

From The



Baobab

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Benjamin Brown, Buffalo Soldier, Family Hero

By Trudy Bradfield Taliaferro

From "Storytime - The Color of My Country"



Trudy Bradfield Taliaferro

My "roots" journey began with a picture of a man in military uniform...a strange looking uniform, old fashioned, topped off with a silly looking hat. It was nothing like the hats

I was used to seeing on military men in the 1950's. And as I sat in the small dining room

of the house at 1535 T Street N.W., Shaw District, in the Nation's Capitol, gazing at the mantel and the military man's picture, even at the age of eight I knew there was something special about his story. Grandma (Lucy Comfort Winston Blackistone) said he was "great - grandma Money's (Mary Comfort Winston) uncle, named Benjamin Brown" and Aunt Blanche chimed in, "He's buried at Soldier's Home".

Benjamin Brown wasn't the only picture on the mantel. There was this terrific portrait of my Grandfather, John Roger Blackistone. His handsome face and his intense eyes followed me wherever I sat at the dining room table. He was in a tuxedo, looking like he might have been ready for a "night on the town", or a "gig" with Duke Ellington's band. He had a story too.....I just knew it.

But, this story is about Benjamin. It was 33 years later when I really took notice of that picture again...still in the same place on the mantle. Except by



then, Mom (Marjorie Adele Blackistone Bradfield - Detroit's first black professional librarian) had made copies of the original. Benjamin's color, seemingly a light brown in the sepia toned photo, faded in the stark black and white copies. But he was still a black man in a white man's army in the late 1800's. Now, as an adult I was asking different questions. (Me) Where's Soldier's Home? (Mom) Why in Washington, DC, of course. (Me) What's so special about this guy? (Gert, Mom's sister) Money always said he was a hero. OK, I said, if he's a hero and he's buried right here, let's go find him. And I pulled out the DC white pages picked up the phone and dialed Soldier's Home. By now at my age, and with a brush with the military through my husband's and brother's service, I recognized the stripes on the jacket. They were a Master Sergeant's stripes. I knew this guy had to have served in either the Civil War, or perhaps the Spanish American War. After all, if he was Money's uncle he had to have been born in the 1840's or 50's. I also recalled hearing that few, if any, men of color achieved rank above a private until the first world war. If this guy was a Master Sergeant he must have done something to get those stripes.

At the other end of the phone, a crusty, good ole' boy Sergeant answered from the Soldier's Home cemetery office. Not at all elated about looking anybody's records up at 3 pm on a September Friday afternoon, the Sergeant took the basic information about Benjamin Brown. He asked me about the photo. I described what I saw, including this

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scruffy looking hat that looked out of shape to me. Sergeant remarked, "sounds like a Buffalo Soldier to me". I started to get a little excited. Since moving to California with my family in the 1970's I'd heard a lot about Buffalo Soldiers and took to reading the history

of the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 24th and 25th Infantry.

Could I have one in my own family?

I waited for what seem to be an interminable period of time, all the while hearing the Sergeant's wheezing, coughing and whistling in the background. I wasn't on hold, just on his desk. About ten minutes later he returned to the phone and said "Gal, (I hate being called 'gal') well I think you done found yourself a bonafidee hero here! That's Master Sergeant Benjamin Brown of the 24th y'all got there. He was a Buffalo Solider and he won the Congressional Medal of Honor! Yes ma'am. He's a buried here, right at Soldier's Home, got his plot number, if you want it."

We'll you could have knocked me over with a feather. And after I recovered from the shock of it all, I wanted a lot more than his plot number. I wanted to see the gravesite, so did Mom, so did Gert. We packed into my rental car and drove to Soldier's Home. It was a perfect autumn day about 65 degrees with beautiful sunshine. I took my Nikon camera and some fresh film. I'd learned from talking to Alex Haley, author of "Roots", during my interview with him, back in 1976, that you should never miss an opportunity to take pictures and record interviews on matters of family history. The Sergeant was waiting for us by the main gate. He grabbed his data and walked while we drove behind him to the grave site.

