



from the **BAOBAB TREE**

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

ALL ROADS LEAD TO AFRIGENEAS!!

For black genealogy, the finest website on the planet, without a doubt, is **AfriGeneas.com!**

There is so much there to see, and we show you where to find it, how to use it, and how to share the data you already have. Story on Page 8

AfriGeneas
African Ancestored Genealogy

from Africa
to the Americas

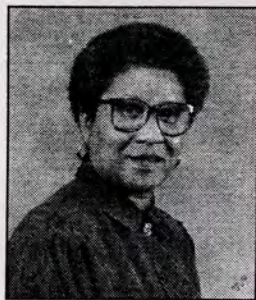
**1st Annual
Writing Contest!
See Page 3**

- AfriGeneas.com - An in-depth guide to what's there, where to find it, how to get help, how to share your data, and much, much more!
- Society News
- Member Spotlight: Dena Jordan vs The Wall Street Journal
- Putting Genealogy Into Historical Context



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

- Ms. MELVYN L. GILLETTE



Have you searched out records beyond Federal census records and the BMD (birth/marriage/death) trio? If your answer is 'no,' you may be missing out on the entertainment value of other records. Oh, yes. You might also miss documenting an ancestor. County records are key to many

genealogical proofs. Have you checked to see if court cases have been indexed in your county? The most circumspect ancestor you have may still appear in court documents. These records include witnesses as well as the plaintiff and/or defendants and you may find a relative as a witness. And it might be someone for whom you find few other records.

For the focus of my research, Clark County, Arkansas, the local Historical society has indexed court cases and has the indices posted on their web site. Before making a research trip back home, I extracted names of interest and the case numbers. When I got to the University library where these records are housed, I only needed to give them case numbers and they pulled the files for me. Some of what I found:

August 1886 – **Adolph Williams**, husband of my great grand aunt, is one of four defendants in a case who "did willfully and unlawfully bet money on a certain game played with cards called seven up against the peace and dignity of the State of Arkansas." They were additionally charged with betting money on other games "called polker (sic) and draw polker (sic)and certain other game called eucré."

August 1892 - The plaintiff in the following case is my paternal grandmother's first father-in-law: "I, **Perry Stoutenburg**, do solemnly swear that in Clark County Arkansas on the 19th day of August 1892, **Mr. Anderson** and Mrs. Anderson"... "did then and there unlawfully assault and beat him with a stick" Witnesses include his wife, Lizzie, grandparent, along with Perry, one of my cousins from another line.

February 1899 - Bench warrant for my step-grandma's brother, **Lace Griffith**, for carrying a pistol. In the same case, my grandfather's brother, **Richard Gillett**, was subpoenaed as a witness for the defendant. Interesting. Step-grandma was wife #4. Grandpa was married to wife #1 at the time of this case.

January 1902 - My great-grandmother's sister, **Charlotte Fleming**, turns up on a subpoena to be a witness in the case of one **Claudie Hunter**, who is to be tried for assault with intent to kill. Her husband, **Milton Fleming**, is listed on the bail bond, apparently bailing out said Claudie. I also have oral history from several sources that Milton, a deacon in the Baptist church I later attended, was shot through the window of the church during services. Nobody told me WHY Milton was shot. Darn, they were too young to know the details, but let's just say "Uncle was a rolling stone."

August 1903 – My grandfather's brother, **Eli Daniel**, indicted for Sabbath Breaking – ".... said day being Sunday, was found unlawfully laboring and performing other services, the same not then and there being of household duty, of daily necessity, comfort or charity."

There are matching indictments against brothers **Claude** and **Oliver Browning** (related to me but I have yet to

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This entire document was created on an Apple Titanium 867 using Adobe InDesign, Photoshop, and Excel. Thanks to Kay Smith for proofreading, Paul Lee for copyediting, and to Valencia K. Nelson for AfriGeneas content editing. -- Ed.



AAGSNC NEWS

1st Annual AAGSNC Writing Contest!!

You've done the research, now it's time to tell your story. AAGSNC members are invited to compete for cash prizes and national recognition by submitting original family histories. The **deadline is November 1, 2003** and details follow:

1st Prize	\$250
2nd Prize	\$100
3rd Prize	\$ 50

In addition, all three winning entries will be published in the December edition of *From the Baobab Tree*.

REQUIREMENTS:

1) Your genealogy must cover at least three generations but not more than five. Include the progenitor and spouse as the first generation, all of their children with spouse(s) as the second generation, and all grandchildren with their spouse(s) as the third generation. It is not necessary to list the children in the fourth and fifth generations.

2) Your manuscript must be between 4,000 - 15,000 words.

3) The family history must include at least one person of African descent but the family does not have to have lived in the United States. The writer may be included as a member of the third generation, but not earlier.

ORIGINALITY:

Your genealogy must be your own work based primarily on research you have conducted yourself. Contributions by family members are expected, but these sources must be cited.

WHO MAY PARTICIPATE:

You must be a current AAGSNC member in order to compete. AAGSNC Officers and Board Members are ineligible for prizes.

PEDIGREE CHART:

You must submit a pedigree chart that corresponds to your submission, following standard genealogical naming and numbering conventions.

SUBMISSION:

Your manuscript must be typed or printed and must be Postal mailed to: AAGSNC - Writing Contest
PO Box 27485
Oakland, CA 94602-0985

eMail submissions are not allowed. Please ensure that your name, address, and phone number appear on the title page. Submissions must be postmarked no later than November 1, 2003. We will confirm receipt of all submissions. You may submit multiple entries.



2002 AAGSNC President **Juliet Crutchfield** (2nd from right) and 2003 AAGSNC President **Melvyn Gillette** (far right) at a recent event at the Oakland Family History Center.

Newest AAGSNC Vice President Has Society Participate in Oakland PortFest 2003.

Once a year, the Port of Oakland (CA) throws a party to remind everyone of just how beautiful the Oakland Estuary waterfront is - and how lucky we all are to enjoy it.

This free one-day festival began in 1935 when it was first called Port Day. Now known as Portfest, the 2003 celebration was held Saturday, June 7th in Jack London Square with entertainment and activities for the entire family.

The AAGSNC participated in the festivities by hosting an informational booth to not only raise awareness about our Society, but to hand out free

information about getting started with black genealogy, sell copies of **Tony Burroughs'** book, *Black Roots*, and convince some of the Portfest visitors to join the AAGSNC.

