



The Baobab Tree

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JESUITS' SLAVES IN THE FAMILY

- Patricia Bayonne-Johnson

We are a big Louisiana family of Roman Catholics. My paternal and maternal grandfathers were Catholic men married to Baptist women. In interfaith marriages where one of the spouses is Catholic, in accordance with Church doctrine, all of the children must be baptized Catholic. So everybody in my family began life as a Catholic and many members are still practicing. We attended Catholic schools and made our First Communions and Confirmations. In all of the years of our Catholic education including catechism and history classes, the Catholic priests were never mentioned as big-time slaveholders. To say that my entire family was appalled to discover that our ancestors were enslaved by the Jesuits of Maryland would be an understatement.

In 2004 I was the co-chairperson of the Hicks/Estes family reunion along with my aunt, Dr. Onita Estes-Hicks. In addition to sharing the organization of the reunion, we each had an extra task to perform: I would research the family and Onita would write the history. Given the shortage of information and time, I hired Judy Riffel, a professional genealogist, to assist me in my research of the Hicks family of Iberville Parish, Louisiana. The Esteses are from Mississippi and Ms. Riffel does not do research in that state.

On March 19, 2004, I mailed 10 documents to Ms. Riffel for her examination. They included a pedigree chart, censuses, baptismal and burial records. Ms. Riffel made a trip to the courthouse in Plaquemine, Iberville Parish, Louisiana and found an inventory for Jesse Batey, mortgages for the Batey heirs and the Barrows and Rev. Thomas Mulledy's bill of sale for 64 negroes. These documents created a paper trail of

my great-great-great grandparents and their children from a plantation in Louisiana to St. Inigoes, a Jesuit-owned plantation in St. Mary's County, Maryland.

INVENTORY OF JESSE BATEY

A notation of the birthplace of my maternal great-grandmother, Rachel Scott Hicks, led to the discovery of her mother, grandparents, aunts, uncles and their last slave owner. When Ms. Riffel noticed that Rachel's parents were from Maryland on the 1910 US Federal Census for Iberville Parish,¹ she decided to research the records of Jesse Batey of Terrebonne Parish who owned a plantation in Bayou Maringouin. She knew from prior research that in 1838 Batey had purchased a large number of slaves from Maryland.

The late Dr. Jesse Batey's inventory is dated 5 March 1851.² Rachel is not listed in this inventory, but her mother and her mother's relatives are found among the slaves. The 1851 inventory lists the family as follows:

1. Nace Butler, negro man, aged sixty-five years, appraised at three hundred dollars
2. Bebe, his wife, negro woman aged about sixty, appraised at three hundred dollars
3. Martha, negro woman (daughter of Babe (*sic*)), aged twenty-two and her two children, Bridget aged five years, and Emeline aged two years, appraised together at twelve hundred dollars
4. Babe (*sic*), negro woman aged twenty, appraised at eight hundred dollars
5. Gave (*sic*), negro boy, aged about eighteen years, appraised at eight hundred dollars

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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.



West Coast Summit Needs Our Support, Now More Than Ever

Each year, one of the independent West coast black genealogy societies hosts the *West Coast Summit on African American Genealogy*. This year, the Seattle Black Genealogy Research Group (BGRG) has taken on this arduous task, which will be especially challenging because of the unexpected death of BGRG co-founder, Edith Gibson Giles, who died in May.

Edith's passion, vision and leadership helped propel the BGRG for many years, and her passing leaves an incredible void, at a time when the BGRG needs our support the most.

At a time when thousands of people are losing their jobs and their homes,

and airfares are going through the roof, a weekend genealogy festival may be an expense we can ill-afford. However, if there is any way that you can stretch your budget to afford this trip (get a roommate, book your airfare NOW before prices go any higher, stay at a less expensive hotel), I urge you to do whatever you need to do to get there.

For those of us lucky enough to attend last year's Summit in Phoenix, it was a phenomenal event and this year's Summit promises to continue a long tradition of excellence. See you there!

- Lisa B. Lee, Editor

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SOCIETY NEWS

AAGSNC CHANGING OF THE GUARDS

After five years shepherding the society as President, Ms. Melvyn Gillette has decided to step down. She will not disappear, however. Mrs. LaVetta White has resigned as Treasurer after a four year period of service, and Ms. Gillette has volunteered to assume her position. Both have served the society with distinction, and their service has been greatly appreciated. Howard Edwards,

Vice President, will serve as interim President until the Board of Directors has completed its search for a replacement for the President position. Anyone wishing to be considered for this position should contact the Board Chair, Bill Melson (billmelson@aol.com)

The Board of Directors has not changed. Please see the back cover for a list of all officers and board members.

AAGSNC MEETINGS 2008

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

- 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

OTHER EVENTS

- October 2008
Family History Month
- October 10-11, 2008
West Coast Summit on African American Genealogy - Seattle, WA (see page 11 for conference and registration details).

