



The African American Genealogical Society of Northern California, Inc. (AAGSNC) was founded in Oakland, CA in 1996, under the leadership of Kathryn Burgess Smith.

**AAGSNC FOUNDING MEMBERS:**

|                       |                         |
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| Kathryn Burgess Smith | Charlesetta Braggs-Ford |
| Ranie G. Smith        | Jeanette Braxton Secret |
| Electra Kimble Price  | Rayford Bullock         |
| Charles T. Brown      |                         |

**OBJECTIVES of the AAGSNC:**

- To promote interest in genealogy, biography and related history among African Americans.
- 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.

**It's Your History ... Isn't it Time You Told Your Story?**

**MEETINGS**

Meetings are held the third Saturday of every month, at 1:30 pm, at the Oakland Public Library, Dimond branch, located at 3565 Fruitvale Ave, Oakland, CA. There are no meetings during the Summer hiatus (July and August). Guests and visitors are always welcome to attend these open meetings. The AAGSNC Board of Directors will meet quarterly, immediately preceding the regular membership meetings, in March, June, September and December. Members and guests are welcome to attend.

**JOURNAL**

The Baobab Tree is published quarterly (in March, June, September, and December) by the AAGSNC and is provided free to all members. Additional copies and past issues may be purchased for \$10.00 per copy.

• Membership categories are:

- Regular \$25
- Youth (16 and younger) \$15
- Family \$35
- Organization \$45
- Life Membership - Individual \$200
- Life Membership - Family \$300

• The AAGSNC accepts no responsibility for statements of fact or opinion made by contributors. Deadlines for submission of material for publication in From the Baobab Tree are: February 5 for the March issue, May 6 for the June issue, August 6 for the September issue, and November 5 for the December issue.

• Correspondence on editorial matters, submission requests, or permission to reprint articles may be obtained, at no cost, by written request to the editor (newsletter@aagsnc.org).

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# The Baobab Tree

Quarterly Journal of the African American Genealogical Society of Northern California, Inc. • Founded 1996



AAGSNC  
P. O. Box 27485  
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[www.aagsnc.org](http://www.aagsnc.org)

## PERSONAL MEMORIES OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

- AAGSNC President, Ms. Melvyn Gillette

In March 2006, I went to Salt Lake City's LDS library for my one and only visit so far. I shared a room with a member of CAAGS who egged me into starting to write MY stories which I had not thought to do. I was so busy complaining that I had just two sentences of oral history for ancestors that MY oral history had never crossed my mind. I then attended a one-hour class on writing at the library which focused on writing our own histories through memories, and using a memory jogger that would call up childhood memories.

As a member of the AAGSNC writing group, I am writing MY history. I ran across a book titled



Photo courtesy of <http://usinfo.state.gov>

**MINNIE GRIMES** - I actually knew Martin Luther King. I met him when I transferred in 8th grade from the one local colored public high school, Washington High, in Atlanta, to Lab High on the Spellman College campus. He was a year behind me, his sister Christine was my classmate. Even though he was a year younger, he kept getting promoted and finished college a year ahead of me.

We took one class together, a summer course and he was the only junior high student that I ever knew who dared challenge a teacher's statements in the classroom. He was serious, disagreed and was quite pointed about it. Although I do not remember

"How to Write the Story of Your Life" and that gives wonderful tips on doing it one bite at a time. I have since written about my years in a two-room elementary school, shared that with schoolmates who really enjoyed reading it, and shared their memories with me. It was printed in the journal of the Historical Association from the county where I grew up, and in the Baobab of course. I've also written about the death of the one grandparent that I knew, as remembered from my 6-year-old perspective. I have post-it notes near my computer with future topics to write stories about: The day we found the raccoon in the trap. The chicken coop with the Isinglass. The story behind the family picture.

While reading the AfriGeneas Discuss forum, I saw a posting that asked people to recount their firsthand experiences regarding the assassination of Dr. King and its aftermath. I was surprised to see no responses at all. I thought that it was a good "interview" question to elicit oral history from our members who might not think to record it for their children and grandchildren. We are so busy recording our ancestors' history, we may not remember to record our own. I must say I have been very pleased at the responses received.

what it was about, I do remember that when that happened the whole class was actually frozen in shock, then the bell rang and class was dismissed. He was asked to remain behind. That was a juicy bit for all of us kids to chew over for a long time.

When we were entering the teen years he used to come by on Sunday afternoons with three or four boys to visit for a while. We weren't allowed to date so these visits allowed them to go in a bunch and visit all the girls they liked. His best friend was my "boyfriend" and was the boy "most likely to succeed" in the group (what did we know?) M.L., as we knew him, was quiet for the most part, but was a people



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The Baobab Tree is published quarterly in Oakland, CA and mailed to every black genealogy society in North America, and most genealogical libraries and archives in the United States. Your published works will be read by thousands of people, possibly one of your relatives.

As always, we welcome our members to submit their stories, accomplishments, questions, suggestions, letters, photos, etc., for possible inclusion in a future edition. We reserve the right to edit submissions and not all submissions will be published.

Submissions: newsletter@aagsnc.org or via postal mail to our PO Box 27485, Oakland, CA 94602-0985.



