

From the



Baobab Tree

Volume IV Issue 2

August 7, 2000

Here's What We're Doing

AAGSNC accomplished a great deal during the second quarter of 2000 and into the third quarter. We thought that the best thing to do in this issue would be to list our accomplishments, projects and plans since the last issue of the newsletter.

Board Realignment

Rev. Adolph Kelly's (Second VP) relocation out of the immediate Bay Area required a change in the Board of Directors. The Nominations Committee, headed by Samuel Golden, recommended Jim Neal to assume a Board position. His nomination was immediately ratified earlier this year by the Board. Rev. Adolph Kelly's leadership, experience and resolve will be sorely missed. He continues as a Lifetime Member; member of the Lifetime Membership Group and remains an ardent AAGSNC supporter. The Board of Directors now consists of the following people:

President - Ranie George Smith
First VP- Electra Kimble Price
Second VP – Barbara Shepard Dunn
Third VP – Jim Neal
Treasurer – Samuel Golden
Recording Secretary – Carole Neal
Corresponding Secretary – Jackie Stewart

Committee Realignment

In an effort to involve more of the membership in AAGSNC operations and activities, President Ranie Smith working with the Board has revised the structure of AAGSNC standing committees. A number of the changes do not appear in committee format, but are noted elsewhere in the newsletter. The revised structure of the standing committees is as follows:

Program Committee

Lisa Lee, Program Director
programs@aagsnc.org

Fundraising Committee

Barbara Shepherd Dunn, Chairperson
fundraising@aagsnc.org

Membership Committee

Kashan Robinson, Chairperson
Jennifer Duhon, Data Coordinator
Membership@aagsnc.org

Nominating Committee

Samuel Golden, Chairperson
Sarah Robinson
Shirley Evans
nominate@aagsnc.org

Newsletter Committee

Thom Allison, Chairperson/Editor
Ranie George Smith, Assistant Editor
Kay Smith
newsletter@aagsnc.org

Website Committee

Jim Neal, Chairperson/Webmaster
Thom Allison
Samuel Golden
webmaster@aagsnc.org

Archivist/Historian

Shirley Evans
archivist@aagsnc.org

Membership Projects

Downs Memorial Church – Youth Project – Karim Al-Rann and Jackie Stewart “African American Genealogy as part of Rite of Passage”. Project is in the planning stage, but scheduled to be implemented during the Third Quarter, 2000.

Walker County Cemetery Index – Ruth Stubblefield spent 3-1/2 months indexing African American cemeteries in Walker County, TX. The index is available through the Walker County Public Library.

African American Cemetery Index – State of TX – Charles Brown is starting a project to index African American Cemeteries for the State of TX.

“Extracting the Slave Manifests for the Port of New Orleans” - Melvin Gillette and Electra Kimble Price – Dee Parmer Woodtor is Project Lead for a project sponsored through Afrigenus entitled “Extracting the Slave Manifests for the Port of New Orleans”. The goal of the project to put these records into spreadsheet formats.

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South African Connection

By Thom Allison

Recently I was surprised by a package I received from South Africa. I do not know anyone in South Africa but I opened the package with great anticipation. Inside was a letter from *Dr. Angela Gilhespie* of Glenvista South Africa along with a beautiful Baobab Tree woven from the leaves of banana trees (see photo, to the right). She thought it was an appropriate gift, given our Society's Logo.

It seems that Dr. Gilhespie was surfing the web when she came across our award winning AAGSNC web site, built and maintained by Jim Neal, AAGSNC Webmaster. She looked at some of the past issues of the AAGSNC Newsletter and decided to send the tree along with some information about an organization of Black African Artists with whom she works.

According to Dr. Gilhespie, "The art has an interesting 'evolution'. The artists are located in many rural areas: in remote regions of Malawi, [the] Congo, Zimbabwe, and so on. They work where the raw materials are available e.g. soapstone and verdite in Zimbabwe, malachite in the Congo, ebony in Malawi, grasses in Natal, and so on. From there the finishing is carried out where the works are displayed for sale. One such a collection is some 100 km NW of Johannesburg. This is on the main road from Sun City to Johannesburg where tourists often stop. The instability throughout central and southern Africa has resulted in a significant drop in tourism. Crime around Johannesburg has led to the perception that this area is not a suitable destination; [tourist would] rather stay within the confines of Cape Town and the Kruger Park. This is such a pity because it is an area rich in culture and history.