MYSTERY SOLVED!

- Patricia Blackwell

Sarah Ann Alice Johnson's picture is prominently displayed in the front of an album that I have made, along with her and her husband's obituary.

This picture has been in my family for many years. She was always referred to as "Cousin Alice," but I did not know how she was related. I had always heard that she was a slave, that she was beaten when the baby that she was tending cried a lot. I looked at many census records for Alice Johnson, at Ancestry.com and HeritageQuest.com, but found nothing!!

I sent her picture to the Photo Detective (www.photodetective.com) to try to get some information on her age. They dated her picture, going by her dress, to be ca.1869-1875. The hat was a style worn in the 1860s called a "fanchon." The mat with the

double gold border was also commonly found in that period. They figured that she must have been a slave when she was a child. They also estimated her to be in her mid-twenties.

It felt good to find some answers! I copied the letter and sent it to my mother in Maryland. Then I called her and we discussed "Cousin Alice." Mom got out the family Bible. In the Bible, my mother had a birth and death date for her, and "Cousin Alice's" full name. Her full name is Sarah Ann Alice Johnson.



Now that I had a name I went back to Ancestry and found her obituary, along with her husband's, in the Frederick, Maryland News. Sarah Ann Alice Johnson was born about 1852 and died in 1932. She was, according to the obituary, "one of

Frederick's few remaining colored mammies." (This was 1932!) Her parents were George and Susan Hopewell. She is buried in the Sunnyside graveyard in Frederick County, Maryland.

Her husband, William Johnson, was born about 1847 and died in 1930. Apparently he was a highly respected resident in the area. What was quite interesting is that he came to Maryland with a Mr. Nickoles. Before that he lived in Virginia. While the slave law was in effect there, he "by hard work" was able to purchase the release of his parents! Such a great story. He is also buried in the cemetery in Sunnyside.

So why call Sarah Ann Alice Johnson "Cousin Alice"?? My great grandmother's father, so the story goes, drowned when Sarah was six months old. His name was Joe Johnson. I believe that he was William Johnson's brother. So the family gave Sarah Ann Alice the "Cousin" name.

This is just my theory. My mother isn't sure why they called her "cousin" and really doesn't believe in my theory BUT!!! I did solve one riddle!

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NAVIGATING THE CHEROKEE FREEDMEN ROLLS

- Barbara Tyson

Wending my way through the various "rolls" associated with the Oklahoma freedmen of the Five Civilized Tribes, I got myself so entangled that I thought I would share my experiences with other genealogists and perhaps save them some troubles.

For over ten years, I have been searching for the parents of Causby Vann Bean, the great-great grandmother of a friend of mine who recently decided to try his luck at applying for a Cherokee Freedmen citizenship card. He needed information on Causby Vann Bean. It re-ignited my quest for information on the elusive Causby. I had first encountered her name as "Cosby Vann" on the April 3, 1901 interview papers of Cy Johnson, Sr. and his wife Lucinda when they applied as Cherokee Freedmen for citizenship in the Cherokee Nation under the Dawes Commission of 1898-1907. Cosby Vann was Lucinda Bean, Johnson's mother.

I had traced Causby Vann Bean back to Georgia before the Indian Removal of 1830-1836 (*The Trail of Tears*) and determined that she was born about 1810; was located in Lincoln, Arkansas as early as 1849; was later in Fort Gibson, Indian Territory after the Civil War, about 1866. I had left off in my search for Causby in 1997, having encountered too many concrete walls of the impenetrable type that frustrate us genealogists so.

I decided to turn to Google this time.

My first hit was when I entered the name Causby Vann Bean into a National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Web site page. There was a "Title: Enrollment for Cherokee Census Card FR158." I could not believe my luck! Assuming that FR stood for "Final Roll" 158, I thought that I could go immediately and look for FR158 in my red book, *The*

Final Rolls Of Citizens And Freedmen Of The Five Civilized Tribes In Indian Territory, prepared by The Commission and Commissioner to the Five Civilized Tribes and Approved by the Secretary of the Interior on or Prior to March 4, 1907 (henceforth referred to as FINAL ROLLS in this article).

My, My! Did I start rolling! Never having found Causby Vann Bean on the Cherokee Freedmen rolls under her own individual Enrollment Card number, I thought I had finally hit the jackpot. I went right to the Cherokee Freedmen section in my FINAL ROLLS book but No. 158 was not Causby Vann or Bean but a female child, age one, surname Watkins. Darn! I thought it seemed too easy!

Back to the NARA page for clues from the list of other names shown with Causby's. I noted that the FR158 was not right next to the name Causby Bean. In fact, it said "Parent." Under her name was John Bean, Parent. The rest of the page contained a long list of 11 names, all surname Vann, all residing in Fort Gibson, city of residence. I wondered about the relationship of all these Vann names to Causby and John Bean. I knew John Bean to be the probable husband of Causby Vann Bean because his name was on Enrollment Card No.79 of the Cherokee Freedmen rolls as the father of Lucinda "Cinda" Bean Johnson. But, Lucinda's name was not among this current list of 11 Vann names.

