, Mrs. Cloe LeClair, who may have been a free black woman. (Her pay was $10 a month.) A doctor regularly visited the hospital, administered his cures, and inoculated at least some of the slaves against small pox.

The quarrying methods employed at Aquia had been around for a thousand years. First, shrubs, plants, and trees were cleared from a stone outcrop; this was then chipped away to reach stone that had not been damaged by vegetation or frost. After exposing one face of the stone wall, slaves and free workmen used pick axes to slowly chip out small cavities about twenty inches wide, five or six feet deep, and spaced about ten to twenty feet apart. The cavities were just wide enough for one man to work in. Next, a trench was created parallel to the face of the stone wall, which was being fashioned into a huge block by the quarriers's activities. Finally, horizontal grooves were cut into the face according to predetermined dimensions and iron wedges inserted. The wedges were hammered to split the stone and free it from the larger block. Cranes were used to lift the stone blocks onto wooden sleds, which were used to drag it to shallow-draft boats for its journey to the federal city 40 miles away. Each stone was identified with marks that would tell masons where it was intended to be placed.[19]



Stone Quarrying

The most immediate need for stone was in the surveying department, which was setting boundary stones at one-mile intervals along the perimeter of the ten-mile-square

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[17] *Virginia Herald* (Fredericksburg), December 22, 1794. Quoted in Jane Henderson Conner, "Government Island: Its Forgotten History and Interesting Stone," unpublished manuscript, 1980.

[18] Commissioners' Proceedings, August 1, 1793, Record Group 42.

[19] Lee H. Nelson, *White House Stone Carving: Builders and Restorers* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1992), pp. 4-6.

federal district. The head surveyor, Andrew Ellicott, was assisted for a few months by Benjamin Banneker, a free black astronomer from Baltimore, who helped establish true north for the survey.[20] Banneker was a self-taught mathematician who compiled and published several astronomical almanacs—a highly significant achievement for the time.

The Stafford County quarries had been in operation for about two years when the Capitol was begun. Agreeing on a design had taken more time than anyone could have imagined and resulted in a hybrid scheme that put one man's floor plan into another man's exterior elevation. But most of the design issues had been settled by the summer of 1793 and it was time to begin work. The foundations were begun in mid-August and the president came to lay the cornerstone on September 18. (The cornerstone ceremony was the highlight of a three-day auction of city lots.) The foundation stone (a gneiss) came from a quarry located in the vicinity of modern-day Foggy Bottom, which was operated for the commissioners by William O'Neale. He was directed to keep up the supply of this stone so that the two teams of masons working on the site would not be idle. O'Neale was instructed to "keep the yearly hirelings at work from sunrise to sunset—particularly the Negroes."[21]

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[20] Iris Miller, *Washington in Maps* (New York: Rizzoli, 2002), p. 48.

[21] Commissioners to William O'Neale, July 30, 1794, Record Group 42.

II. "Negro Hire"

At the end of 1794 there was not much to show for a year's work at the Capitol. Progress at the President's House was also slower than expected. The delivery of stone was the only thing that did not lag, and that was due in large part to the number of slaves employed by the contractors. During that year the commissioners had employed 37 slaves in the city, another seven with the surveyors, and six at the quarries.[22] Now only six years remained before the government would move to the city, and the buildings had to be ready. They decided to double the number of slaves hired and so better help the city's construction crews keep up with their ever-increasing demands for speed:

> The Commissioners Resolve to hire good laboring Negroes by the year, their masters clothing them well and finding each a Blanket, the Commissioners finding them Provisions and paying sixty Dollars a year wages, the payment if desired to be made quarterly or half yearly. If the Negroes absent themselves a week or more such time to be deducted.
> Capt. Williams is requested to obtain as far as 100 Negro men on the above terms.[23]

Renting slaves was a common practice in the Potomac region and elsewhere. George Washington, for instance, occasionally leased his slaves to neighbors who required their labor and skills for short periods of time. (He was careful to rent only to people who treated slaves well.) From time to time Washington found himself short of hands and was obliged to pay for additional help: in 1799, for instance, 13 percent of the slaves at Mt. Vernon were rented. Spring housecleaning and fish harvests were seasonal activities that regularly brought rented slaves to Mt. Vernon.[24]

Records documenting individual payments for "Negro hire" at the Capitol begin on February 11, 1795, and end on May 17, 1801; there were 385 payments, with the largest number being for the year 1798. Initially, pay for enslaved black labor was $60 a year at a time when an unskilled white laborer earned $70. In a few years, with time running out, the commissioners decided to raise the pay of slave hire to $70 a year, or $60 for the period March 1 to December 20.[25] The need for laborers dropped dramatically once the government moved to the new city and began using the public buildings. Congress first met in the Capitol's north wing on November 17, 1800, and there is only one record of slave hire after that date. When construction activities resumed in Thomas Jefferson's first term, the three-

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[22] *Through a Fiery Trial*, p. 262.

[23] Commissioners' Proceedings, November 2, 1794, Record Group 42.

[24] Mary V. Thompson, "They Work Only From Sun to Sun: Labor and Rebellion among the Mount Vernon Slaves," unpublished manuscript, 1993, p. 16, courtesy of the author and the Mt. Vernon Ladies' Association.

[25] Commissioners' Proceedings, January 2, 1797, Record Group 42.

man commissioners' office had been abolished and was replaced with a one-man superintendent. During construction of the Capitol's south wing there is no record of slave labor or any reference to blacks whatsoever. That does not mean that enslaved persons did not work on labor crews or for contractors, only that public documents do not address the subject.

While records offer few specific details, it can be assumed that slaves helped in every facet of construction activities. They worked along side of free blacks and whites in the areas of carpentry, masonry, carting, rafting, roofing, plastering, glazing, and painting. One activity, however, seems to have been performed exclusively by slaves: sawing. References to "Negro sawyers" are numerous, yet they never refer to salaries. Instead, there are monthly payments for the "extra wages of Negro sawyers." The money (in the $10 to $30 range) was divided among an unspecified number of workmen. The commissioners most likely worked crews of enslaved sawyers seven days a week. The slave owner, therefore, would have received $5 a month for the labor performed during the six-day workweek and the extra payments would have been made to the slave himself for working nights, Sundays, and holidays, such as Easter Monday. Despite the hardships apparent in this nonstop work schedule, this was a rare instance of a slave's opportunity to earn money to buy little items—or perhaps freedom. Similar gangs of slave sawyers were operated by the plantation gentry throughout the region to earn extra income for their owners. In Orange County, Virginia, for instance, James Madison's father managed a sideline construction business based on sawing plank, but he had his slaves doing carpentry, riving clapboards, and making hogsheads as well.[26]

Timber used by the sawyers came from several sources, the closest being the city streets, which the surveying department needed cleared of obstructions. The second source was the White Oak Swamp located east of Fredericksburg, Virginia. Ax-wielding slaves working for the commissioners felled the oak, which was highly prized for its strength, while other slaves rafted the timber to the site of the new city. Yellow poplar and white oak came from Stradford Hall, Henry Lee's plantation in Westmoreland County, Virginia. Lee's own slaves cut the timber there.

Sawing was hard and uncomfortable work. Logs would be cut into boards by means of a whip saw or a framed pit saw that was five to seven feet in length. After the bark was removed with an ax, the logs were rolled over a pit so that an upper man standing on the log could push and guide the saw while a lower man in the pit pulled the saw and was showered with sawdust. (Wearing a broad-rimmed hat and veil helped.) Chalk lines snapped on the log guided each pass of the saw. Since water-powered mills had not yet been built in or near the federal city, pit sawing was the only way to cut trees into usable boards.

Sawing was also an important activity in the Capitol's stone yard. There rough stones from the quarry were transformed into smooth ashlar blocks or other regular shapes as called for in the architect's design. Saws consisted of a wooden frame fitted with a plain steel blade; wet sand worked by the toothless saw created the abrasion necessary to make the cut. If less precise cuts were desired, chisels and hammers could be used.[27] The work was less

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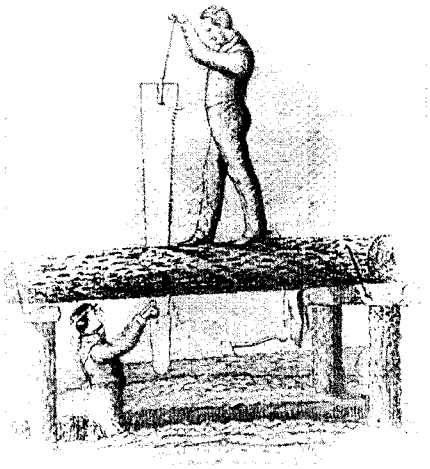
[26] "Notes on Slave Builders at Montpelier," 2005, courtesy of Ann Miller and the Montpelier Foundation Research Department.