Oh my! The sight of Benjamin Brown's grave took my breath away. There in front of me was a beautiful pure white marble stone with his rank, name, birth and death

"The sight of Benjamin Brown's grave took my breath away. There in front of me was a beautiful pure white marble stone with his rank, name, birth and death dates etched in gold, and a seal identifying him as a Congressional Medal of Honor Winner. It was true. A bona fide hero."

dates etched in gold, and a seal identifying him as a Congressional Medal of Honor Winner. It was true. A bona fide hero. I took pictures, copied everything I could find in the Sergeant's records and celebrated with my Mom and Aunt Gert the importance of the oral history in the Comfort, Winston, Blackistone line. They loved that day. I loved sharing it with them.

Benjamin Brown, born in Spottsylvania County, VA about 1860, son of Polly and Henry Brown, won the Congressional Medal of Honor for his participation in trying to save the Army payroll in the Wham Paymaster Robbery. Brown assigned to Company C of the 24th U.S. Infantry, was a part of the detachment of Black troops in Arizona escorting a stagecoach carrying a \$29,000 Army payroll on May 11, 1889. Suddenly, the group was attacked by bandits. The 11 escorts fell one by one. Shot in the stomach, Brown fell from his horse and grabbed one of the wounded men's rifles continuing to fire until he was again wounded in both arms. The payroll, was lost, but Brown earned the Congressional Medal for his bravery. Brown never fully recovered from his wounds. He carried one of the bullets inside his body until his death, December 5, 1910 at Soldier's Home.

Trudy Bradfield Taliaferro is a public relations and grants consultant. A former San Francisco Bay Area television reporter, Trudy has been an amateur genealogist for 20 years. Her mother, Marjorie Blackistone Bradfield was the first African American professional librarian in the City of Detroit (1938). Trudy conducts family search seminars for libraries, schools, churches, and community groups in the San Mateo and Santa Clara County area. Her book "Storytime" is scheduled for publication in the summer of 2000. You can contact her at :

TALIAFERRO1@prodigy.net



Marjorie Blackistone
Bradfield

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Anthony Otis Delaney-Bouchet researching **Delaney** (GA) and **Whitson** (OH)
Glenn Law researching **Law** (KS, OK), **Jones** (AR, LA), **Epps** (KS, MO, AR)
Frances O. Huston researching **Huston** (OH), **Burton, Sapp, Payton** (LA), **Scott** (GA)
Viola Dyas researching **Roberson** (TX), **Archon** (TX, LA), **Artangell** (TX, LA)
William Eugene Smith researching **Smith** (OK, LA), **Wallace** (VA, AR, OK),
Broughton (MS, AR, OK), **Exton** (TN, AR, OK), **Jones** (TN)
Makini Siwatu researching **Brown, Charles, Harvey** (TX, LA)
Bomani Siwatu researching **Goree, Suber, Roach** (TX, LA)
Harold B. Jourdan researching **Jourdan** (CA, LA), **Logan** (CA), **Clemens** (CA, TN),
Thomas (LA), **Ivy, Ivens, Ivins, Brooks** (TN)
Star Maria Vanlandingham Lewis researching **Vanlandingham** (MD, VA, NC),
Robinson (MD), **Ames, Trent, Savage, Kellam, White** (VA)
Khamisi M. Mwaniki researching **Litzsey, Schuler, Martin, Lee, Berry, Robinson,**
Perry, Walker (AR)
James A. Abron researching **Abron** (AL)

FIRST QUARTER BIRTHDAYS

JANUARY

8 Frances Huston
12 Michelle LeDoux
13 Ronald Higgins
14 Kristen McCannon
25 Minnette Murphy
25 Melvin Stewart
31 Mary Frances Taylor

FEBRUARY

2 Jennifer Duhon
3 Cynthia Grady
4 K'ren Johnson
9 Lee Loche
17 Kathryn Smith
21 Electra Kimble Price

MARCH

4 Robert Harris
4 Michele Wms-Smith
11 Leonard Brown
12 Antoinette Livramento
13 Bomani Siwatu
21 Muslimah Salaam



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Pieces of the Puzzle – Make Use of the Information That Comes Your Way!

