

Slave links activist to S. Carolina lawmaker

NEW YORK (AP) - Genealogists have found that civil rights activist Rev. Al Sharpton is a descendent of a slave owned by relatives of the late Sen. Strom Thurmond, a newspaper reported Sunday.

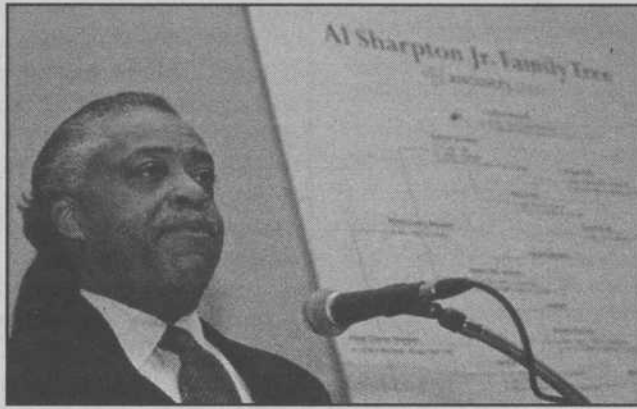
The *Daily News* said professional genealogists, working at the newspaper's behest, recently uncovered the ancestral ties between one of the nation's best known Black leaders and a man who was once a prominent defender of segregation.

"I have always wondered what was the background of my family," the newspaper quoted Sharpton as saying. "But nothing — nothing — could prepare me for this."

"It's chilling. It's amazing."

Some of Thurmond's relatives said the connection also came as a surprise to them. A niece, Ellen Senter, said she would speak with Sharpton if he were interested.

"I doubt you can find many native South Carolinians today whose family, if you traced them back far enough, didn't own slaves," said Senter, 61, of Columbia, S.C. She added, "And it is wonderful that (Sharpton)



Rev. Al Sharpton speaks at a news conference in New York on Sunday. Genealogists have linked the activist to a slave owned by the ancestors of Sen. Strom Thurmond.

was able to become what he is in spite of what his forefather was."

According to the *Daily News*, the genealogists found documents establishing that Sharpton's great-grandfather, Coleman Sharpton, was a slave owned by Julia Thurmond, whose grandfather was Strom Thurmond's great-great-grandfather. Coleman Sharpton was later freed.

The newspaper said the lead researcher was Megan Smolenyak, the chief family historian for Ancestry.com and an author of several published books on genealogy.

Another researcher on the project was Tony Burroughs, who teaches genealogy at Chicago State University.

Strom Thurmond, of South Carolina, was once considered a symbol of segregation. During his 1948 bid for president, he promised to preserve racial segregation.

In 1957, he filibustered for more than 24 hours against a civil rights bill.

But Thurmond was seen as softening his stance later in his long life. He died in 2003, at 100. The longest-serving senator in history, he was originally a Democrat but became a Republican in 1964.

His children have acknowledged that Thurmond fathered a biracial daughter. Essie Mae Washington-Williams' mother was a housekeeper in the home of Thurmond's parents.

Rice: Obama candidacy shows Blacks' progress

WASHINGTON (AP) - Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice finds Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama appealing and says it won't be much longer before race isn't a barrier to becoming president.

Obama is a top-tier contender among Democrats and his wide support early in the 2008 race "just shows that we've come a very long way," Rice said Sunday.

"I do think we've come a long way in overcoming stereotypes, role stereotypes about African-Americans.

I will say race is still a factor. When a person walks into a room, I still think people still see race," Rice said.

"But it's less and less of a barrier to believing that that person can be your doctor or your lawyer or a professor in your university or the CEO of a company.

And it will not be long, I think, before it's no longer a

barrier to being president of the United States," Rice said.

Rice, a Republican, has said repeatedly she will not run for president despite high popularity ratings and measurable support in opinion polls.

She noted that if she were to continue as secretary of state through the end of President Bush's term in January 2009, "we will not have had a White male secretary of state for 12 years — a White woman, Black man and a Black woman. That says something about how far our country has come, even though we can't deceive ourselves. Race is still a factor in this country."