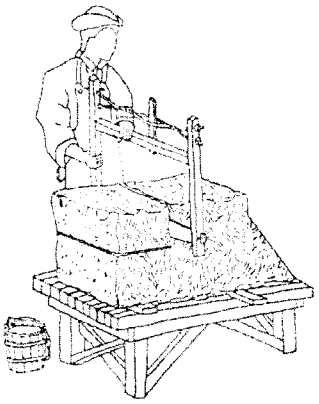
[27] *White House Stone Carving*, p. 10.

distasteful than pit sawing, but grueling nevertheless. To help solve the perennial problem of an insufficient number of stone cutters, one of the commissioners, Dr. William Thornton, proposed putting slaves on the job. He further suggested purchasing slaves for the stone cutting department and rewarding their work with freedom. His proposals were contained in a letter to his fellow commissioners:

> . . . it would perhaps be advisable to hire 50 intelligent negroes for six years, to be superintended and directed how to cut stone. . . . At first these men may be employed in cutting stone till it be nearly ready for rubbing; the last cutting to be done by more experienced men. The advantage of this would be that no change of men and prices could affect the work at the Capitol and it would insure [sic] completion of the building. . . . If Negroes were to be purchased, to have their liberty at the expiration of 5 or 6 years, it would be perhaps still better, as no interference of the owners could then take place.[28]



Pit Sawing



Stone Sawing

The commissioners never bought slaves but continued to rent them throughout this period. In addition to timber and stone sawing, slaves were employed in brick making and brick laying, two construction activities that (unlike stonework) were familiar to area slaves and free workers alike. Hundreds of thousands of bricks were needed to build the walls of the Capitol, and the commissioners annually placed sizeable orders with local brickmakers. In the fall of 1796, for instance, the commissioners let it

[28] William Thornton to the Commissioners, July 18, 1794, Record Group 42.

be known that they were in the market for brick as well as for provisions to feed their slaves during the upcoming winter:

> The Commissioners are Desirous of contracting for the delivery of the following articles in the City of Washington, to wit: One million of good place bricks, six thousand bushells [sic] of unslaked lime, 150 barrells [sic] of Pork, 40 barrells of beef and 1500 bushells of [?] or shifted Indian meal.[29]

By today's standards, the eighteenth-century method of brick making was primitive. A master brick maker would concoct his recipe using clay, sand, and water mixed in large pits dug in the ground; the ingredients were stirred with large wooden paddles. By sight, taste, and experience, the master would know when the mixture was ready to be thrown into wooden molds and set in the sun to dry. Because it was considered semi-skilled labor, molding brick was usually the work of female or adolescent slaves, who could mold as many as 5,000 bricks in a day. Once firm enough to be unmolded, the bricks were piled into huge pyramidal stacks with tunnels left open to receive the wood that would fire the kilns. Once the stacks were completed they received an exterior coating of mud to help seal in the heat. Hardwoods, such as hickory, were necessary to fuel the kilns because of the high heat needed to properly fire the brick—1,500 to 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit. It could take days for the heat to climb to those temperatures, and close attention had to be paid to the fires during this critical period. Experience told the brick maker when the fires should be left to die and then, once cool, the kiln could be disassembled. John Mitchell and Bennett Fenwick were both brick makers who supplied the Capitol, Mitchell from his kilns on Capitol Hill and Fenwick from his brickyard northwest of the President's House. Both men employed scores of slaves in their operations.

Bricklaying

Skilled slaves were often trained in the art of bricklaying. When Washington needed a bricklayer in 1762 he rented a neighbor's slave named Gus, who probably passed on his skill to other slaves on the plantation. In 1816 the slaves building William Dunbar's great, multi-columned mansion near Natchez, Mississippi, included five male and two female bricklayers who were assisted by

[29] Commissioners' Proceedings, November 1, 1796, Record Group 42.

three young black boys.[30] The Capitol's bricklayer was a white contractor named Allen Wiley. He charged $2.26 per thousand bricks laid in straight walls and $0.07 more for curving walls. Arches were turned for $1.50. Public records also indicate that he needed 100,000 bricks to raise the walls of the north wing just three feet. Although Wiley's business records do not survive, it is certain that his crews were made up principally of slaves, some of whom may have been leased from the commissioners' inventory.

Mortar making and plastering were related activities that were heavily dependant on slave labor and a ready supply of oyster shells or rock lime. Burning shells or rock lime in kilns was a common practice in the United States; whether the kiln was a permanent brick structure or a temporary wooden one depended on local means and practices. Lime was sifted with fine sand and mixed with water to create the mortar needed by bricklayers. Breaking up oyster shells and mixing mortar were tasks undertaken by slaves, and as one historian noted, "many a slave in Virginia must have known as much about shell lime as Sir Christopher Wren did."[31] Boiled plaster of Paris could be added to mortar for interior plaster work. The commissioners ordered twenty tons of plaster of Paris and hired John Kearney of Baltimore to undertake this important part of the north wing's interior finish. He could not find enough workmen for such a large job and was obliged to employ four (or more) of the commissioners' rented slaves in 1799 and 1800.[32] Large kettles were used in the boiling process, which, if undertaken during the summer months, was miserably hot work: the only relief that the commissioners could offer was a half pint of whiskey a day for the workmen and slaves.[33]

Of all construction work performed by slaves, perhaps carpentry was the most significant and ultimately the most influential. Slave carpenters were both necessary and numerous on large plantations, building and repairing such structures as tobacco barns, cow sheds, hog houses, chicken coops, horse stables, corn cribs, granaries, dairies, and smoke houses. Fences were also an important part of the agricultural landscape that kept carpenters busy. Some carpenters made furniture, toys, and other household items. An especially talented slave at Monticello, John Hemmings, was a carpenter who learned cabinet making and fine interior finishing under several skilled woodworkers whom Jefferson had employed to enlarge his house. (Hemmings was one of the few slaves Jefferson freed in his will.) At Mt. Vernon, Washington had at least four slave carpenters, including Isaac, who made carts, plows, rakes, wheelbarrows, and other farm implements in addition to building simple wooden structures. Carpentry was a useful skill that was taught to slaves, passed down to succeeding generations, and grew more marketable as the city of Washington developed—a good carpenter could earn a living long after the public quarries had closed and pit sawyers had been replaced by saw mills.

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[30] Adams County (Mississippi) Circuit Court Records, Elisha Roundtree v Dinah Dunbar, 1821, New Box 7, file 24, courtesy of Mary Warren Miller and the Historic Natchez Foundation.

[31] Marcus Whiffen, *Eighteenth Century Houses of Williamsburg* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1960), p. 8.

[32] See the appendix, October 25, 1800.

[33] Commissioners' Proceedings, June 12, 1799, Record Group 42.

Unlike some other construction activities, carpentry has not changed a great deal since the eighteenth century. Saws, hammers, drills, planes, chisels, and augers look much the same today, although they now can be powered by motors or compressors. Carpenters working on the Capitol's north wing were responsible for framing the floors and ceilings with large wooden joists held in sockets built into the brick walls. Sawyers would have supplied the rough boards intended for flooring, but the carpenter had to plane the tops smooth and gouge the bottoms so that, when laid across the joists, boards of different thicknesses would end up at the same level. Carpenters were also responsible for making the mahogany and pine doors and frames. The more expensive wood was intended for exterior doors, while ordinary pine was meant for interior use. These would be painted later to imitate a finer wood like walnut or mahogany. The Ionic columns in the Senate chamber were also wood and were made by the carpenters working under the watchful eye of the Capitol's superintendent. (The column capitals, with their distinctive volutes, were made of molded plaster.) Supporting the columns was a one-story brick arcade that was sheathed in wooden paneling made by the carpenters. They also made and installed the wooden ceiling lath that the plasterers needed. Among the most important jobs undertaken by the carpenters were framing the roof and installing its shingle covering. The roof was a complicated series of short slopes and flat platforms intended to make it disappear behind the balustrade. There were also three large skylights, whose framing required careful attention to details. The commissioners were uncertain whether to use wooden shingles or slate as the covering material and finally decided upon the former material because it was cheaper. After the roof was installed it was coated with paint and sand to preserve it and to protect it from fire.