So, who were all these Vann people and why were they on this page with Causby Bean? I knew of no children of hers surnamed Vann, only Bean. Each Vann name on the NARA page was listed with a Roll Number, from FR465 to FR473. Although not listed chronologically nor being immediately apparent as family groups, I sorted the names, ages, and FR numbers to determine they were the family of Reed Vann, age 32, his wife Mary Vann, age 31, their seven children ages 2-12, and Reed's parents Daniel and Lattie Vann. Perhaps Daniel Vann was Causby Vann Bean's brother?

I cross-checked all the Vann names and numbers with listings in my book by Jo

Ann Curls Page, *Index To The Cherokee Freedmen Enrollment Cards Of The Dawes Commission, 1901-1906*. This little book is a quick, alphabetical reference to enrollment card numbers. Index One contains a list of Enrollees Approved for the Final Roll, National Archives Publication Microfilm M1186, Rolls 23, 24, 25, 26. The Vann surnames are spread across nine pages in the Jo Ann Curls Page book. There were three Reed Vanns and six Mary Vanns. The Mary Vann age 31 had parents John & Causby Bean!

So it was Mary Vann who was related to Causby! Both Reed and Mary Vann were shown with "Card #" 158. I picked out the names of their seven children among all Vann names, confirmed their parents' names and their Card #158.

I still had not located the actual Enrollment Card No. FR158 that I had originally started out with. I did find Reed Vann in my FINAL ROLLS book under FR465 along with Mary and their children under their respective FR numbers. All nine members of the family were under Census Card No.158. So Causby had to be on an Enrollment Card with a Vann family that I had not known about. (There are so many Vann surnames among the Cherokee freedmen that I had given up searching that name years ago.) I wanted a copy of Census Card No.158 – the biggest and brightest copy that I could find. I headed over to the NARA-Pacific Region archives in San Bruno on a glorious, clear, spring day in March. I love the drive over there from Sacramento and the forest-like setting of the NARA building among the eucalyptus trees. If I tarry long enough there, some days the fog comes slipping over the western hills at twilight, just as Robert Frost described in his popular poem.

The last time I had been at San Bruno NARA the genealogy room was in upheaval as they reorganized, re-catalogued, re-labeled, and re-filed rows and rows of microfilm into brand new cabinets. I looked forward to going directly to my objective – Cherokee Freedmen Census Card No.158. Would that card tell me when Causby had died?



The name of her slave owner? Whether she was enrolled on the 1880 Authenticated Roll of the Cherokee Nation? None of that information had been shown with her name on Census Card No. 79 with her daughter Lucinda "Cinda" Bean Johnson.

I found Cherokee Freedmen microfilm boxes in Cabinet 37, Drawer 2 – spanning new, massive steel file cabinets that did not require me to get down on my hands and knees to reach bottom drawers as I had at San Bruno NARA years ago. I was curious about the many microfilm boxes labeled R__ and pulled out Roll R465. I got right into some Vann surnames on enrollment cards and could have stayed there with mounting curiosity but the microfilmed cards were all stamped REJECTED.

And so, I did not learn of Causby Vann Bean's parents from FR158 as I was led to believe I would from the NARA website page. She did not have her own individual Dawes Roll number and Enrollment/ Census Card number which might have given that information. I learned later, after locating another daughter of Causby, that she had died prior to 1901; therefore, she would not have gone through the complete Dawes Commission application procedures.

However, from this renewed effort of mine, I did learn that Causby had a daughter named Mary Bean Vann. I also learned a good lesson: there are many different ways of expressing the roll numbers on the various listings and records of the

Cherokee Freedmen and from now on, whenever I hear the generic term "roll number" I will be wary of assuming anything!

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Next I located M1186, Cherokee Freedmen 1-382, Roll 23. I finally found an Enrollment Card/ Census Card with FIELD NO.158! The card was stamped April 01, 1901. So "FR158" online was equivalent to "Field No." 158 on the actual microfilm.

Reed Vann, Mary Vann and their children were listed on the Enrollment Card/Census Card with Field No.158, each with his/her individual DAWES ROLL NO. 465, 466, etc. Causby Bean's name was on the back of the card as the mother of Mary [Bean] Vann. Reed Vann's father, Daniel Vann, was "dead" and his slave owner had been John Vann. Mary Vann's father John Bean was also dead. No entry was made for the slave owner of John Bean or for Causby Bean. There were only checkmarks in the spaces where this information would have gone, as well as checkmarks on whether Causby was dead by 1901 or whether she had been enrolled on the 1880 Authenticated Roll at Tahlequah, Indian Territory, as the Vann family had been.

