



# From the Baobab Tree

Quarterly Newsletter of the African American Genealogical Society of Northern California

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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).

Membership in the AAGSNC may be handled at our website, [aagsnc.org](http://aagsnc.org), where you can register online, or via mail to: PO Box 27485 • Oakland, CA 94602-0985

African American Genealogical Society  
of Northern California  
PO Box 27485  
Oakland, CA 94602-0985



## Mysterious Disappearance of Savilla Elam, 1913



**Savilla Elam**, maternal aunt of AAGSNC founder Kathryn B. Smith. In 1913, Savilla sent for her sisters, Nannie, Ella, and Florence to come to Bayonne, N. J. (Hudson County), because there was plenty of work available. One afternoon she told them she was going to the store. She never returned and nothing was ever found as to what happened to her. Savilla's brother-in-law was a Pinkerton Detective, who conducted an extensive search, yet Savilla's disappearance remains a mystery.

- **Success with U.S. Military Records**
- **Toones Chapel Cemetery Transcriptions, Arkansas**
- **Member Spotlight - M. Howard Edwards**
- **De Witt Co.,TX: Marriages of People of Color 1847-1883**
- **1826 Inward Slave Manifests, New Orleans, 1826**
- **Blacks in Nova Scotia, Canada**

# Letter From the Pres ...

This has been a very creative and exciting year for the AAGSNC. Please permit me the pleasure of taking you through a review of some major activities that immediately come to mind:

- **The First Annual West Coast Summit on African American Genealogy** took place in late March, and brought together the collective membership and talents of African American genealogical associations from San Diego, Sacramento, Seattle, Los Angeles and Oakland. As the over 225 attendees will attest, this was a truly an outstanding event.
- **The Founder's Day Luncheon**, held in October to recognize AAGSNC's founding members, and more importantly current members who have worked so hard to make AAGSNC a viable organization, will be an annual event aimed at recognizing those who go "the extra mile" to make our organization function. My sincerest personal thanks go to Jamila Sloan for coming up with the idea and making it all happen.
- **Our October Newsletter *From the Baobab Tree*** was a tremendous journalistic effort. This particular issue was aesthetically pleasing as well as being content filled. It featured a comprehensive member surname index and highlighted research efforts being conducted by some of our more experienced researchers. The layout was professionally done and included a number of historic pictures and references. You will want to keep and display this issue!! Again, Lisa, we thank you for your creativity, vision and tireless work.
- **Karen Clifford's** second AAGSNC guest speaking appearance at Mills College was humorous and information packed. Her enthusiasm for genealogy is extremely contagious.
- **The AR and OK Research Study Groups** headed by Electra Price and Barbara Tyson respectively have established benchmarks for research group curriculum, structure and proactivity. The bar has been raised and I am hopeful the other groups will stretch to reach those heights.
- **AAGSNC and the African American Museum and Library at Oakland (AMMLO)** are in the midst of conducting mutual outreach efforts to find common support areas. We will keep you abreast of our progress.
- **Thanks** to Jim Neal for recognizing that our membership record keeping needed some streamlining. Through newly purchase software we can now centrally manage and retrieve membership record information with relative ease. Time, newsletter space and a short memory will not allow me to comment on the entire slate of positive events and programs that occurred this year. The hard work and dedication exhibited by Lisa Lee, Jamila Sloan, Kashan Robinson, Electra Price, Jim Neal, just to name a few made this year's programs very memorable. Your tireless efforts are deeply appreciated. ✨

*Ranie G. Smith*

- President, AAGSNC

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This entire newsletter was created on an Apple iBook 5000, using QuarkXPress, Photoshop, and Excel. Many thanks to Kay Smith for proofreading, Paul D. Lee for copy editing, and A. Forrest Johnson for graphic design editing. -- ED.

The **AAGSNC Online Store** is now open for business. We carry a full line of genealogical books and videos, Family Tree Maker software (PC only), AAGSNC-branded products (tote bags, magnifiers, coffee cups, and mouse pads). Coming soon, we will offer a line of art items imported from South Africa. [www.aagsnc.org/store](http://www.aagsnc.org/store)

Tied in with Amazon.com, our Online Store can meet all of your reading needs. The AAGSNC receives a portion of all book sales purchased from Amazon.com, but you must use the link from our store in order that we receive the credit..



### OBJECTIVES of the African American Genealogical Society of Northern California:

- To enlighten and enrich self-worth and self-esteem of African Americans through genealogical research and interest.
- 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.

### 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. From 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm, following the general meeting, we provide one-on-one genealogical training and assistance to members only.

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# Marriages of People of Color De Witt County TX • 1847-1883

This is the second installment of **Barbara Shepherd Dunn's** transcription of the DeWitt County, TX marriages of people of color. This installment lists all the colored brides and grooms with surname beginning with the letter "B." These marriages were transcribed from the De Witt County, TX Marriage License General Index, Books C and D, FHL film 1012058.