She writes "Local artists here battle for survival. They often live by the side of the road from which they sell. They don't have the infrastructure to access markets where their crafts would be appreciated. Tourism is minimal; crime certainly sees to that. Many of their crafted pieces are incredibly beautiful and would be very sought-after in the first-world markets. Money earned from their sale could be fed back to their communities. This provides work which keeps these crafts "alive".

Dr. Gilhespie invites AAGSNC members to participate in a 'Cradle of Man' tour that her group is promoting in an attempt to attract African Americans and other tourists to some of the less traveled areas

of Black South Africa such as the area of the Sterkfontein Caves (near where ex-South African President Nelson Mandela was incarcerated) which have yielded some of the most remarkable fossils on the origins of man.



Dr. Gilhespie also enclosed a circular advertising the various crafts made by this group of "starving" artists. The purpose of Dr. Gilhespie's communiqué was to see if there was any interest from the AAGSNC membership in purchasing some of the Baobab trees since it is the symbol of our organization. More importantly, however, she is seeking our assistance in contacting a larger community of those who would wish to support their cause through purchasing the art objects produced by the group.

The inset (to the right) contains photographs of other articles available from this group of artists.

The photograph (below) is of the Artists market area between Sun City and Johannesburg in South Africa. AAGSNC is in the process of developing a relationship with the artists group in South Africa and plans to engage in the sale of some of these art objects as a means of fund raising. In the meantime AAGSNC has secured a small supply of Baobab Trees which we hope to be able to begin selling by the time the September 16, 2000 membership meeting is convened. Watch future issues of this newsletter and the AAGSNC Web Site for continuing information on this fund raising project.



Figures
Size 6" x 5"
Weight 300g



Leopard
Size 9" x 5.5" x 3.5"
Weight 1,2kg



Giraffe
Size 15" x 7" x 4.5"
Weight 2kg
Soapstone

Here's What We're Doing (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

Surname Directory – This summer, Leola Williams has busily been putting all of the Society's surname queries into book format.

Census Extractions for Blacks in Alameda County – Electra Kimble Price – Electra has completed census extractions listing all African Americans in Alameda County from the 1870, 1900, 1910 and 1920 censuses.

Ouchita County, AR – Charlesetta Ford Bragg – is doing extensive work with obituaries and Black cemeteries in Ouchita County, AR.

Juneteenth Festivals - Exhibitors

AAGSNC Exhibitors at the Oakland and Berkeley Juneteenth Festival. 6/17, 6/18 - Participants: Lisa Lee, Barbara Dunn, Shirley Evans, Ranie Smith.

California Genealogical Society (Pleasanton) Exhibitors

AAGSNC Exhibitors - Participants: Barbara Tyson, Barbara Dunn, Lisa Lee, Juliet Crutchfield, Ranie Smith, Samuel Golden.

NEWS BRIEFS

Karim Al-Rann – **AAGSNC Youth Group Research Leader** has been unceremoniously introducing genealogy to African American youth through speaking engagements at the Elmhurst Elementary School and the Oakland Public Library, Eastmont Branch.

Peggy Woodruff – **AAGSNC Florida and Georgia Research Group Leader** was recently profiled in the July 23, 2000 issue of the Sunday Post in Charles Aikens' column "Profiles and Personalities". The article highlighted Ms. Woodruff's African American genealogical activities and her emphasis on discovering true histories.

New AAGSNC Duties

Juliet Crutchfield – (1) **Speakers Bureau Coordinator** – periodically AAGSNC receives a number of request from outside organizations for speakers under the auspices of AAGSNC. Juliet has consented to handle the coordination of these activities. (2) In addition to SB Coordination, Juliet will **represent AAGSNC at the Bay Area Genealogical Consortium**. Additional information is to come regarding the BAGC in the near future.

Jennifer Duhon – Keeping track of data is very difficult, and Jennifer acting as **Data Coordinator** has taken on the task of taking information, most of it on scripts of paper, and uploading into our database to ensure membership roster and other related information is current

NEWS BRIEFS (cont.)

Shirley Evans – One of the lacking activities that surfaced during one of our business meetings was the lack of a focal point for archival data and other information generated from various AAGSNC research activities. That is, where and how do we store and retrieve research products. Shirley as the Society's **Archivist/Historian** is responsible for the facilitation of this endeavor. The hope is that she will be able to work on some strategies and resources in conjunction with our Lifetime Membership group.