Our new 3rd Vice-President, **Lenora Gobert**, is also the Fund Raising Chair and came up with this grand idea shortly after she was appointed in May.

Dozens of people stopped by the AAGSNC booth and learned about the joys of genealogy from the AAGSNC members who volunteered to work the booth. If Ms. Gobert has her way, this is just the first of many community activities in which the AAGSNC will participate.

Members' Birthdays

JUNE

- Patricia Bayonne-Johnson
- Charlesetta Braggs-Ford
- 2 Ira Lott
- 12 Sarah Robinson
- 17 Horace House
- 17 Ronald Nelson
- 21 Robert Goins
- 24 Katherine Allman
- 29 Lilafay Hunter

JULY

- Donna Hurts
- 16 Eric Thomas
- 17 Mary Williams
- 19 Jeanette Braxton-Secret
- 20 Leola Williams
- 25 Emma Simms
- 26 Lisa Daniels
- 29 Ella Robinson
- 31 Charles Robinson

AUGUST

- Dorris Caradine
- George Geder
- 4 Leon Hackett
- 4 Paul Lee
- 11 Robert Bragg
- 12 Leamond Anthony Allen
- 23 Herbert Kitchen
- 25 David Simmons
- 27 Madison Harvey, Jr.
- 29 Rhonda Rachel Harris
- 30 Thelma Crump



DENA JORDAN VS THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

On Tuesday, April 29, 2003, the *Wall Street Journal* published an article titled, "Welcome to the new generation of family reunions — online," by Elizabeth Schatz in which she rated several online genealogy websites. As an afterthought, AfriGeneas.com was included, and rated as compared to other sites like Genealogy.com, Ancestry.com, and several others. Ms. Schatz rated the sites in terms of ease of use, cost, plusses ("family jewel"), shortcomings ("out on a limb"), and a comment. In her review, Ms. Schatz could find nothing good to say about AfriGeneas, which offended me. So I posted her article up on the AfriGeneas Main Forum, which touched off a firestorm of angry letters-to-the-Editor. Of all the letters received by the WSJ, they chose to print only one, that of our very own AAGSNC member, Dena Jordan.

Dena quite eloquently addressed many of the erroneous statements made by Ms. Schatz and attempted to set the record straight about black genealogy, in general. As a result, I decided to dedicate this edition of *From the Baobab Tree* to AfriGeneas.com, a phenomenal website dedicated

to African ancestry genealogy, and those wonderful people behind the scenes that have made it what it is today — the premier website for African American/Black Canadian/African Caribbean/African Native genealogy.

Without the men and women who take so much time, care, and dedication to this site, doing black genealogy would be tremendously more difficult. The AfriGeneas community has been invaluable to countless numbers of genealogists around the globe and I'd like to thank them all — Valencia King Nelson, Angela Walton-Raji, Alva Griffith, Eric Thomas, Garland R. Joseph, B. J. Smothers, George Geder, Edith McRae, Doll Hargrove, Denise Oliver-Velez, David E. Patterson, K. Wyer Lane, Sandra Freeborn, Theresa Cherry, Patricia Morton, and Sedalis Broome.

And a special thank you to those who have joined the ranks of the ancestors: Clint Hayes II, Anita Willis, and Dee Parmer Woodtor. Thank you, thank you, thank you.
— Ed.



Dena Jordan was born and raised in Pittsburg, CA, where she still resides with her husband James and daughter Letricee. She still considers herself a beginner in genealogy and has been doing it for a little over 3 years. Dena's research is of Bradley, Arkansas where her father was born and raised as were her father's parents and grand parents. Her goal is to learn as much about the everyday life of her ancestors in Arkansas and, hopefully, to be able to help future Bradley County researchers to find their ancestors. She is now completing her first short story based on her research called, "One Root, Many Branches and a Thousand Green Leaves." Her Arkansas surnames are Green, Childs, Davis, Moman, Belin, Burrell, Harmon, Gill and Calbert.

Ms. Jordan may be contacted at: juneirene@aol.com

Wall Street Journal, Friday May 16, 2003, page A9

BREAKING "WALL" OF 1870 IN BLACK GENEALOGY SEARCH

The Cranky Consumer article "Digging for Your Family Roots in Cyberspace" (April 29) judged Afrigeneas.com by the wrong standard in saying that your test "confirmed our suspicion that there's very little information available to people of color whose parents or grandparents weren't born in the U.S. or Western Europe."

The mission of Afrigeneas (<http://afrigeneas.com/welcome.html>) is to provide resources, leadership and

advocacy for the mutual development of a system of genealogy for researching African-related ancestry. Our approach, among other things, is to collect slave data from descendants of slaveholding families as well as from public and private sources.

Keeping in mind that African Americans weren't documents on paper as "persons" until 1870, unless mentioned in their slaveholder's wills or their personal papers, researching one's African-American ancestors is not very easy. Could you just imagine researching back to 1870, then all of a sudden it seems as though your family had just fallen off the face of the earth? That's what a majority of the African-

American researchers have faced, but with the help of Afrigeneas they can knock that 1870 brick wall down.

As a faithful Afrigeneas member, I can tell you that you won't always find what you want by just typing in a search of your surname. It may take years and, in a majority of cases, a trip to the ancestral home. So the next time you visit Afrigeneas, don't just type in a name, type in a query. The family here is always willing to lead you in the direction of your ancestors.

- Dena Jordan
Pittsburg, Calif.

President's Message, cont'd ...

determine how) on the same day, also for Sabbath breaking. Since I know exactly where their "home place" was in relation to my Daniel family's "home place," I picture the three of them plowing the field together, and along comes the sheriff and arrests them for Sabbath Breaking. This shows how seriously keeping the Sabbath was taken in those days.

August 1909 – H. W. Wheeler, husband of a grandaunt, being sued in civil court. His hogs were said to "ruin and destroy, and damage said crop (value \$70)..... and did kill and destroy a valuable dog (\$25.00) and plaintiff expended \$5.00 trying to drive said hogs out of his said crop."

October 1913 – Adoption case for my aunt. Her mother (grandpa's 2nd wife) died when she was three weeks old. I was always told that she was "raised by her uncle," but never knew that she was officially adopted, at age 8, until I found this file.