GROOM	License	Page	BRIDE	Date	Comments
Brown, Jim	546	154	Minerva Wofford	2/18/1886	
Bowles, Peter	552	157	Francis E. Coppidge	3/10/1866	
Brown, Robert	572	167	Patsy Jones	6/28/1866	D, Pct 2, Pg 30, HH 210
Banks, Thomas	575	168	Fanny Means	7/5/1866	D, Pct 4, Pg 2, HH11
Baker, George	643	202	Amanda Bracey	3/30/1867	
Barnes, George	669	215	Jane Hargroves	7/5/1867	
Bailliss, Jefferson	701	231	Illsey Ann Mike	12/9/1867	
Bane, Eliza	708	235	Vina Carie	12/30/1868	Odd first name for groom
Board, Jacob	728	245	Tilly Thompson	2/13/1868	
Bailey, Walton	827	294	Indiana Armstrong	1/17/1869	D, Pct 4, Pg 3, HH12
Beasley, Edmund	880	320	Charlotte York	8/31/1869	
Barnes, W. Isaac	991	376	Emma Roberson	11/22/1871	
Billingsley, Peter	998	379	Mary Hawkins	12/7/1870	
Brown, John	1011	1	Isy Darden	1/5/1871	
Brown, Leroy	1191	62	Rhonda Strother	2/6/1872	
Blackwell, Munch	1225	73	Eliza Elder	8/1/1873	
Brasetta, Ottoway	1374	123	Martha Lewis	2/4/1875	
Berry, Bealy	1447	148	Candace Elliott	12/24/1875	
Brown, John	1452	150	Laura Brown	1/6/1875	
Boles, Sam	1559	186	Mary Scott	1/3/1877	
Brown, Mack	1800	261	Fannie Glass	5/1/1879	
Bennett, Augustus	1807	263	Pharphina Baker	5/29/1879	
Brown, Andy	1972	319	Clara Thomas	12/29/1880	
Bryant, Lack	1980	322	Fanny Wimbish	1/13/1881	
Brown, Jack	2129	371	Ellen Harvey	11/15/1882	
<b>BRIDE</b>			<b>GROOM</b>		
Ball, Mary	531	146	Allen Parker	12/27/1865	
Buchanan, Famor	538	150	Frank Davidson	-----	
Benson, Phillis Ann	554	158	Marian Knox	5/31/1866	
Bracey, Amanda	643	202	George Baker	3/30/1867	
Brazette, Harriett	673	217	James Williams	7/25/1867	
Bex, Charlotte	709	235	Austin Robison	-----	
Bunting, Mourning	733	247	Jack King	2/15/1868	
Banks, Harriett	747	254	William Issack	-----	
Boon, Elan	753	258	Dock Wright	4/25/1868	
Burks, Susan	788	275	Green Elliott	9/27/1868	
Brown, Margaret	803	282	Johnson Parker	-----	
BlackFannie	810	285	Haywood Roy	-----	
Billings, Sallie	817	289	John Henderson	12/28/1868	
Bryant, Rachel	846	303	Henry Smith	3/16/1869	
Bryant, Cherry	848	304	Peter William	-----	
Brown, Bettis	890	325	James Taylor	10/16/1869	
Brown, Mahala	904	332	James Collier	12/9/1869	
Brooks, Emaline	1035	9	Dan Coleman	4/25/1871	
Bracey, Sarah	1039	11	Franklin Washington	5/5/1871	
Banks, Adoa	1091	28	Newton Kinny	-----	
Bollis, Nannie	1230	75	William H. Pope	8/10/1873	
Blackwell, Sussy	1231	75	Sam Thomas	8/15/1873	
Battles, Sina	1360	118	Jim Taylor	-----	
Baddle, Seah	1368	121	Henry Mosley	1/28/1875	
Brown, Laura	1452	150	John Brown	1/6/1875	
Bryant, Laura	1542	180	Jeff Foster	12/14/1876	
Baker, Pharphina	1807	263	Augustus Bennett	5/29/1879	
Bnchel, Rosa Lee	1870	284	Paul Jenkin	12/29/1879	
Bishop, Eliza	2102	362	Jacob Carr	-----	



**Barbara Shepherd Dunn** is the Second Vice President and Fundraising Chair of the AAGSNC.

While researching her own family's history last year, she decided to extract all of the marriages of free people of color from the counties of De Witt, Gonzales, and Lavaca, TX. Barbara realized that the names of the witnesses were as important as the names of the brides and grooms and rather than going back over the microfilm again and again, it made more sense for her to extract ALL of the information for the licenses of black folks and keep them for future reference. She has extracted over 1,000 records and is considering writing the local history of the area, in concert with a local Texas historian.

Her family comes from TX, GA, and LA, and she has been researching her genealogy for over thirty years.

Ms. Dunn can be reached at [fundraising@aagsnc.org](mailto:fundraising@aagsnc.org)

# FOUND: Another Piece of the Puzzle

by Carole Neal



**Carole Neal** is a past officer and past Membership Chair of AAGSNC. She is the Family Historian for both sides of her family and has been seriously researching her family roots since 1996. She also has coordinated family reunions for both paternal and maternal gatherings. In addition to AAGSNC, she is a member of the Ark-La-Tex Genealogical Association, the Louisiana Genealogical and Historical Society, the National Genealogical Society, the California Genealogical Society, and is in the process of establishing a part time consultancy as Advisor, Genealogy and Reunion Planning.

Ms. Neal may be reached at [cen@worldnet.att.net](mailto:cen@worldnet.att.net).

## "He died overseas during World War I"

That is what I had always heard about my great uncle John Jamison, my maternal grandmother's twin brother and her only sibling.

There were conflicting family stories as to where he was buried. My mother believed he was buried in the U.S. while her sister believed he was buried overseas. The Jamison line is my most challenging. My grandmother, Pernilla [Jamison] Seals Fairchild, and John Jamison were born March 28, 1896 in Camden, Arkansas. Their parents were Annie Warren and John Jamison. Very little information is known about John Jamison, the elder.

As genealogists, we have learned that instinct, hunches, and just plain luck contribute to our successes. In the fall of 1999 I attended back-to-back weekend annual conferences: the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS) Conference in Washington, D.C. and the Family Reunion Institute Conference in Philadelphia, PA. Sandwiched in between, I researched at the National Archives (NARA). My sole focus was to research Freedmen Bureau records. However, my elusive ancestors remained just that. I found nary a mention in Freedmen Bureau records of any of my ancestors! To say I was frustrated and disappointed is putting it mildly. My primary area of research is Northern Louisiana. A NARA archivist told me Freedmen Bureau records tend to be more plentiful in areas where the Army was prominent. In Louisiana, that would be the New Orleans area and other southern and central Louisiana locales. I then decided to research the Southern Claims Commission records. I had done some preliminary research, unsuccessfully, of

these microfilmed records previously at the NARA regional branch in San Bruno, CA, but was eager to research the actual records housed at NARA. One day I took the shuttle to the NARA II building in College Park, MD. Struck out again! I'd anticipated finally finding some mention or record of at least one of my ancestors, but came away empty-handed. One of the archivists walked me back into the stacks to double-check for records pertaining to Louisiana. We found little for that state and he mentioned that unfortunately a lot of the records had been destroyed before their historical value was recognized. Before I'd met with the archivist and while waiting in the reception area, I browsed through the magazines on display and, I believe, fate drew me to the summer 1999 edition of Prologue, NARA's quarterly magazine. I scanned the table of contents and saw an article entitled "World War I Gold Star Mothers Pilgrimages." It told about a government program that paid the travel expenses to the gravesites for mothers and widows whose sons and husbands had died as members of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) during the war. The article went on to describe the "Graves Registration Service (GRS)" which was enacted in 1917. For each soldier who died overseas, a GRS file was created. I became excited because I immediately thought of great uncle John. In 1998, I had written to Arlington National Cemetery to ask if there were a record of John Jamison being buried there. In my letter I included possible other spellings of the surname such as Jamerson and Jimmerson. The response I received



from Arlington was that they had no one by that name buried in the cemetery.

