

**P3 BLACK HISTORY MONTH(S)**

Because researching African ancestored genealogy is a year long pursuit.



**P4 A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS - THE RESULTS**

Thanks for providing your feedback for our 2012 Membership Survey. Read more about the results.

**P8 MY LONG ROAD BACK TO WILLIAM GRIMES**

A grade school project spawns years of curiosity which lead to a connection to the first ever fugitive slave narrative.



**P10 AFRICAN AMERICAN RESEARCH WORKSHOP**

Once a month, family researchers gather together to learn about African ancestored genealogy research.

# the Baobab Tree

Journal of the African American Genealogical Society of Northern California, Inc. / Winter 2013 / ISSN 1543-4125



## Tracked for Freedom

The mural of sovereignty, integration, and their priceless remnants

by Nicka Smith  
Co-Editor, *The Baobab Tree*

History shows that perceived invasions of privacy, such as collecting vital records or tax schedules, provide a bird's eye view into a time, a people, and the archaic systems that gave birth to the current, more progressive world. While citizens resist the US Patriot Act or even the collection of internet activity by Google, it's clear that today's furor over

privacy will lead to findings galore for a future family researcher, regardless of the negative or positive nature of the discovery. The growing pains of diminishing privacy are needed, and the aches are necessary to ensure that an entire story is told, even if it's from the not so popular side.

The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission, created on March 29, 1956, was a predecessor of the USA Patriot Act and a response to a federal "breach of peace" known as *Brown vs. The Board of Education*.

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### Board of Directors

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of Northern California (AAGSNC)

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[WWW.AAGSNC.ORG](http://WWW.AAGSNC.ORG)

*It's Your History...*

Isn't it time you told **your**  
story?

The African-American Genealogical Society of Northern California (AAGSNC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated in its commitment to national and international African-ancestry family history research. The society provides a unique approach to education, research skills, and support to anyone interested in genealogy.

### Objectives

- To promote interest in genealogy, biography, and related history in African ancestry research
- 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

### Membership and it's benefits

Any person interested in furthering the objectives of AAGSNC is eligible for membership upon submission and acceptance of a completed application form and payment of dues.

Membership categories are as follows:

- Regular Membership: Age 17 and Over
- Family Membership
- Youth Membership: Age 16 and Under
- Organization Membership: Association, Library, Society, Non-Profit Group
- Lifetime Regular Membership: Age 17 and Over
- Lifetime Family Membership

Monthly Meetings - AAGSNC holds monthly meetings that include guest speakers, workshops, seminars, and networking with other members. Meetings are held on the third Saturday of each month (except July and August) from 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Dimond Branch of the Oakland Public Library, 3565 Fruitvale Avenue, Oakland, CA 94602-2326.

Field Trips and Research Support - Members can attend regularly scheduled trips to the local Family History Center and receive assistance with their research projects. Participation in organized research trips to the Salt Lake City Family History Library and taking part in events with other historical and genealogical organizations are included in our program.

Members Only Section of Our Website - Compiled Databases, *The Baobab Tree* archive, meeting presentations (PDFs, video, and podcasts), Ancestral Charts, and more.

To join, please visit [www.aagsnc.org](http://www.aagsnc.org)



# The Branch

Words from the Society President and Journal Editors

## Inside this issue

### Black History Month(s) The Afflicted and The Awakened



Photo courtesy of M. Howard Edwards

by **M. Howard Edwards**  
President, AAGSNC

Yes, month(s).

America has set aside the month of February to honor

the history of Americans of African descent. This came from famed historian Carter G. Woodson who established Negro History Week in 1926. He selected the second week of February because this week held the birthdates of both Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. In the American bicentennial year of 1976 the federal government adopted February as Black History Month, and it was introduced by President Gerald Ford.

For us afflicted with a determination to study African-ancestry family history, Black History Month lasts all year long and for many years. For those who are not touched by the affliction, this month may be the only awakening they experience all year long. This provides an opportunity for those of us who are afflicted to interest those so awakened to join us in our search—mainly by helping those that have shown an interest in looking into their own family’s origins. It will be rewarding for the afflicted, and it may entice the awakened to become one of us. We are not a bad sort, and we can be a lot of fun to be around despite our rather limited conversational skills.