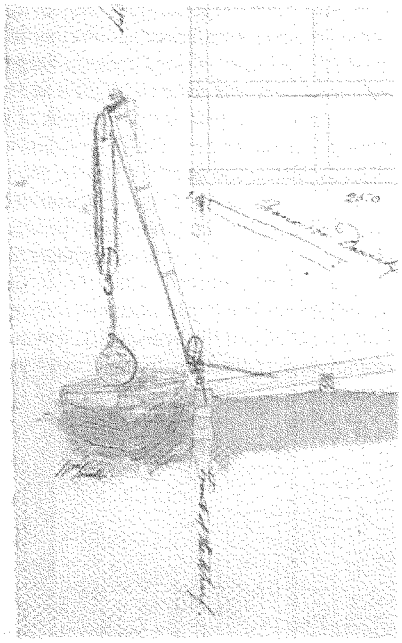
Carpenters employed two methods of joining wooden members together: mortise and tenon joints and nailing. The first method was used to connect large structural pieces, such as joists, plates, and beams, while the second was employed in most other instances. Nails could be either handmade by a blacksmith or machine made in a nailery. Jefferson's slaves operated a nailery at Monticello, producing nails that were consumed in his various construction projects or sold to neighbors for cash. (James Madison was a customer.) In 1796 Michael Shanks opened a nailery at Greenleaf Point in Washington. He placed an advertisement in a local newspaper indicating that he was ready to sell "Nails, Sprigs, and Flooring Brads, of the best quality, and on the most reasonable terms." He also wanted to employ four apprentices from 11 to 14 years old, and did not care if they were black or white.[34]

[34] *Washington Gazette*, June 15, 1796. Quoted in "Labor History of the Construction and Reconstruction of the White House," p. 187.

III. Biography

With the completion of the north wing in 1800, the story of slave labor as a collective force in the Capitol's history comes to a virtual end. For the next six decades much of this history disappears behind vague references to "laborers" in payroll records or payments to white contractors for work that one might suspect was done by slaves. Slavery was legal in Washington until April 16,1862, and it would have been nearly impossible for enslaved men and women not to have participated in building, operating, or maintaining the Capitol and other public buildings in the city. The problem for the historian, however, is to discover the records that might shed more light on this elusive subject.

The few slave-related stories that exist for the period 1802–1862 are remarkable in one respect: they are biographical. Whereas no more than a few slave names are recorded for the period 1795–1801, and virtually nothing is known of their lives, there are two men who played interesting roles in the Capitol's later development whose lives are documented. The first was Captain George Pointer, a slave born in 1773 in Frederick County, Maryland. He worked for the head engineer and the directors of the Potomac Canal Company, and with his earnings he was able to purchase his freedom at age eighteen. In a petition written in 1829, Pointer gave biographical details of his life that included associations with many prominent figures in early Washington history—including George Washington himself. He helped build the canal and was captain of a boat that regularly brought building materials to the federal city for the Capitol: Seneca sandstone (used for flooring) and Potomac marble (used for column shafts in the House and Senate chambers). The marble quarry was located near Noland's Ferry in Montgomery County, Maryland, and was briefly operated by the government (1817–1818). The commissioner of public buildings had found it difficult to hire enough hands to work the quarry and was obliged (like his predecessors in the 1790s) to rent an unknown number of slaves



Loading Potomac Marble onto a Canal Boat

to ease the situation.[35] Indeed, little is known about the quarry that supplied Potomac marble (actually, a breccia), and even its exact location remains something of a mystery. The marble and sandstone were employed in the construction work (1815–1819) that was necessary to restore the north and south wings of the Capitol following the Fire of 1814. Pointer was a typical boat hand on the canal, but he was unusual in leaving behind a detailed autobiographical sketch.[36] His petition was written to save his house from the encroaching waters of the canal and to redress several other grievances. The ending of his story is not known, but his role in the Capitol's history is significant nonetheless. Pointer also helps represent the untold numbers of other free black and enslaved workers whose biographies were never written.

The second slave biography belongs to Philip Reid, the best known black person associated with the Capitol's construction history. He was a slave laborer in the foundry run by the self-taught sculptor Clark Mills, a former resident of South Carolina, where he had purchased Reid for $1,200. Master and slave moved to Washington in the late 1840s when Mills won the competition for an equestrian statue of Andrew Jackson that was commissioned for Lafayette Park. A temporary foundry was erected south of the President's House and, through trial and error, Mills, Reid, and other workmen produced the first bronze statue ever cast in America. The accomplishment was extraordinary due to the absence of any formal training of any of the participants. The success of Mills's statue of Jackson (and political pressure from South Carolina's congressional delegation) prompted the secretary of war in 1860 to give him the commission for casting Thomas Crawford's Statue of Freedom for the top of the Capitol's new cast-iron dome. After some negotiations, a financial deal was struck whereby the government would rent Mills's foundry, pay him $400 a month for his services, and pay for the necessary materials and labor. The government compensated Reid at the rate of $1.25 a day, and he was able to earn extra pay by attending to the fires on Sundays.[37] There were eleven other workmen in the foundry during this period: three molders, a chaser, a stucco worker, a finisher, a blacksmith, and four other laborers. Documents provide their names and rates of pay but no biographical information; Reid was the only known slave among them.[38]

Reid was a short, illiterate, intelligent mulatto, who, according to Mills, was "smart in mind and a good workman."[39] Several stories have cropped up over the years that testify to

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[35] Samuel Lane to Henry St. George Tucker, January 24, 1818, quoted in U. S. Congress, House of Representatives, *Documentary History of the Construction and Development of the Capitol Building and Grounds,* 58th Congress, 2d Session, Report 646, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), p. 205.

[36] "Petition of Captain George Pointer to the President and Directors of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal," September 5, 1829, Record Group 79, National Archives, courtesy of Dr. Robert J. Kapsch.

[37] Pay voucher, copy in "Casting *Freedom*" file, Curator's Office, Architect of the Capitol, Washington, D.C.

[38] "Daily Report of the Application of Materials and Services rendered on the Figure of Freedom," October 30, 1860, copy in "Casting *Freedom*" file, ibid.

[39] Clark Mills, "Petition to the Commissioners under the act of Congress approved the 16th of April, 1862, entitled 'An act for the release of certain persons held in service or labor in the District of Columbia,' " June 20, 1862, National Archives, copy in "Casting *Freedom*" file, ibid.

his talents, but only one withstands scrutiny. A book published in 1869 gave an account of Reid that was told to its author by Clark Mills's son. The story involved the plaster model of the Statue of Freedom, which was displayed in the old hall of the House of Representatives prior to being moved to Mills's foundry northeast of the Capitol. Standing over eighteen feet tall, the model was made in five sections that had been reassembled in Washington after arriving from the artist's studio in Rome. An Italian sculptor employed at the Capitol had overseen the reassembly, and when the time came to separate the sections for casting, no one but the nameless Italian knew how—and he would not reveal the secret unless given a pay increase. This led to an impasse until Reid solved the mystery by attaching an iron hook to the statue's head and, with a block and tackle, gently lifting the top section until a hairline crack appeared, indicating where the first joint was located and where the interior connections could be found. The operation was repeated until all five sections had been separated and were ready to be transported to the foundry.[40]

Philip Reid's story is one of the great ironies in the Capitol's history: a workman helping to cast a noble allegorical representation of American freedom when he himself was not free. Yet by the time the statue was put into place on top of the Capitol's dome on December 2, 1863, Reid had been a free man for more than a year.[41] It is not known if he witnessed the ceremony, but the Statue of Freedom must have been a particularly poignant sight for the former slave.

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[40] S. D. Wyeth, *The Rotunda and Dome of the U. S. Capitol* (Washington: Gibson Brothers, 1869), pp. 194–195.

[41] Pursuant to the congressional act that freed slaves in the District of Columbia, Mills filed for compensation for the value of his property. He requested $1,500 for Philip Reid and was granted $350.40. The District of Columbia was the only jurisdiction in the United States that had a compensation program for the owners of emancipated slaves. Clark Mills, "Petition to the Commissioners under the act of Congress . . ." op. cit.

IV. Conclusion

Despite the misery of slavery, working in the federal city provided some blacks with the opportunity of acquiring skills such as carpentry or bricklaying that eventually could lead to a change in their economic status. It has been shown that skilled workers became the leaders within the slave population, empowered by their skills with a sense of self worth and pride.[42] Hopefully at least some of the slaves working at the Capitol acquired skills that led to a more prosperous and meaningful life.

