



The Baobab Tree

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Fall 2010

Reuben Benjamin Surratt, M.D.

By Carol Miller, M.D.

When I chose medicine as my profession, I didn't realize I was following in the footsteps of my distant cousin, Dr. Reuben Benjamin Surratt. Reuben was the second child and second son born to F. S. (a.k.a. Lafayette, Fate, or General Fate) and Mollie Surratt. His WWI draft registration card (9/12/1918) shows Reuben was born September 27, 1876, in Bethel Springs, Tennessee, but other documents record his date of birth as September 21.

Bethel Springs was and still is a small rural town in McNairy County, the county of the Surratt ancestry. Originally called Bethel, the town dates back before the Civil War but was not incorporated until 1927. "Springs" was added to the name about that time in reference to a large spring located in the town.

Reuben's father, F. S. Surratt, was also born in McNairy County, Tennessee about 1852. F. S. was the eldest of nine children born to Samuel and Nancy Surratt. Both Samuel and Nancy were also born in Tennessee, Samuel around 1830, and Nancy about 1834. Their children are listed in the 1870 U.S. Federal Census in order of



The Surratt brothers, clockwise from top left: Ulysses, Reuben, Sam, Will and Arthur

their births as Lafayette (F. S., age 18), Mary (16), America (15), Neil (13), Isaac (11), Laura (9), Margaret (6), Susan (3), and Lama (age nine months). The second child, Mary, was my great-great-grandmother.

Samuel, Nancy and their six older children spent time as

slaves on the plantation of William Surratt (sometimes spelled Scirrat) in McNairy County. In 1853, 24-year-old Samuel was sold to Thomas Coombs for \$1,275, equivalent to about 256 thousand dollars today according to the website measuringworth.com.

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Welcome New Members!

Kellie Farrish
Cynthia Myatt
Carrie Reese
Maria Sinclair

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EDITOR'S NOTE

For the past year and a half, I have enjoyed the challenge and pleasure of being the editor of *The Baobab Tree*, but this is my final issue in that role. A demanding job, my own family research, and revising my family history book mean I can no longer give *The Baobab* my full attention. So, with great regret I submitted my resignation, effective January 1, 2011. Annette Madden has graciously accepted the position, so please continue to support the journal with your fascinating stories. I wish you a happy and prosperous New Year!

Vernester Sheeler

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By M. Howard Edwards



WHEN YOU'RE DEAD YOU'RE DONE!

These immortal words were written by the great philosopher/songwriter, Louis Jordan in his song, "Let the Good Times Roll," or as some would say, "Laissez les bons temps rouler." A few readers of these words will remember Louis Jordan, a few more will remember his song, and a few will remember the phrase. In another generation or two all the above will all but disappear. This is a simple illustration of why you must tell your story, and in the process, interview all the oldest people in your lives to keep their stories alive and to fill out the gaps in your own story.

Procrastination is a kind of creeping illness in these busy times, and one's personal history is an easy thing to put on the back burner along with the *really* unpleasant things you would rather not do. However, I cannot stress strongly enough how important it is to get this important work into the computer, or dictated on an audio cassette, if not on paper. I know I am preaching to the choir, for all of us doing family history research fervently wish our ancestors had left better accounts of themselves. A little reminder does not hurt, though.

In a memoir written by Ulysses S. Grant's granddaughter, she recounts her memory of her grandfather's struggle to write his autobiography (with the substantial encouragement of Mark Twain) in the last months of his life. He was dying from throat cancer. He was a famous man, an ex-United States President, but broke, so he was attempting to leave a financial legacy for his family as well as a personal story for the world. He died just days after correcting the galley proofs of his book in July 1885. His struggle was a sad passage to read, and it taught me a lesson: get to work before it is too late; move that work off the back burner, for when you're dead, you're done!

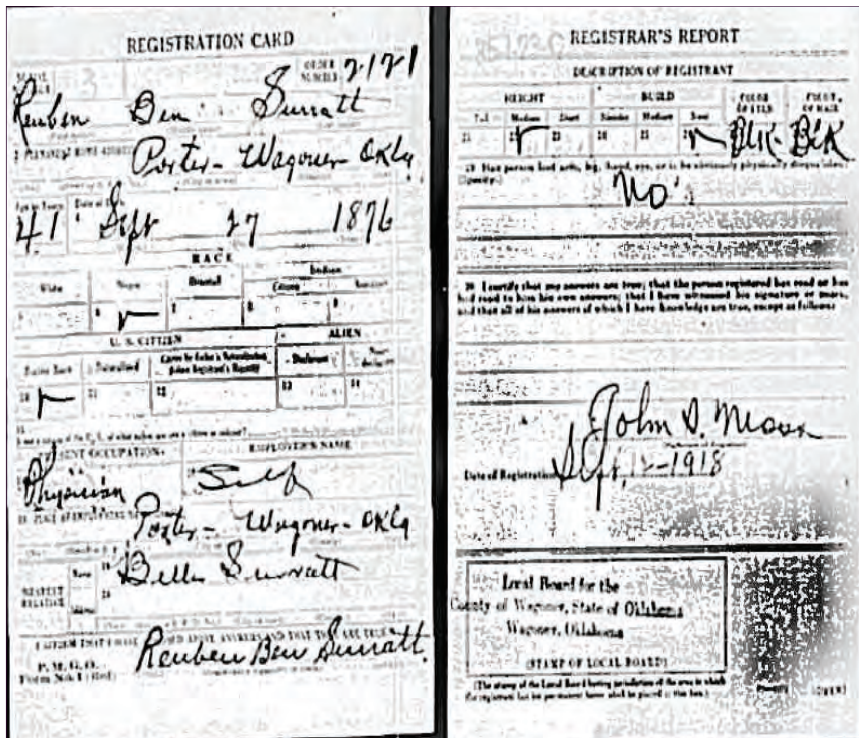
REACH OUT, HELP SOMEONE

We spend a lot of time teaching online research and its limitations. We talk about the need to sooner or later go back home and visit the libraries, courthouses, archives and old folks. One thing we stress too little is how helpful it is to reach out and give a hand to other researchers from the same area. The reason we have a society is to be able to exchange with others information, techniques, sources, and short-cuts that can make our searches easier.