Kashan Robinson – **Membership Director**. One of the most strategic functions has to do with membership services. Kashan graciously took over this responsibility from Carol Neal. The duties involve a host of activities including membership recruitment.

Lisa Lee – As the new **Program Director**, Lisa has the charge of "priming the event pump". She inherits the larger portion of responsibilities previously handled by Electra. Electra will still play a facilitating role for larger scale events.

Lifetime Membership Group – Still to be unveiled will be an effort to secure permanent storage space for research products. The hope is that this group can provide a lobbying effort aimed at securing archival space.

Linda Kay Smith – Linda has volunteered to undertake the task of communications support. Initially, as **Communications Coordinator** will be responsible for coordinating our non-electronic communication effort.

Research Guides for Beginners

Kashan Robinson, our new AAGSNC **Membership Director** has put together a comprehensive beginning African American genealogy research guide. The guide includes various genealogy forms and narrative to get you started. This guide has been or will be sent to new members. If you are a new member and have not to date received your research guide please advise our Correspondence Secretary at 510-496-2740, Ext. 4144.

Slave Information

The largest collection of slave information ever collected is available on CD-ROM. Gwendolyn Midlo Hall through her database, "Databases for the Study of Afro-Louisiana History and Genealogy, 1699-1860: Computerized Information from Original Manuscript Sources" has computerized the records of more than 100,000 slaves. Historians and genealogists are amazed at the breadth and width of the documentation about slaves. It appears that French and Spanish Louisiana slave owners were better record keepers than British proprietors on

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Membership Corner

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Carolyn Green, M.D.
 Marcia Green
 Mary Mazion
 William Melson,
 William Murphy
 Kathleen Murphy
 Cheryl Smith
 Cleveland L. Smith
 Ruth Taliaferro-Peters
 Phyllis J. Thames
 Norman L. Thompson, Ed.D.
 Mary Williams
 Richard Wilson
 Wilhelmina Stewart

LIFE MEMBERSHIPS CONTINUE TO GROW!

Thom Allison	Karim Al Rann
Charlsetta Braggs Ford	Charles Brown
Shirley Evans	Rev. Adolph Kelly, CG
Electra Kimble Price	Mr. & Mrs. Fred Blanchard
Leonard & Carol Brown	Gerald & Lunecia Baxter
Trudy Bradfield Taliaferro	Albert & Evelyn Mayfield
M.R. & Carol Ann Miller	William & Minnette Murphy
Charles & Sarah Robinson	Mr. & Mrs. Michael Salem
Mikini & Bomani Siwatu	Arthur & Charlene Stewart
Jo-Ann & Ed Butler	Vernon & Mildred Turner

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

(for the second and third quarter)

April

7 Leonard Brown 10 Roger Hall

May

1 Charlene Stewart 4 James Abron
 10 Wilhelmina Stewart 12 Vernon Taylor
 23 Thom Allison
 Mildred Taylor
 31 Khamisi Mwanika

June

3 Star Maria Vanlandingham Lewis
 4 Patricia A. Bayonne-Johnson
 12 Sarah Robinson 17 Jesse Warr
 20 Leola Williams 22 Charlesetta Braggs Ford
 24 Katherine Allman
 25 Evelyn Mayfield 26 Karen Francisco
 29 Lilafay Hunter 30 Yvonne Vincent

July

11 Flo Pierce
 11 Electra Kimble Price
 16 Eric Thomas 22 Annie King
 23 George W. Smith Jr. 26 Viola Days
 27 Harold B. Jordan 28 Gertrude Gillette
 28 Jennifer Groebe Rodriguez
 30 Daisy Hall
 31 Leonard Austin
 Charles Robinson

August

6 Mikini Siwatu 7 Dawn Akrie Edwards
 9 Karen Anderson 16 Velma Finch
 27 Madison Harvey Jr.
 Peggy Woodruff
 29 Rhonda Rachel Harris

September

6 Rita May Ballard
 Virginia Rose
 11 Robert Bragg 14 Barbara Ann Tyson
 14 Allison White
 William Eugene Smith
 20 Anita Wills

2000 AAGSNC Newsletter Publication Schedule

<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Deadline for Articles</u>	<u>Publication Date</u>
1st	January 25	February 6
2nd	April 26	May 1
3rd	July 26	August 7
4th	October 25	November 6

MEETINGS

The African American Genealogical Society of Northern California meets every third Saturday at the

**Oakland Public Library,
 Dimond Branch,
 3565 Fruitvale Ave., Oakland, CA.**

Meeting time is 1:30 pm. until 3:30 pm.