I didn't get a chance to finish reading the article at NARA II that day as I was interrupted when the archivist was ready to meet with me. Back in D.C. I bought a copy of the magazine at the NARA bookstore and finished reading it after I returned home from my trip. I then wrote and requested a copy of the GRS file for John Jamison. I addressed my request to: **Military Textual Reference Branch (NWCTM) National Archives 8601 Adelphi Road College Park, MD 20740-6001**

My letter included a statement that the information was being requested for my family research project and I provided the following information about the deceased:

- Name
- Branch of service
- Date and place of birth
- Name of sibling
- Name of mother
- Place of residence

About two weeks later, I received a reply which included an order form, NATF Form 72. I completed the form and mailed it in along with my payment. The method of payment determines where the form and payment are sent. Payments by check are sent to an address in Atlanta, GA; payments by credit card are sent to an address in Washington, D.C.

Soon after submitting the form and payment, I received a packet containing copies of the information in the GRS file for John Jamison.

From that information I learned:

- His date and place of death to be April 18, 1919, Base Hospital No. 101. He was only 23 years of age when he died
- The cause of death was Peritonitis Tuberculosis. Interestingly, I'd learned at a recent genealogy seminar that tuberculosis was the leading cause of death at the turn of the century.
- The name of the American cemetery in France where he is buried, as well as the gravesite location, and that an identification tag was buried with the body and a tag also was fastened to the stake used as a grave marker.
- Type of casket
- His rank in the Army
- His unit and company
- Serial number
- The War Risk Insurance Information listed his mother, Mrs. Annie Criner, as beneficiary.
- Initially, he was buried at the American Base Cemetery #21, St. Nazaire, France.
- In November 1921 the body was disinterred and subsequently reburied at Oise-Aisne American Cemetery, Seringes-et-Nesles, Aisne, France.

According to the file, a year's time elapsed between disinterment and reburial. I did not find information in the file that gave a reason for the reburial or the time lapse. I hope one day to travel to France and visit his gravesite.

Also in the file were copies of correspondence between the quartermaster general of the War Department and my great-grandmother. She was the next of kin since he was not married nor had any children. The correspondence mostly consisted of her responding to questions on a form, but there was one handwritten letter she wrote to the quartermaster general. She initially indicated she would make the pilgrimage and that she desired his remains to be returned to the U.S. for burial. However, in later communications she indicated her health prevented her from making the trip and that she did not want his body moved. I suspect she probably was a bit overwhelmed by all of the paperwork; and the thought of leaving the small town of Homer, Louisiana, and traveling to New York to board a steamer to travel "across the water" to France was a bit much.

Not too long ago I spoke with my uncle, my mother's youngest brother, and men-

tioned this information. He recalled that during the Depression the family was having a very hard time making ends meet. My grandmother was widowed in 1930, left with eight children ranging in age from 16 years to four weeks. This uncle was the newborn baby. He said "without that \$60 a month check" that my great-grandmother received as her son's beneficiary, he didn't know how they would have made it and, as a young boy, could recall hearing his mother in the other room crying and great-grandmother Annie trying to comfort her, saying "It's going to be all right."

Hearing his comments reinforced my determination to dig up copies of any pension files for John Jamison. Previously, I had mailed a request to the Department of Veterans Affairs for such files but did not receive a reply. After speaking with my uncle and now knowing for certain a pension was paid, I sent a follow-up request. The VA's reply came stating they needed more information in order to search. In March of this year, I re-sent my

request providing any and all information I had. As of this writing, I have not received a response. But I remain hopeful for a positive response which potentially could lead to more information on my Jamison line. \*

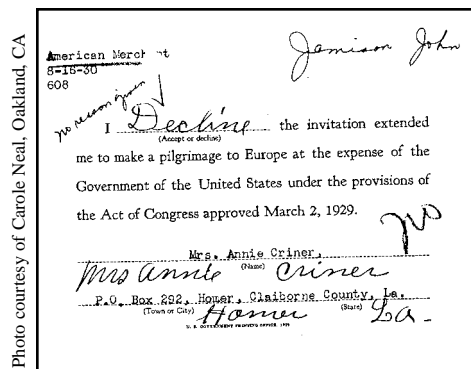


Photo courtesy of Carole Neal, Oakland, CA  
Mrs. Annie Criner declining the U.S. Government's invitation for her to travel to Europe to visit the grave of John Jamison.

G.R.S. Form #120  
Shipping Inquiry.

WAR DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL OF THE ARMY  
GRAVES REGISTRATION SERVICE  
WASHINGTON

APR 25 1920

FROM: Chief, Graves Registration Service, Q.M.G.  
TO: Mrs. Annie Criner, Camden, Ark.  
SUBJECT: Disposition of remains of John Jamison.

Records of this office show your request to be as follows:

Remains to be not expressed Interred

Shipped to head of the body in  
Israel department it was sent

If any modifications of the foregoing are desired please write same fully on the other side of this sheet.

The nearest living relative may choose between, (1) return of remains to home for burial; (2) interment in Arlington, Va., National Cemetery; or (3) remain in France.

You are requested to fill out the following without delay and return in enclosed reply envelope, which does not require postage.

By authority of the Quartermaster General:  
CHARLES C. PIERCE  
Colonel, U.S. Army.

NAME OF	NO. & STREET	TOWN	STATE
Widow		Camden	Ark
Children (Name oldest first)			
Father	John Jamison		
Mother			
Brothers			
Sisters	penelope sally		

Date: 4/28/20 Signature: [Signature]

Address: Camden Ark Relationship: mother

NS/7154/T&L The transfer of bodies will be made entirely at government expense.

GRS Form #120 regarding Disposition of remains of John Jamison, dated April 28, 1920.

NAME	SEX	AGE	HEIGHT	DESCRIPTION
--	Girl	16	5-1	Black
--	Woman	27	5-3	Black
--	Woman	19	5-3	Black
--	Child	7	3-4	Black
--	Woman	18	5-3	Dark Mulatto
Rachel	Woman	28	5-6	Dark Mulatto
Charlotte	Child	2	2-8	Dark Mulatto
Charles	Boy	4	3-3	Dark Mulatto
Ellen Newman	Woman	26	5-0	Black
Mary Gaddis	Girl	17	5-2	Bright Mulatto
Mary Bryan	Woman	18	5-4	Dark Mulatto
Maria Gibbs	Girl	16	5-2	Black
Nancy Nicols	Girl	17	5-0	Black
Sophia Young	Girl	16	5-3	Dark Mulatto
Kitty Young	Girl	10	4-7	Dark Mulatto
Rosetta Tillotson	Girl	11	4-4	Dark Mulatto
Harriet Downs	Girl	6	3-5	Black
Charlotte Morton	Girl	17	5-2	Black

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

By presenting this extremely small sampling from the Inward Slave Manifests, our intent is to showcase an underutilized source of genealogical information for researchers of black history. The transcriptions done by Dr. Dee Woodtor, Melvyn Gillette, and the rest of the volunteers, though impressive, represent probably less than 10 percent of the total of the Slave Manifests which reside at the National Archives in D.C.