Slavery was a wretched institution but an undeniable facet of the Capitol's history. Today little remains to be seen that bears the imprint of slave labor from the 1790s, since fires, rebuilding, and remodeling are also parts of the story. Only one aspect of the existing exterior can be viewed today in connection with eighteenth-century slave labor: the west elevation of the old north wing, the only part of that wing not covered over by later additions. (Limited areas of the original east facade are exposed inside.) On this elevation sandstone quarried by slaves in Virginia and cut by slaves on Capitol Hill is still visible. Hidden from view behind the stone are the brick walls that were also the product of slave labor. The work of slave carpenters has long since disappeared, however, destroyed by fires set by British soldiers in 1814. The beautiful columns in the old Senate chamber and National Statuary Hall are prominent interior features that are connected with slaves who worked the quarry and the free black man who helped bring the stone to Washington. While these aspects of the Capitol's architecture are noteworthy, it is the Statue of Freedom on top of the dome that will forever be the most significant and visible object with a connection to slave labor.

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[42] Bruce Sinclair, "Integrating the Histories of Race and Technology," in *Technology and the African-American Experience* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2004), p. 8.

Appendix
Payments for Slave Labor at the Capitol, 1795–1801

The following list was compiled from the records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, record group 42, entries 14 (ledgers) and 37 (daybooks), located in the National Archives. These are the financial records of the Commissioners for the District of Columbia, the officials in charge of creating the city of Washington, from 1792 to1802. The list contains the names of local residents who rented their slaves to the commissioners for various purposes associated with construction activities. Remuneration was $60 a year (raised to $70 in 1797), and, to judge from the diversity of payments, the commissioners accepted flexible work periods and deducted unexpected absences and expenses from the owner's compensation. All of the following entries for "Negro hire" were charged to the Capitol's account. A list of similar length could have been prepared for work at the President's House.

Many of the slave owners' names have long been forgotten, but a few have not. Middleton Belt, for instance, was an overseer of laborers at the Capitol for many years. Two of the city's commissioners, Gustavus Scott and William Thornton, appear on the list. Thornton is also remembered as the designer of the United States Capitol. The architect of the President's House, James Hoban, is listed here, as is William Deakins, a Georgetown merchant who was an early activist in promoting the city's interests. He was also the commissioners' treasurer. Samuel N. Smallwood would later become mayor of Washington (1819–1822, 1824). One of the last names on the list, Thomas Law, is remembered as a wealthy developer whose wife was Martha Washington's granddaughter. Not here, of course, are many of the names of slaves who actually performed the labor that helped build the nation's Capitol.

1795

February 11, Bernard O'Neill, $1.35
February 12, Middleton Belt, $4.85½
February 17, Alexander Scott, $9.51
February 19, Alexander Scott, $51.33
    Miss Ann Digges, $51.33, for Dick 5 months & Tom 6 months
March 7, John Syle, $14.43
April 2, Teresa Brent, $13.00, for Nace
    Mary Brent, $13.00, for Gerrard
    Eleanor Brent, $26.00 for David and Charles
    Elizabeth Brent, $23.00, for Harry and Gabe
    Jane Brent, $13.00 for Sil
April 3, Middleton Belt, $15.00
April 16, Mary Simmes, $15.00
April 18, J. M. Jackson, $14.33
April 20, James Stone, $45.00

April 24, Leonard Wood, $13.00
James Latimer, $26.00
Charles Love, $26.00
Ann Barber, $26.00
William Somerville, $13.00
Gladen Hunt, $13.00
William Mills, $65.00
April 29, Mary Simmes, $12.91, for Will
May 7, Edmund Plowden, $25.00
May 27, William B. Magruder, $103.71
June 6, John Dobson reimbursed the commissioners for the "hire of Negro Liverpoole" for 201 days ending the 30th September 1795 @ $0.40 per day: $80.40
July 6, "Paid Caleb Varnal's Negro Sawyer," $20.33
Edmund Plowden, $28.33
Thomas Bond, $29.16
July 7, E. J. Millard, $5.77
July 11, M. Belt, $15.00
July 13, J. M. Jackson, $15.00
Charles Love, $18.83
James Latimer, $27.03
William Somerville, $14.17
Leonard Wood, $15,00
Ann Barber, $29.00
William Mills, $76.67
Luke W. Barber, $73.00
July 14, Mary Simmes, $15.00
Joseph Queen, $72.33
July 20, James Stone $45.00
August 6, Francis Hammersly, $30.73, for Negro sawyers
August 13, J. S. Slye, $15.00
August 24, J. Adderson, $19.17
September 3, Gladen Hunt, $14.17
September 5, Joseph Turner, $36.83
Joseph Turner, $20.00
October 5, Gustavus Scott, $15.00
October 7, Thomas Bond, $30.00
Joseph Forrest, $5.00
October 9, Alexander Scott, $5.00
October 10, Middleton Belt, $15.00
October 12, Mary Simmes, $15.00
Luke F. Matthews, $10.00
John S. Slye, $30.00 (includes wages)
October 16, E. Plowden, $50.00
James Heighe, $5.00
Richard Kent, $5.00
James Hollinshead, $10.00

Susannah Johnson, $25.00
Thomas Wolfe, $15.00
October 24, William Somerville, $15.00
October 27, Charles Love, $15.00
James Latimer, $25.00
J. M. Jackson, $25.00
Joseph Queen, $5.00
October 29, Robert Young, $15.00
October 30, B. W. Barber, $15.00
November 6, James Stone, $45.00
Valentine Reintzell, $10.00
November 17, Leonard Wood, $15.00
November 23, William Magruder, $5.00
November 27, Mary Brent, $10.83
Elizabeth Brent, $30.00
Eleanor Brent, $30.00
Teresa Brent, $15.00
Jane Brent, $15.00

1796
January 1, Michael Reiley, $5.00
January 16, R. Kent, $10.00
Francis Wolfe, $1.00
Susanna Johnson, $49.67
January 18, Valentine Reintzell, $13.33
James Stone to January 1, 1797, $39.50
James Stone to January 16, 1796, $7.00
January 22, William Magruder, $13.67
January 23, Elizabeth Brent, $30.00
Teresa Brent, $15.00
Eleanor Brent, $30.00
Mary Brent, $15.00
Jane Brent, $15.00
Jasper M. Jackson, $15.00
Mary Magruder, $15.00
January 25, Catherine Graves, $13.33
January 27, Mary Simmes, $11.17
Middleton Belt, $15.00
Luke F. Matthews, $5.50
B. W. Barber, $20.33
James Latimer, $27.50
Charles Love, $15.00
January 29, John Slye, $15.00
February 4, Thomas Bond, $28.33
February 5, Edmund Plowden, $53.00
Robert Young, $5.00

Josiah Hollinshead, $10.00
James Heighe, $15.00
February 6, Joseph Queen, $14.20
Thomas Parran, $15.00
February 16, George Fenwick, Negro hire to Dec. 1, $10.00
February 19, Joseph Forest, $5.00
February 24, Alexander Scott, $13.33
March 23, Joseph Ireland, $18.33
April 17, James Stone, $56.67
May 17, Mary Simmes, $12.33
June 10, Barnard W. Barber, Negro hire to 1st April, $63.33
John Slye, Negro hire to 1st April, $25.00
Edmund Plowden, Negro hire to 1st April, $72.33
June 28, George Fenwick, $15.00
July 9, Charles Love, $15.00
Edmund Plowden, $75.00
Luke W. Barber, $75.00
July 15, James Stone, payment not recorded
July 25, B. W. Barber, $75.00
Samuel Briscoe, $28.50
July 27, William Deakins, $103.50
July 28, Mitchell Belt, $17.85
George Fenwick, $15.00
August 1, Misses Brent, $153.00
August 8, Mary Simmes, payment not recorded
August 20, Edmund Plowden, $7.47
Luke Barber, $15.00
September 30, Joseph Turner, Negro hire to 1st July last, $48.00
Leonard Wood, Negro hire to 1st July last, $28.00
October 7, Barnett W. Barber, Negro hire to the 1st Instant, $75.00
Middleton Belt, Negro hire to the 1st Instant, $28.00
William Thornton, Negro hire to the 1st Instant, $16.67
Middleton Belt, Negro hire to the 1st Instant, $15.00
Jacob Butler, Negro hire to the 1st Instant, $12.00
October 15, Luke Barber, $59.83
Edmund Plowden, $75.00
George Fenwick, $15.00
November 14, Elizabeth Thomas, Negro hire to 1 October last, $64.00
November 15, Susanna Mills, Negro hire to 1 October last, $65.67
Mary Simmes, $15.00
November 30, Joseph Turner, $15.00
December 14, Leonard Wood, $15.00