The next meeting will be held on:

September 16, 2000

Here's What We're Doing (cont.)

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the Atlantic coast. The disc is available through Amazon.com and other Internet retailers for approximately \$45.

AAGSNC Membership in FGS

AAGSNC is one of 534 members of the Federation of Genealogical Societies. The Federation is recognized as the collective voice of genealogical and historical organizations at the national level. Its charge is to monitor events that are critical to the future of genealogy.

FGS National Conference

The Federation of Genealogical Societies National Conference is taking place in Salt Lake City, UT, September 6-9. The event theme is: Rediscovering Old Millennial Sources with New Millennial Techniques. There are a number of AAGSNC members traveling to Salt Lake for this event and to take advantage the enormous research opportunities. If you are interested in attending the conference, please contact Electra Kimble Price via email at kimblep@pacbell.net or by phone at 510-535-0288

Presidents Message

It is difficult to believe that with our September program meeting, it will have been a full two months since we have met as a group. That being the case, the Board of Directors and I extend a sincere "Welcome Back". We also want to extend our warmest welcome to our newest members, whose names are listed elsewhere in the newsletter.

The August edition of the newsletter is a compilation of second and third quarter news and activities. Conflicting schedules greatly decreased our ability to obtain what we considered to be core news. That is, news not only of the organization, but also of the various research projects and efforts being conducted individually by our membership. Therefore you may find this edition to contain more "core content" news than previous issues.

We are delighted with our growth. As we continuously strive to meet the collective needs of the membership. Organizational changes and new activities are part of that effort. To that end please note the various organizational changes outlined in the newsletter. From these changes we hope to increase membership participation, increase efficiency and make better use of our collective talents. You are encour-

Presidents Message (cont)

aged to join one of the Research Study Groups (Study Group Leader names are listed in the newsletter) or lend your talent to one of standing volunteer activities that include: fund raising, program planning, newsletter assistance, publicity, membership recruitment, technical support, and research education

Your part, as a Society member is to continuously bring forth ideas and concepts that stimulate growth and improvement opportunities.

Upcoming activities for the balance of this year, and 2001 look to be very exciting. We are in the preliminary event planning stages for seminars in various formats featuring nationally known African American Genealogists Dee Parmer Woodtor, and Tony Burroughs. Also, in co-sponsorship with the East Bay Genealogical Society, we are trying to schedule Karen Clifford, internationally recognized genealogist. Many will recall her outstanding seminar of last year, at Mills College, that we co-sponsored with the East Bay Genealogical Society.

Again, "Welcome Back" to all to our veteran researchers and "Welcome" to our new members. Here's looking forward to a very rewarding and exciting research filled nine months

New Lifetime Members

Please extend a hearty welcome to our newest Lifetime Members. By choosing to join this highly esteemed group they magnify the fact African American genealogical research can be an aid putting African American history into a truer perspective. This means, our individual family research efforts are historically intermingled. When put together they make up a collective African American consciousness.

Lifetime membership investment in AAGSNC means that this organization has been chosen as the guide to that collective consciousness. The AAGSNC Lifetime Membership group now has a membership of thirty-two (32). Please accept our sincerest thank you for your vote of confidence.

Our new Lifetime Members are: Mr. & Mrs. Fred Blanchard, Leonard and Carol Brown, M. R. and Carol Ann Miller, Mikini and Bomani Swiatu., Trudy Bradfield Talifafferro, Albert and Evelyn Mayfield, William and Minnette Murphy, Mr. and Mrs. Michael Salem, Arthur and Charlene Stewart, Edward and Jo-Ann Butler, and Vernon and Mildred Turner.

Ranie G. Smith

President AAGSNC

GOING HOME

Recently we received several e-mail messages from a Canadian television production company. They are interested in documenting the quest of a descendent of an African slave in tracing his/her ancestry back to Africa. They are primarily interested in Canadian families, but have shown some interest in Americans whose family history reached into Canada. Here is the text of the original e-mail from the researcher:

"I am working as a researcher for a Canadian company called Great North Productions. We are researching for a series called "Going Home", I would like to do a story on the slave trade. I think watching a person go back to the homelands of their relatives who were displaced by the slave trade would have great impact on Canadian viewers. The series will be seen on two channels, The Life Network, and the History Channel. The History Channel wants a story with a historical spin, and the Life Network wants a dramatic story. We want to incorporate both of these elements.