August 1914 – Grandaunt's husband, Lubie Williams, called as a witness for the plaintiff in the case of a suit against a railroad company for the loss of six turkeys allegedly killed by a train.

1914 - My paternal grandmother (grandpa's 3rd wife) died in 1914, leaving \$125 to her eight children as beneficiaries of her life insurance policy. My grandfather was appointed guardian of her minor children, four of whom were his, and four others who were his stepchildren. The stepchildren went to live with relatives (oral history says this was part of the deal with wife #4 – see **Lace Griffith** above) and I have copies of hand written receipts for support payments made for these children from the proceeds. Example: "\$2.50, February 23, 1916 Received of D. C. Gillett, Two and .50 dollars. By **Perry Stoutenburgh**, for **Lula Mae Stoutenburgh**." The file also included the Letter of Guardianship, Guardian's bond (listing all the children and their ages), certificate of settlement and, finally, the Guardian's report of how the money had been expended.

Don't overlook land records even if you have no indication of land ownership. Deeds of Mortgage, Deeds of Trust, Deeds of Conveyance, were loans, often against a crop to be grown on someone else's land.

January 1872 - Deed of Mortgage - my great-grandfather, **Daniel C. Gillett**,

borrowed \$152.45 at 10%, from **Fred M. Green & Co.**, with collateral as "Eleven Hundred pounds of ?? cotton making two bales out of the cotton to be grown and raised in the year eighteen hundred and seventy-two, in Clark County Arkansas and upon his own farm." By March, 1872 he was back borrowing from the same company, this time collateral listed as "One gray hose (sic) about seven years old, medium size the other a black pony horse about seven years old." The amount borrowed this time was \$269.05 at 10%.

February 1877 – Deed of Conveyance - Another great-grandfather, **John J. Atkinson** borrowed \$15 "in the way of goods, supplies, cash and not to exceed the sum of two hundred dollars" against "all of the cotton & corn which said party shall make" to be planted "on the **McLure Richwoods Farm**." McLure was a large landowner in the area, and not a party to the deed.

Take a look at those other records. Happy Hunting!

Melvyn L. Gillette
Melvyn L. Gillette
AAGSNC President - 2003

Cranky Consumer / By Elizabeth Schatz

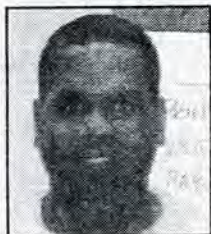
Digging for Your Family Roots in Cyberspace

COMPANY/PRICE	EASE OF USE	OUT ON A LIMB	FAMILY JEWEL	COMMENT
Ancestry.com Super Subscription: \$189. Yearly packages start at \$79.95.	A dizzying display of records, from WWI draft documents to cemetery inscriptions. A tutorial gives tips on searching.	Site bombarded us with offers like magazine subscriptions, but promised it is removing ads for subscribers.	We viewed a scan of a newspaper article from 1915 describing our great-grandparents wedding.	✓ Top Choice. Building a family tree is tedious, but interactive; it automatically links to other trees with the same names.
Genealogy.com We spent \$66.95 for five databases. Yearly memberships: from \$69 to \$149.	Matches of search results were rated by stars; most of ours were only one star.	A surname search in Scottish records got too many hits—we needed first names.	A 1910 census record listing our great-grandfather, his birthplace and his work: "bottler."	Articles on hot topics and search tips were great. Our favorite: "Get Nosy with Aunt Rosy."
Afrigenes.com and Ccharity.com Free	Ccharity.com took us to Genealogy.com. Afrigenes.com gave census records from the 1800s.	Our last name turned up zero records. The company did not return requests for comment.	Ccharity.com linked us to two other sites; we e-mailed a woman with our name, but no luck.	Afrigenes.com offers a "Kidz Korner," and a "Lunch Bunch," where users log on midday to chat.
Onegreatfamily.com We got a free 7-day trial; memberships go from \$14.95 a month to \$74.95 a year.	Download a Web browser to input your family-tree information. Result: a stylish tree and branch formation.	Research is limited to the trees of other members; going outside the family for extra databases can cost money.	We discovered an alphabetical list of names by accident; ours wasn't listed, but it made searching easier.	Customer service is on the ball—they responded to our e-mail about privacy and pricing in five minutes.
Jewishgen.org Free	Family Finder page allows you to search names phonetically. Relatives listed with e-mails.	We found a family tree compiled by relatives—sadly, our first name was listed as "??."	Stories about our great-grandfather say that he remarried just before his death.	Patience is a virtue. Myriad links, from the Family Tree of the Jewish People to Genealogy by Genetics.



PUTTING GENEALOGY INTO HISTORICAL CONTEXT

... BY ROBERT GOINS



Robert Henry Jerome Goins was born in Columbus, OH and currently resides in San Francisco, CA. He has been a member of the AAGSNC Board of Directors since 2003 and has been doing genealogy about two years. He loves history and grew up listening to his aunts talking about his namesake and grandfather, so he decided to go a bit farther and further with their stories. He's added some depth to the oral history and has published all that he's found on his own website, www.interlync.com/rgoins/goinsfamilyrecords.html.

His family comes from Albemarle, Hardy and Lee Counties in Virginia; Belmont, Knox, Franklin Counties in Ohio; Forsyth and Stokes Counties, North Carolina. Mr. Goins has a B.A. from San Francisco State University, and received a certificate of recognition from the State of California Legislature in 2002.

Mr. Goins may be reached at: goins@aagsnc.org

The year 1800 was a fateful one for American slavery. It was in that year that **John Brown** was born, **Gabriel Prosser's** revolt occurred, **Denmark Vesey** purchased the ownership of his own body and, on Oct. 2, Nat Turner was born.¹

The portentous events connected with three of these men — Prosser's August 1800 revolt, Vesey's consciousness of the 1808 slave rebellion in Haiti and Turner's insurrection, which occurred nearly 30 years to the day after Gabriel's revolt — helped set in motion a series of reactions in the Commonwealth of Virginia that have great relevance to black genealogical and family-history research today.