NAME	AGE	SEX	TRIBAL ENROLLMENT
Causby Bean	28	F	3871
Mary Vann	14	F	3872
Jacob	18	F	3873
Sarah	11	F	3874
Levi	6	M	3875
David	1	M	3876
Minerva	3mo	F	

A typical Cherokee Enrollment Card, Front (above) and Back (below) - Courtesy of Angela Walton-Raji

FATHER'S TRIBAL ENROLLMENT	FATHER'S OWNER	NAME OF MOTHER	MOTHER'S TRIBAL ENROLLMENT
		Causby Bean	3871
		Mary Vann	3872
		Jacob	3873
		Sarah	3874
		Levi	3875
		David	3876
		Minerva	



Jesuit's Slaves in the Family

6. Henry, negro boy, aged seventeen years, appraised at eight hundred dollars
7. Tom, negro boy, aged sixteen years, appraised at eight hundred dollars
8. Mary, negro, girl, aged fifteen years, appraised at seven hundred dollars (Rachel's mother)
9. John, negro boy, aged fourteen years, appraised at seven hundred dollars

According to Ms. Riffel's interpretation, all of the children named above are Bebe's children.

SALE OF BUTLERS TO THE BARROWS

An undivided half share of the plantation was sold by the heirs of Jesse Batey to Washington Barrow of Nashville, Tennessee and his son John Barrow of East Baton Rouge Parish on 18 January 1853. The Butler family was listed among slaves that were sold in that transaction: Mary 17, Rachel, her child, 3 months; Nace Butler, negro man, 67, Biby (*sic*), his wife, 63 and her three children, Henry, 19, Thomas, 17 and John, 15. Martha Ann, 24 and her three children were also noted on the inventory. Bridget 7, and Emeline, 4, were described as mulattos. Josephine, 1, Martha's youngest child, was listed as black. Mary, Martha Ann and their children were not grouped with Nace, Biby (*sic*) and their sons. Perhaps, the young Butler women and their children were living on their own in separate cabins.³

WOOLFOLK PURCHASES THE BUTLERS

On 4 February 1856, Washington Barrow sold the plantation to Patrick and Joseph B. Woolfolk. On this record, Rachel is listed as age 3, but her mother Mary Butler is not listed. However, Rachel's grandparents, Nace and Biby (*sic*) Butler are among the slaves on the plantation. Also listed were Rachel's uncles, Henry, Thomas and John Butler. Martha Ann, Rachel's aunt and her three children, Bridget, Emiline and Josephine were there, but living apart from the other Butlers.⁴

JESUITS' SLAVES - FROM GEORGETOWN TO LOUISIANA

In the city of Washington, on 10 November 1839, Thomas Mulledy of Georgetown, District of Columbia, sold to Jesse Batey of Terrebonne, Parish, 64 Negroes. Nace Butler, 50, is positioned as the head of the following slaves, who appear to be his wife and their nine children: Beby (*sic*), 45 and her children: Caroline, 16; Basil, 14; Martha Anne, 12; Anne, 10; Gabe, 9; Beby(*sic*) 8; Henry, 7; Tom, 15; Mary, 3 (Rachel's mother).⁵ This transaction occurred in Georgetown while the slaves were on the plantation in Maryland.

When I received the report from Ms. Riffel, I summarized her research and sent it to my aunt Onita. As she began to write the history of the family, she wondered how the family became Catholic and decided to research Rev. Thomas Mulledy. She learned that he was a Jesuit priest who had served as president of Georgetown University from 1829 until 1837 and discovered the Butlers in Jesuit Plantation Project.

THE JESUIT PLANTATION PROJECT

The Society of Jesus owned six plantations in the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries which they relied on to support their ministries. The estates totaled 12,000 acres on four large properties in Southern Prince Georges, Charles and St. Mary's counties and two smaller estates on Maryland's Eastern Shore. These estates were presented to them by the Lords Baltimore who were Catholic and used slaves to work them. The slaves were gifts to the Jesuits from wealthy Catholic families to sustain the Church.

The records of these plantations, The Jesuit Plantation Project (JPP), form part of the archives of the Jesuits' Maryland Province and have been converted to an electronic format by students of American Studies Department at Georgetown University. The archives contain personal papers like diaries of Br. Mobberly who spent time on many of the plantations, the Sale Contract of 272 Slaves in 1838, documents regarding

plantation conditions, the welfare and religious needs of the slaves, Resource Chronology and a JPP Bibliography.

The sale of the slaves by the Jesuits had nothing to do with morals but was a decision based on economics. They feared the devaluation of their property, the slaves, at a time in which the abolitionist movement was spreading. The economy was no longer being driven by slave labor and the slaves were getting very costly to feed. They were also experiencing difficulty with governing the slaves and thought they could make more money by selling the slaves and employing tenant farmers.