By Carole Neal

I had the opportunity to research at the National Archives recently. My primary focus was to research Freedmen Bureau records. I was hoping for some breakthroughs. I just *knew* that I would come across records that would provide all kinds of information, at least for one of my lines. As it turned out, for my area of research (northern Louisiana), the Freedmen Bureau records were not at all fruitful. I was very disappointed.

One day while at Archives II in College Park, MD, I was waiting to speak to an archivist. While I waited in the reception area, I decided to read one of the many magazines displayed in the magazine rack. The hand of fate led me to the summer 1999 issue of *Prologue*, the NARA quarterly magazine. I scanned the table of contents and was drawn to an article entitled "World War I Gold Star Mothers Pilgrimages." The article told about a "government program that paid the travel expenses to the gravesites for mothers and widows whose son and husbands had died as members of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) during the war." The article went on to describe the Graves Registration Service (GRS) which was enacted in 1917. In short, for each soldier who died overseas a GRS file was created.

From family history I knew that my maternal grandmother had a twin brother, John JAMISON, who died overseas during World War I. However, there were conflicting stories on whether he was buried overseas or in the U.S. About a year ago, I had written to Arlington National Cemetery to see if my great-uncle was buried there. My sister had mentioned that our mother believed that was where he was buried. But the written response from Arlington indicated they had no John Jamison buried in that cemetery.

I wasn't able to finish reading the article at the time of my visit to NARA II, so I purchased a copy of the magazine at the Washington, D.C. NARA bookstore. After I returned home, I mailed a request to receive a copy of the GRS file for my great-uncle. After sending in the requested payment, I received a packet which contained copies of information in that GRS file. From the file information I now know my great-uncle's:

- date of death
- cause of death
- military serial number
- Army unit

- and the name of the American cemetery in France where he is buried, as well as the location of the gravesite in that cemetery. The file also contained correspondence between the quartermaster general of the War Department and my great-grandmother, as well as some other descriptive information. For my great-grandmother's part, the information consisted mostly of responding to ques-

tions on a form, but there was one handwritten letter from her to the quartermaster general. It appears that she initially indicated she would make the pilgrimage and that she desired her son's remains to be returned to the U.S. for burial. However, in subsequent communications she indicated her health prevented her from making the trip and that she did not want his body moved. She may have been a bit overwhelmed by all of the forms and paperwork.

I also gathered additional genealogical leads because my great-grandmother's address, at different times, was either in locations in Arkansas (where she was born and reared) or in Homer, Louisiana, where she later lived.

I had set out to research at the Archives with high hopes of success in researching Freedmen Bureau records – only to have those hopes dashed. But, the "silver lining" that came in the form of the GRS information helped to ease that disappointment. As genealogists, we must always "take the information as it comes."

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Carole Neal is the Recording Secretary of the African American Genealogical Society of Northern California.

KINSMAN

(Original Poem by Wayne Hand, 1999)

Alas, my elusive kinsman
You've led me quite a chase
I thought I'd found your courthouse
But the Yankees burned the place.
You always kept your bags packed
Although you had no fame, and
Just for the fun of it
Twice you changed your name.
You never owed any man, or
At least I found no bills
In spite of eleven offspring
You never left a will.
They say our name's from
Europe Came state side on a ship
Either they lost the passenger list
Or granddad gave them the slip.
I'm the only one that's looking
Another searcher I can't find
I play (maybe that's his fathers
name)
As I go out of my mind.
They said you had a headstone In

a shady plot I've been there
twenty times, and
Can't even find the lot.
You never wrote a letter
Your Bible we can't find
It's probably in some
attic Out of sight and out of
mind.
You first married a Smith
And just to set the tone
The other four were
Sarahs And everyone a
Jones.
You cost me two fortunes
One of which I did not have
My wife, my house and
Fido God, how I miss that
yellow lab.
But somewhere you
slipped up, Ole Boy,
Somewhere you left a track
And If I don't find you this
year
Well.....Next year I'll be
back.

