

# From The Baobab Tree

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 3

AUGUST 8, 1998

## MEMBERSHIP CORNER

### Welcome To New Members

Michele Williams-Smith  
Mary Frances Taylor  
Judy Miller

### Acknowledgment of Life Members

Reverend Adolph Kelly  
Thom Allison  
Shirley Evans  
Charles T. Brown  
Electra Kimble Price

## 3RD QUARTER BIRTHDAYS



### JULY

16 - Eric Thomas  
20 - Leola Williams  
23 - George Smith  
26 - Lisa Daniels  
28 - Jennifer Groebe  
31 - Leonard Austin  
31 - Charles Robinson

### AUGUST

9 - Karen Anderson  
11 - Robert Bragg  
16 - Velma Finch  
28 - Rhonda Harris

### SEPTEMBER

6 - Rita Mae Ballard

### THANK YOU

to Thom Allison for his donation toward AAGSNC

## FREE BRODERBUND WEB PAGE HELPS BRING FAMILY TOGETHER

by Thom Allison

I am a relative neophyte at genealogical research in that I have been at it for about one year. Because of my relative newness at family history research, I do not presume to advise anyone on how to conduct research. However, I have experienced something that I think will be of benefit to anyone researching his or her family history.

### \*\*\*\*IMPORTANT NOTICE\*\*\*\*

There will be *no meetings in July or August*. The schedule of regular monthly meetings will restart in September.

When I began my research, I was advised to obtain some sort of application for my computer to warehouse the information I would soon acquire. After reviewing several packages I settled on Broderbund's "FAMILY TREE MAKER". While Family Tree Maker, like any off the shelf application, is not perfect I found that it generally meets my needs for data storage.

One of the unexpected benefits of Family Tree Maker is the fact that *Broderbund Software provides a free web page for users of Family Tree Maker on their World Wide Web site*. About a year ago, I set

up a web page on that site in an attempt to solicit information about my maternal great grandfather, Charlie Brooks. I took this action because I could not locate any information on him other than anecdotal information passed down the family line.

On the web page I gave his name, where I thought he was from and the names of his known children. After putting up the page I actually forgot about it until a few weeks ago.

In June 1998, I received an unexpected e-mail message from a woman in Texas who had seen my web page. She too was researching a Charlie Brooks who happened to be her maternal great grandfather.

I exchanged a few e-mail messages with her and finally spoke with her on the telephone. As it turns out, her grandmother (Gracie Brooks) and my grandfather were sister and brother who had been separated in the early 1900's. Her grandmother (my grandfathers elder sister) migrated from Alabama to Texas with her father, Charlie Brooks in 1903. Charlie had apparently left the younger children (including my grandfather) with his deceased wife's parents in Alabama and took the older children with him.

After discussing this over the telephone, we were able to confirm most of it

through examining census information in Texas and Alabama as well as property records, death notices and entries in an old family Bible and diary kept by Gracie Brooks and now in the hands of her granddaughter.

With the help of the Broderbund - Family Tree Maker web site, I was able to learn about an entire branch of my family that we did not know was in existence. Moreover, after discussions with my new family, we were then able to locate information on Charlie Brook's mother and the plantation on which she lived as a slave from 1845 through manumission in 1865.

We are now in the planning stages of a family reunion, which will bring together family members (who have never met) from at least four states and three countries. I firmly believe that without the use of this web page, I never would have learned about this branch of the family and my research efforts would have been completely stymied.

Whether or not you think the use of this free resource will be of benefit to you, I highly recommend that you take advantage of it. You never know how that last bit of important information may find its way to you.

### NEXT MONTHLY MEETING

Saturday, September 19, 1998

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Oakland Public Library  
Dimond Branch,

Upstairs Meeting Room  
3565 Fruitvale Avenue  
Oakland, CA 94602

## ATTENTION THOSE RESEARCHING THE COLE SURNAME

AAGSNC Webmaster, Jim Neal reports receiving a letter from a Bob Knebel from Granbury, Texas. Bob is a genealogist researching his and his wife's ancestors. In the process, they discovered a family bible containing information on 62 former slaves. The information is as follows:

The subject is: Slaves on Moreland Plantation, Beaufort County, South Carolina.