## The BAOBAB TREE IS ALIVE AND WELL ...

... thanks to the determined efforts of our President, Ms. Melvyn Gillette, the AAGSNC Writer's Group, and many other AAGSNC members who were determined to not let this valuable resource die. Since our last edition, the Writer's Group has volunteered to edit all submissions, which is truly a godsend. Doing the layout of a journal such as *The Baobab* takes a lot of time on its own, but having to edit articles for spelling, grammar, content and composition makes the job so much longer. Having so many eager eyes to assist me in this is more than I ever imagined.

Vernester Sheeler, despite the death of her mother a few days earlier, stepped in and took care of getting the last issue printed and mailed. An amazing gesture, and one which we wholeheartedly appreciate.

This issue of *The Baobab* is based on a suggestion Melvyn made to our members that we should begin to tell and document our *own* stories. We spend so much time trying to tell the stories our ancestors couldn't, or perhaps wouldn't, tell, but how often do we stop to think that, maybe, our stories would best be told by us?

The question, “*Where were you when Martin Luther King, Jr. was killed?*” didn't resonate with me because I was simply too young to know who he was or of his accomplishments to the furthering of civil rights in this country. I wasn't raised in a black church and had very little exposure

to the whole cadence and rhythm of black ministers until I was an adult. As the first black family to move onto Massachusetts Avenue (Highland Park, MI), our neighbors welcomed us by throwing a brick through the front window. For many years, I lived in a very white world, a world that my parents hoped would provide me and my five siblings with better opportunities and exposure to a better class of people.

At 11 years of age, I'd heard very little about Martin Luther King and, in my mind, he was just another stranger. And if truth be told, when one of my many white friends asked me about Rev. King, I told her that he was “just a trouble maker.”

I was in sixth grade at Barber Elementary School and when I went to school the next day it was quite evident that my teacher, Ms. Patricia Howard, had been crying all night long. When we asked her why she had been crying, she could barely speak. I simply had no idea of the impact that Rev. King had on the lives of so many.

But, as you'll see by the stories our members submitted, this question really struck a nerve with many AAGSNC members who took the time to share with us their memories of that fateful day.

I hope that this sharing of our own stories will inspire you to tell your own. Whether or not you're willing to share your stories with us isn't important -- what is important, however, is that you *tell your stories*.

Again, my thanks to all the AAGSNC members who stepped in to keep this dream alive.

- Lisa B. Lee, editor



8th Annual WEST COAST SUMMIT ON AFRICAN AMERICAN GENEALOGY

## “FAMILY HISTORY - PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER”

**Date:** October 10-11, 2008 - Bellevue, WA (suburb of Seattle)

**Keynote Speaker:** Dr. Quintard Taylor, Professor, University of Washington History, host of the popular television program, “The African American West,” and owner of the online reference guide to African American History, [www.BlackPast.org](http://www.BlackPast.org).

**Conference Location:** Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints  
15205 – SE 28th Ave., Bellevue, WA

**Hotel Information:** Silver Cloud Inn – Eastgate  
14632 Eastgate Way, Bellevue, WA (425) 957-9100  
Free transportation will be provided from the hotel to the conference.

**Special Rates:** \$109 plus tax per night (double, double/double, king).  
These rates effective until Sept. 12, 2008

**Conference Registration Fee:** \$50, in advance - **NO ON-SITE REGISTRATION**

Reception on Friday evening 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM at the Northwest African American Museum, 23rd Ave. S. & Massachusetts St. Free transportation will be provided to the reception. Bus will leave hotel at 6:30pm.

**Conference Highlights:**

- Full day of a variety of genealogical workshops
- Luncheon, keynote and all materials included in registration fee
- Special trip and research opportunity at the National Archives (NARA) after the conference. NARA will be open exclusively to Summit attendees from 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm. Free bus transportation will be provided.

**For More information:** Call (206) 784-0337 or (206) 937-5039 or email BGRG92@AOL.COM  
BGRG – Seattle • P.O. Box 28513 • Seattle, WA 98118

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check all of these sources for potential information.

Using the search term "convict labor" on the websites of a variety of southern states libraries and archives, I found that there were interesting records that might help document an ancestor's travails through these systems.

**GEORGIA** - The Georgia Department of Archives and History (<http://gil.sos.state.ga.us>) has, several listings of possible resources which might help you document the lives of your ancestors who were unlucky enough to have ended up in one of these labor camps.

One such listing, the **Convict camp registers, 1871-1910** provides registers that were kept by the officials at the individual camps. For each convict, name, crime, term of sentence, when received, expiration date of sentence, the county from which convicted, date of discharge, escape, death or pardon, age, complexion, height, weight, color of eyes and hair, date of recapture, and remarks are indicated. The amount of information varies from book to book.

**MISSISSIPPI** - The Mississippi Department of Archives and History (<http://mdah.state.ms.us/>) lists several sources of interest, though their online descriptions leave much to be desired.

**ALABAMA** - The Alabama Department of Archives and History (<http://www.archives.state.al.us/>) provided 53 listings of various records relating to convict labor. One such listing, County convicts sentenced to hard labor, 1927-1931, states that each entry is numbered and lists prisoner's name, race, sex, court where sentenced, crime committed, date of conviction, term of sentence with fine, court costs, term to serve to cover court costs, date sentence with fine expires, expiration of sentence and fine on S.T. (short time?), expiration of time for costs, and under remarks is listed the date discharged. Sometimes the prisoner's age is included.

**SOUTH CAROLINA** - Checking both the South Carolina State Library (<http://www.statelibrary.sc.gov/>) and the South Carolina Archives (<http://archives.sc.gov/>) for "convict labor" and several variations

produced not a single search result. I do not believe that these records don't exist, but that they simply are linked to different key words.

