

# Dedication Ceremony of the United States Colored Troops

View photo gallery:

<http://s1217.photobucket.com/user/UCAC/library/June%202012%20-%20USCT%20Memorial%20Monument%20Dedication>

© www.UCAConline.org and AfricanAmericanContributions.com



## Introduction

"Today, we bring to fruition the vision of Idolia Shubrooks and her family. Over twenty years ago, Idolia found her grandfather's (Pvt. Alexander Armstrong) muster papers from the USCT and began to do research and believed that a monument to honor these sons of St. Mary's County must be established." ~ remarks from the dedication ceremony by Dr. Janice Walthour



The Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions (UCAC) Monument Committee initiated an historical project to educate the citizenry and preserve local, state and national history by erecting a memorial monument to honor United States Colored Troops. It recognizes Congressional Medal of Honor recipients and all Union soldiers and sailors from St. Mary's County who served during the Civil War. UCAC worked in partnership with the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW). Together bringing the lives of these American heroes to the attention of the public so that their sacrifices will never be forgotten.

The United States Colored Troops were regiments of the United States Army and Navy during the Civil War that were composed of African American soldiers and sailors. Recruiting stations were set up at various places by the Union. This action was taken despite the complaints of plantation owners who depended on slave labor for local agricultural needs. In St. Mary's County during the 1800s there were more than 6,500 slaves and over 600 were recruited as USCT to fight with the Union to end slavery in the United States. This history is a vital part of our local heritage, and this project will create a legacy which will serve to educate the community and preserve our history for future generations.

We are proud that St. Mary's County produced two USCT recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor, Pvt. William H. Barnes and Sgt. James H. Harris. These sons of St. Mary's County were awarded the Medal of Honor for their gallantry in the Battle of Chaffin's Farm also known as the Battle of New Market Heights (Sept. 1864) in Varina, Henrico County, Virginia.

Nationally recognized sculptor Gary Casteel will build the monument. Mr. Casteel's work is highly regarded and may be seen in collections of the National Park Service, state and local governments, corporations and private enterprises. Visit Mr. Casteel's website for more information regarding this talented artist: [www.garycasteel.com](http://www.garycasteel.com). The site for the monument was been donated by St. Mary's County in John G. Lancaster Park in Lexington Park, Maryland.

## USCT Memorial Monument Dedication

### Remarks by Dr. Janice T. Walthour

#### History of the USCT Civil War Memorial Monument

Dr. Janice T Walthour Good morning, platform guests and all who are here today. What a beautiful day this is. The Zulu tribe of Africa has a special way of greeting or recognizing/acknowledging each other. They say, "I see you." And the other person responds, "I am here." Today on this historic occasion, we can look at this beautiful monument and all say to our fore fathers, ancestors, slaves, freedmen, sons of St. Mary's County, we see you.....you are here! We are so proud of you and so appreciative of the freedom we have today because of your sacrifices.



The United States Colored Troops were regiments of the United States Army and Navy during the Civil War that were composed of African American soldiers and sailors. Many of the men who served as USCT were slaves prior to volunteering for the Union Army. In St. Mary's County during the 1800s there were more than 6,500 slaves and more than 700 were recruited as USCT. The monument honors the United States Colored Troops from St. Mary's County who fought during the Civil War and all Union soldiers and sailors. There were more than 60 white Union troops from St. Mary's County who served in the Civil War.



It pays special tribute to USCT soldiers, Pvt. William H. Barnes and Sgt. James Harris who earned the Medal of Honor for gallantry at the Battle of New Market Heights, Va., in September 1864. Joseph B. Hayden of St. Mary's County, a white Civil War sailor in the United States Navy, earned the Medal of Honor for his bravery on board the U.S.S. Ticonderoga, during attacks on Fort Fisher, 13 to 15 January 1865.

Dr. Janice Walthour speaking at the USCT Memorial Monument Dedication How fitting it is that on this annual Juneteenth Day celebration of emancipation, we witness the unveiling and dedication of the United States Colored Troops (USCT) Civil War Memorial Monument. The Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions (UCAC) in partnership with the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, the state and county governments began this historical project in 2009

to honor the United States Colored Troops of St. Mary's County and all Union soldiers and sailors from St. Mary's County who served during the Civil War.

Today, we bring to fruition the vision of Idolia Shubrooks and her family. Over twenty years ago, Idolia found her grandfather's (Pvt. Alexander Armstrong) muster papers from the USCT and began to do research and believed that a monument to honor these sons of St. Mary's County must be established.

Please stand and be recognized UCAC, USCT and SUVCW Sgt. / James H. Harris Camp #38 and members of Idolia's family that began and continued on this 20 year journey.

During this Sesquicentennial of the Civil War (150th anniversary), this Monument, symbolizes love, pride in our heritage from generation to generation. Today all who are here to witness this historic occasion, can verify that the lives of these American heroes who joined the fight to end slavery and protect the heritage of freedom for all in these United States have the full recognition of the public, which they so richly deserve, and their sacrifices will never be forgotten.

This could not have been possible without the many contributors and supporters... Special recognition to our gold sponsors... Please stand

Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Maryland F & AM (PHA)

Wyle

Mr. Steve Hawkins and Dr. Francine Dove Hawkins

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War James Harris Camp #38

And special accolades to the State of Maryland Government:

Our governor, state delegation, Secretary Alvin Collins - Dept. of General Services,  
Delegate John Bohanan (who walked with us every step of the way), and  
St. Mary's County Government (our commissioners, present and former)

We thank them all for their encouragement, monetary and in-kind support. Thank you for recognizing the importance of preserving our history and providing the opportunity to make this dream a reality.