



From the Baobab Tree

Volume III, Number 3

August 7, 1999



Historic Virginia

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by Anita Wills.

I Just spent two weeks in Virginia visiting Courthouses, Archives, Libraries, Plantation houses and the neighborhood (Old Town) in Fredericksburg where Free blacks lived. I was in Southern Maryland and Northern Virginia and immediately fell in love with those states. Except for Washington DC most of the area is still quite rural and they are not in a hurry to have Developments dotting their landscape. It was a very enriching and educational experience for me. I noticed many Plantation houses dotted the landscape, a grim reminder of the not too distant past.

The Plantations I visited were Wakefield (the birthplace of George Washington), where my ancestors Mary and Patty Bowden were born. Kenmore (Owned by George Washington's brother-in-law, Fielding Lewis), Nottingham (my ancestor Patty Bowden served from this house) and New Post (part of Nottingham). Wakefield is located in Westmoreland County Virginia and is right off of a main stretch of Highway. I got the best interpretation of how my ancestors lived from my visit there.

We looked at the Plantation, which was large, and I wondered how 75 slaves were expected to grow tobacco there. During the Colonial, period the kitchen and outhouse were separate from the main building. We went inside of the kitchen and there was a "Mulatto" girl. Her name was Kadisha and she was about 20 years old and was dressed in period clothing. She had on a blouse buttoned up to her neck, a bonnet over her head, long skirt and black boots. There was a huge fireplace in the kitchen over, which hung the pots to cook the food in. Kadisha said that most of the vegetables and meat were prepared in that kitchen and then taken to the main house. During the re-enactment, Kadisha explained that the skirt of the servant often caught on fire. Over the fireplace were herbs, which were dried and used for medicinal purposes. Those who worked in the kitchen were also responsible for making teas and other medication for the Master and his family.

Kadisha then explained that the house servants did not sleep in the house (unless they were white). Those who

Juliet's Genealogy Gems

By Dr. Juliet Culliver Crutchfield

Juliet Culliver Crutchfield, Ed.D. is a member of the African American Genealogical Society of Northern California.

Alice O. Walker has compiled a rich source of information on African American families in the book *Registers of Signatures of Depositors in the Augusta, Georgia Branch of the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company*. Because each person applying for an account was required to provide specific information, these registers often contain a gold mine of information. If you suspect that a family member may have been a depositor in the Georgia Branch, an examination of this work is a must. Although the Augusta Branch opened in March 1866, these Augusta, Georgia accounts are from 23 November 1870 to 29 June 1872.

The Freedmen's Savings and Trust Company was established and incorporated by an act of March 3, 1865 (13 Stat. 510) as a banking institution established in Washington, D.C. for the benefit of freed slaves and former African American military personnel. Commonly called the Freedman's Bank, it was an independent entity and was not under the direct supervision of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen's Bureau).

The original account applications were handwritten on preprinted forms that included the following fields of information: name of depositor, date, where born, where brought up, residence, age, complexion, occupation, employer, spouse, children, father, mother siblings, remarks, and signature.

Walker's work has been compiled and typed from the original making it easy to use. Included are (1) endnotes on selected accounts; (2) an every name index; and (3) a map on the end papers of the book representing Augusta as it appeared in 1872. This was the year when the Freedman's Bank was in full operation. The index in the back of the book is a useful finding aid that enables the researcher to quickly locate and compare similar surnames in the area. The map shows the locations of the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company for a number of years. Along with information on former African American military personnel and slaves, some accounts provide information on schools, churches, and

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worked in the kitchen slept over top of the kitchen. She showed us a room next to the kitchen, which depicted how the sleeping room was arranged. There was a bed of straw with a white Muslim type covering around it. She said that each night before they went to bed the servants would beat the straw to chase the bed bugs away. As she was demonstrating how it was done, I felt as if I was watching my ancestor and a sad feeling came over me.

From the kitchen we went to the Main house, which was actually a replica of the original house since the original house burned down (In fact several of the Washington houses burned down)? Augustine Washington Junior (George's brother) was out of town when it happened and the slaves had a day off. What was interesting to me was the kitchen was the only building left standing. The Main House burned to the ground and only some items were saved. My cousin and I gave each other "the look" as is to say we know what happened. However, our guide was quick to assure us that the slaves took no part in the burning of the house. It was an accident caused by a spark from the fireplace in the kitchen (hmm).