**NORTH CAROLINA** - The North Carolina Office of Archives and History (<http://www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/>) provided dozens of hits both detailing the contracts involved in the hiring-out of prison laborers as well as detailed information about the convicts involved. The State Library of North Carolina (<http://statelibrary.dcr.state.nc.us/>) provides thousands of hits, though many of them are contemporary listings.

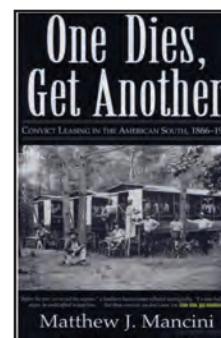
**TEXAS** - The Texas State Library and Archives Commission (<http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/>) listed quite a few items, and they were broken down by county. One such listing was Liberty County, Convict Labor Record 1891-1901; 1913-1932.

**FLORIDA** - The State Library and Archives of Florida (<http://library.florida.gov/>) contains several hits including many photos that can be viewed online. The image below is from Macon County, FL, a convict labor road crew).

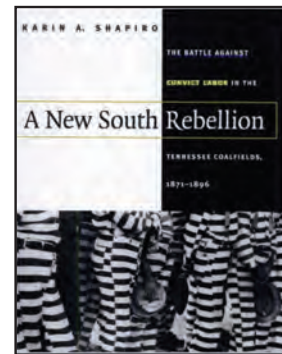


During the research for this article, I noticed that the topic of convict labor is not a new one and several other books have been written on the subject:

**One Dies, Get Another: Convict Leasing in the American South, 1866-1928**, Mancini, Matthew J. 1996. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press (1996). A partial preview of this book can be viewed online at Google Books ([books.google.com](http://books.google.com)).



**A New South Rebellion: The Battle Against Convict Labor in the Tennessee Coalfields, 1871-1896**, Shapiro, Karin A. 1998. The Fred W. Morrison series in Southern studies. Chapel Hill: University



of North Carolina Press. "In 1891, thousands of Tennessee miners rose up against the use of convict labor by the state's coal companies, eventually engulfing five mountain communities in a rebellion against government authority. Propelled by the insurgent sensibilities of Populism and Gilded Age unionism, the miners initially sought to abolish the convict lease system through legal challenges and legislative lobbying. When nonviolent tactics failed to achieve reform, the predominantly white miners repeatedly seized control of the stockades and expelled the mostly black convicts from the mining districts. Insurrection hastened the demise of convict leasing in Tennessee, though at the cost of greatly weakening organized labor in the state's coal regions. Exhaustively researched and vividly written, *A New South Rebellion* brings to life the hopes that rural southerners invested in industrialization and the political tensions that could result when their aspirations were not met. Karin Shapiro skillfully analyzes the place of convict labor in southern economic development, the contested meanings of citizenship in late-nineteenth-century America, the weaknesses of Populist-era reform politics, and the fluidity of race relations during the early years of Jim Crow."

A partial preview of this book is also available on Google Books.

I've only begun to scratch the surface regarding available sources for this subject. I'm sure you can find others. Good luck in your research.

**Lisa B. Lee** may be contacted at: [Lisa@TheGeneQueen.com](mailto:Lisa@TheGeneQueen.com)

## SOCIETY NEWS

### AAGSNC MEETINGS 2008

Held at the Oakland Library, Dimond Branch (3565 Fruitvale Avenue) from 1:30pm - 4:00 pm. Guests welcome!

• **April 19** - Two topics:  
1) Oral Histories, Interviewing, Sharing Ongoing Research  
2) Finding the Last Slave Owner

• **May 17** - Two topics:  
1) Archives and Repositories, Online Databases, Free and Subscription-Based  
2) Finding the Last Slave Owner

• **June 21** - Two topics:  
1) Courthouse Records  
2) Finding the Last Slave Owner

• **September 20** - Two topics:  
1) Braggin' & Lyin' - Share the Research You Did Last Summer  
2) Finding the Last Slave Owner

• **October 18** - Two topics:  
1) Resources at the Family History Center, Online Library Catalogues  
2) Finding the Last Slave Owner

• **November 15** - Two topics:  
1) Publishing Your Family History  
2) Finding the Last Slave Owner

• **December 20**  
1) Annual "Black Elephant" Sale and Potluck

## AAGSNC TOTES FOR SALE \$20 EACH



We have two different styles of tote bags, each with a flat bottom, heavy canvas fabric with sturdy handles.

- Beige with burgundy trim, AAGSNC logo (left)
- Beige with black trim, AAGSNC logo (left)
- White with dark blue trim, baobab tree photo (right)

**TO ORDER:** Send \$20 (includes tax and postage) to: AAGSNC • PO Box 27485 • Oakland, CA 94602-0985 Please indicate your style/color preference.

You may also purchase your tote/s (for \$15 each) at the next AAGSNC meeting.