My Butler family was among the 272 slaves sold downriver to Louisiana plantation owners. According to the JPP site, sixty-four negroes including the "Butler Breed"⁶ as they were called in a Slave Transfer from St. Inagoes (*sic*) Plantation in St. Mary's County, were shipped to Louisiana on Ship #2. Nace, Jr., 20, ran away before boarding the slave ship.⁷

Once they landed in Louisiana, the family remained together as stipulated in the conditions of the sale as set by the Jesuits: the slaves must be sold to plantations and not families so they would not be separated; husbands are not to be separated from wives or children separated from parents; slaves must be allowed to practice their religion which was Catholicism; slaves who have spouses on another plantation must be bought together; slaves who cannot be sold because of age or disease must be provided for as "justice and charity" demands, as noted by Kathryn Powers Brand in the *Georgetown Voice*, "The Jesuits Slaves," February 8, 2007.

BUTLERS IN 1870

Nace and his wife Bebe were quite long-lived. They were found on the 1870 census at 75 and 80 respectively⁸ (I think that the ages were reversed). Charles a, male child, 9 years old, was enumerated with them. It is thought that Nace and Bebe Butler died between 1870 and 1878. No record of their deaths has been located, but Charles Butler was enumerated with Henry and Rachel Hicks in the 1878 Iberville Parish census.⁹



Many of the Butler children remained in the area. I have located them in the censuses and the Catholic records of the Diocese of Baton Rouge. I plan to do further research at the courthouse in Plaquemine when I am in Louisiana to attend a family reunion.

My search for the name of the ship that transported my ancestors who were enslaved by the Jesuits came to an end after four years of research. When I wrote the article a couple of months ago, the ship that transported my Butler family from Maryland to Louisiana was identified as Ship #2.

On July 4, 2008, I visited usgenweb.org, clicked on Louisiana and found the Inward Slave Manifests for the Port of New Orleans. There were several rolls of transcriptions and I selected Roll 12, 1837-1839; the Butlers were sold in 1838 so I figured they would be on that roll. I searched for Jesse Batey, the plantation owner who purchased them, but he was not found. Then I wrote my great-great-great grandfather's name, Nace, in the "Find in Top Window" space, clicked and the entire family appeared. The details are as follows:

Entry # 304

Port: Alexandria

Ship: KATHERINE JACKSON of Georgetown

O/S: Robert N. Windson

Date: 13 November 1838

Nace & Bibey(*sic*) Butler and their 10 children were listed. The sex, age, height and color were also noted. The transcriber was Alma McClendon. Other manifests had been transcribed by Dee Parmer Woodtor, PhD. My work with the Butlers is not finished; my next task is to find the name of the parishoner who donated the Butlers to the Jesuits to work St. Ingoes Plantation in Maryland.

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ENDNOTES

- 1) 1910 U. S. Census, Iberville Parish, LA, pop. sch., Maringouin, page 156, T624, Roll 515.
- 2) Inventory for Jesse Batey, Conveyance Book 2, Volume 2, Entry#192, Iberville Parish, Louisiana.
- 3) Mortgage Book Entry for Samuel Batey, Robert Batey, Martha Batey and Margaret

Young, Mortgage Book 4, Entry #20, 18 January 1853. Transcription by Judy Riffel.

- 4) Mortgage Book #5 Entry #133 for Washington Barrow, Conveyance Book 4, Entry #151, page 228, 4 February 1856, Iberville Parish, Louisiana.
- 5) Conveyance Book T, pp 34-35, #24, 4 June 1839, Washington, D. C. Transcription by Judy Riffel.
- 6) Slave Transfer; Document 110 W5-Maryland Province Archive, 1970. Jesuit Plantation Project.
- 7) Record of the Sale of the Jesuit Plantation Slaves, 1838, Inventory page 7.
- 8) 1870 U. S. Census, Iberville Parish, LA, pop. sch., Plaquemine Parish, page 368, M 593, Roll 514.
- 9) 1878 Iberville Parish, LA Census, transcription by Judy Riffel.

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INWARD SLAVE MANIFESTS?

The domestic slave trade transplanted approximately 1 million slaves from what was called the Upper South (primarily Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, Maryland, District of Columbia, North Carolina) to what was once called the Southwest (Alabama, Mississippi, Western Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas) between 1808, the year which the United States effectively abolished the importation of slaves, and 1865, the year the Civil War ended.

Most people think of slave traders moving slaves overland in coffles. However, there was another method of transporting slaves, and that was

by the coastal waterways from as far North as Boston along the Eastern Seaboard all the way to New Orleans, a trip that typically took four to six weeks. The coastwise manifests, Record Group 36 of the United States Customs Service, document this aspect of the transshipment of slaves. Though the coastwise manifests constitute one of the most underutilized sets of records by African American genealogists, these records are well organized by ports and dates and can be easily searched, though it would be a time consuming effort. They have not been microfilmed with the exception of the coastwise manifests for the port of New Orleans, Inward and Outward Bound.