These reactions, designed to address the fears of white Virginians, compelled the government to create a select committee to legislate the establishment of "colonization boards" to "repatriate" the descendants of African survivors of the perilous Middle Passage and those who were the products of the often coerced relations between the enslaver and the enslaved to the west coast of the Africa.²

Even though a good number of Virginia's black people were already bound by the institution of slavery or some form of servitude, the commonwealth saw fit to authorize a

count of "free blacks and mulattoes" within its boundaries. According to **Louis P. Masur**, this select committee even considered "acquiring the state of Texas (or what then was Texas) and making it an independent black state."³

In case this left any room for movement by "free blacks and mulattoes" in their supervised freedom, Virginia, or the select committee, turned the screws just a bit tighter.⁴

Specifically, a "police bill" was passed that further eroded their rights, "denying them trial by jury and allowing for their sale and transportation if convicted of a crime," according to Masur⁵

In **Ervin L. Jordan, Jr.**'s helpful essay, "A Just and True Account": Two 1833 Parish Censuses of Albemarle County Free Blacks," he states that "in accordance with the act of the state legislature, the Albemarle County Court ordered the commissioners to report a complete list of all Free negroes [*sic*] or mulattoes in their respective districts."⁶

Albemarle County was just one of the Virginia counties to follow this decree. It was neither the first nor last time that this happened in Virginia, or the United States.

The implications of this act are far-reaching because it provided an

"unofficial" census of "free blacks and mulattoes" in Virginia. Despite the *de facto* mandate that federal census schedules only enumerated white males, and the fact that the objective of this special census was deportation, the enumeration of these persons in the early- to mid-1800s provided a better sketch of their lives compared to their white Virginian counterparts. According to Jordan, "these censuses are in several ways more detailed than the federal censuses" of 1830.⁷

In fact, Virginia's action, or reaction, to slave rebellions left a record that perhaps set the model for census taking in federal schedules. According to Jordan, the enumerators were charged with the task of "record[ing] names, gender, families, occupations, length of county residence, places of residence, if before or after the first day of March, eighteen and thirty-three."⁸

The questions asked of black and mixed-race persons in Virginia only began appearing in federal census schedules after 1850.

The 1833 document described by Jordan has many consequences for genealogical and family-history research. One of the most important is evidence regarding which "free blacks and mulattoes" stayed in Albemarle County and which left it. This allows some black genealogists

to trace their ancestors at least to that place and time.

It also illustrates black migration patterns within the United States. For example, some black and mixed-race persons who were enumerated in this Albemarle County census chose to stay home in Virginia, while on the others took, or were perhaps compelled to take, the chance on migrating to other parts of the United States after resisting the threat of systematic deportation “back” to Africa.

Perhaps the Northwest Territory was the area most likely and accessible to these persons after the War of 1812 and the passage of unwieldy Virginia laws. Indeed, individuals such as Jane West, who owned property in Albemarle County, chose to remain planted on Virginia soil, while others, such as my ancestor **Michael A. Goins**, picked up and left.⁹

According to Goins’s 1886 obituary from Belmont County, Ohio, he was born in Albemarle County about 1806. His Belmont County marriage license reports that he entered the Northwest Territory, then named Ohio, about 1835. The first census that he appears in is the 1850 Muskingum County, Ohio, enumeration, which includes his wife, Verlinda Payne Goins, and their 13 children. This schedule confirms that Goins and his wife were Virginians of color then living in Ohio.

Looking through the annals of time, this article cites only a few examples of why and how black people and people of color, whether free or under the heavy weight of slavery, remained in one locality or migrated — some leaving a documentary trace, others disappearing altogether from records in the United States. Join the search!

Footnotes

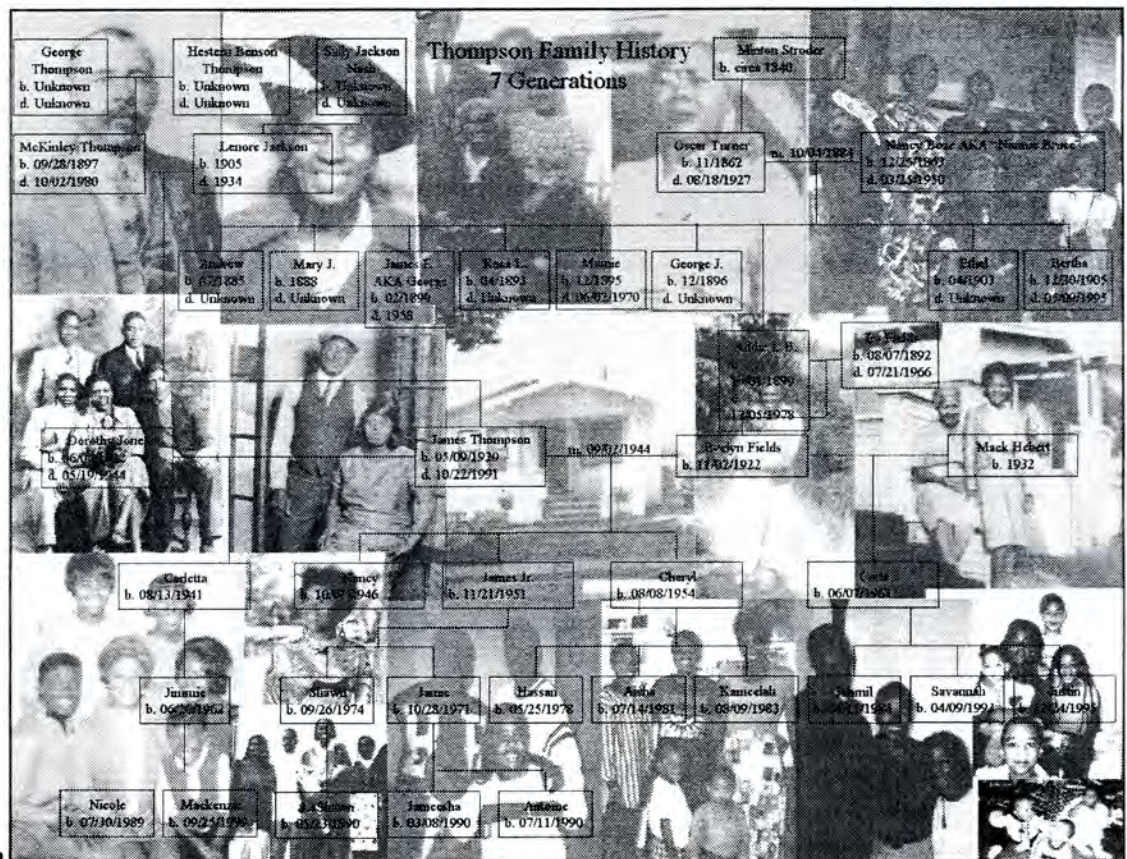
- ¹ Herbert Aptheker, “Nat Turner’s Slave Rebellion: The Event,” in Kenneth S. Greenberg, ed., *Nat Turner: A Slave Rebellion in History and Memory* (New York: Oxford UP, 2003), 45.
- ² Louis P. Masur, “Nat Turner and Sectional Crisis,” in *Ibid.*
- ³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁶ Ervin L. Jordan, Jr., “‘A Just and True Account’: Two 1833 Parish Censuses of Albemarle County Free Blacks,” *The Magazine of Albemarle County History* 53 (1995): 115.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁹ *Ibid.*