## NARRATIVE HISTORY OF JULIA ANN CROUT

- Annette Madden

Julia Ann Crout, my great great grandmother, was born into slavery in Laurens, South Carolina, about 1833, being listed as age 47 in the 1880 census.<sup>1</sup> Nothing is recorded of her life from that inauspicious beginning until February 1860, when she was about 27 years old. There is contradictory evidence as to whether her name was Julie Ann or Julia Ann. The estate inventory of her slaveholder lists her as both July Ann and Julia.<sup>2</sup> The 1880 census and her son Morgan Crout's death certificate list her as Julian.<sup>3</sup> Her daughter Ellen Crout McDaniel's death certificate lists her as Julia Ann Thomas.<sup>4</sup> The biography of John Wesley Sexton, her daughter Lula Crout's husband, lists her as Julia.<sup>5</sup> I have chosen to use Julia Ann throughout this family history. I have not yet been able to make the connection to the Thomas surname listed on Ellen's death certificate. Perhaps this is a later marriage, although no evidence has been found to support that supposition.

Julia Ann's slaveholder was James Henderson Irby, a prominent Laurens lawyer and politician. He died in February 1860 at which time his estate was inventoried. In that document, Julia Ann was listed with her children John and Corry, along with about 200 other slaves.<sup>6</sup> According to Irby's inventory, Julia Ann and her children were retained from the estate by his widow, Henrietta. Five years later in 1865 at the end of the Civil War, they would have been emancipated along with all other slaves in the country. From 1865 to 1877 was the period of Reconstruction. Federal troops occupied the South and enforced to a greater or lesser extent the laws which were enacted to protect the newly freed slaves.

Although not found in the 1870 census, Julia Ann was listed in the 1880 census along with children Lee, Ellen, Morgan, Walter, Florence, Clarissa, John, and Louisa. They are all using the last name of Crout. The only Crout ever listed in the Laurens county US census, other than Julia Ann and her children, was Azariah. An entry in the history of the white Crout family written by Charles Nichols, *The Crout Family of South Carolina*, provides a vital clue to link Azariah and Julia Ann: "Later he surfaced in Laurens County as A.M. Crout and had children by a black woman (Juliana)."<sup>7</sup>

Also listed on the 1880 census in Julia Ann's household was Mary Boyd, age 64, old enough to have been Julia Ann's mother. A handwritten family tree produced by Crout cousin Kay Frances Hicks in the late 1970s lists William Irby,



One of two homes owned by Julia Ann Crout's slaveholder, Laurens, SC lawyer and politician, James Henderson Irby.

James Henderson Irby's brother, as Julia Ann's father and Mary Boyd as her mother, but no substantiating documentation has been found.

The father of the first John is not confirmed at this time either through documentation or oral history, although it is most likely Azariah Crout. It is more certain that Azariah was the father of Julia Ann's other children born during and immediately after slavery: Corrie (1857), Lee (1861), Ellen (1862), Morgan (1864), and Walter (1866).

We know much more about Azariah than we do about Julia Ann. Apparently, Azariah Crout worked for James Irby as an overseer and that is how he and Julia Ann came together. He was born in 1819 in Lexington County, South Carolina, to a family of modest means. In May 1839, at about the age of 20, Azariah married Christina Elizabeth Lybrand. She died nine months later, February 27, 1840, perhaps in childbirth.<sup>8</sup>

Azariah soon remarried to Delila Austin. He had four children with her between 1843 and 1848. In 1850, Delila died.<sup>9</sup> By 1860, the children had been farmed out to various families and Azariah was working as an overseer for the Irby family in Laurens, South Carolina. Julia Ann and Azariah's relationship seems to have terminated at the end of the Civil War. The date of Azariah's death is not known.

According to Charles Nichols, his solitary grave is located on his (Azariah's) home place in Lexington County, marked only by stones.

Oral history identifies the father of Julia Ann's last four children, Clarissa, Florence, John, and Lula, as Gus Cunningham, although all of the children used the surname Crout.<sup>10</sup>

Julia Ann and her children were farm laborers according to the 1880 census, most likely working under a sharecropping contract. As such, she and her children stood little chance of ever owning their own land, especially in the restrictive atmosphere of post-reconstruction South Carolina. Reconstruction

ended in 1877 with the withdrawal of federal troops which opened the way for Jim Crow and intimidation by the Ku Klux Klan. Many black folk were shaking the dust of South Carolina off their shoes and heading west for Texas and Arkansas. Push was provided by the worsening social conditions for blacks. Pull was provided by labor agents who roamed the South recruiting blacks to move west with tales of paradise, a land of endless sunshine and abundant crops with little toil. Considering the worsening social conditions in South Carolina, the promise of a future in Arkansas would have been irresistible to many.



## A DIFFERENT KIND OF SLAVERY

- Lisa B. Lee

*Between the Emancipation Proclamation and the beginning of World War II, millions of African-Americans were compelled into or lived under the shadow of the South's new forms of coerced labor. Under laws enacted specifically to intimidate blacks, tens of thousands were arbitrarily detained, hit with high fines and charged with the costs of their arrests. With no means to pay such debts, prisoners were sold into coal mines, lumber camps, brickyards, railroad construction crews and plantations. Others were simply seized by southern landowners and pressed into years of involuntary servitude.*

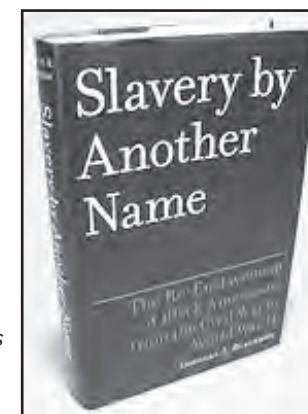
**Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II**, by Douglas A. Blackmon, the Atlanta bureau chief of the Wall Street Journal, describes the painful, often horrific treatment many of these black men and women endured during the more than 60 years this system existed in many Georgia labor camps. And although this new form of slavery existed throughout the South, Mr. Blackmon focuses on Georgia and chronicles the lives of not only the prisoners but also the men who enslaved these supposedly free men. One such owner was one-time Atlanta mayor James W. English, who operated the Chattahoochee Brick Company with almost entirely forced black labor. Millions of bricks from his brickyard were used at the turn of the 20th century to pave the sidewalks and streets of Atlanta's oldest neighborhoods. English along with other prominent white Atlanta leaders have been lionized for their contributions to the building of Atlanta, though the sacrifices made by their black employees have been virtually ignored.