1797
January 28, Middleton Belt, $15.00
John L. Slye, $30.00

George Fenwick, $15.00
Mary Simmes, $15.00
February 7, Edmund Plowden, 65.00
Luke W. Barber, $45.00
February 11, Elizabeth Brent, $30.00
Jane Brent, $30.00
Teresa Brent, $30.00
Eleanor Brent, $60.00
Joseph Turner, $15.00
February 28, James Stone, $30.00
March 31, Alexander Scott, $15.00
April 6, Barnett W. Barber, $90.00
April 12, Joseph Simmes, $35.00
Samuel Briscoe, $17.50
Joseph Queen, $26.66
Middleton Belt, $17.50
April 29, Samuel Smallwood, $17.50
James Heighe, $12.23
Teresa Brent, $13.09
Eleanor Brent, $13.09
Jane Brent, $13.09
Mary Brent, $13.09
Elizabeth Brent, $28.93
William Digges, $12.23
James Stone, $52.56
Bennett Fenwick, $17.50
May 12, Sarah Bond, $17.50
June 10, Edmund Plowden, $15.60
June 14, James Key, $20.00
Benjamin Sunderland, $16.00
June 22, Joseph Turner, $17.50
June 30, William Bryan, $20.00
July 17, Jane Brent, $16.17
William Digges, $16.17
Elizabeth Brent, $$33.67
Eleanor Brent, $16.17
Teresa Brent, $16.17
Mary Brent, $17.50
Sarah Bond, $17.00
Nathaniel Dare, $100.00
Joseph Simmes, $35.00
July 22, James Stone, $68.67
Charles Love, $40.00
August 22, Joseph Queen, $87.26
James Hith, $15.98
William M. Duncanson, $20.00

August 31, Joseph Turner, $15.79
September 22, Alexander Scott, $20.00
Barnett W. Barber, $87.50
Benjamin Sunderland, $20.00
October 11, James Key, $20.00
November 11, 1797, Samuel H. Briscoe, $35.00
Leonard Wood, $15.00
Joseph Simmes, $35.00
James Hith, $17.50
Hammett Brookes, $20.00
Edmund Plowden, $52.50
Samuel N. Smallwood, $35.00
Barnett W. Barber, $87.50

1798
January 17, Joseph Simmes, $35.00
Hammett Brookes, $20.00
James Clagett, $22.00
Eleanor Brent, $35.00
Jane Brent, $35.00
Teresa Brent, $35.00
Mary Brent, $35.00
William Digges, $29.17
Nathaniel Dare, $122.00
Elizabeth Thomas, for 1797, $15.00
James R. Dermott, for 1797, $29.16
Charles Tarlton, $21.43
Thomas Hodges, $60.00
James Key, $20.00
Anthony Reintzell, for 1797, $35.00
Edward Simmes, for 1797, $8.23
Middleton Belt, for 1797, $35.00
Joseph Jackson, for 1797, $163.50
January 22, Joseph Queen, $53.41
Thomas Dixson, $15.70
Barnett Barber, $87.50
George Fenwick, $12.00
Samuel Smallwood, $17.50
February 1, Alexander Scott, $55.83
Sarah Bond, $35.00
James Broome, $58.33
February 10, James Stone, $134.00
February 24, Richard Bryon, $40.00
Joseph Turner, $26.57
Charles Love, $6.40
April 10, James Broome, $26.92

Nathan Walker, $27.00
Miss Brent, $47.07
James H. Blake, $49.12
April 20, Middleton Belt, $17.50
Joseph Queen, $52.47
Edmund Plowden, $26.25
James B. Heard, $14.36
Joseph Simmes, $17.50
Bennett Fenwick, $50.91
Thomas Parran, for 1797, $104.93
Joseph Dant, $11.67
Peter Short, $15.02
James Stone, $61.04
May 1, Jasper M. Jackson, $35.00
Clemont Sewell, $17.50
James Simpson, $70.66
Overton Carr, $17.50
Robert Douglass, $52.50
Edward Boone, $17.50
May 10, Samuel N. Smallwood, $77.79
May 17, Barnett W. Barber, $54.72
John Jackson, $11.66
July 9, John Jackson, $17.50
Joseph Dant, $17.50
James Simpson, $87.50
Bennett Fenwick, $52.50
Joseph Simmes, $17.50
Overton Carr, $17.50
James Broome, $32.91
James H. Blake, $52.50
Jasper M. Jackson, $35.00
Margaret Chew, $28.17
July 18, Edmund Plowden, $35.00
Joseph Queen, $17.50
James Stone, $70.00
Gerrard Causeen, $31.50
Peter Short, $17.50
Nathan Walter, $35.00
Samuel Smallwood, $78.75
Joseph Turner, $32.04
Miss Brent, $52.50
July 31, Barnett Barber, $70.00
August 8, Middleton Belt, $17.50
Edward Boone, $17.50
James B. Heard, $17.50
August 28, Robert Douglass, $52.00

October 16, Joseph Simmes, $17.50
James H. Blake, $52.50
William Magruder, $17.50
Joseph Dant, $17.50
Middleton Belt, $8.30
October 20, James Broome, $35.00
Edmund Plowden, $52.50
Edward Boone, $17.50
October 27, Samuel N. Smallwood, $78.75
Nathan Walker, $35.00
James B. Heard, $17.50
November 9, Robert Douglass, $52.50
Henry Burch, $35.00
James Simpson, $75.83
James Stone, $70.00
November 17, Clemont Sewell, $17.50
Overton Carr, $17.50
Joseph Queen, $87.50
December 7, John Jackson, $17.50
Bennett Barber, $70.00
Gerrard Causin, $17.50
Edward Simmes, $35.00
Joseph M. Jackson, $35.00
December 15, William Cartwright, $30.87

1799
January 17, Samuel Smallwood, $72.91
Nathan Walker, $35.00
Joseph Dant, $17.50
Overton Carr, $17.50
James H. Blake, $36.94
James Stone, $68.10
Peter Short, $17.50
Joseph Beck, $70.00
Misses Brent, $52.00
Gerrard Causin, $17.50
Joseph Queen, $85.10
February 2, Thomas Parran, in full for 1798, $120
Bennett Barber, in full for 1798, $70.00
James B. Heard, in full for 1798, $17.50
Joseph Simmes, in full for 1798, $17.50
Edward Simmes, in full for 1798, $35.00
Henry Burch, in full for 1798, $17.50
Edmund Plowden, in full for 1798, $52.50
James Hoban, in full for 1798, $70.00
James Broome, in full for 1798, $35.00

Joseph Turner, in full for 1798, $35.00
Robert Douglas, in full for 1798, $35.00
John Jackson, in full to 1 January last, $17.50
Jasper Jackson, in full to 1 January last, $35.00
March 17, William Cartwright, $11.70
April 13, Samuel Smallwood, $43.75
Nathan Walker, $20.54
Jasper M. Jackson, $52.50
John Lynch, $17.50
Edmund Plowden, $52.50
April 23, Edward Boone, $17.50
James H. Blake, $17.50
Joseph Queen, $87.50
Elizabeth Brent, $17.50
Jane Brent, $17.50
Eleanor Brent, $17.50
April 29, John Lynch, $17.50
June 15, Samuel Briscoe, $93.33
July 17, John Lynch, $17.50
John Jackson, $17.50
Samuel Smallwood, $43.75
Jasper Jackson, $52.50
Nathan Walker, $17.50
Edmund Plowden, $52.50
Joseph Queen, $87.50
James Blake, $17.50
August 17, Misses Brent, $52.50
August 31, James Height, $17.50
Catherine Brown, $35.00
October 19, Jasper Jackson, $52.50
James H. Blake, $17.50
Edmund Plowden, $52.50
John Jackson, $17.50
Samuel Smallwood, $43.75

1800

January 4, Joseph Queen, $87.50
Misses Brent, $52.50
Samuel Smallwood, $32.08
James Blake, $17.50
J. M. and John Jackson, $70.00
James Burnes, "hire of a labourer," $0.67
February 15, Joseph Queen, $87.50
Edmund Plowden, $52.50
Richard Beck, $17.50
Edward Simmes, $140.00

April 5, Hez[e]k[iah]. Orme, $71.67
Misses Brent, $52.50
May 17, John Jackson, $17.50
Zephaniah Prather, $11.66
June 7, Joseph Queen, $19.74
July 7, Thomas Law, $19.30
August 16, Samuel Briscoe, $77.40
Edward Simmes, $35.00
September 29, Daniel Carroll of Duddington, $72.62, for the hire of four sawyers 48 days in July 1799, and 70 days in August 1799, at $16 per month
October 25, John Kearney (plasterer), $8,656.45 reimbursement for "65½ months Labor of public hands at $16.00 per month and a few old materials"

1801
April 2, Negroes James and Rhode Butler (probably free), $0.67
May 17, Samuel H. Briscoe, $26.15, for hire of a labourer

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Bell?

STATEMENT OF FELICIA BELL

Ms. BELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon.