Going Home Series Overview

Going Home is a weekly, half-hour television series that will follow Canadian families or individuals, the famous and not-so-famous, as they return to the country of their family's origins-sometimes for the first time in their lives, sometimes for the first time in generations, and sometimes, to renew friendships with close friends and relatives. Going Home will present to a national audience the varied multi-cultural facets of our country and help Canadians understand where many of us came from-and, as importantly, why we came. Combining travel, history and cultural exploration, Going Home promises to be unique, informative, entertaining and participatory. The series will be unpretentious and unpredictable. In true cinema viewers style, we will never know in advance what awaits our travelers. Viewers watching Going Home will come to expect the unexpected.

Genealogy has become almost a sacred mission for tens of thousands of Canadians, and millions of people worldwide. Canada's Centennial in 1967 and Alex Haley's 1976 book *Roots*, fuelled earlier explosions in searching out family trees. This latest phenomenon springs from the Internet. With only minimal coaching, people are flocking to related web sites (there are over two million-and counting) to transport themselves back in time. When the Mormons set up their free Internet site in May 1999, it received a staggering 30 million electronic hits in its first day of operation.

Surprisingly, the most dedicated questions, according to a survey for American Demographics magazine, are 35 to 44 years old, a group whose nomadic days are over and who are often raising kids. They show a strong desire to reconnect to their roots-to fill in the gaps.

The families or individuals who trace their heritage in episodes of Going Home will be selected by means of electronic and print

research. A small production committee might screen short home videos submitted by interested parties in which they explain why they want to return to their ancestral homeland. These videotapes could become part of the opening sequence of each episode, and would enable the producers to ensure that the subjects of each episode are comfortable before the cameras and have engaging personalities.

Once the successful applicants have been selected, our documentary crew will film them in Canada as they prepare for their trip and we will find out what they expect to learn from their journey. We will then follow them to their destination and document their experiences. We will come to learn something about the land and the culture they left, find out why they (or their forefathers) emigrated to Canada, and learn whether or not they now think this was a wise decision. In some cases, we may arrange for our travelers to be met by a local expert genealogist and/or historian who will have been selected, as is done on the successful *Antique Road Show* series, for their expertise in specific regions and time periods, and for their on-camera presence and personality. The expert will then accompany the visitor back to the region of his or her ancestry; explore both the history and the contemporary reality of the area and attempt to make a connection with the visitor's ancestral roots.

Each half-hour episode of Going Home will consist of one major documentary segment in which we follow one family or individual back to the country of their ancestry. This would be the centerpiece of each program. It could be packaged with the video audition tapes and with interviews with the subjects after they have returned from their trip. A studio host would conduct these interviews, someone well recognized as an historian of note and with a comfortable on-camera presence.

Great North Productions would like to pay for an individual to take a trip to their homelands. I'd like to contact names and phone numbers of Canadians that would like to take a trip to their homeland. Please reply if you have any leads or people that we can follow up with. I am more than happy to send information on Going Home and Great North Productions. This is a real offer!!!! If you want to go back to your home land and you have a story to tell, or for more information feel free to contact me.

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AAGSNC

In Quest of Ancestors

We're on the Web
Http://www.aagsnc.org

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To submit articles for consideration to From the Baobab Tree, e-mail them to newsletter@aagsnc.org or snail mail to the post office box shown above. Articles should be accompanied by a statement from the author authorizing AAGSNC to print and/or post the article on our website. AAGSNC reserves the right to determine which articles are published in this newsletter. Submitted material will not be returned.

STUDY GROUPS

In order to enhance the experience and simplify research activities, AAGSNC has established several study groups. These groups, made up of AAGSNC members, are organized according to states in which the members have a research interest. The leaders of the various groups are as follows:

Arkansas-*Electra Kimble Price*
Florida & Georgia-*Peggy Woodruff*
Louisiana & Mississippi-*Sarah Robinson*
Maryland & Virginia-*Janet Keys Benson*
Oklahoma-*Barbara Tyson*
Texas-*Barbara Shepherd Dunn*
Youth Group-*Karim Al-Rann*

Call AAGSNC at (510) 496-2740 ext. 4144 to learn more about these study groups, how you can start your own study group, or how you can become a member.