



Harriet and Dred Scott were slaves who met and married at Fort Snelling. When they left Minnesota, they went to court to fight for their freedom.

Slavery has never been legal in Minnesota. But when George Bonga was alive, some European and American army officers brought slaves to work in Minnesota from the South, where slavery was still

legal. For example, Harriet and Dred Scott were two slaves who were brought to work at Fort Snelling, near St. Paul. They met, married, and worked at the

fort. Later, the Scotts and their owners left Minnesota. The Scotts believed they should be free because they had lived in a free state. They went to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Supreme Court makes decisions about laws for everyone in the country. But the court ruled against the Scotts and denied them their freedom.

Jean Bonga did not have to go to court to seek freedom. His owner gave him his freedom in Michigan. Jean married a black woman named Marie

George's grandparents Jean and Marie Jeanne Bonga were legally married in 1794. Notice the spelling differences in their names. In the French language Jean is a male name, and Jeanne is a female name.

June 25, 1794, I, the undersigned priest and apostolic Missionary, Received the mutual consent of Jean Bouga and of Jeanne, the former a negro and the latter a negress, both free, and I gave them the nuptial Benediction in the presence of the following witnesses, towit: Messr. Jean Nicolas Marchesseaux, Hamelin, the elder, Francois Soulignny, Charles Chandonnet, some of whom signed; the others, being unable to write, made their usual marks. * * *

LE DRU, apostolic Missionary.⁵²