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### Look Back, Plan Ahead



Photo courtesy of Annette Madden

by **Annette Madden**  
Co-Editor, *The Baobab Tree*

January takes its name from Janus, the Roman god of beginnings and transitions. He is depicted with two faces, one looking back at the past and the other looking ahead into the future. January thus seems an appropriate time to look back at 2012 and ahead to 2013 as far as your genealogy is concerned.

This is the perfect time to review your research to date and set out your goals for the coming year. Maybe you can tackle one of your brick walls again, or make sure that all of your sources are noted and up to date. Or, perhaps you’ll finally start writing that family history (my personal favorite) or interview your oldest relatives before it is too late. Maybe start organizing a family reunion? Or...

The list is endless and varied. But start now. Before you know it, January 2014 will be upon you and your “To Do” list will not have changed.

What did you accomplish in your research last year? What do you hope to accomplish this year?

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# A Penny for Your Thoughts - The Results

*You spoke. We listened. Here are highlights from the 2012 Membership Survey.*

The Executive Committee of AAGSNC would like to take the time to thank society members who provided their input regarding the society and its activities for the 2012 Membership Survey. Your feedback will help ensure that the society remains your go-to organization to support your genealogy research.

Below are selected highlights from surveys collected by mail, online, and in person at monthly meetings.

## Membership and Mission

- Years of membership: Less than one year: 8%, One to four years: 35%, More than five years: 47%
- 70% felt the society was very supportive in educating them about genealogy
- 49% felt the society was very supportive in developing their genealogy research skills
- 56% felt the society was very supportive in helping them learn about African ancestored genealogy research in the U.S.
- 47% felt the society was somewhat supportive in helping them learn about African ancestored research internationally
- 51% felt the society was somewhat supportive in helping them learn about preserving genealogical and historical materials
- 47% felt the society was somewhat supportive in helping them learn about maintaining ethical standards in genealogical research
- Members said they would not renew their membership for these top four reasons: Financial reasons, Society Culture (Politics, personalities, etc.), Lack of services and support locally, I've outgrown what is currently being provided. 19% of the respondents were life members and did not provide an answer to this question.

## Communications

- 81% receive Yahoo Groups emails while only 40% receive MailChimp emails
- 70% learn about what's going on in the society through *The Baobab Tree*
- Most have attended four to six meetings this year
- The top four things that would make members come to more meetings, if they live locally are: Better meeting topics/programs, more support for my individual research needs, more local programs outside of monthly meetings.

The top three most valuable meeting programs in 2012 were: Beyond the Census, Reviewing the 1940 Census, Breaking Through Brick Walls, and DNA.



Photo Credit: AAGSNC

Attendance at AAGSNC monthly meetings has increased during 2012. The Program Committee has used the input provided by the 2012 Membership Survey to create the schedule of meeting programs for 2013.

The top three least valuable meeting programs in 2012 were: Christmas Party and "Black Elephant" Sale, Braggin' and Lyin' and Social Media, and Organization - Genealogy Software and Record Keeping.

## Use of Technology

- 88% have used an online repository for research
  - 53% have used a search engine for research
  - 51% have used webinars in their research
  - 23% have used podcasts in their research
- \*Respondents could check more than one answer\**

The most used DNA test among respondents was 23andMe. 70% of them had utilized this test, while only 23% had utilized African Ancestry.

42% viewed the Understanding 23andMe webinar recording.

74% had not listened to a podcast on the AAGSNC blog. Of those that did listen to a podcast, the one most listened to was the Melvin Collier interview.

Topics suggested for future webinars are: DNA basic analysis, trainings on webinars, researching on FamilySearch, information found on a census, military research, solving brick walls, topics from the meeting programs.

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# The Leaf

Updates from the Board of Directors,  
Officers, Society Committees, and Blog

## New Members Only Field Trips Announced

AAGSNC's Program Committee recently announced 2013 members only field trips. Below lists details for each:

### February 23 - California Genealogical Society & Library (CGS)

This field trip includes a formal tour of the library and a panel discussion/presentation by AAGSNC and CGS members Felicia Addison, Annette Madden, Vernester Sheeler, Nicka Smith, and Jackie Stewart. Pre-registration is required. Limited to the first 30 registrants. To register, visit <http://tinyurl.com/BlackHistSemReg>