One big help to others when you go back home is to take a list of names with you from a friend. You can research these while you look up information on your own list of names. It will not take a lot of extra time, your friend will really appreciate your saving them a trip, you might learn something new, and you might even discover that you have found a new cousin. It's all good.



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Reuben Surratt's World War I Registration Card

No information is available to tell us whether Samuel's family went with him or stayed with William Surratt.

Like Reuben's father, his mother, Mollie, was born in Tennessee, about 1855. The 1880 census shows her parents were born there as well. At the time of this writing, her maiden name and her parents' names are unknown. F. S. married a total of three times. With Mollie, he had five sons: Ulysess, Reuben, Will, Arthur, and Sam in order of their births. The exact date of Mollie's death is unknown, but appears to have been sometime between 1887 when her youngest son, Sam, was born, and 1894 when Reuben's half-sister, Lena, was born to F. S.'s second wife.

F. S.'s marriages, his children, and his migration from Tennessee to Arkansas to Oklahoma are described online and in an unpublished article by two other distant cousins, Jennifer Surratt and Angie Surratt Succes. By June 1880, when Reuben was a little

over three-and-a-half years old, the family was living in Pope County, Arkansas, in Holla Bend Township. Holla Bend is located in central Arkansas, and takes its name from its original location at the bend of the Arkansas River. The area was prone to flooding, however, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers eventually straightened the river to control the flooding.

Many Surratts settled in this area. In the early 1900s, approximately 65 families owned or worked farms in Holla Bend. In 1927, a particularly bad flood wiped out the farms and homes, causing many to move away.

While none of the official historical texts describe Holla Bend's residents, we know from our own family history and from looking at the census records for that time period that many were African-American. From oral family history we also know the graves of many in our family, including Surratts and Parkers, were washed away by the 1927 flood.

The graves were covered over by the Army Corps of Engineers project, and the area is now a wildlife refuge used by both tourists and biologists.

It's difficult to track Reuben and his family in the late 1800s because most of the 1890 U. S. Federal Census was destroyed by a fire in the Department of Commerce Building in Washington, D.C. Oklahoma, where Reuben and his family lived for many years, was among the states whose records were destroyed. The 1900 census shows Reuben's father, F.S., and three of Reuben's siblings (Sammy, Lena, and Willie) still living in Arkansas, but so far we have not found Reuben, his older brother Ulysess (a musician), or his younger brother Arthur (a farmer) anywhere in the 1900 census.

Reuben's early educational history remains a mystery, however, we can assume he had some type of formal education because he entered Meharry Medical College in Nashville and graduated on February 19, 1905. No information is available to tell us either how he became interested in medicine as a career, or how he came to be admitted to this particular medical school.

We do know he was successful in his training, and his degree from Meharry was recognized and accepted by Oklahoma state authorities. On May 16, 1905, Dr. Reuben Surratt was granted a license to practice (certificate number 380) by the Indian Territory that would become the state of Oklahoma on November 16, 1907. A few months after Oklahoma achieved statehood, on February 18, 1908, Reuben was issued a state medical license (no. 1411), making him the first African-American doctor to be licensed in the state of Oklahoma.

Dr. Surratt practiced general medicine in Porter, Oklahoma for 48 years from an office attached to his

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Dr. Surratt



Dr. Surratt's home in Porter, Oklahoma in 2001 (left) and 2006 (right); the entrance to the office is to the right of the front door.

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home, caring for both black and white patients. He was respected and admired throughout the local area as a caring and knowledgeable physician. Some of his former patients still reside in Porter. Dr. Surratt was a member of the National Medical Association, the organization for African-American doctors founded in 1895. The November 1953 issue of the NMA Journal acknowledged Dr. Reuben Surratt as an active member at the time of his death in 1952.

While building his medical career, Reuben had married a woman named Belle (maiden name unknown) in 1906. Belle was born in Mississippi, where both of her parents were born. Reuben was 29 years old at the time of their marriage and Belle was 26 (born 1884). They never had children of their own, but helped care for Reuben's youngest four half-siblings, Asa, Zora Victoria, Darthula, and Horace, Sr. Reuben owned many acres of farmland in Porter which were farmed by his younger brother, Arthur. Most of the property currently remains with the Surratt family.

The doctor died on August 21, 1952. The notation on his death certificate reads: "Found dead in



Dr. Eleatha Surratt

bed. Presumed to have died Aug. 21, 1952 shortly after midnight of heart failure." Mortuary services were performed by Ragsdale's Mortuary (Muskogee, OK), a continuously operating black-owned company since 1895. Dr. Reuben Surratt is buried in Porter Cemetery next to his wife, Belle.

Reuben had no direct descendants, but there are at least two physicians in the Surratt family who proudly follow his legacy.