Years later, a string of witnesses told a legislative committee that prisoners at the plant were fed rotting and rancid food, housed in barracks rife with insects,

driven with whips into the hottest and most-intolerable areas of the plant, and continually required to work at a constant run in the heat of the ovens.

### NOTHING SHORT OF TORTURE

It is hard for me to describe how painful it was to read the accounts of those who witnessed the barbarity of the treatment of these people, who, in many cases, had been placed in these labor camps due to trumped up charges and without the option to defend themselves in a court of law -- victims of an awful system intent on enslaving as many blacks as possible for the financial gain of powerful whites. As



though slavery never ended.

Changing employers without permission, selling cotton after sunset, bastardy and gambling are examples of the "crimes" with which these individuals were charged. In one case in Alabama in 1903, a young man was convicted of "gaming," which required a 10-day stint in the Sloss-Sheffield mine in Coalburg, AL. However, he had to serve an additional 104 days to cover the fees to the sheriff, county clerk and witnesses who appeared at his trial. In the end, though, the convict, John Clarke, died in the mine one month later, the official cause of his death, a falling rock.

*On Sundays, white men came to the Chattahoochee brickyard to buy, sell and trade black men as they had livestock and, a generation earlier, slaves on the block. "They had them stood up in a row and walked around them and judged of them like you would a mule," testified one former guard at the camp.*

*Another guard told the committee that 200 to 300 floggings were administered each month. "They were whipping all the time. It would be hard to tell how many whippings they did a day," testified Arthur W. Moore, a*

*white former employee.*

*A rare former convict who was white testified that after a black prisoner named Peter Harris said he couldn't work because of a grossly infected hand, the camp doctor carved off the affected skin tissue with a surgeon's knife and then ordered him back to work. Instead, Mr. Harris, his hand mangled and bleeding, collapsed after the procedure. The camp boss ordered him dragged into the brickyard and whipped 25 times. "If you ain't dead, I will make you dead if you don't go to work," shouted a guard. Mr. Harris was carried to a cotton field. He died lying between the rows of cotton.*

*Similar testimony emerged from camps owned by Joel Hurt, the rich Atlanta real-estate developer and investor most remembered as the visionary behind the city's earliest and most-elegant subdivisions. Mr. Hurt was also the founder of Atlanta's Trust Company Bank -- the city's other pre-eminent financial institution.*

*In 1895, Mr. Hurt bought a group of bankrupt forced-labor mines and furnaces on Lookout Mountain, near the Tennessee state line. Guards there had recently adopted for punishment of the workers the "water cure," in which water was poured into the nostrils and lungs of prisoners. (The technique, preferred because it allowed miners to "go to work right away" after punishment, became infamous in the 21st century as "water boarding.")*

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### DOCUMENTING THE LIVES OF FORCED LABORERS

Many states have both a state archive and a separate state library. In some cases, these two functions are combined into one institution, while in other states, they're split into two or more distinct entities. Some counties also have their own archives and historical societies, each which may be rich with documentation you need to explore. That said, it's important to

Continued on page 10



not quoting his words exactly but this is the essence of what he said).

There are so many other of his sermons that resonate with me and when I listen to them they help me in a way that aids me in dealing with the daily nonsense that one still must endure, especially in the workplace.

In any event, didn't mean to be so long-winded. But I certainly would recommend and encourage people to listen to Dr. King's sermons, unedited and straight from his mouth. There still are many lessons to be learned from doing so. I believe I

purchased that audio book at Marcus Books, but again that was a number of years ago. But if they no longer have it, it should still be available from other sources.

Another observation -- I do believe in that saying, "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree." If any of you have ever seen the youngest daughter Bernice speak, she has some of the same mannerisms as her Dad. I noticed that several years ago when she was at a book signing in Oakland jointly sponsored by Marcus Books and Allen Temple Baptist Church. And also, even when she's speaking, she sometimes has

the cadence of her Dad. She was only four when he died so it's not likely that she picked up the mannerisms and speech patterns from observing him.

One last comment -- I recently read in Jet that Martin King III and his wife (had not known he had gotten married in 2006 -- a number of months following his mother's death) are expecting a baby girl and they will name her Yolanda, after his sister who died last year. I am very happy for them but one of my first thoughts was Mrs. King didn't live long enough to enjoy being a grandmother.