Message from the President

Welcome to "Century 21". No, I'm not speaking of the real estate chain, but rather I am addressing the "new mil". The acronyms, "Y2K", "the year 2000", or "2 Grand", seem to have worn a "little thin". So, we've coined a different term to capture our organization's thrust into the new time continuum. The thought is to build on what we accomplished last year.

The momentum from 1999 is continuing as we strive to better assist members with family history research and aid in individual research skill development. Some of us have recently entered the computer age. Others are beginning to understand the meaning and methods of material organization. I'd like to broadly mention a couple of key activity areas.

To put last year's events in perspective, AAGSNC sponsored or co-sponsored a number of activities which were monumental; namely:

- *The presentation by Rev. Frank Dorman, author of "Twenty Families of Color",*
- *Genealogist Marvin Holmes' excellent presentation on the use of probate records in African American genealogy*
- *Accredited Genealogist Karen Gifford's outstanding presentation on "Researching in Virginia".*
- *Webmaster Jim Neal's presentation took us into Internet and Web Site use.*

This year, the beginning of "Century 21", we are starting where we left off last year. The Tony Burroughs seminar, with over 200 researchers in attendance, was truly phenomenal. Thanks to Paul Cobb's Oakland Tribune article, which gave extensive coverage to this event, many researchers were able to obtain very valuable information from a master in African American genealogy, Tony Burroughs.

Continuing - We're "on a roll" here. On March 25, we take delight in co-sponsoring "Finding Your Roots, African American Family History Research" with featured speakers Darius Gray, of the PBS "Ancestors" television series, and Marie Taylor, Senior Research Consultant, Family History Library, Salt Lake City, UT. Ms Taylor is Project Director for extracting names from Freedman's Savings and Trust Company deposit records.

Everyone has a different reason for delving into African American genealogical research. Mine is just plain old curiosity, to reveal the true history of our collective ancestry. This includes teaching our children that African American history did not start with their births. There were a lot of "dues paid" to get to the "FUBU" and "Air Jordan" era. Whatever your motivation for doing this very worthwhile and valuable work, the hope is that you have seen that your efforts are magnified as a participating member of AAGSNC.

As a Society member or a potential member, and if you like what you have experienced through the Society, it can only improve with your further participation and support. Your involvement can take the form of donating time by volunteering to serve on a committee; newsletter or other production support; sharing research within a state study group, or by seeking to serve in a leadership capacity.

Concluding - some goals for the current year-not necessarily in order, but stated rather broadly:

- *Increase membership by 50%*
- *Fill leadership vacancies*
- *Sponsor fund raising events – (the society's financial goal is \$7,000)*
- *Recruit more participants in assisting with newsletter production (writing, planning, production, etc.)*
- *Increase membership participation for assistance with special events*

With your help, I look forward to a very productive and fun filled year.