Dr. Eleatha Surratt, who is also Reuben's distant cousin, is a graduate of the University of Tulsa and Oklahoma College of Medicine. She is currently a Staff Psychiatrist in Student Health Services at Washington University in St. Louis.



Dr. Carol Miller

I am the other, a graduate of Stanford University Medical School, and Medical Director of the Newborn Nursery at the University of California, San Francisco Benioff Children's Hospital.

Carol A. Miller, M.D., has been on the faculty of the University of California San Francisco since 1989 and is currently Clinical Professor in the Department of Pediatrics. She is the medical director of the Well Baby Nursery and runs a busy faculty practice in general pediatrics focused on the primary care of children who experienced medical complications as newborns.

Dr. Miller lives in Oakland, CA with her family and enjoys building her skills in genealogical research. She is Vice-President of AAGSNC.

Mississippi Summer 2010

By Barbara Tyson

I enjoyed an opportunity to do some family history research in the state of Mississippi this past summer when my friend Howard Corey invited me to the Corey-Tyson-Taylor-Henry Family Reunion in Cleveland, Mississippi (Bolivar County). For years the two of us have been assiduously tracing the Tyson surname in North Carolina and Mississippi. We both had family who had lived in the same part of Mississippi long ago, and suspect we may share some common ancestry.

The reunion ran from June 25 to 27, 2010, but for me it stretched into a nine-day adventure on the highways and byways of the most storied of the southern plantation states. I flew from California to Memphis, rented a car, and drove south across the state line. This was my first visit to Mississippi and I was determined to make the most of every minute.

On the drive south and west from Holly Springs (Marshall County) to Cleveland, I passed a Highway 8 road sign that read "Money," with an arrow pointing south toward the Leflore County town. A chilling flashback brought up the image of 14-year-old Emmett Till's mutilated body that had appeared in *Jet* Magazine the summer of 1955. I was a teenager then, and found the news reports of his brutal murder at the hands of white Mississippians, allegedly for whistling at a white woman, too horrible to contemplate. The sense of Mississippi as a state to be feared and avoided had stuck with me for decades afterwards. Now, here I was near the very spot where it happened.

The protest lyrics of Nina Simone's 1960s "Mississippi G-d D--n," which she sang with such irreverence, also sprang into my consciousness at the same moment that I spotted the Money road sign. If I, a Pennsylvanian and Californian, still have such vivid memories and negative opinions of the state, how do native African-Americans view their home state?

Thank goodness my thoughts and my mood changed to positive anticipation as I was welcomed with big hugs by reunion organizer Juanita Wiggins Sanders and the Corey-Tyson-Taylor-Henry folks the first night of the family reunion. It was with warmth and excitement that I participated in the three-day reunion activities with Howard and his wife Betty, including meeting many members of his family with surnames Cole, Heard, Perkins, Tucker, McElroy, Wiggins, and others.

The traditional Friday night banquet delivered soul food to savor, such as fried chicken and banana pudding. The Saturday picnic was held at the 80-acre Cole family homestead deep in the Delta-land of Shaw, Mississippi. The family matriarch, Howard's mother, Ms. Mabel Corey Cole, presided. Surrounded by endless fields of soybeans, a private bayou, shady trees and brush, cornfields, and turf, I joined the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of Ms. Cole and related descendants of Frederick and Judy Tyson in a meal of catfish, potato salad, baked beans, and other southern staples.

Howard's sister, LuBertha Cole, helped me mitigate my overindulgence by letting me work out for 30 minutes on her treadmill. Later, Betty and I took a tractor ride with Howard's brother Frank Cole at the wheel.



Howard Corey's wife Betty (left), brother Frank Cole, and Barbara Tyson, at the Cole Family farm in Shaw

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Mississippi

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At the Greater Macedonia Baptist Church in Shaw, we searched the small church cemetery for the grave of Howard's great-grandmother, Delphia Taylor Tyson. The quiet serenity of the little white church reminded us of our mission to capture the stories and memories of our ancestors amid the Blues Trail markers commemorating Mississippi's musical past.

After the reunion, Howard, Betty and I shared in the awe-inspiring experience of the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center in Indianola, B.B.'s hometown. The origins and history of blues music from the Mississippi Delta are vividly displayed in this state-of-the-art museum whose walls reverberate from ceiling to floor with the deepest rhythms of the most soulful music on earth.

We stopped for a brief respite from the Delta heat to enjoy the ambience of the historic Club Ebony in Indianola, a juke joint where B.B. King and other legendary blues artists have appeared since 1945. In 2008, B.B. King purchased the club from former proprietor Mary Frances Shepard, perpetuating its landmark status in the Indianola community. On this day, the locals were excitedly awaiting B.B. King's arrival the following weekend for a two-day homecoming concert.

The next day we dug into research at the Sunflower County Courthouse in Indianola. Sunflower County is in the process of computerizing its birth, marriage, and death records, which facilitated our searches for Tyson and other surnames. At the Leflore County Courthouse in Greenwood, we were struck by the specificity of identifying information used in the 1879 *Register of Marriages*, where



Howard and Barbara at the B.B. King Museum in Indianola

descriptors such as "White," "Black," "Copper," and "Light Copper" were used as entries in the "Color of Bridegroom" and "Color of Bride" columns.

Departing from Howard and Betty in Greenwood, I drove on alone to the Carroll County Courthouse in Carrollton, collecting copies of original wills and deeds listing Tyson slave names and families. Traveling south from Winona in Montgomery

County, along an interstate lined with trees and patches of tenacious kudzu vine, I headed for the state capital, Jackson. I arrived at dusk in a blinding rainstorm.