The owner of the Plantation: John James Cole (1809-1867). His wife was Esther Caroline (Corley) Cole.

He included copies of three pages from the Cole family bible. There are 62 Slaves listed by first name with the month, day and year of birth. He also included a plate that shows old plantations adjoining the Moreland plantation.

The owners of those plantations were:

1. Richard Pettigrew
2. ???? Hartstene (this name was used as a middle name by some Cole family members but somehow he has determined that the Cole's were not related to the Hartstene).
3. Winborn A. Lawton
4. Jeremiah T. Theus
5. T. H. Gregorie

Bob Knebel's wife, Jane Knebel, is the great-granddaughter of John James Cole, the plantation's owner.

Bob Knebel has given us written authorization to use or publish this information. Hence, its appearance in our Newsletter. The information is also posted on the AAGSNC Website. Eventually, it will probably appear in the Afrigeneas Slave Data Archives. Meanwhile, if you are researching the COLE surname, I can provide you with a copy of the names.

Jim Neal  
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You may send comments c/o Newsletter Editor, AAGSNC at the above mailing address or send e-mail to:  
baobabree@rocketmail.com

### You May Not Have to Wait 70 Years After All - - -

The Census Bureau will assist researchers in obtaining census records from the 1930-1990 Federal returns for any person for whom you can supply proof of death. "Age Search" will, for \$25.00 search any two census records. The search is limited to the person for whom you are requesting information, but you may ask for other family members to be included for a \$2.00 per person fee. The basic fee includes an official document stating the person's name, age, place of birth, citizenship and relationship to the head of the household. Form BC-600, which is required, may be obtained from any Social Security Office or by writing: Bureau of the Census, "AGE SEARCH", PO Box 1545, Jeffersonville, IN 47111. (from the Odom Family Tree, June/July 1997 via San Ramon Valley GS, July/August 1997)

Contributed by:  
Kathryn Smith

**AFRICANS IN AMERICA**

Your local PBS station will present a four-part series premiering on PBS and PBS Online in October, 1998.

"However much black and white, slave and free, seem to be polar opposites, we must see them not only as interdependent, but as having a common story and necessarily sharing the same fate."

- Nathan Huggins, *Black Odyssey*

**The Series**

Africans in America is a landmark historical documentary series of four, 90-minute television programs that bring to life our nation's early history in a new way. From Jamestown in 1607 to the start of the Civil War in 1861, the programs show the dramatic impact of the struggle over slavery and freedom in shaping our country. Africans in America is produced for PBS by WGBH Boston.

Africans in America will be the first comprehensive television history of the international events leading to the growth of racial slavery in the United States. The series opens in the 16th century on Africa's Gold Coast with the European and African trade, and ends on the eve of the American Civil War in 1861. This six-hour series explores the central paradox that is at the heart of the American story: a democracy that declared all men equal but enslaved and oppressed one people to provide independence and prosperity to another. Africans in America examines the economic and intellectual foundations of slavery in America and the global economy that prospered from it. The series reveals how the presence of African people and their struggle for freedom transformed America.

The Terrible Transformation (1562-1750) tells of the largest forced migrations in recorded history and how this mass movement of people was instrumental in the creation of America. After establishing settlements in North America, England joins Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands in the international trade in human beings. Millions of Africans are abducted from the homelands to labor in the North American colonies. So horrific is their "middle passage" across the Atlantic that almost a quarter of them die

during the crossing. In the American colonies, Europeans rely on African skills and labor to transform vast lands into agricultural profits. But European masters fear the growing population of Africans upon whom they now depend. Slavery's inhumane codes and punishments foment African resistance and escape, bringing more brutality from the slave holders. In the colonists' worst nightmare, Africans shouting "liberty, liberty, liberty!" rise up in Stono, South Carolina and kill twenty-five whites. More than fifty slaves suspected of leading the rebellion are executed, their heads placed on posts as a warning. The nightmare has begun in the colonies. Colonists have found profits and permanence in their New World, but at what cost?