Afrigenaeas (www.afrigenaeas.com) has generously agreed to host these transcriptions and we encourage you to download these files and print them out for yourself. A key part of these files is the **Slave Surname Index**. An estimated 10,000 names of slaves are entered into this database along with the descriptive data contained on the original manifests. Of the estimated 10,000 slaves, approximately 250 surnames were identified and indexed. Note that this does not mean only 250 slaves were identified with surnames since two or more people could share the same surname. This is a small number of surnames compared to the total number of people being shipped with only their first names identified. Please note that first names of slaves were not indexed, but a first name can be entered and searched for.

To volunteer to help transcribe these films, contact Dr. Woodtor: [dparmerwoo@aol.com](mailto:dparmerwoo@aol.com).



Unidentified class of students, school unknown, Richmond, VA, 1908

Photo courtesy of Kathryn B. Smith, Oakland, CA

# 1826 Inward Slave Manifests, Port of New Orleans, Roll 6

NAME	SEX	AGE	HEIGHT	DESCRIPTION
Bill Ligon	Boy	18	5-6	Black
Henry Turney	Boy	13	4-6	Dark Yellow
Morris Grindage	Boy	12	4-7	Dark Yellow
Perry	Boy	13	4-6	Black
Simon Turner	Boy	9	4-2	Black
Alfred	Boy	9	4-1	Black
Moses Green	Boy	12	4-6	Black
Austin Pawlet	Man	24	5-8	Black
Joshua	Man	26	5-7	Black
Toby	Boy	13	4-8	Dark Yellow
James Green	Boy	12	4-6	Dark Yellow
Anthony	Man	24	5-6	Dark Yellow
Perry Baxton	Man	21	5-8	Black
Vachel Broughton	Man	22	5-10	Black
Fanny Addison	Woman	17	5-5	Black
Nancy Stewart	Woman	18	5-0	Dark Mulatto
Betsey Wilson	Woman	19	5-1	Mulatto
Anna Maria (her child)	Child	2	2-6	Dark Mulatto
Henny Robison	Woman	35	5-3	Black
Minta Carter	Woman	19	5-1	Dark Mulatto
Fanny Johnson	Child	9	4-4	Black
Anne Quaker	Girl	16	5-5	Black
Senah Cox	Woman	26	5-2	Black
Alfred (her son)	Infant	-	--	Black
Elizabeth Dixon	Girl	17	5-6	Black
Caroline Lee	Girl	15	5-0	Black
Phoebe Darnal	Woman	25	5-4	Black
Loyd (her son)	Infant	-	--	Black
Diana	Child	3	2-9	Black
Anna Maria	Child	8	3-11	Bright Mulatto
Rachel Chase	Child	9	4-4	Black
Mary Johnson	Girl	17	5-3	Dark ?
Ellen Thomas	Woman	19	5-4	Mulatto
Phoebe	Woman	19	5-3	Dark Mulatto
Sarah Scott	Girl	8	3-11	Black
Jenny Anderson	Woman	24	4-11	Black
George	Infant	-	--	Yellow
Phil or Phillis	Child	6	3-0	Black
Henny	Child	3	2-9	Yellow
Hannah Downs	Woman	28	5-5	Black
Phil Downs	Boy	8	4-2	Black
John Downs	Boy	6	3-8	Black
William	Boy	3	3-0	Black
Alexander	Boy	2	--	Black
Clarissa Gibson	Woman	23	5-2	Black
Wesley (her son)	Infant	-	--	Black
Ann Cornice	Woman	24	5-2	Black
Alice	Infant	-	--	Black
Anne Wilmer	Woman	22	5-2	Dark Mulatto
Priscilla Gooby	Woman	18	5-2	Dark Mulatto
Hetty Lewis	Woman	17	5-5	Dark Mulatto
Mary Harris	Girl	12	4-7	Dark Mulatto
Fanny	Girl	8	4-0	Black
Macy	Girl	12	4-10	Bright Mulatto
Ellen Fleetwood	Girl	14	4-11	Black
Eliza Young	Girl	10	4-9	Dark Mulatto
Charlotte Wilson	Girl	6	3-10	Dark Mulatto
Anne Birkhead	Girl	12	4-7	Dark Mulatto
Cassa Richards	Girl	16	5-1	Black
--	Girl	16	5-1	Black
--	Girl	17	5-1	Black
--	Girl	12	4-4	Dark Mulatto

# TOONES Chapel AME Church Cemetery, Tulip, AR

by Jamila Sloan



AAGSNC Programs Director, Jamila Sloan, has been doing her family's genealogy since 1998. She was born and raised in Oakland, CA and her family comes from Kings Co, CA and Dallas Co, AR. She produces a quarterly family newsletter entitled *The Chronicles of the Smith-Sloan Family* which she has been publishing for two years.

On a recent research trip to her ancestral home of Tulip, AR, she diligently transcribed the entire cemetery of Toones Chapel AME Church. The church was designed and built by Rev. J. W. Stinson, and was completed in August of 1913 at a cost of \$1,250. The church is located at 193 Dallas 409, Tulip, AR. The photo at left shows Jamila (right) and her mother, Connie May Poole Sloan-Akin, in Mexico in 2000. Sadly, Connie lost her battle with breast cancer in June 2001.

Ms. Sloan may be reached at [sloja000@yahoo.com](mailto:sloja000@yahoo.com).