If you are tracing ancestry in Virginia or Maryland and have

successfully found a slave owner who disappears all of a sudden or whose activities from his records on file at the courthouse indicate many sales without an explanation, after which no further transactions can be found, consider the possibility that he migrated out of the county to new land, namely to a part of the Old Southwest. Likewise, if you have successfully traced a slave owner in Mississippi or Louisiana back to the territorial or pre-statehood period, and cannot figure out where that slave owner migrated from, then consider that he migrated overland or by sea from the Upper South with or without his slaves.

- Dee Parmer Woodtor, Ph.D.

<http://www.afrigenes.com/slavedata/manifests.html>



WHEN GOOD RESEARCH GOES BAD

- Lisa B. Lee

There really is an art to good genealogy and in my case, it came after years of repetition, countless mistakes and after I had taken a variety of genealogy courses through the National Institute for Genealogical Studies (GenealogicalStudies.com).

I started researching my family's history back in 1970, and was pretty into it for several years, but I didn't really get serious about it until about 1995. Despite my best efforts to do good research, my documentation standards were awful and I did little evaluation of the data I'd gathered. My genealogy research back then consisted of just mining data, scouring census microfilms day in and day out, and collecting as much data as I could, barely even coming up for air. Since the digitization of the U.S. Census was still only a dream in some developer's eye, I relied on census data, Soundex information and vital records I could order, collecting information about all the branches of my family, my daughter's family and my son's family, all at the same time.

At any given time, it was easy for me to be researching over 20 different lines, trying to keep track of each one using a stack of yellow legal pads and, sometimes, Family Tree Maker 4.0 (for Macintosh), which was discontinued around 1998.

I thought I was doing a good job. In fact, I was doing an awful job, and here's why:

1) RESEARCHING TOO MANY LINES AT ONCE

I don't care who you are, there is simply no way you can do your research justice if you're working on too many lines at the same time. A good rule of thumb is **NO MORE THAN TWO LINES AT ONCE**.

As it turns out, my family and my son's family both have branches that came

from the same general vicinity in Virginia (Buckingham, Campbell, Cumberland, Halifax and Mecklenburg counties), and there are at least three Payne lines between our two families. I was researching the area for the Crawleys, Raglands, Yancys, Trents and Youngs (at the same time), and when I stumbled upon some Paynes, I had no idea to which line/s they belonged because of all the families I was trying to juggle at once.

Oh, and all of the women were named Sallie, Fannie or Mary, and all the men were named Robert, James, Samuel or William. In many cases, there were fathers, sons, uncles and cousins on the same census page, each with the identical name.

Oh, yeah, I was doing a *great* job researching my families.

2) I DIDN'T GET TO KNOW THE AREA/S I WAS RESEARCHING

During the Civil War, over 20 of Virginia's county courthouses were burned, an event not unique to Virginia. These burned counties lost a great deal of records – but not all – and since I hadn't bothered to get to know the areas I was researching, this fact totally escaped me.

Had I realized this void existed for Buckingham County, I would have been alert to look for alternate sources of information. Instead, I just plugged away like it was any other county, and couldn't understand why the records for Buckingham County were so sparse.

Another thing I overlooked by not getting to know about the area I was researching was that I totally overlooked the wealth of information available through one of the local genealogical or historical societies. I live in California, which is about 3,000 miles from Virginia, and since I'm not made out of money, my research trips to Virginia happen only once every five years or so. Relying only on microfilmed records and my infrequent research trips, I missed out on one of the most important resources I had at my disposal – local researchers who live in the counties of my research

who not only know the history but know where and how I can find the information I need. For the cost of a yearly membership to one of these societies (average \$25/year), I could have worked with a Virginia researcher who probably would have volunteered to give me the information I needed, for free, and in a much more complete manner than I could have, considering how inexperienced I was.

3) I NEVER ANALYZED THE DATA I'D COLLECTED

In many ways, I was spinning my wheels, not making any real progress, but mining more and more information, I felt like I was really *doing* something. All I thought about was taking each line back as far as I could using census records. In the end, I had a very skeletal tree with few branches and no meat on any of the bones.

Had I stopped, for just a moment, to look at the information I'd uncovered, perhaps I might have wondered why it was that my maternal grandmother was born in 1899 in Virgilina, VA, yet her two younger sisters were born in Long Branch, NJ (1901 and 1904), yet the family was living in Virgilina in both the 1900 and 1910 US Censuses. As far as I knew, we didn't have any family in New Jersey, but I didn't notice this discrepancy back then ... I was too busy *researching*.

Had I noticed, it might have led me to examine the Long Branch, NJ (Monmouth County) area for other Raglands to see if there were others from the VA/NC border and maybe why they were in New Jersey at all.