## BIOGRAPHY OF DR. MLK, JR.

From [www.nobelprize.org](http://www.nobelprize.org)

**M**artin Luther King, Jr. (January 15, 1929-April 4, 1968) was born Michael Luther King, Jr., but later had his name changed to Martin. His grandfather began the family's long tenure as pastors of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, serving from 1914 to 1931; his father has served from then until the present, and from 1960 until his death Martin Luther acted as co-pastor. Martin Luther attended segregated public schools in Georgia, graduating from high school at the age of fifteen; he received the B. A.



of Colored People, the leading organization of its kind in the nation. He was ready, then, early in December, 1955, to accept the leadership of the first great Negro nonviolent demonstration of contemporary times in the United States, the bus boycott described by Gunnar Jahn in his presentation speech in honor of the laureate. The boycott lasted 382

degrees in 1948 from Morehouse College, a distinguished Negro institution of Atlanta from which both his father and grandfather had graduated. After three years of theological study at Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania where he was elected president of a predominantly white senior class, he was awarded the B.D. in 1951. With a fellowship won at Crozer, he enrolled in graduate studies at Boston University, completing his residence for the doctorate in 1953 and receiving the degree in 1955. In Boston he met and married Coretta Scott, a young woman of uncommon intellectual and artistic attainments. Two sons and two daughters were born into the family.

21, 1956, after the Supreme Court of the United States had declared unconstitutional the laws requiring segregation on buses, Negroes and whites rode the buses as equals. During these days of boycott, King was arrested, his home was bombed, he was subjected to personal abuse, but at the same time he emerged as a Negro leader of the first rank.

In 1957 he was elected president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization formed to provide new leadership for the now burgeoning civil rights movement. The ideals for this organization he took from Christianity; its operational techniques from Gandhi. In

the eleven-year period between 1957 and 1968, King traveled over six million miles and spoke over twenty-five hundred times, appearing wherever there was injustice, protest, and action; and meanwhile he wrote five books as well as numerous articles. In these years, he led a massive protest in Birmingham, Alabama, that caught the attention of the entire world, providing what he called a coalition of conscience. and inspiring his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail", a manifesto of the Negro revolution; he planned the drives in Alabama for the registration of Negroes as voters; he directed the peaceful march on Washington, D.C., of 250,000 people to whom he delivered his address, "I Have a Dream", he conferred with President John F. Kennedy and campaigned for President Lyndon B. Johnson; he was arrested upwards of twenty times and assaulted at least four times; he was awarded five honorary degrees; was named Man of the Year by Time magazine in 1963; and became not only the symbolic leader of American blacks but also a world figure.

At the age of thirty-five, Martin Luther King, Jr., was the youngest man to have received the Nobel Peace Prize. When notified of his selection, he announced that he would turn over the prize money of \$54,123 to the furtherance of the civil rights movement.

On the evening of April 4, 1968, while standing on the balcony of his motel room in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was to lead a protest march in sympathy with striking garbage workers of that city, he was assassinated.

An 11/19/1884 article in the New York Sun stated: "The methods that were adopted by emigrant agents were later recalled by William Pickens, an agent representing a planter in the Mississippi River valley of Arkansas persuaded the elder Pickens to sign a contract to move his entire family to that state.

*The agent said that Arkansas was a tropical country of soft and balmy air, where cocoanuts, oranges, lemons and bananas grew. Ordinary things like corn and cotton, with little cultivation, grew an enormous yield. On the 15th of January, 1888, the agent made all the arrangements, purchased tickets, and we boarded the train in Seneca, S.C., bound toward Atlanta, GA. Our route lay through Birmingham and Memphis and at each change of trains there seemed to be some representative of the scheme to see us properly forwarded, like so much freight billed for we knew not where."*

An excerpt from South Carolina Negroes 1877-1900 states, "Large farmers in the West and the major railroads maintained regular agents whose job it was to entice emigrants from the Southeast, and the railroads had special emigrant rates. Since federal aid was not forthcoming, Negro emigrants, like the latter-day Joads of Oklahoma, were at the mercy of labor and railroad agents and their propaganda of better conditions and higher wages in the West. At the end of 1881 the emigrant rate from Greenville to Little Rock was \$22.50....most of them going to Arkansas, although some of them went to Memphis and others to Texas."<sup>11</sup>

Although it must have been a difficult decision, in about 1883 Julia Ann and her younger children—Lee, Morgan, Walter, Florence, Clarissa, John, and Lula—bid farewell to her married daughters, Ellen and Corrie. The departure must have been filled with tears for they could not have known if they would ever see each other again.

According to one version of oral family lore, the eight travelers went by train, heading for the town of Conway in Faulkner County, Arkansas. Another oral

version says that they came in a wagon train, taking six months to make the journey. It would not have taken Julia Ann's family long to realize that the labor agent's claims of endless sunshine and easy crops were lies, but Lee, Morgan, and Walter were not deterred. They married, had children, and Lee and Morgan were eventually able to realize the dream of owning their own land. Walter died in 1891.

Perhaps it was homesickness, perhaps it was disillusionment. Whatever the reason, "Julia Ann came to Arkansas, didn't like



Great grandparents of Annette Madden: Robert Madden and Clarissa "Classy" Crout

Ark. And returned to South Carolina, taking John, Lula and Clarissa (maybe Florence)", according to a 1977 letter written by Julia Ann's granddaughter, Martha Madden Pitts. Julia Ann never left Laurens again. She died and is buried there at New Grove Baptist Church.

The move of Lee, Walter, Morgan and Clarissa to Arkansas was the beginning of a separation which is only now being overcome. Her descendants now live all over the United States, from California to New York and from Michigan to Texas. Many are still in Laurens, South Carolina.