Revolution (1750-1805) is the story of the American Revolution. While the American colonies challenge Britain for independence, American slavery is challenged from within, as men and women fight to define what the country will be. In the upheaval of war, 100,000 black people escape their bondage and threaten the institution of slavery as never before. Initially, Colonial Commander George Washington refuses to allow black volunteers into his army. But when Lord Dunmore, the British Governor of Virginia, promises freedom to slaves and indentured servants who will fight against their colonial masters for England, the American high command is forced to reconsider. For the better part of a decade, black people, both slave and free, seize on the language of natural rights and equality that is rising throughout the land. But when the War of Independence is won, the nation's Constitution codifies slavery and oppression as a national way of life. As the 18th century comes to a close, it is clear that America hopes to walk a dangerous tightrope between property rights and human rights, between slavery and freedom.

Brotherly Love (1791-1831) examines the first forty years of the new nation, primarily through the fortunes of Philadelphia's unique free black community. As freedmen and fugitive slaves seek full participation in American democracy, a new leadership emerges -- abolitionist and entrepreneur James Forten, preacher Jarena Lee, and Bishop Richard Allen, a former slave and founder of the first black Christian denomination. Black churches indeed become the fulcrum of the community, providing schools, aiding their poor and agitating for the repeal of slave laws. Elsewhere, the invention of the cotton gin compels slavery into the western frontier, while the success of a slave rebellion in Haiti provides a counterpoint to the efforts of black Philadelphians to establish

*The editors wish to offer their sincere apologies to member Shirley Evans for truncating part of her fascinating article published in the last edition of From the Baobab Tree. We regret this oversight and will make amends by re-publishing the entire article, in its entirety, in a future issue of From The Baobab Tree.*





## *From The Baobab Tree*

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Mailing  
Address  
Goes  
Here

their own autonomous community. Haiti inspires slave rebellions in the South as well. These threats and the surplus of slaves in the east, lead to the rise of a colonization movement, led by leading white intellectuals, to send free black people, the main voices agitating for the abolition of slavery, to Africa, creating a volatile debate within the black community. But despite intensified brutality in the South and a new popular culture based on blackface minstrelsy in the North, African Americans resoundingly vote to stay and challenge the democracy.

Judgment Day (1831-1861) tells of the last years before the Civil War, as America is challenged as never before to end slavery, but won't. Expanding west, the country takes slavery as it goes. Black abolitionists like Frederick Douglass, Rev. Jermain Loguen and Sojourner Truth agitate against southern slavery and northern racism. Seeing their way of life continually under attack, southern states angrily threaten to leave the union. In 1850, a last political compromise, with a "fugitive slave law," trades away black rights to keep the nation united. Even so, fighting breaks out in Kansas, and in 1857, the Supreme Court formally obliterates black rights in *Scott v. Sanford*. As slaveholders call for reopening the Atlantic slave trade, abolitionists fight back against slavecatchers with fatal violence. John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry seems the final blow. The program ends with the emotional voices of black men and women on the South Car-

olina plantations, who tell of hearing the start of "the war to end slavery."

**The Web Site** (<http://www.pbs.org/africansinamerica>)

The Africans in America Web site will feature a major collection of materials, gathered as part of the extensive scholarship, research, and production effort mounted for the series: documents, images, biographies, and commentaries. This resource bank will provide a broad view of pre-Civil war history, one that tells how both Africans and Europeans struggled to define freedom and how together they created a new nation, one that presents many heretofore hidden stories. It will be organized according to the four time periods of the series episodes: the Settlement of North America (17th century to mid 18th century); the American Revolution and Founding of the United States (late 18th century); the Expansion of the New Nation (early 19th century); and Resistance, Abolitionism, and the North-South Debate (pre-Civil War). A historical essay will provide an orientation to the relevant people, events, and issues for each period. The essays will focus attention on three key themes: the development of the American principles of freedom and equality, an examination of leadership and resistance in the African American community, and a look at the evolution of race ideology.

(Article excerpted from the PBS web site)