Ranie Smith
President

OTHER VOICES

From The Yellow Springs News, Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387 February 13, 2000
(Reprinted with the permission of the author)

Bry Robert L. Harris

"Other Voices" As Yellow Springs and much of America celebrates Black History Month, I'm reminded of how important it is that we don't lose our perspective of history and our individual places in the scheme of humanity. Nothing promotes the feelings of "place" and self-esteem as genealogy which has provided an anchor for me in the ever-changing ebb-and-flow of life. During the thirty-some odd years that I've lived in this community much had changed, yet as an individual my roots within the family-of-man have remained unaltered. My life-environment and community's demographics have may shifted... new technologies, older acquaintances, more conservatives; but the roots of my family and my sense of "place and belonging" have remained unchanged. I contend my personal brush with genealogy and history have helped me to become a wiser and more fulfilled individual. There is an urgency within every thinking person to know where they came from; to wonder who their ancestors were, and what gave rise to things as they are. It is this wonder which in-part makes us "human" and separates us from all other known species on earth as we know and understand them. As far back as human history goes, and among all known tribes, cultures, and civilizations there has been an urge to record who, what, where, when, and how. Whether this legacy was oral or written, it exists. African American genealogy is a part of this human urge. And just as there is the drive to know those singular persons who preceded us, there is the want to know about those others who were derived from common ancestors: aunts, uncles, and cousins. In reality this forms the basis of humankind socialization and civilization. Thus we have two complementary human knowledge searches: genealogy, which begins with us as individuals and traces our blood lines into antiquity; and ancestry, which begins in antiquity and traces blood lines forward to where we are today. Genealogy is America's fastest-growing hobby. Its converts and advocates have literally doubled every year during the last decade and the growth trend is not letting up. The latest local entry in this expansion is The African American Genealogy Group of the Miami Valley, a Yellow-Springs-based organization which began with a handful of people here last July and now number more than one hundred fifty, located in Yellow Springs, Xenia, Wilberforce, Springfield, Dayton, Trotwood, Piqua, and far beyond. If one includes "absentee membership" and supporters made possible by the Internet, out influence is literally global. The American slave system placed a peculiar burden on African Americans yet the growth of the hobby has been even more spectacular among us. Among African Americans it is estimated that more than one percent of our thirty-six million are engaged in some form of searching for family roots and ancestors. This equals three hundred sixty thousand, which is probably a conservative number. The Internet and computers have had revolutionary impacts on genealogy. Storage, search, and retrieval of data have never been more efficient or easier. Records can be obtained almost instantaneously and an entire software industry has emerged to service genealogists. The Internet has connected people together from around the world, and given rise to networks which enable economies-of-scale, analogous to mass-production of many consumer products. Enabled by the Internet, surname groups have arisen numbering in the thousands, many con-

taining thousands of members. Just as libraries have been changed by the Internet, all those who use them have been affected, among the most have been African American genealogists. So what is peculiar to our research? As African Americans we have a history of oral tradition. Stories of our ancestors and heritage were traditionally passed down from one generation to another by word of mouth. Much of this has its roots in slavery where in most slave states it was illegal to teach slaves to read and write. Even free blacks who could read and write suppressed these skills for fear of antagonizing the dominant white population, who for the most part was also illiterate. The requirement for "evidence and documentation" in genealogy have made African American research much more focused on translating verbal leads to some written record. Another peculiarity is slaves were considered property, therefore much of the traditional record-keeping with regard to them exist in property records, deeds, wills, tax records, journals, and personal property writings of whites who kept such records not for their historical value, but for business purposes. For example, it was not until the 1870 federal census that first and last names of for non-whites were recorded. Finally, slave research takes on a disproportionate amount of time and effort for most African Americans. The African American Genealogy Group of the Miami Valley permits African Americans and other minorities of color to "specialize" in their ancestral quest by sharing information and resources; a condition that cannot be found when working in isolation. New ideas regarding strategies, tactics, and planning can best be developed among others with like goals and problems. A goal of the organization is also to promote the writing of family histories and "main streaming" Black History. African American genealogy has the potential to make all of American history more truthful and relevant to a larger part of the American population. In studying this sector of genealogy one quickly discovers that our current pop-culture version of American history is largely both inaccurate and incomplete. Perhaps this should come as no surprise to many. It might explain the fascination of the general public with the current Jefferson-Hemings relationship, and the phenomenon 1997 TV mini-series "Roots" that was watched by more than one-third of the entire American population, breaking all then-existing records for viewing in the history of television. Most historians point to the latter event as the "trigger" for America's general interest in genealogy which has since grown unabated.