## ENDNOTES

1. Julian Crout household, 1880 U.S. census, Laurens County, South Carolina, E.D. 99, Sheet 42C, line 26-35.
2. James H. Irby inventory, Laurens County probate, FHL film no. 1029306, SC Laurens inventories, appraisals, and sales.
3. Shug Crout, death certificate register no. 1008 (1924), Oklahoma State Board of Health, Tulsa. Shug was Morgan's nickname and he used it on all documents I have been able to locate thus far.
4. Ellen Crout McDaniel, death certificate file no. 2199 (1932), South Carolina State Board of Health, Laurens.
5. A.B. Caldwell, History of the American Negro, S.C. Edition, Vol. III, (Atlanta Georgia: A.B. Caldwell Publishing Co., 1919), 291-293.
6. James H. Irby inventory, Laurens County probate. Julia Ann apparently had two children named John. The first John is listed on this inventory and thus was born before 1860. The second is listed on the 1880 Laurens county US census with Julia Ann and was born in 1873.
7. Charles M. Nichols, The Crout Family of South Carolina, (Saline, Michigan: McNaughton & Gunn, Inc., 1994), 28.
8. Ibid, 34.
9. Ibid. 34.
10. Only one Gus Cunningham has been identified to date and he was too young to have fathered Julia Ann's children. Further research is required.
11. Tindall, George Brown. South Carolina Negroes: 1877-1900. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1952

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## Memories of MLK

person who loved to laugh at the antics of the group clown.

I said all of that to give you a little background on how I felt when I heard of his assassination. I was working in Los Angeles as a County Social Worker. At first I could not believe it and just felt numb. I went home and my neighborhood friend came over and we cried together. I was devastated and we were all in front of the TV for as long as they showed anything about it.

Clyde and I had been following his activities closely, talked with him on the phone on one of his Los Angeles visits and told him then that we had named our new born son after him. We heard him speak at Holman Methodist church. I marvel now that I even knew him and cherish the memories I have.

**DERA WILLIAMS** - I was a senior in high school and I don't remember much about where I was at the exact moment I heard or what I was doing but I remember riding the bus home from Skyline High School and getting off the bus and walking to my house in a fog. It was surreal, like an out of body experience.

As a child raised in Oakland, I had very little experience with racism. It was a year of change, 1968. I was noticing my little world crumbling; I was getting used to calling myself black and not Negro as the militant guy I liked insisted. I watched the Black Panthers from a distance trying to figure out their agenda and wondering why they were so angry. I was beginning to see the subtle racism at Skyline. A story here -- the day of my senior picnic, I wasn't feeling good but not wanting to miss it I went to school anyway. Shortly after I arrived I decided I would not go because we had to take a long bus ride and, with my motion sickness, that would be all I needed. I went to the nurse's office to get an excuse to go home. I saw several kids, all white, in there looking like they were on their death bed. I figured they all had the same bug as I did. Dumb me. The nurse started asking me questions after I lost my breakfast.

"What did you have for breakfast?, she asked."

"Toast, boiled egg, orange juice, the same thing I have every morning."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I'm sure." I replied.

"Are you SURE? You didn't have any thing else to drink."

"No, just juice."

She asked me again and when it occurred to me that she thought I had been drinking, I was mortified and burst out crying. She called my mother who left work and picked me up. As soon as I got in the car, I told her that woman had accused me of drinking, just because all those white kids who were in the nurse's office were drunk. My mother said the nurse knew she had upset me and she was sorry. I wanted Mom to turn the car around and go back and tell that woman off, I was so hurt, but of course she would not. She said something like that "would teach her not to judge people." A couple months later, after King was assassinated, Robert King was gunned down and my anger at white folks was complete. That summer the family took the scenic route to Arkansas and went through Salt Lake City. The family went to the Mormon Temple but I refused to go and stayed in the hotel room once I heard their stance on blacks in their church.

**ELECTRA PRICE** - I was living in Oakland and my teenage daughters were attending Oakland Public Schools. The students were dismissed from class when the news came. Panicked kids were in the streets, not certain where to go and what to do. About 15 ended up in my living room, it was an interracial group of friends - they wanted to talk about it, they want to understand, they wanted to know what to do. I first had them to contact their parents to let them know where they were and that I would keep them inside until they were picked up by an adult. Then the dialogue started, I wish I had taped it. I think it helped them. There were tears, anger, frustration. They vowed to stick together and try to "make things better at the school" - and wanted to get together often and get more kids involved. The school set up a program for this purpose. Food was prepared and served. They asked their parents for permission to stay later and it

developed into a group of teens and some parents sharing their thoughts, fears and frustrations

**NORMA PERNELL** - I was working in San Francisco. I remember thinking, how awful that someone could hate that much. I wasn't involved in any of the aftermath. I remember thinking that it was sad that when our people decide to riot (even with good reason), they tear up the neighborhood where they live.

**SHARON NICHOLS** - I was in my last year of junior college in Vallejo, California. I was driving my mom's car on the way to my part-time job with the school district. I was going to Bishop College in Dallas, Texas that summer and was working to help pay my tuition. When I heard the news, I remember feeling that I was dreaming. I didn't go to work but drove to my mom's job where we just held each other and cried.

I remember feeling confused, sad, outraged (I wanted to hurt somebody), defeated, depressed, and, to some degree, hopeless. Marches and meetings happened in my hometown, but I remember watching the riots on TV and experiencing some vicarious pleasure and release as the cities went up in flames.

**M. HOWARD EDWARDS** - I was living in the Haight in San Francisco, working for the General Services Administration at 49 Fourth Street.

