

while dying of the fever, wrote his family, "I don't know what the people would do if it was not for the Negroes, as they are the Principal nurses."

This 1993 bicentennial provided one avenue to tell African-American history at Independence National Historical Park, a site Congress set aside for its "outstanding national significance" in the American Revolution and the founding and growth of the United States. Here the park exhibits and interprets the world renowned Liberty Bell, and tells the story of the nation's most significant political documents—the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, and Constitution of the United States—adopted in Independence Hall. Benjamin Franklin's Philadelphia home site is also part of the park, set aside by Congress to honor his many contributions to the creation of the nation.

Despite such nationally-significant themes, park staff have continued to bring African-American history into the park's interpretation. Park historians have probed recent research on Philadelphia's 18th- and early-19th-century black population to supplement park themes. As early as the 1740s Benjamin Franklin assisted the Bray Associates, an Anglican Church missionary group, to establish schools for African Americans in Philadelphia. During his far-flung travels as post-master general of the colonies, he helped establish similar schools outside of Pennsylvania. Through his efforts, Franklin became sensitized to the equality of the races and the power of education to change unequal circumstances. A slave owner as a young man, Franklin served as the president of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society during his last years of life.

A recent park research report on Independence Square's history discussed the struggle African Americans in the neighborhood faced when they tried to build their own church and bur-

ial ground. Throughout most of the 18th century Independence Square's adjoining square, (now known as Washington Square and a property slated to be incorporated into Independence National Historical Park), served as a Strangers' burial ground and the only sanctioned place for African-American internments. After the heroic efforts during the yellow fever epidemic, white opposition to a separate black church dissolved, and the Free African Society purchased a site half a block south of Independence Square.

Early in the 19th century, however, Philadelphia succumbed to a reactionary climate which led to a city ruling in 1814—a generation after the Declaration of Independence was adopted—to ban African Americans from partaking in the Fourth of July celebrations on the square (then known as the State House Square). In 1837, Pennsylvania's legislatures denied African Americans the right to vote. As the city's electorate cast their ballots at Independence Hall, Philadelphia's blacks again were excluded from participation at the seat of local politics, Independence Square.

In other areas, Philadelphia's African-American community flourished, supplying talented and successful caterers and businessmen for the larger population. At the same time, scores of refugees from slavery arrived in Philadelphia, some of whom risked their freedom by seeking justice in the courtrooms on Independence Square.

These aspects of Philadelphia's history have not yet received much attention, in part because they are difficult and painful chapters of our collective story. As at other parks in the system, Independence National Historical Park has only begun to consider the many means of bringing a more inclusive point of view to its exhibits, tours, and publications. The recent revisiting of the park's

## ***Another Kind of Glory***

*Celebrating the Centennial of the Memorial to Robert Gould Shaw and the Massachusetts Fifty-Fourth Regiment*

There will be a major conference, "The Massachusetts Fifty-fourth Regiment and Memorial Monument: History and Meaning," from May 28-May 30, 1997. The conference, which will be free and open to the public, will begin on Wednesday evening, May 28, at Harvard University's Sanders Theater. Colonel Shaw attended Harvard and the university played a central role in the installation of the Memorial in 1897. The remainder of the conference will be held at Suffolk University on Boston's Beacon Hill, only a few blocks from the Memorial and the African Meeting House. The entire conference program will be easily accessible for all in attendance as organizers have stressed to presenters that a broad, general audience will be attending. To keep the conference lively, individual sessions will vary in format and presentation styles. A special Thursday evening session at Faneuil Hall, to be moderated by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., DuBois Institute, Harvard University, will examine the best path to empowerment for African Americans. The conversation will reflect upon the historical examples of W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington, who spoke at the dedication of the monument in 1897. Potential panelists include Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr. and former Congressman Gary Franks.

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