I would like to thank the Committee on House Administration for hearing my statement regarding the enslaved and free black labor used to construct the United States Capitol. My name is Felicia Bell, and I am the Director of Education and Outreach at the United States Capitol Historical Society. I am also a doctoral candidate in United States history in the Department of History at Howard University and have researched this topic over the last 5 years. I am overjoyed today to testify before this congressional committee and for the congressional record on behalf of those enslaved and freed who labored at the Capitol.

I think the history of the United States Capitol is closely linked to the lives of all Americans. It symbolizes the center of the American ideals of freedom and opportunity. Not only is the Capitol the seat of representative government, it is where democracy (insofar as America is concerned) lives. Yet in all of its neoclassical architectural splendor, impressive artwork, and intriguing history, one key component is conspicuously missing from the vast body of historical literature about the Capitol. That is the role of people of African descent in its construction.

During the initial construction of the Capitol in the 1790s, the Commissioners of the District of Columbia generally went into contract for labor with local owners of enslaved people. The enslaved worked alongside free blacks, European immigrants, and white Americans. Some of the hired enslaved and free black men were skilled in building trades such as sawing, carpentry, brick making, brick masonry, plastering, or blacksmithing, while others quarried stone, cleared land, or hauled materials.

The number of these men laboring varied throughout the years and according to their tasks. For instance, in 1794, the Commissioners claimed there were anywhere from 8 or 10 or 30 or 40 enslaved laborers at the quarries and, in the same year, more than 800 mechanics or laborers employed on improving the Federal city. And according to time sheets and payrolls in the National Archives, these men always labored under the supervision of an "overseer".

All of those men, like all of us here today, have a story. Back then, they were viewed as nothing more than property or chattel providing a service. Today, let us share the story of the contribution of these human beings to our Nation not only with fellow Americans but people of all nations.

Indeed, one of the more triumphant stories to arise from the oppressive Capitol construction site is the story of Philip Reid. Reid was an enslaved man who was purchased at a young age in Charleston, South Carolina by Clark Mills, a renowned American sculpture. According to Mills, he purchased Reid because he was smart and had evident talent for working in a foundry.

After the plaster model of the Statue of Freedom arrived in the Federal city in March 1859, Mills went into contract with the Commissioners to cast the bronze onto the Statue of Freedom in April of 1860. While the government paid Mills for his service and supplies, Philip Reid had a significant role in the casting process.

Reid's payment receipt states that he received the sum of $41.25 for his services on Sundays between July 1, 1860 and May 16, 1861, for "keeping up fires under the molds".

Perhaps the hardest aspect of the trade is the molding skills. Not only does the mold need to be properly constructed, it must be constantly heating or the casting will be inferior. Laboring in a 19th-century foundry was extremely hazardous, hot, and filthy. While "keeping up fires under the molds," Philip Reid most likely inhaled ash, coal dust, and sand. He would have bathed in his own sweat, particularly during the summer months, as molten bronze reaches temperatures of 2,000-plus degrees.

Philip Reid was later freed by the District of Columbia Emancipation Act, which was implemented by President Abraham Lincoln on April 16, 1862. The Act not only ended slavery in the district, but it uniquely provided loyal unionist owners of enslaved people compensation for their loss of property. Clark Mills was included in this group and according to his petition, listed Philip Reid at $1,500. Mills, like other petitioners, used words like "sound", "healthy", "smart", and "stout" when describing their formally enslaved and listed them at the highest value in order to receive the most compensation the law allowed.

The Statue of Freedom was installed atop the Capitol dome on December 3, 1863, over a year after Philip Reid was freed. Records do not document whether he was present at the moment of this occasion.

Today, the Capitol is one of the most recognizable buildings in the world. Ironically, it stands as a reminder that freedom and democracy in America was predicated on the enslavement of Africans. The Capitol has continuously remained open to the public and thousands of its visitors receive guided tours each year. Yet information about people of African descent who contributed to the development of this Nation, particularly the enslaved Africans who constructed the Capitol, is seldom a subject of discussion on tours of the building. Sadly, African Americans are not seen in much of the artwork on the walls of the Capitol.

It is the opinion of this historian that all groups should be included in the written history of the Capitol. It is an American icon, and the contributions of all Americans ought to be a part of its historical interpretation to the public. Mr. Chairman, thank you for your time.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, and I agree with you.

Ms. BELL. Thank you.

[The statement of Ms. Bell follows:]

"Enslaved and Free Black Labor Used to Construct the United States Capitol"

Written Testimony

prepared by

Felicia A. Bell

Director of Education and Outreach

United States Capitol Historical Society

for

Committee on House Administration Hearing

"The Construction of the United States Capitol: Recognizing the Contributions of Slave Labor"

November 7, 2007

All three branches of government in the United States of America have had close associations with the U. S. Capitol since the North Wing was completed in 1800. The Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution were ratified while the Supreme Court occupied space in the Capitol. Nearly all the Presidents since Andrew Jackson took the oath of office on its steps and no other building, not even the White House, is so closely linked with the lives of all Americans.

The United States Capitol symbolizes the center of the American ideals of freedom and opportunity. Not only is it the seat of representative government, it is where "democracy" (in so far as America is concerned) lives. Yet in all its neoclassic architectural splendor, impressive artwork, and intriguing history, one key component is conspicuously missing from the vast body of historical literature about the Capitol—the role of people of African descent in its construction.

The Residence Act of 1790 specified that the national capital would be located along the Potomac River between Maryland and Virginia. But Congress removed itself from establishing the national capital or financing the venture. It allowed the president the authority to select the exact site along the Potomac as well as giving him responsibility for the overall supervision of constructing the public buildings. The bill also designated that December 1800 would be the time Congress would make its permanent location in the Capitol in addition to the president taking a permanent residence in the new federal city[1].

Indeed, there was pressure to build the Capitol at a brisk pace. Even before its design had been decided, the Commissioners of the District of Columbia (appointed by President George Washington) realized that they faced a long-term problem of finding

[1] 1st Congress, 2nd Session, The Residence Act of 1790, ch. 28, United States Statutes at Large.

the labor to build such a colossal structure. Almost from the beginning, they looked to enslaved Africans to supply the labor. Such labor was inexpensive and readily available through a system of hire.

The system of "hiring out" enslaved labor or "slave hire" was a common practice in the Chesapeake region as well as other regions of the United States. It was a system in which owners with a surplus of enslaved people hired out their laborers to neighbors or local yeoman farmers to do temporary work. In turn, the owners of the enslaved laborers received payment from the hirers for "renting" the laborers. Owners and hirers typically negotiated the rate of pay based on the level of skill of the enslaved person as well as the demand for a particular skill. At the discretion of the owner, the enslaved person may have been permitted to hire out their own time and/or keep a portion of their earnings.[2]

Paying a rate of five dollars per person per month, the Commissioners hired enslaved people from local owners on a contractual basis. The following is indicative of such agreements:

> The Commissioners Resolve to hire good laboring Negroes by the year, the masters cloathing [sic] them well and finding each a Blanket, the Commissioners finding them Provisions and paying sixty Dollars a year wages, the payment if desired to be made quarterly or half yearly. If the Negroes absent themselves a week or more such time to be deducted. Capt. Williams is requested to obtain as far as 100 Negro men on the above terms.[3]

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[2] Edna Greene Medford, "'There was so many degrees in slavery...': Unfree Labor in an Antebellum Mixed Farming Community," *Slavery and Abolition* (vol. 14, no. 2) August 1993, 39, 40; see also, Sarah S. Hughes, "Slaves for Hire: The Allocation of Black Labor in Elizabeth City County, Virginia, 1782 to 1810," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., Vol. 35, No. 2. (Apr., 1978), 260-261; and Philip D. Morgan, Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 352, 515.

[3] Commissioners' Proceedings, November 3, 1794, Record Group 42, Washington, D. C.: National Archives.

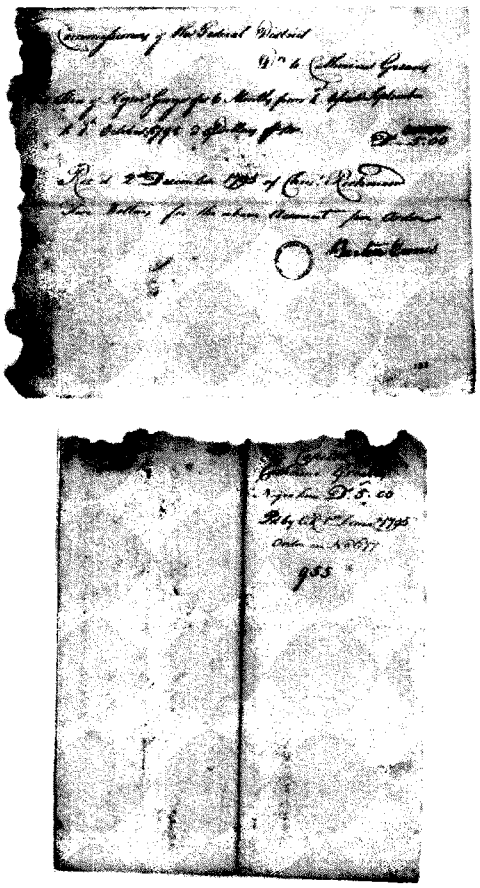

Figure 1
Payment request, Catherine Greaves of St. Mary's County, Maryland to the Commissioners

Source: Records of the Accounts Officers of the Department of Treasury, Accounts of the Commissioners of the City of Washington, 1794-1802 (Record Group 217) National Archives and Records Administration.

