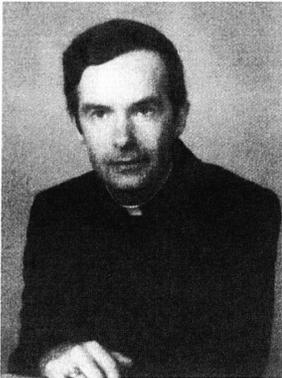


## Chaplain's Corner, Hughes Camp Chaplain Richard W Rudd



At the Harvard forum alluded to at the conclusion of last month's article, liberals on the Clinton team mentioned "moment(s) in our history." From a historical perspective, let us consider liberals' misuse of race as the alleged all-pervading

issue to affect nearly every major internal situation America has experienced. . In a recent TV broadcast, an interviewee, representing the left on a political panel discussion, spoke of the 3/5 Compromise reached during the Constitutional Convention as if it originated with white southerners. The constitutional debate concerned states' representation in the House of Representatives based on their population. The South wanted Negroes to be counted. It was the North's idea to count each Negro as 3/5 of a human being in order to limit the influence of the southern states in the federal government. Madison recognized the focus of this debate was not on big vs small states, but North vs South.

In most of today's classrooms, the myth that the WBTS was over race and slavery is erroneously perpetuated. The Emancipation Proclamation was not introduced until two years after the war began, did not apply to slaves in the North, and was designed to inflame apathetic Yankees' passions against the South.

The issue of race has always been used to discredit the Founding Fathers. About 15 years ago, the old rumor about Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings was dredged up again from the gutter of historical gossip. It is widely known that the rumor originated with a political enemy of Jefferson and that there is no evidence that Jefferson and Hemings had a miscegenous relationship. When they were called out, perpetrators of this insidious accusation had to retract their slanderous assertions.

Last September, an article was published entitled Historic Recognition: Washington's Family Tree Is Biracial. The title itself is an example of gross hyperbole that is not based on facts, historic or scientific. Washington had no direct descendants. . He adopted Martha Custis' grandchildren, Parke and Nellie. Parke married Mary Fitzhugh and their

daughter, May Anna Custis, married Robert E. Lee in 1831. According to this article, "Outside the marriage, Parke Custis likely fathered children with two of his stepfather's slaves: Arianna Carter and Carline Branham..." He "likely fathered children?" That does not sound very conclusive. Arianna Carter had a daughter named Maria Carter who married Charles Syphax in 1821. Again, according to this article, "A new family tree... lists the bride's parents as Parke Custis and Arianna Carter." "A new family tree" sounds like a revision. What about the original family tree? The claim being made is that Maria Carter was Gen. Lee's wife's mulatto half sister. "The circumstantial evidence includes...the fact that Parke Curtis...freed Maria Syphax and her sons before the Civil War..." Circumstantial evidence is a mere inference based on an inconclusive set of circumstances suggesting that benevolent acts of kindness shown to slaves inferred a miscegenous relationship. Judy Hynson, director of research at Stafford Hall, Gen. Lee's birthplace and location of his family records, says she knows of no records that acknowledge Parke Curtis freeing slaves. Scientific proof would require matching the DNA of Carter and Branham's descendants to the progeny of Mary Anna Custis and Robert E. Lee. However a descendant of Maria Carter Syphax acknowledges that they have "...yet to approach the Lee descendants to gauge their interest in genetic tests..." Briefly put, there is no proof for the claims being made in this article. Such accusations made in court would be dismissed. If they were used as a thesis for a research paper or dissertation, they would be deemed untenable. Matt Penrod, a National Park Service ranger and program manager at Arlington House, Lee's home, proclaimed, "There is no more pushing this history to the side." He calls rumor "history!" Then he contradicts himself by admitting that "... no new, definitive evidence has surfaced to prove Parke Custis fathered daughters with slaves.

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Rather, the recognition reflects a growing sense that (black) history cannot be disregarded and that Arlington House represents more than Lee's legacy." The "growing sense" he refers to is the rise of racist political correctness, in this case, the censorship and revision of history to discredit Arlington House, a Confederate monument to the life of a great man, by transforming it into a symbol of an illicit racial myth.

**(To be continued next month)**

***Fr. Richard W. Rudd***

**Hughes Camp Chaplain**