THOMPSON FAMILY PHOTO COLLAGE



Nancy Thompson is a new member of AAGSNC and began researching her genealogy after her father’s death in 1991. Inspired by the book, *Cane River*, by Lalita Tademy, Ms. Thompson created a photo collage of her family tree covering seven generations. Her family comes from Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana. The graphic design was done by Denise Rodezno.

Ms. Thompson may be reached at:
nthompson46@hotmail.com





ALL ROADS LEAD TO AFRIGENEAS

- BY LISA B. LEE

AfriGeneas.com is the premier website on the planet for black genealogy. On the next six pages, we present an in-depth guide to this massive site, and explain why it is that if you're doing black genealogy, YOU GOTTA COME THROUGH AFRIGENEAS!!

Just what is AfriGeneas?

AfriGeneas is a site devoted to African ancestry genealogy, to researching African ancestry in the Americas in particular and to genealogical research and resources in general. It is also an African ancestry research community featuring the AfriGeneas mail list, the AfriGeneas message boards, databases of genealogical information, and daily and weekly genealogy chats.

How much does it cost to join AfriGeneas?

There is absolutely no charge to belong to AfriGeneas, although charitable donations are encouraged and welcomed. The Webmaster, Moderator, Forum Managers, and other AfriGeneas contributors are strictly volunteers.

Is AfriGeneas only for experienced researchers?

Not at all. AfriGeneas has several excellent options for beginners, including: 1) the Beginner's Guide, created by Dee Parmer Woodtor, Ph. D, an online how-to guide that explains the basics of doing slave research in America, along with organization tips, etc.; 2) the Getting Started Forum, an online community where "newbies" can connect with other researchers to get help, answers to specific questions, census look-ups, share successes as well as brick walls, etc.; 3) Chats — daily and weekly chats are a way that researchers of all levels can connect on

a variety of topics in real-time.

How do the Forums work?

At AfriGeneas, there are no dumb questions! The Forums are on-line communities where anyone can post a message, question, or suggestion, knowing that there are others online who can benefit from the information being shared. Look-up requests are usually done within a matter of hours, and questions are answered by patient, knowledgeable researchers, many of whom have had the same problem in the past, and The forums are moderated by other researchers who have volunteered to manage a particular board and who have displayed expertise in the area. In addition to the Main Forum there AfriGeneas Forums for the following areas:

- African Research
- African-Native
- Books-Authors-Reviews
- Canadian Research
- Caribbean Research
- Cemeteries
- Discuss! (non-genealogical discussions)
- Free Persons of Color
- Getting Started
- Juniors
- Military Research
- Slavery
- States Research
- Writers
- World Research

That's fine if I want to chat or

talk with someone online, but what if I just want to search for information. Does AfriGeneas have any genealogical databases for black genealogy?

In the Records section of AfriGeneas there are searchable databases that cover a wide range of topics, such as census and death records, slave data collection, surnames database, state and world resources, African-Native genealogy information, cemetery and military records. The Records section also has a form where you can submit your own data for inclusion in the AfriGeneas collection.

But there's much, much more. The list of searchable databases and information housed within the AfriGeneas database is far more broad, such as the holdings of the AfriGeneas Library:

- **Quick Reference Guides**
 - "Researching in Southwest Louisiana"
 - "Hiring a Professional Genealogist"
 - "Searching the Virginia Records of the Freedman's Bureau"
- **Old Newspaper Articles**
 - "Head of Negro School Spins Old Time Tales"
 - "121 Year Old Former Slave Dies in Mississippi"
 - "Mrs. Sarah Fine at 95 Years Recalls Slavery Days"
 - "111 Year Old Former Slave To Cast First Vote"
- ... and many more
- **Special Collections**



- Inward Slave Manifests, Port of New Orleans: 1818-1860
- Louisiana Slave Database and the Louisiana Free Database: 1719-1820
- Cherokee Freedmen in Indian Territory
- Jamaican Manumissions 1820-1825
- City Directories
- Runaway Slave Ads
- School Rosters and Yearbooks
- Birth, Marriage, and Death Records
- Slave Narratives

How did AfriGeneas get started?

The AfriGeneas community started over ten years ago on a variety of Bulletin Board Systems (BBSs) and online services including America On Line (AOL). A diverse group of individuals, many separated by thousands of miles, started compiling data, managing an online mailing list, and creating the website that evolved to become AfriGeneas.com. Today, the AfriGeneas website and mailing list is hosted on a server at Mississippi State University.

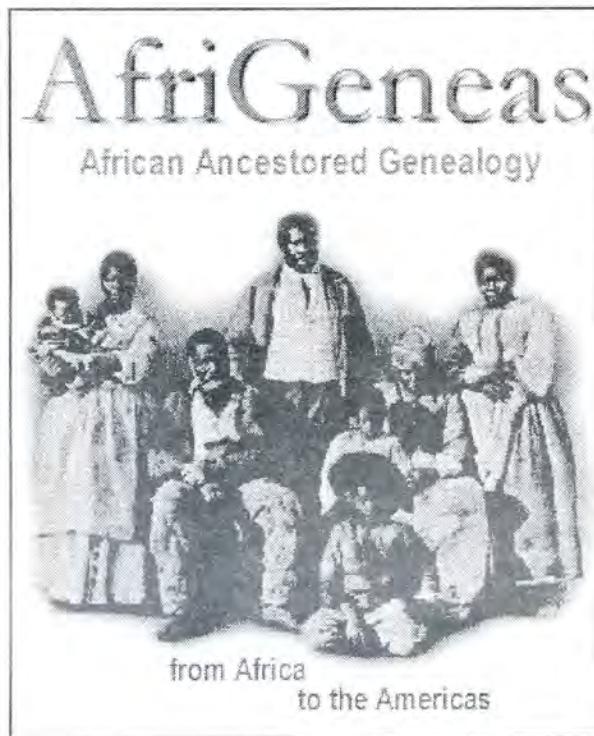
The goal of AfriGeneas is to encourage and support all African ancestored individuals and families to begin and continue researching their roots until all possible resources are exhausted and the results are published ... to find and document the last slaveholder and the first African in each family.