In his travels to the federal city, Julian Niemcewicz (a Polish writer and traveler) wrote about the practice of hiring out and what he witnessed at the Capitol construction site in the late 1790s. He conveys to his reader that the white American workers were absent from their tasks:

> It was eleven o'clock. No one was at work; they had gone to drink grog. This is what they do twice a day, as well as dinner and breakfast. All that makes four or five hours of relaxation...The negroes alone work. I have seen them in large numbers and I was very glad that these poor unfortunates earned eight to ten dollars per week. My joy was not long lived: I am told that they were not working for themselves; their masters hire them out and retain all the money for themselves. What humanity! What a country of liberty. If at least they shared the earnings![4]

Enslaved and free black laborers were continuously exploited throughout the Capitol's construction. A portion of the stone supply needed to construct the Capitol came from a quarry located at Aquia Creek in nearby Stafford County, Virginia. Local advertisements sought "strong, active NEGRO MEN" to labor in the quarries.[5]

In keeping with the pace of construction, these enslaved Africans labored constantly, in and out of the building season. In fact, when writing to his assistant in the winter of 1791, Peter Charles L'Enfant ordered that when the weather was "too severe" the enslaved laborers were to "busy themselves in clearing away the rubble" and as often as possible "set about extracting the stone."[6]

Typically, these men worked twelve-hour days, six days per week (the Sabbath was observed on Sundays), using simple machines (such as pulleys, pick axes, and hand saws). Due to the conditions and methods of labor, the men were subjected to injury.

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[4] Julian Niemcewicz, Under Their Vine and Fig Tree: Travels through America 1797-1799, 1805, trans. and ed. Metchie J. E. Budka (Elizabeth, NJ: Grassmann Publishing Co., 1965), 93. The quote used in the title of this dissertation is attributed to Niemcewicz whose eyewitness account explicitly describes the roles of the laborers at the Capitol construction site.

[5] Brent and Cooke, advertisement, Virginia (Fredericksburg) Herald, 22 December 1794.

[6] H. Paul Caemmerer, The Life of Pierre Charles L'Enfant (Washington: National Republic Publishing Co., 1950), 152. L'Enfant stopped using "Pierre" soon after he arrived in the United States in 1777, see Kenneth R. Bowling, Peter Charles L'Enfant: Vision, Honor, and Male Friendship in the Early American Republic (Washington, DC: George Washington University, 2002).

illness, and even death. As a result, the Commissioners were alarmed by the increased number of "Blacks" seeking "constant attendance" by the physician hired by the Commissioners:

> The Board have [sic] just received the accounts of Dr. May, which amounts to $268.50. for half a year; and the former year by contract, was only ten shillings per head, per annum for the Blacks, about ninety being employed at the public works.... By a verbal Report from Captain Williams, who has enquired into the number of sick during the above time, he has been informed that there have been from two or three, to eight or nine, and the average about 5 or 6. The Board agreed to pay 50 cents per visit.[7]

On August 30, 1822, the *National Intelligencer* (a Washington, D.C. newspaper) reported the death of a free black laborer at the Capitol. The article is indicative of the hazards workers experienced on a daily basis:

> Fatal Accidents.—A laborer on the Capitol, a free colored man of the name of Nathaniel Bowen, was crushed to death on Wednesday last by the falling of a block of stone upon him, of near two tons weight. The stone had been raised from its position in the dome, for the purpose of setting it with more precision, and was suspended by the pullies 18 or 20 inches above its bed, which the deceased was cleansing for its reception; in stooping to do this, he had placed some of his limbs and a part of his body under the block, and while in that situation the lashings of the pulley gave way, and the stone falling upon him, put an instant period to his life.[8]

Enslaved labor used for the Capitol extended beyond the construction site. For instance, an enslaved man played a key role in casting bronze onto the Statue of Freedom (located atop the Capitol dome) at a foundry near Bladensburg, Maryland. The statue is an allegorical figure that was designed in Rome, Italy by American sculptor Thomas Crawford.

The first design Crawford submitted to the Commissioners, which featured a laurel wreath headpiece, was not approved because a pedestal needed to be added. Crawford's

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[7] Records of the District of Columbia Commissioners and the Offices Concerned with Public Building, 1791-1867 Index to Letters Sent by the Commissioners for the District of Columbia, 1791-1867, Nov. 22, 1798, Commissioners to Dr. Cornelius Conningham.; see also, Robert J. Kapsch, "Building Liberty's Capital: Black Labor and the New Federal City," American Visions, (Feb./Mar. 1995), 10.

[8] "Friday, August 30, 1822," The National Intelligencer, 30 Aug. 1822.

second design featured a pedestal and a different headpiece, a liberty cap. The liberty cap was worn in ancient Roman times by freed individuals who had previously been enslaved.

Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis, objected to the design because, he argued that, Americans were "born free"—not enslaved. Therefore, Davis suggested that Crawford replace the liberty cap with a helmet since *Freedom* was also armed with a sword and shield. The Statue of Freedom was redesigned, featuring an eagle's head (in honor of American Indians) on a helmet. Ironically, an enslaved man would later have an integral role in casting *Freedom*.

The plaster model of *Freedom* was shipped to the federal city in several crates in March 1859. The government paid Clark Mills, a self-taught American sculptor. It also provided supplies for him to cast the statue in bronze. Mills owned eleven enslaved people, one of whom was Philip Reid. According to Mills' records, he purchased Reid because he was "smart" and had "evident talent" for working in a foundry. Perhaps the hardest aspect of the trade is the molding skills. If the mold is not properly constructed and heated, the casting will be inferior. Philip Reid received a sum of $41.25 from the government for "keeping up fires under the moulds."[9]

[9] "The Statue of Freedom," brochure prepared by the Architect of the Capitol, S. Pub. 104-40; Ed Crews, "Cast in the Colonial Mold: The Geddy Foundry," Colonial Williamsburg Journal, (winter 2003-2004); William C. Allen, History of the United States Capitol (Washington, DC: U. S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 308, 253-55; Record Group 217, Records of the Accounts Officers of the Department of Treasury, Accounts of the Commissioners of the City of Washington, 1794-1802, Petition no. 741, Clark Mills, National Archives and Records Administration.

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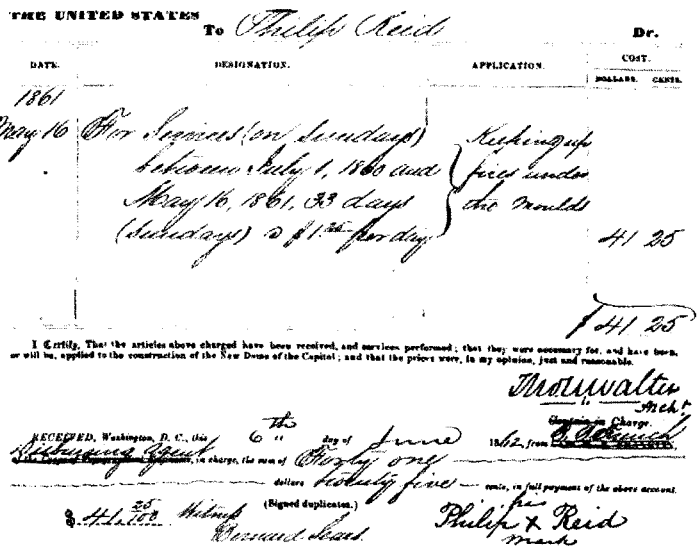

THE UNITED STATES To Philip Reid Dr.

DATE.	DESIGNATION.	APPLICATION.	COST. DOLLARS.	CENTS.
1861 May 16	For Services (on Sundays) between July 1, 1860 and May 16, 1861, 33 days (Sundays) @ $1.25 per day	Keeping up fires under the moulds	41	25
			41	25

I Certify, That the articles above charged have been received, and services performed; that they were necessary for, and have been, or will be, applied to the construction of the New Dome of the Capitol; and that the prices were, in my opinion, just and reasonable.