The next day, I delved deeply into the masses of books at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) in Jackson, immersing myself in genealogical publications, indexed listings of wills,

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Mississippi

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probate and estate records of early Mississippi families with slaves and large land holdings, cemetery records, local mappings, and family histories. Viewing so many records naming slaves and their owners, along with slave ages, relationships, and names of their children was a great find for me.

At MDAH I uncovered numerous possible leads and links to the Tysons, Taylors, Gerens, Ingrams, and other pioneer families who settled in the early Mississippi Territory and state. I was also building on family names and locations provided to me by Mrs. Carolyn Tyson (no relation), whom I had met online several years ago, and lunched with in Holly Springs earlier in the week. Carolyn is the widow of Robert Emmon Tyson, great-grandson of white slaveholder Horatio Tyson of Holly Springs and Anson County, North Carolina.

Carolyn had given me directions to the Ingram-Watson cemetery in Byhalia, where Horatio was buried and where his land and Tyson slaves had been located. The fact that Howard Corey's great-grandfather, Richard Tyson, also lived in the Byhalia area around 1910 had spurred the two of us to intensify our search for links to a common Tyson ancestor and heritage. After my MDAH visit, I

couldn't wait to get back home to start analyzing, evaluating, collating, and cataloguing my new findings on the Tysons.

Wrapping up my journey with a side trip to Vicksburg on the Mississippi River, I briefly toured the Vicksburg National Military Park, a 16-mile route lined with Civil War monuments and memorials. I made sure not to miss the monument to the United States Colored Troops, regiments of free Blacks and freed slaves who fought for the Union Army in the final years of the Civil War. It's a striking sculpture designed by Dr. J. Kim Sessums. The sculpture is also captured in a painting by Kenneth Johnson, which is available as a poster in the Vicksburg Military Park's gift shop, along with a wealth of African-American publications which I just couldn't resist. I left the park with a collection of books and memorabilia to expand my library on Mississippi and African-American history.

On my return home to Sacramento, I set a goal to revisit the Magnolia State and dig even further into Tyson family history, Mississippi genealogical research, and southern life and culture. In a state with a past as turbulent as Mississippi's, discovering the limitless possibilities for peace and harmony through family reunions

and ancestor searches is truly unifying and satisfying.



Barbara Ann Tyson

Barbara Ann Tyson was born in Atlantic City, New Jersey, began her education in Mt. Gilead, North Carolina, and grew up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She has lived in Sacramento, California since 1974. She began research on her maternal ancestry in Nova Scotia, Canada in 1983. She returned to her paternal home in Candor, North Carolina in 1984 and became fascinated with the slave ancestry of her Tyson family.

Barbara has been an active member of AAGSNC since 1999, sharing her research and travel experiences as well as her extensive library with others involved in Black family history and genealogy.



You are cordially invited to
AAGSNC
 Black Family History Day
 Sunday February 20, 2011 2:00 -5:00 p.m.
 Family History Center
 4766 Lincoln Ave, Oakland, CA

Speak My Name and I Shall Live Again: Bull Hill Cemetery

By Sharon Johnson Styles
and Nedra Kristina Lee

Editor's Note: AAGSNC member Sharon Johnson Styles' family goes back for generations in Marlin, Texas. Sharon and Nedra Kristina Lee, a doctoral student at the University of Texas Austin, met while organizing the Bull Hill Cemetery dedication, and originally wrote the following article for The Marlin Democrat, Sharon's hometown newspaper.

MARLIN, TX 2010: Nearly 200 people gathered on July 10th to celebrate the dedication of Bull Hill Cemetery and the unveiling of its Official Historical Marker. After several days of heavy rains, the skies cleared to allow the large crowd to remember the long forgotten African-American cemetery in Southwest Falls County, near Marlin, Texas.

Family, friends and neighbors came from Dallas, Ft. Worth, Houston, San Antonio, and Austin to attend the dedication as well as to reconnect with old acquaintances. Cousins William Broadus and Ray Hurd spent their boyhood years in Marlin but had not seen one another in 44 years. Both returned to honor their common ancestors resting in Bull Hill. Ray Hurd of Ft. Worth, TX stated, "Grandma would be proud."

Hurd further noted that he brought his daughter, Jayda, so she could be part of history. He said, "I want her to see where she came from, to know more about her great-great-grandmother, Pearl Sneed Paul. [I want her to learn] about the slaves and everything they went through, to get where we are now."

There were many similar stories on this day, and these sentiments were echoed by many in the crowd. Christopher Jones and Courtney Jones Keady are the great-great-grandchildren of the original land and slave owner, Churchill Jones. They spoke of their childhood days growing up on the



Left to right: John Crain, Summerlee Foundation President; Texas State Rep. Jim Dunham; Nedra Lee, doctoral student and mistress of ceremonies; Mrs. Bledsoe; Gary Bledsoe, Texas NAACP President

land encompassing Bull Hill, which is now owned by the Summerlee Foundation. The Jones descendants acknowledged that the homecoming was bittersweet for them, but they expressed confidence that the property would be well taken care of.

Many in the crowd of black and white faces were descended from the Jones, Tomlinson and Stallworth slave owning families and the enslaved African-Americans that came with them from Alabama in the mid 1800s. It is virtually impossible for either group to tell their history without including the other, and for a few hours on Saturday both groups shared food and memories of days gone by. Toni

Anderson Kirk of Ft. Worth, TX said, "I thought that was big of them [the Jones descendants] to come and speak. Everyone seemed receptive of them."