Other websites such as Cyndislist.com, Familysearch.com, and Ancestry.com have information about black genealogy. What makes AfriGeneas so different?

I agree that those other websites are valuable and I use them all the time, but when it comes to black genealogy, no other website holds a candle to AfriGeneas. The institution of chattel slavery makes black genealogy far different from that of any other ethnic group — slaves were property, valuable property, and in order to successfully trace an ancestor back

through generations of slavery requires a researcher to look for their family members in different ways, using different sources and research methods than those of other ethnic groups. That said, AfriGeneas strives to provide an open community where researchers can:

- Cooperate, coordinate, and combine



- their efforts with others, to the maximum extent possible.
- Collecting slave data from descendants of slaveholding families as well as from public and other private sources.
- Provide and maintain a searchable database of surnames.
- Discuss tips and topics to advance individual and group research resources through mailing lists, chats, newsletters, and the internet.
- Assist other researchers by volunteering to provide data, manage a Forum, moderate a chat, etc.
- Extract, compile, and publish all related public records with genealogical value.
- Link to other specific internet resources.

What's the best feature of AfriGeneas?

That's a tough question. There are SO many things about AfriGeneas that you won't find anywhere else and of course, everyone has his or her own favorite. I think the best part of AfriGeneas is the Forums because you can ask just about any question and know you'll get at least one good answer, usually several

answers from different researchers. Sometimes I'll post a message about my frustration with a particular family line I'm researching, needing simply to vent — and within a short period of time, I'll receive an encouraging email from a complete stranger, urging me on to try it again, and offering a different perspective to my problem. It simply amazes me at the types of responses, tips, and answers you will receive from other researchers who share your passion to tell your ancestors' stories.

Through the Forums, you can connect with relatives you didn't know you had, you can find someone willing to help you with your research by doing free census look-ups (from paid online census databases), learn about obscure genealogical stories, databases, and information, and share your own research with others.

Beginning on page 10, we present an in-depth guide to the wonders of AfriGeneas. It is our hope that this guide will help you in your research and that you will consider contributing to AfriGeneas either with a financial donation, volunteer to host an un-hosted database, or submit your own research for inclusion in the AfriGeneas website.



AFRIGENEAS.COM HOW-TO GUIDE

AfriGeneas Home Page

The AfriGeneas website is easily viewed from most browser on either a Mac or a PC (except OmniWeb on a Mac). The recently revised homepage provides you with several drop-down menus to help you navigate the site. The first menu, **HOME**, is simply a link back to the homepage.

The next menu, **EMAIL**, takes you to the free AfriGeneas email option. You can sign up for an email account on AfriGeneas, such as john@afriogeneas.net.

The third drop-down menu on the AfriGeneas homepage is **GETTING STARTED**, where you will find a great deal of information to help you if you are just getting started with black genealogy.

- **BEGINNER'S GUIDE**
www.afriogeneas.com/guide, is a 12 page interactive database which was created by the late Dee Parmer Woodtor, Ph. D. This guide covers the following topics:
- What the Internet Can Do to Help You
- What the Internet Cannot Do to Help You
- Telling the African American Family's Story
- What Will My Genealogy Project Look Like Once I'm Finished?
- What is Genealogy?
- Genealogy is a Mission: Fantastic Lives and Stories to Discover
- Essential Steps for Beginners
- Genealogy Knots for Beginners: Calling Names of Other People's Ancestors in Vain
- The Future of African American Genealogy on the Internet.
- Ready, Set, Go Off the Web.

AfriGeneas Mailing List

The AfriGeneas Mail List is a place to focus on black genealogy to whatever degree the researcher desires. This is where you can browse, post, and interact to share your genealogical research, resources, and expertise in general, and African ancestry in particular. It is a moderated and

the archives first, you'll find that your question may already have been answered.

• USING THE MAILLIST ARCHIVES

Click on the month you'd like to browse. From there, you can either view the messages by date posted (default view), or you can view them by topic (Thread Index).

To search within the archives, enter your keyword in the search box and hit your **ENTER** key. The default search will try to find your keyword **only in Subject lines, and will Stop after 10 matches**. Along with your search results, you'll have the opportunity to modify your search to find your keyword **anywhere in the messages, and to search for a greater number of results, i.e. Stop after 25, 50, 100, 200, or all matches**.

screened discussion list operated for the pleasure and enjoyment of its members. The list is free and posting to the mail list is done at least twice daily.

The Mail List Archives

www.msstate.edu/listarchives/afriogeneas is a searchable repository of postings from January 1997 through today. It is a compendium of the expertise, research, and wisdom of the AfriGeneas community. If you have a question, it's likely that if you search

• Boolean Searches

On internet search engines, the options to construct logical relationships among search terms is referred to as Boolean searching, named for British mathematician George Boole.

AND, OR, NOT are three operators used to modify your search, and you can utilize the power of these options on the AfriGeneas website. For example, if you need information about *manumission*, you simply enter

that keyword in the search box.

However, if you want information about a manumission in Virginia, you can enter *manumission AND Virginia* (the caps are not necessary), and you will receive a list of posted messages for both Virginia and West Virginia. To further limit your search, you can enter *manumissions AND Virginia NOT West*, and your search results will not include any messages involving West Virginia.

• SUBSCRIBE TO THE MAIL LIST

Simply send an email with “subscribe afrigenaeas” or “subscribe afrigenaeas-digest” in the body of an email message to: majordomo@lists.msstate.edu (majordomo is a computer program which automates the management of internet mailing lists).