Her most recent predecessors at the State Department were Colin Powell and Madeleine Albright. Powell was secretary of state from 2001 to 2005; Albright from 1997 to 2001.

Rice discussed race in the United States when asked

about Obama's candidacy. Obama, a first-term senator, is considered among the early front-runners for the Democratic nomination with Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York and 2004 vice presidential nominee John Edwards.

Rice noted that Obama is a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, where the secretary often testifies.

"I think he's very appealing and a great person. He's on my committee. And we've always had good exchanges. I think he's an extraordinary person," she said.

Rice declined to say whether she thought he had enough experience, especially in foreign policy, to be president.

"Oh, I'm not going to make that choice. The American people are going to make that choice," she said.

Rice was interviewed on "Fox News Sunday."

Slavery gets apology

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) - Meeting on the grounds of the former Confederate Capitol, the Virginia General Assembly voted unanimously Saturday to express "profound regret" for the state's role in slavery.

Sponsors of the resolution say they know of no other state that has apologized for slavery, although Missouri lawmakers are considering such a measure. The resolution does not carry the weight of law but sends an important symbolic message, supporters said.

"This session will be remembered for a lot of things but 20 years hence, I suspect one of those things will be the fact that we came together and passed this resolution," said Delegate A. Donald McEachin, a Democrat who sponsored it in the House of Delegates.

The resolution passed the House 96-0 and cleared the 40-member Senate on a unanimous voice vote. It does not require Gov. Timothy M. Kaine's approval.

The measure also expressed regret for "the exploitation of Native Americans."

The resolution was introduced as Virginia begins its celebration of the 400th anniversary of Jamestown, where the first Africans arrived in 1619. Richmond, home to a popular boulevard lined with statues of Confederate heroes, later became another point of arrival for Africans and a slave-trade hub.

The resolution says government-sanctioned slavery "ranks as the most horrendous of all depredations of human rights

and violations of our founding ideals in our nation's history, and the abolition of slavery was followed by systematic discrimination, enforced segregation, and other insidious institutions and practices toward Americans of African descent that were rooted in racism, racial bias, and racial misunderstanding."

In Virginia, Black voter turnout was suppressed with a poll tax and literacy tests before those practices were struck down by federal courts, and state leaders responded to federally ordered school desegregation with a "Massive Resistance" movement in the 1950s and early '60s. Some communities created exclusive Whites-only schools.

The apology is the latest in a series of strides Virginia has made in overcoming its segregationist past. Virginia was the first state to elect a Black governor — L. Douglas Wilder in 1989 — and the Legislature took a step toward atoning for Massive Resistance in 2004 by creating a scholarship fund for Blacks whose schools were shut down by the state between 1954 and 1964 in defiance of segregation orders.

Among those voting for the measure was Delegate Frank D. Hargrove, an 80-year-old Republican who infuriated Black leaders last month by saying "Black citizens should get over" slavery.

After enduring a barrage of criticism, Hargrove successfully co-sponsored a resolution calling on Virginia to celebrate "Juneteenth," a holiday commemorating the end of slavery in the United States.

Follow the Rainbow to...

Good Health!



When your family counts on you to stay healthy, you can count on Rainbow Medical Centers' board certified family physicians to provide the highest quality of primary and urgent care services. Our facilities offer lab, x-ray, and are open evenings and weekends for your convenience. Rainbow Medical Centers has also been awarded Joint Commission Accreditation (JCAHO) for maintaining national standards of quality healthcare.

Track your health at
My Health Zone
You'll find it at...
www.rainbowmedical.com



RAINBOW
Medical Centers

PRIMARY & URGENT CARE



Board Certified Physicians
Most Insurances Accepted

West
255-6657
1341 S. Rainbow Blvd.

East
438-4003
821 N. Nellis Blvd.

North
655-0550
4920 Lone Mtn. Rd.

Rampart
254-9192
8522 Del Webb Blvd.

Galleria
436-5800
1397 Galleria Dr.

Golden Triangle
657-9555
1302 W. Craig Rd.

Boulder Hwy
898-1405
4241 S. Nellis Blvd.