Mc Walter Mch.

RECEIVED, Washington, D. C., this 6th day of June 1862, from [illegible] Charge, in charge, the sum of Forty one dollars Twenty five cents, in full payment of the above account.

$41.25 Witness [illegible] (Signed duplicate.) Philip his X mark Reid

Figure 1
Payment receipt for Philip Reid for "Keeping up fires under the moulds"

Source: Records of the Accounts Officers of the Department of Treasury, Accounts of the Commissioners of the City of Washington, 1794-1802 (Record Group 217) National Archives and Records Administration.

Enslaved people resisted slavery in many ways. In some instances they feigned illness or pretended not to know how to use their tools. In other desperate circumstances they poisoned their owners or when the opportunity presented itself they ran away to escape the constant state of oppression. For instance, when Daniel Brown, Christina Hamilton's enslaved man ran away from the Capitol, she placed an advertisement in the local newspaper as if she had hired him out to a plantation. The following is the advertisement:

> Fifty Dollars Reward. Ran away from the subscriber, on Sunday, the 28th ultimo, a Negro Man named Daniel, who calls himself Daniel Brown. He is twenty-three years of age, about five feet nine inches high, very black, shows a pleasant countenance when spoken to, has ears rather larger than common, which stand off from the head.

> He has a wide mouth, and shows his teeth very much when he talks or laughs, speaks rather quick, and as if his mouth was full. He was purchased about a year ago from Mr. Kirby, of Prince George's County, Maryland, and has been employed of late as a laborer at the Capitol. When he absconded, he had on a black cloth coat, and light corded pantaloons. The above reward, and reasonable expenses, will be paid for him, if taken and secured out of the District of Columbia and Prince George's County, or ten dollars if taken within the limits of the latter, and delivered to me. CHRISTINA HAMILTON, Residing near the Capitol, Washington City.[10]

On April 16, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln implemented the District of Columbia Emancipation Act. It was passed nine months prior to the Emancipation Proclamation. The DC Emancipation Act uniquely provided loyal Unionist owners (including Clark Mills) of enslaved people in the District of Columbia compensation for loss of their property (up to $300 for each enslaved person). The law effectively ended slavery in the District of Columbia and eliminated the use of enslaved labor at the U. S. Capitol.[11]

Today, the United States Capitol is one of the most recognizable buildings in the world! Ironically, it stands as a reminder that freedom and democracy in America was predicated on the enslavement of Africans. The Capitol has continuously remained open to the public and thousands of its visitors receive guided tours each year. Information about people of African descent who contributed to the development of this nation, particularly the enslaved Africans who constructed the Capitol, is seldom a subject of discussion on tours of the building. Sadly, African Americans are not seen in much of the artwork on the walls or honored in literature related to the Capitol.[12]

The U. S. Capitol Historical Society (USCHS) is making strides to change this pattern. Founded in 1962 as a non-profit and non-partisan organization, the USCHS is

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[10] Christina Hamilton, advertisement, National Intelligencer November 22, 1827.

[11] An Act of April 16, 1862 [For the Release of Certain Persons Held to Service or Labor in the District of Columbia], General Records of the United States Government, Record Group 11; National Archives.

[12] Capitol Complex Overview, 31 October 2007, online, available from http://www.aoc.gov; Karissa Marcum, "Lawmakers say Capitol artwork is race 'disgrace'," The Hill, 30 October 2007.

dedicated to preserving and protecting the history of the Capitol and Congress through educational programs and scholarly publications. In February 2006, the USCHS launched a traveling exhibit titled, "From *Freedom*'s Shadow: African Americans and the United States Capitol."

This successful exhibit has traveled to various schools, universities, and institutions throughout the United States including the Georgia State Capitol in Atlanta. It is a survey of the African American experience at the Capitol highlighting the enslaved and free black labor used to construct the building, segregation in the Capitol, and the current African American Members of Congress who serve constituents of all ethnic backgrounds in the Capitol. In addition, the USCHS has always included an African American prospective on its interior and exterior tours of the Capitol. It is the opinion of this historian that all groups should be included in the written history of the Capitol. The Capitol is an American icon and the contributions of all Americans ought to be a part of its historical interpretation to the public.

The CHAIRMAN. How many slaves were there that worked on the Capitol? Do you have an idea?

Mr. ALLEN. It is impossible to look at the records and know exactly where the slaves were working. We know that they were working in the Federal city. We know, in the 1790s, usually they were calling for 100 slaves to be rented for the next year's work. So that gives us an idea.

Now, there were also slaves working at the quarries for contractors who were contributing there. There were probably other contractors, too. So it is not precisely known, but certainly in the—over 100, I would say.

The CHAIRMAN. And the only time they actually got paid was the Saturday or Sunday.

Mr. ALLEN. Not on Saturday. They were working—work was from sunup to sundown Monday through Saturday.

The CHAIRMAN. That is when the masters got paid for their work.

Mr. ALLEN. That is when the masters got paid.

The CHAIRMAN. And they would get paid only if they worked on a Sunday.

Mr. ALLEN. They worked on Sunday—they had some limited holidays, like the Monday after Easter. They worked that day.

The CHAIRMAN. They would get paid some.

Mr. ALLEN. They would get paid.

The CHAIRMAN. I am sure that you are talking with the task force, the panel that was before you with ideas and giving recommendations. What in your opinion do you think that we can actually do to raise the awareness? What would be a good way to raise the awareness other than—again, I encourage you, Ms. Bell, the tour guides. We need to educate them a little bit more and let them know what they show the public and include, you know, the slaves with the contributions that they made. Are there other recommendations for awareness that you think we can do or they could do? Have you been talking to them? I am sure you have, I hope.

Mr. BUNCH. Well, I think there are several things. I mean, I think, first of all, to recognize that this is such an important story, that—I know that the Smithsonian is interested in helping to make it well known to the audiences that come to our buildings through our Web sites and the like. And I think what I am hearing is—people are talking about this around the country—is that there are many institutions, like the Underground Railroad Museum in Cincinnati and those in Memphis and others, who really want to see this as part of a conversation about the possibility of change in America. And so I think that in some ways, this has a chance to do the wonderful job it will do here in Washington. But I think it will stimulate other conversations around the country to help make sure this is a story that gets beyond the Beltway.

The CHAIRMAN. Maybe help them tell their story.

Mr. BUNCH. Exactly.

The CHAIRMAN. You mentioned Philadelphia, where I am from. You mentioned the President's house. Did you see that? Were you there?

Mr. BUNCH. Yes. I was just there last weekend.

The CHAIRMAN. We—myself and my colleague Congressman Fattah were instrumental in getting funding for the historical excavation there. We gave them X amount of dollars, and do you know they found one foundation; they went a little deeper, and they found the second foundation that actually had the exact footprint of the President's house.

Mr. BUNCH. I didn't know that.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, it was a second foundation. And they actually had a well, and they moved the well because Washington was probably—they say was the first one to have the Oval Office. It was all in glass, and the well was right there, and he didn't want to see—he didn't want his visitors to see the slaves come out from the well. They actually moved the well for that.

And the point I am making is, it was so moving to me even that when I went there, and I looked at it, and I saw—because a friend told me, you need to go just to check up on them, and find them some appropriations, and help with what they are doing. I was moved so much by it that I brought my grandchildren back. And one was only 4 years old, but I was trying to explain to him, and he was kind of getting it, but he couldn't understand the fact that we could actually have slaves and have people do these things.

It was amazing, and it was really moving, and that in itself—we could be an example and raise awareness for other State capitals and other buildings. I think that would be a really good thing to happen.

Mr. BUNCH. I agree very much, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. And it was moving. If anybody gets a change—well, they covered it up now. We are trying to get more money, and we are going to try to put a glass ceiling. It was just a little wooden platform, maybe no larger than this room, that you can look down and see the actual footings. And more people went to see that than the Liberty Bell or anything else. That is how moving that was.

So that is something we are figuring out how to get more money and try to encase that, whether it be glass or whatever you can do to encase it. The foundation has got to be coated because it would disintegrate through time, because the air hits it now, so it would disintegrate. So we are doing that, and that is something that is really absolutely moving. And we have to fix that, preserve that, let other people see that and raise the awareness of what happened there.

And, again, I think we could take that example and let the Capitol be the beacon, because there are more people coming to the Capitol than are coming to Philadelphia.

So I thank you for your participation. I appreciate all your participation with the task force and to keep this awareness up, and I am sure that we will do this also in this committee here. Thank you. Thank you very much.

This hearing now is adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 3:30 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]