The original house at Popes' Creek was occupied by Augustine Washington Senior and his first wife Jane Butler (about 1720-1730). During that period, the Washington's were still just farmers with few assets to their names. They received head rights (land) by bringing Indentured Servants from England and Ireland, who then worked to pay their indentures off in five to seven years. There were few slaves until Augustine Senior and his sons married into the Butler, Aylett, Ball and Fairfax families. With the women came dowries of money and property, including slaves.

The House on Popes' Creek would have been considered one built for a Middle Income Planter. It had a Main Hall going from the Front Door to the Back door, four rooms down stairs and four bedrooms. The beds slept in by the Master were not made of straw, but possibly, Down stuffed mattresses. The Mattresses was probably made by the slaves, who slept on beds of straw. We climbed the stairs to look at the second floor where the bedrooms were located and the difference in where the "Mulatto" Servants slept, was like day and night. The rooms were large and airy with netting over the beds to protect against flies. Their were Slop pots in each of the rooms (guess who emptied them) and toys in the children's rooms.

As we were leaving, we noticed the sheep, Geese, horses and Oxen, basically the same animals on the old Plantation. We were then taken to the slave graveyard, which is located on land still owned by Washington descendants. The Graveyard is non-descript and sits under a huge tree miles away from the family plot of the Washington family. The Park Ranger said the graves are in a circular shape, which was the way Africans buried there dead (that

was news to me). This was the end of our tour and it gave me a better perspective on how slaves and servants lived during that period.

The other house that left an impression was New Post, which was built by Alexander Spotswood, who married Augustine Washington Juniors' daughter. This house was larger but still had outside kitchen and restroom. There was a rusty bell hanging on a rope from the main house to the Kitchen, which was rang to summon the servants. This house sat on twice as much acreage as Wakefield and I wondered how many slaves worked on this farm. The farm is still a working farm and I noticed there were black faces in the fields although they were now operating equipment.

My cousin and I spoke of our ancestors as we headed up the road away from the Plantations. He told me that there was a slave cottage in Charles County Maryland, which was burned down. It was a reminder to them of slavery and they wanted it removed. We agreed that it is painful, but we do not want to forget, nor do we want America writing a history that does not include slavery. It is not black peoples' shame, it is Americas' shame.

Places to visit for Research:

- Westmoreland County Courthouse, Montross VA
- Fredericksburg Courthouse, Fredericksburg VA
- Central Rappahannock Regional Library, Fredericksburg VA
- National Archives, Washington DC
- Wakefield Plantation, Westmoreland County VA
- Old Town Fredericksburg (Go to Visitors Center in Fredericksburg and they will give you a tour and/or a map.)
- Shiloh Baptist Church, Fredericksburg (church has been in operation since early 1800's)

We were well received and the staff was helpful (they are understaffed) in showing us where information was. They allowed us to look through books that went back to the early 1800's. We found a lot of information in the little court-houses and libraries. My suggestion is that those who are seeking information in small towns go and search the records. You will save time and money in the long run.

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By Anita Wills**

A new book entitled "The Family Reunion Sourcebook" is scheduled for publication in July 1999 by Lowell House Publishing, Los Angeles, CA. The book was produced by the Editor of Reunions Magazine. *AAGSNC member Carole Neal was asked to permit several of her reunion planning tips be included in the book.*

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other organizations; thereby giving the researcher valuable clues on activities taking place in the community.

The account # 2408 for Robert Jones indicates, in the occupation category, that Jones is "farming, rent[ing] land, work[ing] 3 acres for self and one acre for white man." Other accounts give the first, middle, and surname of the depositor. Such information can be useful in (1) distinguishing one individual from another; (2) uncovering names when only initials are present; and (3) showing how many families alternate the first and second names between generations. Similarly, many accounts list aunts, uncles, and half-brothers and sisters. Sometimes, the names of both husband and wife are given for an account. This valuable information can help identify a couple with no recorded marriage or no other extant records. The account may provide the names of former spouses. This was the case for Lucy Bailey, account # 2208. Lucy's first husband was Nelson David, her second Newman Robinson, and her third Dick Bailey.