SURNAME	FIRST	MIDDLE	MAIDEN	DOB	DOD	NOTES
Allen	Daisy	Willie	Sloane	23-Jun-08	10-Jul-92	Daughter of William & Mary SLOANE
Allen	Jamie	Sue		18-May-11	8-Jul-99	Mother
Allen	Jimmy			13-May-51	22-Nov-82	At the age __ years. At Rest.
Allen	Pearl		Wilson	18-Apr-15	15-Jan-73	At the age 72 years. At Rest.
Allen	Woody			21-Dec-11	31-Oct-86	At the age 77 years, In Loving Memory.
Amos	Annie			1-Aug-66	17 Mar__	
Berry	Reatha			25-Jan-32	17-Dec-94	No Marker.
Bevins	Rosie	Lee	Dobbins	17-May-35	11-Sep-93	
Collins	A.	B.		00/00/1836	00/00/1955	
Collins	Rev. Alex	Lee		08 Mar 1899	27-Sep-77	Husband of Bessie Lawson Collins. [Double stone.]
Collins	Bessie		Lawson	12-Jan-05	12-Jul-95	Wife of Rev. Alex Collins. [Double head stone]
Collins	Edna			17 Sep 1888	13-Dec-71	
Collins	Lee	Andrew		1928	1968	No Head Stone.
Collins	Minnie		Hawkins	17-May-22	17-Jun-85	Mother. In Loving Memory
Crain	Lucinda		Giles	27 Nov 1889	7-Jun-90	I will meet you in the morning.
Cross	Annie		Hawkins	22-Feb-07	4-Sep-88	No Marker.
Davis	Bulah, Mrs.			31-Dec-09	15-Oct-38	At the Age 29 years. Resting in peace
DeCone	Minnie				24-Sep-78	No Marker.
Dobbins	Helen		Smith	09 Apr 1898	14-Nov-42	
Dobbins	Henry	J.		23 Oct 1891	2-Mar-73	Gone but not forgotten
Fielder	Lawrence	Clevon		1-Oct-42	25-May-00	No Head Stone.
Glymph	Mary	Annie	Sloane	1913	1990	Daughter of William & Mary SLOANE
Green	Rev. John			21 Feb 1871	2-Jul-16	
Griffin	Willie			31-Dec-00	31-Mar-89	
Harper	Edith	Doris		22-Sep-31	14-Apr-84	Dau of Fanny Jones & Evaline P. Smith. At The age 53 years. Resting in Peace
Harper	Forney			29-Apr-03	22-Nov-91	
Hawkins	Annie	B		00/00/1908	00/00/1948	
Hawkins	Clementine			11-Aug-26	4-Feb-94	
Hawkins	Eddie			1905	1970	
Hawkins	George			7-Mar-11	5-Sep-92	US Army WWII
Hawkins	Henvha	S.		10-Oct-08	2-Mar-77	Mother. At the age 59 years. Gone but not forgotten.
Hawkins	Hugh			20-Dec-03	7-May-71	
Hawkins	Infant Son			11-May-53	11-May-53	Infant son of Junius Jr. & Dorothy Hawkins.
Hawkins	Junius			01 may 1878	13-Oct-41	At the age 63 years. Sadly Missed
Hawkins, Jr.	Junius			7-May-17	12-Aug-97	
Hawkins	Maggie		Pattillo	11 May 1885	2-Feb-74	At the age 83 years. Sadly Missed.
Hawkins	Oscar			14-Aug-19	23-Feb-72	At the age 53 years. Sadly Missed.
Hunter	Lillie	Bell	Sloane	11-Mar-04	27-Oct-98	Daughter of William SLOANE & Lula SMITH
Jimerson	Johnny			7-Jun-41	15-May-93	
Jimmerson	Johnny			1940	1993	No Marker.

NOTE: DOB = Date of Birth; DOD = Date of Death



# TOONES Chapel AME Church Cemetery, Tulip, AR

SURNAME	FIRST	MIDDLE	MAIDEN	DOB	DOD	NOTES
Jones					28-Sep-11	Marker was broken, just says; wife of Henry Jones. Died sept 28,1911. As a wife, Devoted. As a Mother affectionate. As a friend ever kind & true.
Jones	Bettie			01 Mar 1885	9/17/19??	Wife of Tom Jones. (Broken)
Jones	Ben			16-Apr-00	1-Apr-63	In loving memory of. At the age__
Jones	Eltezer		Smith	1923	11-Jun-60	No Marker.
Jones	George			16 Jun 1890	3-Sep-73	
Jones	Hazel		Jones	28-Oct-12	9-Mar-84	No Marker.
Jones	Hugh			08 Dec 1896	20-May-77	Marker was buried.
Jones	John	Henry		10-May-29	4-Nov-00	
Lee	David			18-Feb-66	25-Apr-86	
Means	Vassie			16-Jun-15	25-Mar-80	Gone but not forgotten
Matlock	Mattie		Smith	27-Jan-17	16-Jun-95	
Morris	Lou				15-Aug-10	Age 88 years. Gone to a bright Home _____.
Owens	Charles, Jr.			26-Jul-96	26-Jul-96	No Marker.
Pattillo	Callie			29 Feb 1896	3-Feb-47	At Rest.
Pattillo	Kate			1-Mar-00	21-Nov-18	Dau of Ed & Patsy Pattillo. Beautiful, Lovely. She was but given a fair bud on earth
Pattillo	Tom			23 Apr 1810	30 Jan1880	
Penix	Shirley	Mae		24-Apr-45	16-Jun-00	
Roberts	Gladys		Smith	8-Jun-39	18-Jul-99	
Sams	Clayton			00/00/1875	00/00/1919	Our beloved husband and father at rest.
Sams	Daisy	Lee		15-May-25	22-Mar-37	Gone to a better land
Scott	Rederick	L.			31 Mar __01	Age 28. No Marker.
Sloan	Margie	Del		3-Jul-44	17-Nov-44	Dau of Dorothy Lea SLOANE
Sloan	Mary	Birtha	Smith	25 May 1885	11-Sep-33	No Marker.
Sloan	William	A.		08 Mar 1882	7-Apr-69	
Sloan	Willie	Earl		1-Mar-19	11-Mar-90	US Army WWII
Smith	??			05 Sep 1889	9-Jan-01	Can't read headstone.
Smith	Alex			21 Oct 1880	20 Sep 1897	Son of Alex & Lucy " We will meet again."
Smith	Andrew	Whitney		7-Jul-21	11-Feb-84	See Whitney, Andrew.
Smith	Blake			1954	1982	Beloved one, farewell
Smith	Rev. Booker	T.		1916	1988	
Smith	Clarence			4-Sep-05	5-Oct-88	
Smith	Charles	J.		18 Dec 1861	8-Mar-37	Gone, but not forgotten.
Smith	Curtis			14-Jan-26	12-Mar-72	At the age 54 years. Sadly Missed.
Smith	Elise		Dobbins	00 ???1895	31-Dec-46	No Marker. Wife of Richard S. SMITH.
Smith	Eugenia			13-Aug-06	14-Oct-96	Wife of Rev B. T.
Smith	Evaline	P.		22-Dec-13	1-Aug-89	Wife of Green A.
Smith	Fanny		Pattillo		22-Apr-05	
Smith	Freedonia			00/00/1929	00/00/2001	No Marker.
Smith	George	McKinzey		22-May-02	3-Aug-82	At the age 80 years. Resting in Peace.
Smith	George	W.		17-Jul-01	12-Jul-61	Arkansas PVT Co D 15 Inf Repl 18N WWI
Smith	Georgia	Ann			16-Feb-54	Wife of William Lee SMITH. "At Rest
Smith	Green	Arch		26-Jan-10	3-Jan-94	
Smith	Hazel	v.	Sloane	1905	1981	Daughter of William & Mary SLOANE. "Rest in Peace."
Smith	Howell "Hal"			Mar 1872	1935	No Marker.
Smith	James	C.		16-Jul-04	May-44	"At the age 40 tears. Sleep on at rest."
Smith	James	Charlie		21-Jun-39	3-Jun-63	No Marker.
Smith	James	D.		03 Jul 1897	13-Nov-55	"Arkansas Cook US Army WWI"
Smith	Leatha			14 May 1889	9-Sep-86	"Gone but not forgotten."
Smith	Louella			28 Aug 1885	06 Apr 1888	"Dau of Alex & Lucy Smith. We will meet again."
Smith	Lovlor_	A.		Sep 1834	22-Jul-17	