Harold Williams of Austin, TX reiterated Anderson's comment by stating that, "The more powerful story for me was the descendants of the slave owners who were there with the descendants of the slaves. That was a mark of how far we've come. Standing on the same ground under different circumstances and enjoying one another. That was a beautiful situation."

Gary Bledsoe, Texas NAACP President, also joined family and

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Bull Hill

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community members to recognize his deep familial roots in Bull Hill and the China Grove community. One of six local and state dignitaries asked to offer remarks at the dedication ceremony, Bledsoe reminded the crowd to remember the sacrifices of those resting in Bull Hill. He recalled that the last burial in Bull Hill was in 1961 and that this year was significant in many ways.

Bledsoe noted that President Barack Obama was born in 1961; John F. Kennedy was sworn in as President in 1961; and the Civil Rights Movement was also gaining momentum during that year. His remarks placed the history and closure of Bull Hill in the midst of major political and social change and epitomized the hallowed nature of the cemetery.

Many representatives from local and state government also took part in the ceremony, including Texas State Representative Jim Dunnam, Marlin Mayor Norman Erskine, Mayor Pro Tem Elizabeth Nelson, and State Senator Rodney Ellis.

The Hopeful Masonic Lodge No. 78 and the Order of the Eastern Stars (OES) Peace Chapter 232 participated in the event. Historically, the Mason and Eastern Star organizations were two of the largest African-American groups in the China Grove/Tomlinson Hill area. Many of those buried in Bull Hill were lifelong members of these organizations. Helen Woodson, Worthy Matron of the OES remarked, "I just keep thinking, these are our people." She led the Eastern Star women with a remembrance of their departed sisters with the placement of a single white rose.

Ronnie Jones, District Special Deputy of the Hopeful Masonic Lodge No. 78 read a resolution which saluted their brethren with words of thanks for their service in this life and the one to come. All of the proclamations presented at the ceremony were accepted by Herman Bell, grandson of Herman Paul, founder of the Paul Funeral Home who interred the majority of the deceased at Bull Hill.

Mayor Pro Tem Elizabeth Nelson stated that "Any ceremony of this nature takes a lot of planning." Sharon Styles, descendant of the Paul, Sneed, Bailey and Johnson families of the China Grove community, and Nedra Lee, doctoral student of anthropology at The University of Texas at Austin, began planning this ceremony in February 2010. Many Marlin residents helped them throughout the planning process.

Hilda Blann and Trudie Lee Asbury of the Falls County Historical

Commission worked with Lee and Styles over four months to organize the ceremony. While Elizabeth Nelson, Helen Woodson and City Manager William McDonald spent hours the day before helping with the setup, volunteers from the Marlin Boys and Girls Club arrived early Saturday to take on heavy lifting and last minute errands. George and Delores Hudson, owners of Sister's Restaurant, contributed cooling refreshments.

Most importantly, the surviving kin of people buried in the Bull Hill Cemetery were also given an opportunity to honor the memories of their loved ones through significant participation in the dedication program. Minister Sanford Paul, Jr. offered the opening prayer and Reverend Will Miller, Jr. provided the closing prayer of dedication. Vocalists Alma Calloway, Shirley Hawkins and Carlene Mack sang *Precious Lord* and *Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah*. The latter of these songs involved



Most Worshipful Master David Scruggs and members of Hopeful Masonic Lodge No. 78, Prince Hall Affiliation of Marlin, Texas

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Bull Hill

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true forms of call and response that is the bedrock of the African-American church. Shirley Hawkins of Marlin stated that the women “wanted to sing something for the older people.” Both of these songs invoked the crowd to remember the pains of slavery and the trials and tribulations of obtaining freedom.

The dedication program was a culmination of roughly three years of research and preservation efforts led by the Summerlee Foundation and the Texas Historical Commission (THC).

The Summerlee Foundation of Dallas purchased the 400 acre site that includes Bull Hill in 2007. Dedicated to preserving Texas history, John Crain, president of the Summerlee Foundation, generously provided funding to support the rescue and preservation efforts at Bull Hill.

Jim Bruseth, head of the Archaeology Division at the THC and Nedra Lee worked closely with Sharon Styles to use archaeological, genealogical and oral history research to recover the names of 106 individuals buried in Bull Hill and to highlight the history of the China Grove community. The history of both Bull Hill and China Grove will be celebrated in perpetuity on two black, cast aluminum markers granted by the THC. Mark Wolfe, Executive Director and David Gravelle, Vice Chairman of the THC both attended the ceremony with other members of their staff, who contributed to the preservation of the burial ground.

Preservation efforts will not end with the dedication of Bull Hill. Community members have



Left to right: Mark Wolfe, Texas Historical Commission Executive Director; Sharon Johnson Styles, event planner and descendant; William H. Broadus, Jr., descendant; Nedra Lee

expressed a great interest in documenting more African-American history in Falls County. Several Marlin residents participated in an oral history workshop organized by Lee and Styles in mid-June. Dr. Stephen Sloan of Baylor University’s Oral History Institute led the workshop and supports the efforts of residents to record the African-American past in Marlin.

Community descendants Paralee Johnson Williams, Bea Paul and Lovie Miller Taylor were interviewed in Waco last week. Their interviews will become part of Baylor’s permanent oral history collection. Sandra Mitchell of Marlin completed the oral history training workshop and came to the dedication ceremony at Bull Hill prepared to conduct interviews. She was able to gather short interviews with several people and will be following up with others for further conversation.