To post a message directly to the Mail List Archives, send your email to: AfriGeneas@lists.msstate.edu.

There are a few tips we suggest you follow when posting to the Mail List:

- Send a message only once. The list is moderated, so there may be a delay in posting a message.
- Priority is given to messages with surnames in the subject line
- Please do not attach files to messages
- Please do not use “help” in the subject
- Put at least your name, email address and location on every post.
- * Put surnames in the subject line in ALL CAPS.

AfriGeneas Links

Here you will find hundreds of links to other genealogical websites organized by topic and geographic location, personal family websites, sites of general historical interest, and many others. New sites are added all the time, so it pays to take a look at this list for updates.

AfriGeneas Juniors

This is a great place for kids, teachers,

and students to connect, publish class projects, and show off their work.

The fourth drop-down menu on the AfriGeneas homepage is **RECORDS**

Mississippi State University
afrigenaeas@lists.msstate.edu
Monthly Archives of African Ancestored Genealogy Databases

1997 -	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
1998 -	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
1999 -	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
2000 -	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
2001 -	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
2002 -	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
2003 -	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December

Search

Has Manumissions | Has Arrivals | Afrigenaeas Archives |
For information about this page, contact afrigenaeas@lists.msstate.edu.
For information about Mississippi State University, contact msu@msstate.edu.
Last modified: 06-02-2003.
URL: <http://www.msstate.edu/archives/afrigenaeas/>
Mississippi State University is an equal opportunity institution.

where you will find the majority of member-submitted databases. Records included in this section are:

• *Census Records*

AfriGeneas members have submitted census transcriptions and extractions as well as some scanned images. Like all AfriGeneas databases, members are encouraged to contribute census information, and to make it easier to submit, you can fill out the Census Schedule Submission Form by clicking on the “fill out the form” link.

• *Death Records*

This link consists of a link to the African American Cemeteries Online website (www.prairiebluff.com/aacemetery/), and contains African American cemetery listings from 28 states. In addition, members have compiled a database of African American obituaries, death notices, and funeral programs, which can be viewed by surname or by state.

• *Library Archives*

The AfriGeneas Library is a rich collection of databases covering slave records, city directories, school rosters, birth/marriage/death records, and slave narratives.

One of the most impressive databases, the Inward Slave Manifests, is an under-utilized resource of slave information housed at the National

Archives in Washington, D. C. These rolls were painstakingly transcribed by the late Dee Parmer Woodtor, Ph. D., and Alma McClendon and are cross indexed by slave surname, ship name, and owner/shipper name.

The domestic slave trade transplanted approximately 1 million slaves from Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia,

Maryland, North Carolina, and the District of Columbia to Alabama, Mississippi, Western Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, and Arkansas. Many of these slaves were transported in coffles overland, but thousands of them were transported by coastal waterways from as far North as Boston along the Eastern Seaboard all the way to New Orleans.

Many slave owners transplanted entire plantations South, so if you are tracing ancestry in Virginia or Maryland and have successfully found a slave owner who seemingly disappears all of a sudden, consider the possibility that he migrated out of the state.

This partial transcription of the Inward Slave Manifests can be downloaded for personal use, or searched online using your browser’s FIND function.

• *Slave Data Collection*

This collection was designed to assist descendants of slaveholders and other researchers to share information they find with any slave reference in records such as birth records, advertisements, legislative acts, wills, runaway ads, diaries, tax records, slave sales, pension

records, manumissions, bible records, day books, death records, inventories, etc.

This database is searchable, can be viewed by state, and the Slave Data Form makes it easy to submit these data online.

This collection also includes an excellent response to the question,



“Is Slave Research Hopeless?” which will be useful to anyone who feels it’s nearly impossible to break through the 1865 brick wall.

• Surnames Database

A collection of queries for specific surnames in specific locations.

• State Resources

All 50 states, plus the District of Columbia, the Bahamas, Canada, Cuba, Jamaica, and several world regions have their own page, hosted by an AfriGeneas member volunteer.

• World Resources

Same as above

• African-Native Genealogy

This is a link to the African-Native American History & Genealogy webpage: (www.african-nativeamerican.com),

dedicated to research of Oklahoma’s Black Indians.

• Military Records

This is a link to the Lest We Forget website (coax.net/people/lwf), which includes databases on blacks in the Civil War (USCT), as well as links to other military databases.

• Submit Data to AfriGeneas

The Data Submission Form allows you to easily type data directly into the box or copy and paste from another document. This online form can be found at:

www.afriGeneas.com/dataform.html

The fifth drop-down menu on the AfriGeneas homepage is FORUMS, where members of the AfriGeneas community connect with one another. The Forums cover a wide range of topics:

• Mailing Lists

See page 10 for more info on this.

• Message Board Home

Provides a description of each of the Forums

• Announcements & News

A read-only board used to keep members informed of news and happenings at AfriGeneas.com. No responses are posted to this board.

• Main Forum

The main message board, used for surname queries and the discussion of general genealogical topics.

• Getting Started Forum

This is the place for those new to genealogy to ask all those questions about how to get started with their research and for veteran genealogists to share information, knowledge and tips from their personal experiences. The Guidelines for Beginners page will help you to frame your questions

in a manner that will provide you with the best results.

• Slavery Forum

This board is reserved for discussion of the Enslavement Period, slave genealogy, documents pertaining to slavery, and techniques for finding the last slaveowner and the first slave ancestor.

• Free Persons of Color Forum

For those ancestors who were born free or were emancipated prior to the Civil War.

• Writers Forum

If you are interested in writing and publishing family histories, biographies, articles, extracts, transcriptions, or any other genealogical work, this forum will be of help.

• Books-Authors-Reviews

This Book Club forum is for the exploring, sharing, and dissemination of ideas through literature relative to genealogy and the AfriGeneas community. It’s all here, from reviews to discussions.

• Juniors Forum

Kids have their own forum on AfriGeneas, and this is the place. Any topics related to genealogy and family history are allowed. Any other posts are promptly removed.

• African-Native Forum

Discussion is strictly limited to the genealogy and history of the Oklahoma Freedmen — the African citizens of the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole Nations. All other posts will be removed.

• Caribbean Research Forum

This forum covers the numerous islands of the West Indies and the countries of North, Central and

South America that border on the Caribbean.