It was a scary time, with the anti-war riots, the Viet Nam War, our struggle for equality, and all the other stuff going on. It felt like the end times. We seemed pretty isolated from the explosive aftermath, but I found it expedient to buy a rifle, I believe, at the White Front Discount Store.

As an aside, I found it remarkable that none of MLK's children married nor had children.

**JACKIE STEWART** - 40 years, I recall as if it was yesterday. I was working in Inglewood California, North American Aviation Executive Office mail room. Only 14 blacks worked in the building with a staff of around 200. When the news came that Dr. King had been assassinated all 14 gather in the mail room in the attempt to

console each other. Our emotions were moods of sadness to anger. It had been two years prior our community had experienced the Watts Riot and there was still tension in certain areas of Los Angeles. I was living at the time on Towne Street one block west of Central Ave. in Los Angeles. As a single parent all I could think of were my children and how I needed to be with them. I left work early heart broken. Dr. King was like a brother to most of us his age.

**CAROLE NEAL** - I was attending City College of San Francisco and working part time at the phone company (Pacific Telephone & Telegraph, PT&T) as a Directory Assistance Operator. I was still living at home and I remember getting home from work that evening and finding my father, sitting in his usual place at the kitchen table listening to the radio. He was kind of slumped forward and looking so downhearted and sad.

My father, and many others especially in his generation really looked up to Dr. King and saw him as the "chosen one" to lead our people out of the hopelessness and despair brought about by the unfair and inequitable conditions Black people had faced and still faced. That is when I learned about Dr. King's death.



Image courtesy of [http://www.writespirit.net/inspirational\\_talks/political/martin\\_luther\\_king\\_talks/martin-luther-king2.jpg](http://www.writespirit.net/inspirational_talks/political/martin_luther_king_talks/martin-luther-king2.jpg)

I just have to make this aside because it comes to mind as I think back and it reminds me of something Dick Gregory said -- that this country treated German POWs better than it did its own returning black (WWII) soldiers. My father enlisted and served during World War II and was placed in harm's way. At the time of his retirement from work, we planned a surprise celebration and in a round about way prior to the celebration, I got him to talking about his military experience. One thing I always remember is his saying how their landing in Oran, Africa was delayed because of the German U-boats in the area. But after his discharge he returned to face discrimination and racial inequities even in supposedly and

so-called "enlightened" San Francisco. Of course, the general population and practices were not what one would consider enlightened, at least not at that time (the late 1940s and 1950s). Daddy was a carpenter by trade. He was not able to join the local carpenter's union in San Francisco, because they would not accept Blacks. He had to drive all the way over to Oakland to join Local #36. He remained a member of that local until his death. In the 1950s he was employed by Roy Nelson, General Contractor who built many of the commercial buildings on the Peninsula. Mr. Nelson was going to promote my father to Foreman but some of the white employees go wind of it and began acting up -- they did not want to take direction from a Black man, no matter if he was qualified (and humble and unassuming). So Mr. Nelson apologetically let my father know he could not promote him -- and it

had nothing to do with whether or not he was qualified. It was a decision brought about solely by race. Daddy, being the proverbial Good Samaritan that he was, did not raise a fuss. But look at the residual effects -- he

was denied an opportunity to earn a better salary to provide for his growing family and to better his station in life. So when some people nowadays still want to holler "reverse discrimination" or say they have not benefited from any institutional privilege, I strongly beg to differ; I have another perspective I would ask them to consider.

Anyway, back to my response to Melvyn's e-mail. I just remember sadness and despair. Also, it was around that time that there were "riots" in the Hunters Point area of San Francisco. I remember being at City College and the mother of my across-the-street neighbor (they were Caucasian) driving to school to pick up her daughter

to bring her home and she offered me a ride home. But I declined. Probably because I didn't think it was a good idea, given what was going on with the "riots."

It was shortly after Dr. King's death that I bought a number of LPs (at the Woolworth's on Market Street in downtown San Francisco) of Dr. King's sermons and speeches. Motown issued a number of them. To this day, I still have those LPs and one of them includes Nina Simone's song with the words, "the king of kings is dead." That song gets to me still, every time I hear it. I have seen the funeral coverage on TV but I cannot say with certainty if I saw it at the time it happened or if I've viewed it in later years through rebroadcasts or on videotape or DVD.

By the way, a few years ago, many of Dr. King's sermons (originals in his own voice and unedited) were issued in audio book form and each comes with an introduction by someone who knew and/or worked alongside Dr. King. They bear listening to. And it never ceases to amaze me that one could easily feel he is speaking of situations today. One of my favorites is his sermon, The Drum Major Instinct. And I mean the entire sermon, not the little clip that most people are only familiar with -- that portion which is the ending of the sermon that was played at his funeral; i.e., "if any of you are around when I have to meet my day, I don't want a long funeral. And if you get somebody to deliver the eulogy, tell 'em not to talk too long. ..." I'm talking about the whole sermon where he explains what the drum major instinct is and how it can be a good thing but that it often, unfortunately, is used for bad or evil -- that need to be out front of the parade, that need to be first, that need to think you are the best, etc, etc. He went on to say there is nothing wrong with it; that a newborn baby's first cry is a cry for attention; and desire to be "first." But if you're going to be out there in front, be there for good -- be a drum major for justice! And he said it is not something only among individuals; it is also among nations: I must be first, I must be the greatest; I must reign. He went on to say I am sorry to say that my country is the most guilty of this perverted use of the drum major instinct. (Note: I am sure I am