Failing to analyze my data also created a big mess when it came time to reconcile all those identical names I found in Campbell and Halifax counties and input the information into my new genealogy software (Reunion). It seemed like Sam Crawley had a different wife in each census year, and this drove me crazy for a while. In actuality, there were at least three different men named Sam/Samuel Crawley, and all were related, but my failure to analyze my data made for just one confused mess of information. Not



only did his spouse's name change between every census, so did his age as well as the birthplace of at least one of his parents.

I was a mess – a well-meaning mess, but a genealogical nightmare in every sense of the word.

4. THE SOUNDINDEX IS JUST AS GOOD AS THE CENSUS

No, it's not.

This is a *huge* mistake I used to make. Remember that the census was still only available via microfilm and since only heads-of-household were indexed, it could be pretty hard finding families. If I lucked out and found a family on a Soundex film, I often recorded the information or made a photocopy of the card and filed it away feeling like I had accomplished my mission.

I was such a mess in those days.

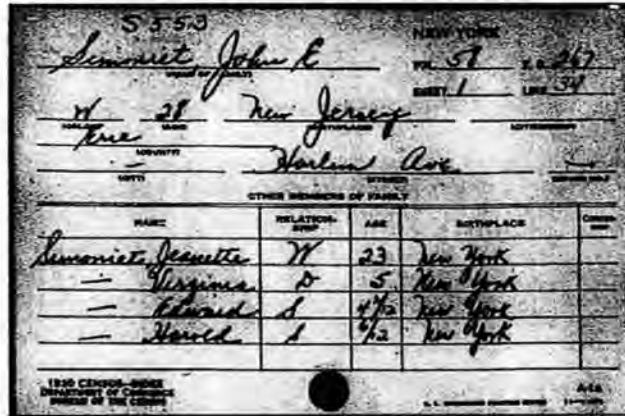
By failing to examine the actual census page, I missed out on crucial information such as the birthplaces of parents, when someone immigrated to the U.S., nearby families that might be related, occupation, ownership of land, address, and a whole lot of other stuff.

I realize that the Soundex is now a thing of the past and new researchers will have no clue what this is or have any need to use it. But for those of us who started researching "back in the day," it's worth it to go through our old files and anywhere we see the Soundex as an original source, to take the time to examine the entire census page.

5. CITING MY SOURCES BASED ON MY MOOD

As I go through some of my old research, I'm simply amazed at my lack of citation standards. What I mean by this is the way in which I referred to the sources of various information I included in my family file. And trying to retrace my *own* steps has

often been difficult because I often didn't bother to include the microfilm number of a film I found at the Family History Library (FHL) in Salt Lake City. There are only about a gazillion microfilms at the FHL and tracking down the correct film is a lot harder than you might realize, especially when the type of document wasn't properly



Typical Soundex card from 1920 US Census, Erie County, NY

cited. Was it a part of a collection of land records, military land grants, county probate records, etc.?

I'm not one of those who feels that you have to conform to somebody's fancy citation standards, but I do feel that whatever citation style you use should contain these elements:

- a) **Standardization** - which ever way you decide to list your sources, do it the same time each time. Be consistent;
- b) **Complete Information** - the intent of citations is to allow any researcher to retrace your steps and find the same record you found. Your citation should provide things like the name of the repository, name of the collection, microfilm number, Web site URL and the date you viewed it (since Web sites change), page number, etc.
- c) **Personal Comments Clearly Noted** - Suppose you find a land record that you *think* belongs to your ancestor but you're not quite sure. I recommend you state that in your citation, but make sure your

personal comments can be clearly noted as such. You can place these comments between *asterisks*, [braces], in **bold** text or *italics*, etc.

6. IGNORING FACTS THAT DIDN'T "FIT"

At some point, I think the ancestors actually took pity on me because, as hard as I tried, I just wasn't doing them justice. Bless my little heart.

So, they started dropping information down from heaven, knowing that there was no way I'd screw it up. Oh, how they underestimated my ability to mess up a good thing.

I discovered an online index of the 1871 Ontario Census, and since my Lees had lived in Ontario as far back as the beginning of time, I figured this database would help me track my great great grandfather, William Barnard Lee. This database, Archivia.net, allows you to search with a variety of options including using a wildcard for the name (in case you're not sure how it's spelled), age, place of birth, religion, occupation, ethnic origin, district, etc. In Canada, blacks were often referred to as being of African origin, so when I did a search for Barnard, (as we always referred to him), I got a hit:

LEE, WILLIAM BERNARD, male, 58, born Ontario, Episcopal Methodist, African origin, barber, living in Collingwood, Simcoe County.

This was an amazing find and, luckily, Sutro Library in San Francisco happened to have that census microfilm, but when I viewed the film, my heart sank when I discovered that his wife's name was Roselia and she was of German origin. Huh? Roselia? My great great grandmother's name (Barnard's wife) was named Eleanor Jane Smith, who was born in County Cork, Ireland.