# 1826 Inward Slave Manifests, Port of New Orleans, Roll 6



Melvyn Gillette is an Arkansas native whose path to school took her through the local cemetery -- this constant exposure fostering an abiding interest in the community's history. She began to write down her family's history more than thirty years ago, but only began serious research about ten years ago. All four of her grandparents were born in Arkansas, three within the same county as she, with migrations from AL, MO, NC, TN and VA to Arkansas. Her family tree has become a "community tree," and includes all of the intertwined families of her community.

In addition to her work on the Inward Slave Manifests, she is extracting the black households from the 1900 census from Clark County, AR and is also developing an extensive database of marriage records for the county, from 1866 - 1951. Gillette worked on the transcription of the manifests a little more than a year, and is now proofreading while compiling the three indices that accompany the transcription: (1) Slaves with Surnames; (2) Ships; (3) Owners, shippers, ship's masters, consignees, etc.

Ms. Gillette may be reached at: [tootncmon@webtv.net](mailto:tootncmon@webtv.net)

In our last edition of *From the Baobab Tree* we published a small sampling of transcriptions from the **Inward Slave Manifests** project which has been organized by Dr. Dee Parmer Woodtor. Ms. Gillette is one of many volunteers who has devoted countless hours to this undertaking. She is a valuable member of the AAGSNC and we are pleased to published this small sampling of the work she has done. For additional information about this resource, we refer you to [www.afrigenas.com](http://www.afrigenas.com). -- ED.

**Entry #:** 304    **Date:** 5 Dec 1826    **Port:** Baltimore    **Ship:** Hibernia    **Master:** Matthew Robinson  
**Owner/Shipper:** Austin Woolfolk    **Consignee:** Reynolds Byrnes & Co., New Orleans

NAME	SEX	AGE	HEIGHT	DESCRIPTION
Henry Roberts	Man	24	5-3	Mulatto
Samuel Butts	Man	24	5-7	Black
Richard Mathis	Man	20	6-0	Bright Mulatto
William Wilson	Boy	11	4-3	Black
Rich d Sinclair	Boy	15	5-1	Bright Mulatto
Caleb Goodwin	Man	22	5-5	Dark Mulatto
Varnale Johnson	Man	22	5-6	Dark Mulatto
Harvey Miller	Man	21	5-6	Black
John Small	Man	18	5-9	Black
Moses Perkins	Boy	11	4-3	Dark Mulatto
Benj Addison	Man	22	5-5	Black
Alex Gilpin	Man	35	5-8	Black
Malan Brown	Man	19	5-8	Bright Mulatto
James Morton	Man	26	5-9	Dark Mulatto
Thos Pleasants	Man	38	5-2	Black
Jesse Robison	Man	21	5-6	Black
Geo Bloxton	Man	25	5-5	Black
Joe Ringgold	Man	37	5-10	Black
Henry Christy	Man	24	5-10	Black
Abram Murro	Man	21	6-0	Dark Mulatto
Thos Anthony	Man	24	5-11	Black
Henry Miller	Man	22	5-9	Dark Yellow
Shadrack Ward	Man	25	5-6	Black
James Johnson	Man	25	5-8	Black
Bill Davis	Man	24	5-8	Black
Thos Johnson	Man	19	5-6	Dark Yellow
Bob Campet	Man	19	5-6	Dark Yellow
Philip Miller	Man	20	5-6	Dark yellow
Ned Tilghman	Man	25	5-9	Black
John ?illey	Man	19	5-?	Black
Bill Ringgold (?)	Man	16	5-0	Black
Solomon Wilme?	Man	18	5-5	Black
Vachel Gazaw (?)	Boy	17	5-4	Black
Emory Lias	Boy	17	5-2	Dark Yellow
Tom Betts	Boy	18	5-5	Black
Asbery Tolden	Boy	17	5-0	Black
Wm Tilghman	Boy	15	4-10	Black

# Member Spotlight - M. Howard Edwards



M. Howard Edwards was born in Indianapolis and raised in Terre Haute, IN. He was educated in Indiana schools, served time in the United States Army and moved to San Francisco almost 40 years ago. He is married to Sandra Dalida and has three children from his first marriage and two stepchildren: a boy and four girls. He lives in Hayward after residing nearly 30 years in Richmond. He is the Purchasing Manager for the City of Palo Alto.

His interest in genealogy started when he was unable to determine the white members of his family, being absolutely certain that there was one or some. This curiosity stayed dormant for maybe a dozen years. A cousin, Leroy Edwards, passing through San Francisco, had what amounted to an abbreviated list of family members. It was made up by a much older cousin, Estel Edwards, a man he had never met but knew about.

Edwards read a Reader's Digest article by a writer named Alex Haley who was writing a book and trying to trace his family history back to Africa. This sparked a revival of his efforts to find all of his family members. Wouldn't it be great to find the African Edwards' as well as the European ones! Following Mr. Haley's research techniques from the article, he located the Family History Center in the Mormon Temple in Oakland. He shared his excitement in finding his first relative in a United States Census: his grandfather in an 1900 census as an eight year old child. He had never before considered this roly-poly old man as a child. The wonder of this discovery really stimulated his continued research.

One of the valuable techniques he has used to round out family facts is to write to, and join, the historical societies of the communities he has researched. The North Carolina Genealogical Society found his grandmother. The Alleghany County (NC) Historical Society found his cousin, unbelievably, in Oakland, California. He did not know she was there. The Gibson County (IN) Historical Society found perhaps his oldest relative: Robert Cole, b 1780 in Virginia. He has yet to confirm that this was his Robert Cole, but he feels he is on the right track.

Edwards attended the annual meetings of the California Genealogical Society. They had remarkably good one-hour presentations by genealogists on all possible aspects of beginning and intermediate researching. It was there where he met Charlesetta Braggs-Ford who told him about the beginnings of a black genealogical club and invited him to join. That is where he met Electra Kimble Price and learned some really obscure tricks of the trade.