I conclude by saying genealogy is every reader's legacy to posterity. No other endeavor will give as much personal pleasure, and contribute to future generations knowledge at the same time. On a more personal level, we African Americans have a special history and claims which are unique and inspiring; and with genealogy we can challenge much of the ignorance about American history as it now stands.

Robert L. Harris

AAGSNC Study Groups Are Up and Running!

To further aid your family history research, a number of study groups have been established. Creation of these study groups offers researchers an opportunity to receive research support in a more focused manner. The study groups are restricted to AAGSNC members only.

The **Florida & Georgia Study Group** has an established meeting schedule. For meeting schedule information for all other study groups, contact the respective group leader directly.

Florida & Georgia Study Group

Group Leader: Peggy Woodruff

Date: 4th Saturday of each month

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Location: Rhinehart House, Mills College,
5000 MacArthur Blvd,
Oakland, California

Louisiana & Mississippi Study Group

Group Leader: Sarah Robinson (510) 644-3292

Maryland & Virginia Study Group

Group Leader: Janet Keys Benson (510) 536-5662

Oklahoma Study Group

Group Leader: Barbara Tyson (916) 421-2728

Texas Study Group

Group Leader: Barbara Dunn (510) 352-4048

Youth Study Group

Group Leaders: Karim Rann (510) 562-1709
Peggy Woodruff

F.Y.I.

- AAGSNC has joined the Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS). AAGSNC also holds membership in the California African American Genealogical Society (CAAGS).
- A new "Ancestors" series on PBS is scheduled for June. Check local listings for dates and times.

Tony Burroughs Educational Seminar a Success!

On Saturday, February 12, 2000, approximately 200 hundred researchers were in attendance to hear lectures by distinguished African American genealogist Tony Burroughs. The location was the auditorium at the Y.W.C.A in Oakland. This event was a first for AAGSNC. Each lecture was approximately one hour in length. The topics were:

1. Beginning Resources For Tracing the Family Tree
2. Slave Genealogy
3. Creating Order Out of Chaos

Through his lecture and visuals Burroughs shared a wealth of information, which should assist attendees with various aspects of their research. Attendees also received a copy of a detailed bibliography.

Professionally produced tapes of Burroughs' lectures are available at <http://www.repeatperformance.com>. Click on "Search" at the bottom of page and then search by TITLE or AUTHOR. An example of what's available is "You Don't Go From the Census to the Slave Schedules in Afro-American Genealogy" by Tony Burroughs - \$7.50.

Calendar of Events

3/18/2000	Monthly Meeting 1:30 p.m. Dimond Branch Library, 3565 Fruitvale Avenue, Oakland
3/25/2000	"Finding Your Roots" 4 to 6 p.m. The Interstake Center, Temple Hill 4780 Lincoln Avenue Oakland, CA 94602-2595 No cost
4 th Friday of each month	"Just Us" night Family History Center 4766 Lincoln Ave Oakland, CA 94602-2595 (510) 531-3905 <i>Receive help with your research</i>
4/28&29/2000	California Genealogical Society Fair Alameda County Fair Grounds 4501 Pleasanton Avenue Pleasanton, CA (510) 663-1358