J.C. Williams of Marlin remarked

that this was the most unique cemetery dedication that he had ever seen. The program’s theme, to speak the name of the deceased so they could live again, was particularly meaningful to friends and family members who had been shut out of the cemetery for nearly half a century.

With merely seven intact headstones remaining at Bull Hill, a marker lists the 106 known names and acknowledges the unknown. Sharon Styles felt that it was imperative that the names of all 106 souls identified be read aloud. Styles joined her relative, William H. Broadus, Jr., in the reading of these names. Mack, Calloway and Hawkins sang softly while members of the Masons and Eastern Stars stood by.

Of the tombstones surviving at Bull Hill, four are military issue. In their honor, the 62nd Expeditionary Signal Battalion of Fort Hood opened the

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Bull Hill

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ceremony with the posting of colors, and closed with a rifle salute and the playing of taps. The battalion added another level of dignity, grace and pride to the event. This concluded the ceremony and the lifting of voices which breathed new life to those buried in the Bull Hill Cemetery.

To visit Bull Hill, call 214-363-9000. If you have any questions or information to share, contact Sharon Styles at 916-275-8084 or Sharon.kay@sbcglobal.net; or Nedra Lee at 202-841-3124 or NedraLee@mail.utexas.edu.



Sharon Styles

Sharon Styles is a resident of Sacramento, California. She retired from AT&T in March 2010 after 30 years of service. She began researching her roots in 2007. Now that she is retired, Sharon plans to continue researching the Bull Hill Cemetery as well as her own family roots. Fortunately, her parents, four grandparents and great-grandparents all came from the same little town of Marlin, Falls County, Texas.

Sharon is a member of the AAGSNC, the AAHGS, the Central Texas Genealogical Society, and the St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church Library Ministry, which hosts a genealogy seminar each year.

The 106 Identified in Bull Hill Cemetery

Bettie Paul Broadus	Mary Anna Guy	Martha O'Neal	Ener McGee Stokes
Callie Brown Broadus	S. T. Hickman	Velma Lee Parks	Peter Stokes
E. C. Broadus	Willie Lee Hurst	Annie Paul	Sam Stokes, Sr.
Johnie May Broadus	Bessie McDaniel James	Baby Boy Paul	Benjamin F. Taylor
Ned Broadus	Martin James	Churchill Paul	Caroline Sneed Taylor
Oliver Broadus	Furlor Johnson	David Paul	Mariah Travis Taylor
Pearline Broadus	Grace Doll Stewart Johnson	Delila Guy Paul	Roberta Travis Taylor
Sheley Broadus	Jack Johnson	Eula Wallace Paul	Perry Lee Tomlinson
Tom Broadus	Leanna Stokes Johnson	Frank Paul	Addie Broadus Travis
Wyman Broadus	Lee Johnson	James Paul, Jr.	Jack Travis, Jr.
Pauline Brown	Martha Johnson	James Paul, Sr.	Jack Travis, Jr.
K. L. Bruse	Mary Broadus Lang	Jerry Paul	Martha Paul Travis
Henry Childers	Caldonia Stokes Linville	Pearl Sneed Paul	Lee Etta Mozee Versia
Mary Lee Johnson Coleman	Infant Lucy	Robert Paul	Silvia Johnson Washington
Celestia Webb Collins	Robert McDaniel	Thornton Paul	Ethel Virginia Webb
Arthur Curry, Jr.	Dennis McGee	Will Paul	Jerry Kenneth Webb
Emma H. Colter Curry	Jack McGee	C. J. Clark Peoples	Rebecca Paul Webb
Ursy Hailey Paul Curry	Lula Sneed Miller	Ruthie Paul Peoples	Rufus Ellis Webb
Curtis M. Davis	Will Miller, Sr.	Viola Paul Peoples	Willie Esty Webb
Sarah Diles	Ben Minefee	Ora King Robinson	Ed Williams
Peter Downs	Dan Mozee, Jr.	Tommie Lee Robinson	Alton Willis
Henrietta Stewart Evans	Dan Mozee, Sr.	Rendy Smith	Pearlie Young Wright
Robert Lee Evans	James Ed Mozee	Eliza Jones Broadus Sneed	Annie Young
Oscar Gray	Johnett Liggins	Opal Jean Sneed	Ella Broadus Young
Bill Guy	Mariah Stokes Mozee	Sam Sneed	Will Young
Francis Guy	Verdict Mozee	Shirley Ruth Sneed	
M. N. Guy	Henretta Paul O'Neal	Anna Bell Franklin Stokes	All the Unknown

The Embry-Woods Family of Talladega County, Alabama By Dorothy Turner Tuck

The matriarch of the Embry-Woods family was my third-great-grandmother, Susan Embry, born in Virginia in 1790. I located the October 20, 1862 will of slave owner Elijah Embry in the Talladega County Courthouse in Talladega, Alabama, and found Susan Embry and her son, Gabriel, listed among his 12 slaves. I traced Elijah Embry to Clarke and Oglethorpe Counties in Georgia, where Susan and Gabriel were slaves on Elijah's cotton farm. In 1839, he and his wife, Frances Noel Embry, left Georgia and settled in what is now Lincoln, Alabama, taking Susan and Gabriel with them to continue farming cotton.