This has been a long, long pursuit for him. Edwards feels that he has reached the end of the road to finding his direct line to Adam and Eve, but the journey has been a gratifying and enriching experience for him. He characterizes his family as pretty ordinary. In addition to being black, there were no famous people, no infamous people, no headline makers, no scholars, no very rich family members, no people that would be missed if missed in the census, or their property records lost, or tax receipts not recorded. They joined the billions of people who have passed over the earth with no record of their passing. Despite its difficulty, family research has been an enriching experience for him. He has met new people, visited and enjoyed a part of the nation he would never have visited for any other reason than genealogical research, and plans to visit others. Being there gives the flavor, the culture, and the contacts that mail simply will not provide. Following the advice of Tony Burroughs, in his AAGSNC seminar last year, Edwards intends to use all the information accumulated from research in writing a family history as a legacy. ✱

Mr. Edwards may be reached at [mhedwards\\_1@msn.com](mailto:mhedwards_1@msn.com).

SURNAME	FIRST	MIDDLE	MAIDEN	DOB	DOD	NOTES
Smith	Malinda			09 Feb 1875	12-Sep-66	"Mother. At the age 91 years."
Smith	Mattie	A.		21 Jul 1896	28-Apr-70	
Smith	May	L.		27-May-16	21-Sep-48	Dau of Rev. & Mrs. W. B. Smith
Smith	Mr. Monist			12-Jan-28	15-Nov-70	At the age 42 years. Sadly missed
Smith, Jr.	Morris			3-May-32	5-Jan-88	
Smith	Morris	Calvin "Pete"		12-Jan-59	6-Jun-97	"Beloved Father & son"
Smith	Otis	Lee		22-Nov-47	26-Sep-77	"At the age 31 years. At Rest."
Smith	Patsy	T.		15 Jan 1850	06 Nov 1924	"Mother. Our dear Mother"
Smith	Richard			8-Mar-09	7-Oct-96	
Smith	Richard	S.		01 Jul 1894	1-Dec-59	"Father. At the age 64 years. Sadly missed."
Smith	Robert	A.		26 Dec 1877	23-Jan-53	"At Rest"
Smith	Rosa				15-Feb-16	Broken
Smith	Sam	M.		01-Aug-21	24-Sep-77	"US Army WWII"
Smith	Thunia		Jones	08-May-04	16-Oct-84	"Wife of George SMITH. At the age 80 years. Resting in Peace."
Smith	Vanessa			5-Oct-56	23-Nov-90	In Loving Memory.
Smith	William	M.		3-May-07	7-Apr-85	At age 32 years. Resting in Peace.
Smith	William	Lee "Willie"		02 Apr 1879	18-Mar-56	
Smith	William	T. "Dub"		1-Mar-31	1-Jan-98	No Marker.
Smith	Willie "Bill"	Maxine		19-Nov-15	5-Jun-87	"Beloved wife of Albert Lloyd Smith"
Thomas	Peggy	Jean		00/00/1955	00/00/1999	No Marker.
Walker	Bessie	M.		25 May 1890	3-Dec-42	
Walker	Curtis			4-Nov-14	10-Dec-97	"Husband"
Walker	Henry	L.		1-Jun-17	8-Jul-67	
Walker	Jim			25 May 1890	3-Dec-42	
Walker	Ruth	Ellen		28-Apr-08	12-Sep-77	
Walker	Victoria			22-Sep-24	16-Jun-86	
Walker-Sloan	Bessie		Smith	02 Feb 1896	23-Apr-76	Dau of Howall Smith, Wife of Jim Walker & William Sloane.
Warren	Annie				2-Apr-01	At age 83.
Warren	David			08 Dec 1885	10-Aug-42	Wife of David Warren
Warren	Mary			28-Jan-08		
Warren	William			07 Feb 1881	25-Aug-21	Will Do Chamber 351. Kingsland, Ark (Broken)
Warren	Willie	D.		18-Mar-04	6-Sep-10	
Whitney	Andrew			7-Jul-21	11-Feb-84	At the age 62 years. See also Smith, Andrew
Williams	Bradley			1994	1994	No Marker.
Williams	Carrie	Sue	Smith	16-Aug-29	5-May-98	No Marker.
Williams	Mary	Lea	Smith	22-Feb-25	26-Nov-73	No Marker. Daughter of George & Thunia SMITH.
Williams	Silas			23-Oct-22	9-Aug-94	In Loving Memory of, At age 72.
Wilson	Mattie	Carrie	Smith	14 Mar 1888	22-Aug-72	At the age 84 years. In loving memory.
	??			25 Oct 1889	2-Oct-10	Age 20 years, 11 months, 25 days.



Photo courtesy of Lisa B. Lee, Oakland, CA

**Florence Randolph Jackson Lee**, the daughter of Charles Kersey Jackson and Mary Luvisa Bruce, was b. 1884 in Jersey City, NJ. She graduated from the Pratt Institute (Brooklyn, NY) in 1905 and worked as a modiste in New York City until she moved to Buffalo, NY to marry Edward David Lee in 1917. In 1922, Florence founded the Lit-Mus Study Club. Derived from a contraction of literature and music, the group's mission was "to study history, sociology, civic, literature, music, and any other subject chosen to improve our community and to promote sociability among our members." The Club holds the distinction of being the oldest active affiliate of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs in the city of Buffalo and continues a tradition of service to the community. Edward Lee died in 1954 and Florence in 1965. Both died in Buffalo.



Photo courtesy of Jamila Sloan, Oakland, CA

**Toone's Chapel AME Church and cemetery, Tulip, AR**



# Blacks in Nova Scotia - Who Were They?

by Barbara A. Tyson

Among the 3,000 black Loyalists who embarked from New York for Nova Scotia in 1783 were Henry Mitchell, age 23, and Phillis Mitchell, 22, carrying her 6-month old child in her arms. They were aboard the ship CLINTON, captained by Lt. Trounce and bound for Annapolis and St. John's Nova Scotia. Henry was described as "stout fellow," formerly the property of John Mitchell of Charlestown, South Carolina. Phillis, "likely wench," had also been owned by John Mitchell. Henry and Phillis had "left" him four years earlier.

Discovering the Henry and Phillis and John Mitchell names on one of the lists of the "Book of Negroes" brought me full circle back to America and the Carolinas in my search for my ancestors. I had started out in North Carolina, looking for paternal great grandparents who had been slaves. My maternal relatives from Nova Scotia had never known of slaves in their ancestry. Through the Black Loyalist Directory, with its transcriptions of the original lists of free, fugitive, and enslaved persons referenced in the Book of Negroes, I brought my relatives and myself to the full realization of the duality of my family's history and am now delving into the slave history in both North and South Carolina.