Saturday Seminar Success

By Dr. Juliet Crutchfield

The African American Genealogical Society of Northern California, Inc. (AAGSNC) sponsored a phenomenal seminar entitled "Uncovering African American Roots," February 12, 2000 at the Oakland YMCA. Over 200 participants attended the event. Those individuals that failed to come out and brave the rainy weather missed a rare opportunity to learn about African American genealogy. AAGSNC's speaker was Tony Burroughs, an internationally known genealogist, author, teacher, and lecturer. Not only does he teach a family history course in Chicago State University's adult education program, but he has authored a chapter in the *African-American Genealogical Sourcebook*, received the *Distinguished Service Award* from the National Genealogical Society, appeared as the African American genealogy expert in the public television series *Ancestors*, and conducted the African American Genealogy workshop at the National Archives – Great Lakes Region. In addition, Burroughs is a graduate of the National Institute of Genealogical Research in Washington, D.C. and the Institute of Genealogy and History at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. He has been practicing genealogy for over twenty years and was inspired to trace his ancestry after attending a lecture by Alex Haley, the author of *Roots*. He has traced two family lines back seven generations and has extensive research experience in libraries, archives, historical societies and county courthouses.

Although his presentation was scheduled from 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m., Burroughs spoke until 6:00 p.m. His topics were Beginning Resources for Tracing the Family Tree, Slave Genealogy, and Creating Order Out of Chaos. Burroughs graciously stayed longer than his scheduled time. This speaks well of Burroughs' dedication to African American genealogy and his willingness to share his experience and knowledge. Many researchers hung on his every word and did not leave early. These actions show hunger for information and the difficulty in obtaining it the African American genealogists.

Burroughs began his presentation by suggesting new genealogists compile a list of living relatives and interview and tape-record the oldest first. The stories of these individuals must be told while they can still tell them. He explained that interviews should be repeatedly conducted, as elders with lifetime memories are unable to convey everything they know in a single session. In addition, the researcher should ask about family archives. These are collections of old letters, Bibles, post cards, newspaper clippings, scrapbooks, and funeral announcements. Examining these with a relative will help bring back memories from the past. He suggested that documents in family archives be located, organized, analyzed, and preserved.

After his impressive beginning, Burroughs spoke on Slave Genealogy. Many African Americans want to identify the slave owner(s) that held family member(s) in bondage before the end of the Civil War. Finding slave owners is an extremely difficult task and for

many African Americans an impossible one. Burroughs cautioned that before tackling this job, it is important to follow the steps required of all good genealogists and trace family members back to the 1870 census. For the descendants of enslaved African Americans, the 1870 census is important, as it is the first census in which all were enumerated. Identifying a slave holding family may be impossible, if preliminary research has not been meticulously conducted. Unfortunately, for some African Americans finding ancestors in the 1870 census is difficult, as individuals and even entire families may have missed being enumerated or may have assumed new surnames. Only after ancestors are found in the 1870 census is the researcher ready to explore the period of savery and because not every African American was enslaved, the assumption of slavery for an individual must be proved before the search for a slave owner is begun.

The last topic covered by Burroughs was organization of collected information. He urged beginning researchers to utilize an organization system from the start. For those with many collected documents and no system of organization, he asked: "How can you expect to find an ancestor in the many archives that you search, if you can not locate records you already possess?" As part of an organization strategy, Burroughs advised the researcher to write an autobiography and then biographies for all ancestors. As additional information is acquired, the researcher can update biographical facts. The presentation of information as an autobiography and as biographies will help reveal relationships not noticed before and be of interest to descendants, allowing them to understand and cherish the completed research.

Burroughs concluded this memorable seminar with a question and answer session. The day's program was such a success that the African American Genealogical Society of Northern California, Inc. plans to host a similar event next year.

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Here is a good way to win free membership for one year and two AAGSNC tee shirts. Simply submit an idea for raising money to the Fundraising Committee. Our goal this year is to have \$7,000 in the treasury by the end of the year. The rule is simple: the idea must be workable within a small budget or "no budget." Multiple entries are encouraged. Please submit your ideas by e-mail to:

Fundraising Committee
Email - fundraising@aagsnc.org

Or by snail mail to:

African American Genealogical Society of Northern California
ATTENTION: Fundraising Committee
P. O. Box 27485
Oakland, CA 94602-0985

The Fundraising Committee will judge the entries. The decision of the judges is final. *Deadline for submitting entries is March 30, 2000.*