- **African Research Forum**

Intended to explore our diversity, our history, our cultures, our accomplishments, our needs, and our resources in researching Africa.

- **Canadian Research Forum**

Following the "North Star" led us to points of freedom enroute to Canada. This board will help us learn about and connect with our ancestors who were slaves in Canada, Black Loyalists, or who settled there once slavery was abolished in Canada.

- **States Research Forum**

Each state has its own forum, and this is a place that will help us put our heads and hearts together to focus, develop, and utilize research resources in each state. Some states are still in need of a volunteer to "adopt" the state. Volunteers are always welcome and encouraged.

- **World Research Forum**

The continents of Europe, Asia, Australia and even Antarctica hold clues, keys, facts, documents, and relations in our ancestral search. This forum is the place to discuss and combine our efforts to these roots.

- **Military Research Forum**

For anyone interested in military history and records from the Revolutionary War to the present. Hosted by the Lest We Forget website (lestweforget.com), this forum is strictly limited to serious discussion of the topic. All other posts will be removed.

- **Cemeteries Forum**

This forum is affiliated with the African American Cemeteries Online

website (www.prairiebluff.com/aacemetery), and contains African American cemetery listings from 28 states. This site, like AfriGeneas, is dependent upon volunteers to submit transcriptions and other information.

useful links.

Reunion & Events Calendars

Both of the AfriGeneas calendars are intended to house events that will be of interest to the greater genealogical community. Anyone may post to these calendars and the calendars are maintained by AfriGeneas volunteers to ensure that events are posted to the proper calendar and that pertinent information is presented in a consistent manner.

Spotlight Periodically, AfriGeneas spotlights an AfriGeneas

member or group to showcase their unique talents and contributions to genealogy as a whole. The Spotlight editor accepts suggestions for genealogy heroes to be featured and you can submit your suggestion to: spotlight@aftigeneas.com.

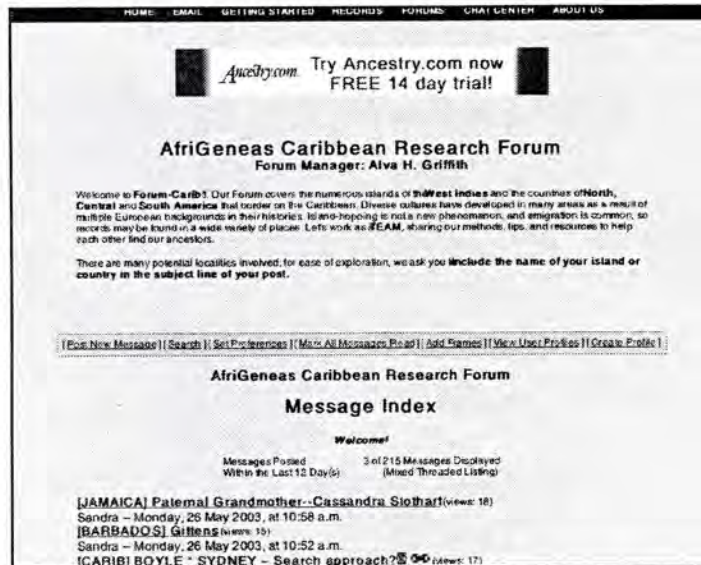
Bookstore

The AfriGeneas bookstore is tied in with Amazon.com so all book purchases made through the AfriGeneas link provide a small commission to AfriGeneas.

Awards

AfriGeneas has received a dozen awards from other genealogical and historical organizations including Ancestry.com, AOL Golden Gate Genealogy Forum, Family Tree Magazine, and Genealogyspot.com

No matter where you begin your search, eventually you'll find your way to AfriGeneas, and you'll be glad you did. Happy Hunting!!



- **Discuss! Forum**

For the posting of any non-genealogical topic of interest to AfriGeneas members. This is the place to wax grandiloquent about fun topics, controversial subjects or current events.

The sixth drop-down menu on the AfriGeneas homepage is CHAT CENTER where you can join in live chat sessions on a variety of topics Monday through Friday, the AfriGeneas Lunch Bunch chats from Noon - 1:30m PM ET, and on Saturday morning (9:30 am - 10:30 am ET), there is an open chat. Check the Chat Schedule for specific times and topics.

Chat Logs are available for some of the specially scheduled chat session, such as the Louisiana Chat Series, the Sunday Brunch Chats, and some of the Lunch Bunch Chats.

The seventh drop-down menu on the AfriGeneas homepage is FEATURES, which includes a number of other



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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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First Name: _____

Month and Day of Birth: _____

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eMail: _____

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Spouse's Month and Day of Birth: _____

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OR

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online at www.aagsnc.org

TELL US ABOUT THE NAMES YOU ARE RESEARCHING

SURNAME

State or Province

County or Parish

_____	_____	_____
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If your name, address, or email information has changed recently, please use this form to notify us.

You can purchase your AAGSNC membership online at www.aagsnc.org.
We accept American Express, Discover, MasterCard, Visa, and PayPal.

OBJECTIVES of the African American Genealogical Society of Northern California:

- 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 material available to all.
- To promote and maintain ethical standards in genealogical research and publications.

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MEETINGS

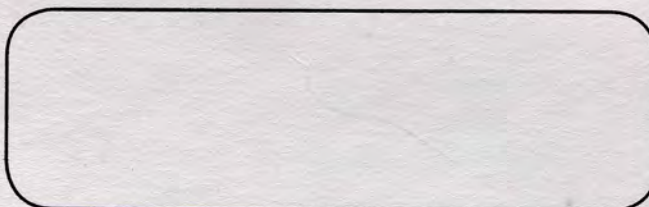
Meetings are held the third Saturday of every month, at 1:30 pm, at the Oakland Public Library, Dimond branch, located at 3565 Fruitvale Ave, Oakland, CA. There are no meetings during the Summer hiatus (July and August). Guests and visitors are always welcome to attend these open meetings. The AAGSNC Board of Directors meets immediately following the regular membership meetings (from 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm) and members are welcome to attend.

JOURNAL

From 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 25 for the March issue, May 26 for the June issue, August 26 for the September issue, and November 25 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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IT'S YOUR HISTORY ... ISN'T IT TIME YOU TOLD YOUR STORY?