The exact circumstances by which Henry and Phillis Mitchell arrived at their free status in July 1783 have yet to be determined. Perhaps they were runaways. Some slaves had been abandoned by their owners upon British sequestration of their estates. Others had seized the opportunity to slip aboard British vessels during the chaotic evacuation of Charlestown. Suffice it to say that in throwing in their lot with the defeated British at the close of the Revolutionary War, the future of Henry and Phillis in Nova Scotia would certainly be no worse than their past lives in bondage.

During the preceding years of war, turmoil, danger, and disruption, many former slaves had gone over to the British lines, served in varying capacities of military occupations, and earned special certificates of passages. The largest number of blacks had made their way from Virginia and South Carolina to New York prior to 1783,

Photo courtesy of the Nova Scotia Museum, Virtual Museum Canada, and the Black Cultural Centre of Nova Scotia, Dartmouth (museum.gov.ns.ca/blackloyalists/settlements.htm)



**Historical black settlements in Nova Scotia**

responding to British proclamations and enticements of land, security, and provisions. Other blacks were from New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Georgia. Their numbers among the white Loyalists fleeing the American victory were estimated at 10% of the total number seeking refuge in Nova Scotia at the end of the war.

The Black Loyalists of 1783 were the first major group to settle Nova Scotia. The majority were established at Birchtown, just outside of Shelburne, on the southern rocky shores of Nova Scotia. The second largest community of black settlers was at the Annapolis Basin on the northwest side of Nova Scotia, on the Bay of Fundy. Brindley Town, on the outskirts of Digby, offered a slightly better existence over Birchtown for the newcomers, for the land eventually obtained by the black Loyalists was more fertile and the bays, coves, and rivers held abundant fish.

It was at Digby that Henry and Phillis were mustered along with a group of 211 immigrants in May-June 1784. Henry did receive one acre of the land promised by the British, however, it was not until 1789 that he applied for and apparently was granted 50 acres in the township of Clements. His Mitchell family and descendants were subsequently identified in the 1838 Census of Coloured Inhabitants in the Township of Clements

as well as the 1861, 1881, 1891, and 1901 censuses of Annapolis County. Jesse Mitchell, born in 1841, was the great-grandson of Henry Mitchell. Jesse raised a large family of 14 in the Granville area and many of these children came to the United States, settling primarily in the Boston area. During the twentieth century, the Mitchells of Annapolis County have resided on land in Granville Ferry and Inglewood, a predominantly black enclave along the Bay Road on the outskirts of Bridgetown.

The second major group of blacks to settle Nova Scotia were the notorious Maroons, a group of Jamaicans who steadfastly refused to be enslaved in their West Indies homeland. The term, "maroon," derives from the Spanish word "Cimarron," meaning wild or untamed. It came to signify runaway slaves. Maroons often took to the hills, becoming outlaws, fiercely resisting capture and maintaining their own communities. In 1796, the British, finding the Maroons indomitable and incorrigible, removed 600 of them to Nova Scotia for settlement on some of the lands previously occupied by black Loyalists who had been re-settled on the West coast of Africa, in Sierra Leone. After four years, most of the Maroons joined the earlier black Loyalists in their desire to escape the harsh conditions of climate, poverty, disease, and disillusionment in their Nova Scotia communities. Again, they

embarked in ships heading for a continent that had originally been home to many of them and their ancestors. Finding even less solace among the hostile African tribes and duplicitous British policies, they finally were repatriated to their adopted homeland in Jamaica after a half century of wanderings and displacement. The lasting legacy of the Maroons in Nova Scotia is the huge Citadel fortification they constructed which overlooks Halifax Harbor.

The War of 1812 between America and Great Britain precipitated a third major exodus of blacks from the Western hemisphere to Nova Scotia. Most of the 1,200 Americans who arrived during the War did so in 1813 and 1814. They departed from the Chesapeake Bay and were deposited by British naval vessels in Halifax. This time, however, the black refugees were not accompanied by white Loyalists to share in their adjustment and acclimation to the rigors of the Nova Scotia environment. About 1,000 refugees settled in Preston, where they joined black Loyalists and a few remaining Maroons.

Slavery was abolished in the British colonies in 1834. The American Civil War ended slavery officially in 1865. Preston, like other black communities in Nova Scotia, experienced the departure of Afro-Canadians to the United States after 1865. Many of these blacks had skills and work experience to be applied in the newly freed environment of America.



Photo courtesy of The Black Battalion, 1916-1920, Ruck, Calvin W.

**WWI veterans of the No. 2 Construction Battalion, enlisted on July 25, 1916**

The descendants of Henry and Phillis

Mitchell have populated Halifax, Sackville, Preston, and North Preston, as well as the Annapolis County areas previously referenced. They have evolved economically from farmers and laborers to teachers, preachers, meteorologists, public health nurses, and other professionals. A significant contribution to Nova Scotia's military history was made by Arthur Sims, a great-great-great-grandson of Henry Mitchell. In 1916, Arthur enlisted with the No. 2 Construction Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Forces, the first and only black battalion in Canadian military history. There was much resistance to the entry of blacks in the military, including fear that white soldiers would not wish to eat or share quarters with blacks, and apprehension that American blacks would seek to gain a foothold by enlisting in a construction battalion. Nova Scotians were seen as suitable for duty, however, and eventually the battalion was formed. It included recruits from across Canada – New Brunswick, Cape Breton, Ontario, Quebec, Western Canada. About 200 soldiers from the U.S.A. were among the ranks of the Black Construction Battalion. The Battalion served with distinction in France.

In 1926, Arthur Sims and his wife, Ethel, immigrated with their ten children from Inglewood, Nova Scotia to Pleasantville, New Jersey. There, Arthur reunited with his mother, Olivia Mitchell, who had been in the United States since 1903 and remarried to Randolph Burwell of Boydton, Virginia. Descendants of Arthur Sims currently reside in New Jersey, New York, Philadelphia, and California. \*

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**Barbara Tyson, M.S.**, is Education Chairperson of the African American Genealogy Society of Sacramento, CA (AAGSSC) and Leader of the Oklahoma Study

Group of the AAGSNC. She has been researching her North Carolina roots for 17 years and corresponds regularly with adescendant of the Tyson slaveholders in North Carolina. Ms. Tyson has traced her Nova Scotia family back to 1761 and the black Loyalists. She has presented at the California Genealogical Society's 15th Annual Family History Fair in Pleasanton, CA in 2000, as well as the First Annual West Coast Summit on African American Genealogy in Oakland, CA in 2001.

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