You may find the wife's maiden name or at least you may be able to infer it from information given. There may be names of people who were eligible to draw on the account, or names of military units in which the depositor served during the Civil War. In the remarks category, depositors frequently named nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, grandparents, in-laws, and sometimes the location of these individuals and whether they were living or dead.

Many depositors were able to sign their names. Others made a mark. This information gives the researcher an indication of the literacy level of the account holder.

For many Augusta, Georgia researchers of African Americans these records will enable them to secure specific information on ancestors for the critical period just after the Civil War. For others these accounts will be extremely useful in finding general information and new research leads.

The project was made possible by a grant from the R.J. Taylor, Jr., Foundation. D. Douglas Walker drew the map on the end papers of the book. Account numbers 2167-6701 for the period 23 November 1870 to 29 June 1874 are included. The author explains that account numbers 1 to 2166 are most likely not extant. The copyright page indicates that copies of *Registers of Signatures of Depositors in the Augusta, Georgia Branch of the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company* (1998) may be obtained for \$35.00 from the Augusta-Richmond County Public Library, 902 Greene Street, Augusta, Georgia 30901.

Dear AAGSNC Members,

"Finding A Place Called Home - A Guide to African American Genealogy and Historical Identity" by Dee Parmer Woodtor, Ph.D. has been heralded as a "must have" reference guide for the African American genealogical researcher. The text is concise, logically laid out, and easily read. It is guaranteed to be one of the most important reference books in your genealogical library.

Charles Robinson, one of our Life Time members, has relieved you of the need to visit Barnes and Nobles or Amazon.com for your copy. He has procured a number of copies for distribution among our membership.

The price is \$20.

This is deeply discounted, as the regular bookstore or Internet price would approach \$27-\$30.

Please give Charles a call to pick up your copy:

510-644-3292

Sincerely,

Ranie G. Smith, President, AAGSNC

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) will release the 1930 census on April 1, 2002. There is a 72 year restriction on access to census records. The official "census day" in 1930 was April 1.

There is a soundex(index) for approximately a dozen southern states. NARA will make the census catalog available approximately April 2001. Orders for purchase of the "entire U. S." and "entire states" will be accepted prior to the release date, with shipment to occur during the week following April 1, 2002. "Partial state" orders will be accepted beginning April 1, 2002.

Source: Nat'l Archives Archivist/Genealogy Specialist; Archives 1 Research Room Services Branch (NWCCRI) Claire Prechetal-Klusens.
E-mail: claire.klusens@ARCH1.nara.gov
(dated 3/6/99)

**Contributed by AAGSNC Member
Charlesetta Braggs-Ford**

HealthFile Magazine is a Sunday newspaper insert (primarily in the mid-west). The June 1999 issue contained the article "Put the family back in reunions." *AAGSNC member Carole Neal was one of the persons interviewed and mentioned in the article.*

Calendar of Events

August 11-14,

Federation of Genealogy Societies

conference in Saint Louis Mo. For more information see their web site at www.fgs.org

September 18, 1999

Regular monthly membership meeting of the **African American Genealogical Society of Northern California** at the Oakland Public Library, Diamond Branch, Upstairs Meeting Room, 3565 Fruitvale Ave., Oakland, CA 94602-2398

October 17-24, Sunday - Sunday

Salt Lake City, Family History Library Research Tour. Watch the newsletter or the AAGSNC web site (www.aagsnc.org) for further information.

November 5-7

The Family Reunion Institute presents

The African American Family Reunion Conference
Hilton Hotel at the Philadelphia (PA) Airport
Conference cost: \$100
Hotel room rate: \$89 plus tax
for hotel reservations telephone 1-800-445-8667 or (215) 365-4150.

Conference brochures will be available in September. To request a brochure and for more information contact:
E-mail: vargus@vm.temple.edu
(215) 204-6244

Recurring Events

Bay Area Roots User's Group (BARUG)

Software: The Ultimate Family Tree
When: 3rd Saturday of Jan, Apr, Jul and Oct,
10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Place: LDS Temple Building, Oakland, CA
Contact: Judy Lanphear
Notes: Publishes newsletter and holds special classes/workshops. Membership \$10.00 per year.

