

Today we add to his many accolades the highest honor the college can accord and alumnus for service. For the impact of his teaching on the lives of hundreds of our students and for his role in developing one of the finest accounting programs in the nation, we are proud to present the LaSalle Medal to Joseph R. Coppola, Ph.D., '40, professor emeritus of accounting.

TRIBUTE TO COL. FRED MILLS

**HON. IKE SKELTON**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 29, 1997*

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to a distinguished Missourian. Col. Fred Mills, a 30-year veteran of the highway patrol, is retiring on September 1, 1997. Colonel Mills has been the superintendent of the Missouri State Highway Patrol since September 1993.

The focus of his administration as superintendent was "Working Together." He worked to forge partnerships between the highway patrol and other law enforcement agencies as well as between the highway patrol and the citizens of Missouri.

Colonel Mills was a driving force behind the partnership formed between highway patrol and the Kansas City and St. Louis Police Departments which put highway patrol officers on the streets with city officers in 1994 and 1995. The joint operation lowered the violent crime rate in both cities.

Colonel Mills also encouraged a process which moved uniformed officers from office jobs back into field positions by training civilian personnel to perform office functions. Nearly 70 officers were put back on the highways during Colonel Mills' tenure.

Colonel Mills' dedication to the highway patrol and the citizens of Missouri exemplify the highest tradition of service. His experience will be sorely missed. I know that the other Members of this body join me in expressing our deepest gratitude to Colonel Mills and our best wishes for his retirement.

"FORTY ACRES AND A MULE"

**HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 29, 1997*

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to an "Editorial Notebook" commentary by Brent Staples in the July 21 issue of the New York Times.

In 1989 I first proposed that a commission be created to study the institution of slavery in this country from 1619 to 1865, and subsequent de jure and de facto racial and economic discrimination against African-Americans, as well as the impact of these forces on living African-Americans, and to make recommendations to the Congress on appropriate remedies.

One of the remedies in this Congress is H.R. 40, with the number of the resolution selected for the "Forty Acres and a Mule" rallying cry of 1865 when Civil War Gen. Tecumseh Sherman issued Special Field Order 15, declaring the Georgia Sea Islands and a strip of South Carolina rice country as black settle-

ments. Each family of freed slaves was to be given 40 acres and the loan of an Army mule to work the land.

Mr. Staples' article describes that historical fact from the personal viewpoint of his own family's experience. I commend him for his contribution to the dialog on race in America. The article and the bill with its 21 cosponsors follow.

[From the New York Times, July 21, 1997]

FORTY ACRES AND A MULE

(By Brent Staples)

Bill Clinton has earned a boat-load of scorn since suggesting that he might apologize for slavery, as some in Congress have suggested. Critics from both left and right argue that such an apology would be trivializing, empty, arrogant and racially divisive. The dominant view, typified by the columnist Charles Krauthammer, is that there is essentially nothing to discuss, since the Civil War closed the issue and the slavers and the enslaved are long since dead. But all the noise suggests the issue is very much alive. The terms of Emancipation are nearly as explosive today as during the 1860's, when they dominated public consciousness and nearly tore the Government apart.

The facts of the period have been papered over in myth. These days, every school child thinks that Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves at one fell swoop—and for moral reasons. In fact, the Emancipation Proclamation freed only the slaves in rebellious states. Lincoln himself called it a military tactic, acknowledging that moral issues were in no way involved.

The slavers and the enslaved are certainly gone from the scene. But African-American families that have shown even a casual interest in history can give chapter and verse on relatives who were born in slavery or just afterward and the costs they paid. In the Staples family, for example, mine is the first generation to come of age without a flesh and blood former slave somewhere at the extended family table. That people in their 40's have this experience makes the issue a current one indeed.

My maternal great-grandmother, Luella Holmes Patterson, was born of a former slave and her master—and shipped off the plantation when the wife got wind of her. As a grade schooler, I visited Luella often in Hollins, Va. A few towns away lay the farm of my paternal great-grandfather, John Wesley Staples, who was conceived in slavery as well and born July 4, 1865, at the dawn of Emancipation. He died 10 years before my birth but was remembered to me in stories and pictures. As recently as 10 years ago, he and his wife, Eliza, were the subject of a pamphlet, written for a family reunion.

John Wesley met Emancipation with his whole life still in front of him. But among his neighbors and in-laws were ex-slaves who came to freedom landless and old or simply broken by the experience. My uncle Mack, who will be 80 in December, remembers them well. When I asked him about the apology brewing in Congress, Uncle Mack could barely contain himself: "They can keep the apology. What good is it? They promised us 40 acres and the mule. None of our people ever got that."

"Forty acres and a mule," of course, is a rallying cry from 1865. It originated during Sherman's March to the Sea. Overwhelmed by black families that abandoned the plantations to follow him, Sherman issued Special Field Order 15, declaring the Georgia Sea Islands and a strip of South Carolina rice country as black settlements. Each family was to get 40 acres and the loan of an Army mule to work it. Other generals and Federal

officials followed Sherman's lead, realizing that land was the only hedge against starvation and renewed bondage.

The confiscations were in accordance with Federal law. If sustained and accelerated, the land grants would have created black capital and independence almost immediately and precluded much of the corrosive poverty that still grips the black South. President Andrew Johnson was nearly impeached, in part for obstructing Congress on Reconstruction. Meanwhile, he canceled Special Field Order 15, returning land to white owners and condemning blacks to de facto slavery.

In many places, the eviction process was long and bloody. As the ex-slave Sarah Debro said of the period: "Slavery was a bad thing, and freedom, of the kind we got with nothing to live on, was bad. Two snakes full of poison. One lying with his head pointed north, the other with his head pointing south. . . . Both bit the nigger and they was both bad." My father and uncles grew up steeped in accountings like this one.

For 250 years African-Americans were deprived of freedom, basic education and the right to accumulate wealth, which they could have passed on to their descendants. This history would have left a wound in any case. But the wound is open and running because the country refused to atone materially when it had the chance. In that sense, at least, my Uncle Mack is right about the apology. No amount of talk can alter the past.

H.R. 40

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the "Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act".

**SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds that—

(1) approximately 4,000,000 Africans and their descendants were enslaved in the United States and the colonies that became the United States from 1619 to 1865;

(2) the institution of slavery was constitutionally and statutorily sanctioned by the Government of the United States from 1769 through 1865;

(3) the slavery that flourished in the United States constituted an immoral and inhumane deprivation of Africans' life, liberty, African citizenship rights, and cultural heritage, and denied them the fruits of their own labor; and

(4) sufficient inquiry has not been made into the effects of the institution of slavery on living African-Americans and society in the United States.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to establish a commission to—

(1) examine the institution of slavery which existed from 1619 through 1865 within the United States and the colonies that became the United States, including the extent to which the Federal and State Governments constitutionally and statutorily supported the institution of slavery;

(2) examine de jure and de facto discrimination against freed slaves and their descendants from the end of the Civil War to the present, including economic, political, and social discrimination;

(3) examine the lingering negative effects of the institution of slavery and the discrimination described in paragraph (2) on living African-Americans and on society in the United States;

(4) recommend appropriate ways to educate the American public of the Commission's findings;