Gabriel Lewis Embry and family

Gabriel Embry had 14 children, five by his first wife, Elizabeth, and eight by his second wife, Sureena. Gabriel and Sureena also reared an orphan, a girl named Allis. Seven of Gabriel's children were born into slavery; they, along with their father and grandmother, helped build the Talladega area. As slaves and as freedmen and women, they farmed cotton, which was Talladega's major export; bought land soon after the Emancipation Proclamation; and most of them built their own homes. Gabriel's mother, Susan, lived with the family until her death in the early 1880s.

Two of Gabriel's children married members of the Woods family. His son, my great-grandfather Gabriel Lewis Embry, married Laura Woods; his daughter, Liza, married Anthony Woods. As a result, we began referring to ourselves as the Embry-Woods family.

After the Emancipation Proclamation, Gabriel was a very industrious farmer. The Alabama State Archives located records of Gabriel loaning \$253.83 to a Black couple on March

7, 1881, and of making another loan of \$115 to the farmer married to Elijah Embry's granddaughter. A February 21, 1882 advance lien shows that he loaned two white farmers \$185.10 to plant, grow, and harvest their yearly crop. Once again one of them was Elijah Embry's grandson-in-law. In 1900, Gabriel Lewis Embry paid \$900 for 110 acres of land in Talladega County. Thus, the Embry-Woods families continued to farm and develop Talladega County.

In 1918, two of Gabriel Lewis Embry's sons, Savannah and William, migrated to Springfield, Ohio, and went into business. William, Savannah, and their cousin, Lee Embry, owned The Progressive Laundry in Springfield from 1921 to 1925. They were among the town's first Black entrepreneurs. Descendants of 10 of Gabriel Embry's 14 children followed them north, migrating from Talladega County, Alabama to Ohio and Michigan between 1919 and 1960.

In May 2006, I located two of Elijah Embry's great-great-grandchildren, Jimmy Goldstein and Barbara Goldstein Bonfield. After I sent an inquiry about the Embry family, the Alabama State Archives sent me an Embry article that Barbara had written for a book, "The Heritage of Talladega County, Alabama." I read the article, then called Barbara, who told me she was Elijah's great-great-granddaughter.

Barbara also mentioned that her brother, Jimmy Goldstein, had Gabriel Embry's tombstone, dated February 28, 1887. It had been displaced from Blue Eye Baptist Church Cemetery in Lincoln, Alabama, so we no longer know



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Embry-Woods Family

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where Gabriel's remains are located. But someone had found the tombstone and given it to Jimmy, who held onto it for more than 10 years. When Black members of the Embry family located Jimmy, he gave us Gabriel's tombstone. On September 19, 2006, twenty Embrys, both black and white, held a memorial service to place Gabriel's tombstone in Embry Cemetery in Talladega, Alabama.

Embry-Woods descendants credit one of Elijah Embry's descendants with providing them jobs at Garner Hospital in Anniston, Alabama,

during The Great Depression. Black and white Embry descendants continue to communicate on family history.

A book titled *The African-American Embry-Woods Family from Talladega County, Alabama (1790-2007)* details the family's history. Copies of the book are located in the Alabama and Georgia State Archives; the Birmingham Civil Rights Museum; and the public libraries of Springfield, Ohio; Talladega, Alabama; and Anniston, Alabama. Details concerning the Embry-Woods family and its research can be found online at www.embryandwoods.com.



Dorothy Tuck was born in Pell City, Alabama, grew up in Springfield, Ohio, and currently lives in McDonough, Georgia. She holds a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree from Kent State University in Ohio, and a Master's in Logistics Management from Central Michigan University.

Her extensive genealogy experience includes speaking engagements around the country and co-writing two books with her brother about their family. The two also developed and maintain the Embry-Woods family website. Dorothy is a member of the African-American Genealogy Group of the Miami Valley (Ohio).

Through e-mails, Baobab Editor Vernester Sheeler discovered Dorothy and AAGSNC Vice-President Carol Miller were both researching the Embry family name, but did not know each other. Vernester got them connected, now they are working together.



Black and white Embry family members at the Gabriel Embry Memorial September 19, 2006, in Talladega, Alabama

Queries

Readers may submit one family query per issue of *The Baobab Tree*. There is no limit to the number of words, however, the journal committee reserves the right to edit all queries. Queries are free to all AAGSNC members, cost is \$5.00 for non-members. All queries must be typed or neatly printed. Begin the query with all surnames capitalized and listed alphabetically. Non-members must submit via mail with payment to: AAGSNC, P.O. Box 27485, Oakland, CA 94603-0985. AAGSNC members may submit queries via email to journal@aagsnc.org or by mail.

MYSTERY PHOTO



Do you need help identifying persons in old pictures? Do you think they are persons from this area? If so, we would be happy to include them in future issues to see if anyone can help you. We would need a small black and white copy of the picture, one that you do not need returned, and any information about it that you think would be of help. Submit photos to:

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AAGSNC members may submit photos via email to journal@aagsnc.org or by mail.

My grandmother, Bina Dee Reeves, was born in 1897 in Sparta, Alleghany County, North Carolina, and she was 21 years of age when she died. My father was six months old. I had grown up with my step-grandmother, not knowing the distinction until I was a teenager, when she and my grandfather divorced. My grandmother went unmentioned, unknown, and unrecognized over the years. All that I learned about her I learned from my mother: that my grandmother suffered from mental illness, and family silence about her was the penalty she paid for that diagnosis.