San Francisco Bay Area TMG User's Group

Software: The Master Genealogist
When: 2nd Saturday of each month, 9:00 a.m.
to 10:45 a.m.
Place: 1611 Telegraph Ave., Room 1015,
Oakland, CA 94612-2152
Contact: Kathleen Watson

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Debra Dickerson
Mark Lomax
Janet Wells
Barbara Ann Tyson
K'ren Johnson
Robert L. Harris
Lisa B. Lee
Allen County Public Library
Leonard & Carol Brown

LIFE MEMBERS

Rev. Adolph Kelly, C.G.
Thom Allison
Shirley Evans
Charles T. Brown
Electra Kimble Price
Karim Aldridge-Rand
Charles L. Robinson
Sarah A. Robinson
Charlesetta Braggs-Ford

Charles T. Brown was inadvertently omitted from the list of Life Members which appeared in the February 1999 and the May 1999 issues of the newsletter. Our apologies to Mr. Brown for the oversight.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

JULY

11 Flo Pierce
16 Eric Thomas
20 Leola Williams
28 Jennifer Groebe-Rodriguez
31 Leonard Austin

AUGUST

07 Dawn Akrie-Edwards
09 Karen Anderson
11 Robert H. Bragg
16 Velma Finch
23 George W. Smith, Jr.
27 Madison Harvey, Jr.
27 Peggy Woodruff
29 Rhonda Harris
31 Charles Robinson

SEPTEMBER

06 Rita Mae Ballard
06 Virginia Rose
15 Barbara Ann Tyson
15 Allisa M. White
20 Anita L. Wills

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

African-American Genealogical Society of Northern California
A Non-Profit Organization

Rev. 9/30/97

[Please Type or Print]

DATE: _____

LAST NAME: _____ FIRST NAME: _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

E-MAIL: _____

TELEPHONE: () _____

BIRTHDATE (*for birthday club information only*): [Month]
_____ [Day] _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY AND ANNUAL FEE SCHEDULE

- REGULAR (Single, 17 & over) \$20/year
 - FAMILY MEMBERSHIP (spouse) \$30/year
 - YOUTH MEMBERSHIP (16 & under) \$10/year
 - ORGANIZATION \$40/year
 - LIFE TIME MEMBERSHIP \$200 (\$300 for married couple)
- New Member Renewal

Total Enclosed: \$_____ for calendar year [January–December of current year]

Payable to: **African American Genealogical Society of Northern California**
P. O. Box 27485,
Oakland, CA 94602–0985

E-Mail: baobabtree@rocketmail.com

LIST YOUR AREAS OF FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH AND SURNAME STATE

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
| | |
| | |

I volunteer to help with (check all that apply):

- Fundraising
- Program Planning
- Newsletter
- Membership Publicity
- Technical Support
- Research Education

AAGSNC
 PO Box 27485
 Oakland, CA 94602-0985

**The
 Mailing
 Address
 Goes
 Here**

At the June 19, 1999, meeting it was agreed to establish state-specific study groups. The study groups are for AAGSNC members only. The following members volunteered to be study group leaders:

- Florida & Georgia** - Peggy Woodruff
- Oklahoma** - Barbara Tyson
- Texas** - Barbara Shepherd Dunn
- Virginia & Maryland** - Janet Keys Benson
- Mississippi & Louisiana** - Sarah Robinson

As meeting information is received from the group leaders and as additional groups are established, that information will be sent out to members.

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 of Northern California (AAGSNC)
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 E-mail: baobabtree@aagsnc.org
 Web Page: <http://www.aagsnc.org>

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P. O. Box 27845
 Oakland, CA 94602-0985
 Web Page: <http://www.aagsnc.org>

Or by E-mail at : newsletter@aagsnc.org

| Newsletter Publication Schedule for 1999-2000 | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|
| Quarter | Deadline | Publication Date |
| 4th | October 25, 1999 | November 6, 1999 |
| 1st | January 25, 2000 | February 6, 2000 |
| 2nd | April 26, 2000 | May 1, 2000 |
| 3rd | July 26, 2000 | August 7, 2000 |
| 4th | October 25, 2000 | November 6, 2000 |