There's *no way* this could be my great great grandfather for several reasons:

- 1) His middle name was spelled wrong
- 2) His wife's name and origin were wrong
- 3) No one in the family had ever



mentioned anything about Barnard having been a barber.

That family was, obviously, not mine.

The ancestors must have just looked at one another and asked, "Are you sure she's on of ours?" This little gem, quite literally dropped down into my lap, was the key to my documenting my Lee line back another three generations. But I totally ignored this information, not even thinking for one minute that, maybe, Barnard had married twice. Not only did I ignore the information, I didn't even make note of it in my research just in case it turned out to be correct.

I was on a roll. And yet, the hits just kept on coming.

7. SPELLING IS EVERYTHING!

Actually, spelling is almost nothing. At one of the AAGSNC meetings, society co-founder, Electra Price, was there and we went around the room sharing all the surnames and locations we were researching. As you can imagine, it took me about ten minutes to list all my names and places (I was so proud of myself. What's with those slackers in the group, only working on two or three lines?), one of which was my GEER line from Connecticut.

Electra had this talent for remembering who was researching whom, and when she would run across one of those names in the course of her own research, she'd make a copy of it and shoot it off to the researcher, via postal mail. She's an amazing woman and it still amazes me that she can keep track of all this.

Anyway, so a few months later, I get one of Electra's missives in the mail and it had information about a GERE family in one of the mid-Atlantic states, close enough to Connecticut that it warranted my attention.

But, nooooooo. It was spelled wrong and, therefore, could not be my family. I thanked Electra for the information but told her about the spelling problem, and that this information wasn't useful to me after all.

Electra never said a word. I'm sure she just shook her head and probably mumbled something like, "Poor thing, she'll never make a good genealogist in a million years."

What I didn't realize back then was the first rule of genealogy: **SPELING DOUSN'T COWNT!** Most folks could barely read or write (white or black) and many census enumerators and county clerks were given their jobs as political plums, with no concern as to whether or not they were actually qualified for the job.

As I became more experienced, I came to realize that the lack of education, politics, coupled with poor transcriptions as well as regional accents played a major role in the documentation of vital and other records.

For example, let's assume that I'm from, oh, I don't know, say, Michigan. And in Michigan, the surname PARHAM is pronounced PAR-ham, just like it's spelled. But, suppose I have Parham relatives from Virginia, and they pronounce their surname PURR-im. Purr? Im?

If I'm trying to document the lives of my Purrim ancestors but I don't understand or appreciate how regional accents can affect how these names are pronounced, can you imagine how much trouble I'll have trying to find James Purrim who is actually James Parham?

Spelling doesn't count, but phonetics does. The way a name sounds can often provide the key to figuring out how the name has been butchered in a variety of records.

Try this test:

How do you pronounce GILLETTE? ja-LET, right? Well, some folks with that surname pronounce it either GIL-it, or zhee-LAY. Go figure.

How do you pronounce DAUGHERTY? DOW-erty? Some people pronounce it DOCK-erty, DOW-dy or DOW-ty, or even DAW-tree. And there may be other ways to pronounce that name.

8. I EXPECTED EVERYONE TO SHARE MY EXCITEMENT

Talk about a humbling experience. I just

knew that everyone else in my family shared the same sense of excitement as I did when it came to the topic of our family history. After all, it's a history we all shared and the amazing discoveries I made pertained to me as well as them. I had spent countless hours and lots of money putting together a full-color family history as a Christmas present for my family several years ago. I got them all assembled, packaged and mailed, then I sat back and waited for the phone and emails to jump off the hook from relatives who were oh, so grateful to have received such a valuable gift from me.

And I waited.

In the end, I heard from two relatives who contacted me to let me know about some errors I'd made in my report, but not one person was excited. No one called me with tears streaming down their face sobbing with appreciation and gratitude for all my hard work. You could hear a pin drop.

The worst thing I did was to allow their lack of enthusiasm to affect me. It brought me down, way down, and for a while I actually considered quitting family research altogether. So, I moped around for a time, but then I realized that genealogy is *my* thing and it really doesn't matter what anybody else thinks. I'm on a mission, and my quest is to tell the ancestors' stories as completely and as accurately as possible. And if I'm the only person in my family who cares, that's okay with me. Because I know that somewhere, there will come along a researcher who will be just as infected with the genealogy bug as I was, and that person will be ever so grateful that I took the time to find these stories and tell them.

I hope that I've shared some very common mistakes that I made so, hopefully, you won't have to make them.

It never hurts to go back over research you did years ago, just to see how well you analyzed the data, cited your sources, or followed up on leads. You may discover some shortcomings you overlooked, so take the time to correct your errors and improve the quality of your work. In the end, the telling of the stories is what this is all about.



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.

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
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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:

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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