In my first research trip to the old country in North Carolina, I attempted to flesh out the skeletal information I had been given by my mother. My father had been silent about his mother's existence. In North Carolina, I learned that only one living cousin knew and remembered her, and she did not remember her very well since she was a little girl at the time of my grandmother's death. I sensed that she either was not revealing all she knew or had successfully erased all she may have gathered over the years.

I asked anyone I met what they knew about my grandmother and if they had as little as a photograph of her. This drew a universal blank. After all, 83 years had passed since her death. Many relatives had never heard of her.

Just before I left North Carolina, my cousin Thelma Gambill showed me a photograph of my grandmother as a little girl, with her parents and brothers and sisters. She had gotten it from a friend of the family who did not know who was who, nor did Thelma. She was unwilling to give me the photo, but she agreed to get a copy and send it to me. I packed without the copy and left for home to await the mystery photograph. She sent it.

My grandmother's parents, Jack and Demia Reeves were easy to identify in the photo, but the kids were another matter. Out of a total of nine children, six were pictured, all pretty close in age. With prolonged study, I was able to narrow their identities to seven of the nine possibilities. Two kids could have left the family to be on their own at the time the photograph was taken.

Depending on which of the seven kids were pictured, the photograph was taken either in 1904 or 1907. Those pictured would be six of the following seven children:

Mecca (f)	b. 1891
Ollie (f)	b. 1895
Bina (f)	b. 1897
Leff (m)	b. 1898
Pearl (f)	b. 1902
Garnett (m)	b. 1903
Annie (f)	b. 1906

Their parents are Jack Reeves, born 1864; and Demia Reeves, born 1867. Their photograph was probably taken at home on the farm in Alleghany County, North Carolina.

With my limited ability to judge children's ages, not to mention the ages of children 100 years ago, I was able to reduce my choices to two before I became completely stuck.

If the photo was taken in 1904, the children would be (left to right): Mecca (13), Leff (6), Garnett (one year), Pearl (2), Bina (7) and Ollie (9).

If the photo was taken in 1907, however, the children would be

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CALENDAR

AAGSNC meets every third Saturday of the month from 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Oakland Public Library, Dimond Branch, 3565 Fruitvale Avenue, Oakland, California. No meeting in July and August. 2011 topics:

- January 15 - Bill Melson Slave Research
- February 19 - Presenting Your Family History
- February 20 - Black Family History Day
- March 19 - Internet Tips and Tricks Plus Using Software
- April 16 - Breaking Through the Brick Wall and Conducting Interviews
- May 21 - DNA
- June 18 - Research Trips/Exploring Cemeteries
- September 17 - Braggin' and Lyin' (What I Did This Summer)
- October 15 - Beyond the Census: Other State and Federal Resources, Newspapers
- November 19 - Guest Speaker
- December 17 - Christmas Party and Black Elephant Sale

California Genealogical Society and Library offers Genealogy for Beginners, first Saturday of every month FREE at 2201 Broadway, Suite L12, Oakland, California 94612 www.calgensoc.org.

The Baobab Tree is published four times a year and is provided free to all members. Additional copies and past issues may be purchased for \$10.00 per copy. All articles and manuscripts submitted for publication are evaluated and may be edited. Authors retain copyright. AAGSNC does not assume responsibility for errors of fact or interpretation. Deadlines for submission of material for publication in The Baobab Tree are: February 27 for the Spring issue, May 30 for the Summer issue, July 31 for the Fall issue, and October 30 for the Winter issue. Correspondence on editorial matters, story submissions and requests for permission to reprint articles may be sent to journal@aagsnc.org.

Articles and manuscripts acceptable for publication include:

Manuscripts/Articles:

- African and African-American genealogy, cultural traditions, and philosophy
- Church histories
- Documentation of African oral traditions and African writings
- Documentation of African-American families
- Ancestry charts, family group records, personal family papers
- Miscellaneous topics of interest in researching African ancestors
- Resources and methods of research in Africa

Abstracts:

- Census transcriptions (federal, state, county & city)
- Church records (baptisms, burials, marriages, etc.)
- Court records
- Manumission and freedom certificates
- Missionary and benevolent society records
- Military and pension records
- Newspaper transcriptions
- Plantation family papers relating to slaves
- Tax lists naming free blacks or slaves
- Voter registration lists

Mystery Photo

(Continued from page 14)

Ollie (12), Leff (9), Annie (one year), Garnett (4), Pearl (5) and Bina (10).

It seemed to me that mothers might be better judges of children's ages than fathers. I decided to ask members of the African American Genealogical Society of Northern California to help identify my grandmother in the picture. Not

only might they know how to estimate children's ages, they might be familiar with old photographs as well.

I made copies of the photograph and the options that I had developed, and at the fifth anniversary meeting of the society at a restaurant in San Leandro, California, I presented my dilemma to the membership and guests. We took a vote, and selected...

Wait, maybe you would like to weigh in on my dilemma. Contact the Editor of The *Baobab Tree* with **your** opinion, and I will announce the consensus in the next issue of the journal. No prize is being offered. You'll just have the satisfaction of knowing you're a great judge of children's ages from a century ago--or not.

M. Howard Edwards

AAGSNC FOUNDING MEMBERS:

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OBJECTIVES

- To promote interest in genealogy, biography and related history in African ancestry research
- To supplement and enrich the education of African-Americans through the collection, preservation and maintenance of African-American genealogical materials
- To promote the accumulation and preservation of African-American genealogical and related historical materials and make such materials available to all
- To promote and maintain ethical standards in genealogical research and publications

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