### May 10 - California State Library, Sutro

### August 16 - National Archives and Records Administration, San Bruno

### November 9 - Oakland Family Search Library

Field trips are free for members of AAGSNC but will have a fee associated for those in the general public who would like to attend. For questions, please contact Jackie Stewart, Program Committee Chair at [programs@aagsnc.org](mailto:programs@aagsnc.org)

## Gather at the Table Book Signing Event on January 20

*Gather at the Table* is the chronicle of Tom DeWolf and Sharon Morgan's shared journey toward racial reconciliation. Over a three year period, the pair traveled thousands of miles—visiting ancestral towns, courthouses, cemeteries, plantations, antebellum mansions, and historic sites both overseas and in twenty seven states—and engaged in deep conversations about how the lingering trauma of slavery shaped their lives. DeWolf and Morgan will share the story of their journey and lead attendees through an interactive exercise at this upcoming book signing sponsored by AAGSNC, in collaboration with Museum of the African Diaspora, and California Genealogical Society and Library.

Sunday, January 20, 2013

2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Museum of the African Diaspora  
685 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA  
94105

### Museum Admission

\$10 adults, \$5 seniors (65 and older), full time students with ID, FREE children under age 12

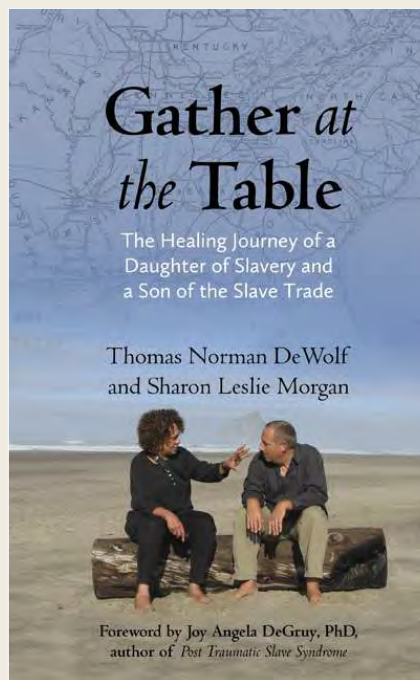


Photo Credit: Beacon Press

Seating is limited to the first 80 people.  
Please arrive early.

## 2013 Calendar of Events

### January 19

Annual Board Meeting and Practical Brick Wall Busting

### January 20

Gather at the Table Book Signing

### January 26

Beyond the Census Workshop Series Begins - See back cover for details

### February 16

Slave Research: a Case Study

### March 16

HERstory: Finding Female Ancestors

### April 20

More Than Vital Facts: Researching Social History

### May 18

People on the Move: Tracing the Migration of Your Ancestors

### June 15

The Family Reunion Planner's Primer

### September 21

Research Presentation, Braggin' and Lyin' Session

### October 19

Beyond the Census, Part I

### November 16

Beyond the Census, Part II

### December 21

Annual Holiday Party

For more info on our events and meetings, please visit [www.AAGSNC.org](http://www.AAGSNC.org)

# Tech Talk

Get your head into the cloud. Use cloud storage to work on, store, and share your documents.

by Nicka Smith

Chair, Outreach and Education Committee, AAGSNC, Co-Editor, *The Baobab Tree*

Clouds. Cloud storage. DropBox. Google Drive. You may have heard these terms recently when it comes to your genealogy research and wondered, what do they have to do with my ancestors? Well, they actually have a lot to do with your ancestors, and how you store and share the information that you discover while tracing your family tree.

## What is the cloud?

The cloud, simply put, is hard drive space that does not sit on your computer, but on the internet. It's like a USB flash drive that lives online but doesn't have to be plugged into a computer, is accessible anywhere with an internet connection, and can be shared with anyone you want.

The cloud is actually just a name for the place that the documents are saved, which is really a server that a company operates and gives you limited access to.

## How can I use the cloud?

Most of us have exported family reports from our favorite genealogy software. Imagine having access to them anywhere, including your mobile phone, or on a computer at the Family Search Library, without having to bring your own computer or a flash drive with you. Imagine being able to share the link to that report, or even a photo or entire database without having to clog up the recipients email inbox or having an email bounce back to you because of the file size.

Perhaps you collaborate with other researchers on a project and you're constantly emailing documents to each other. With shared cloud storage, you all can share and work on the same documents but have just one copy of the files since you all access the same location where the documents are stored.

Your cloud storage can be set up just like your own computer hard drive. You can create folders to stay organized and even restrict or limit access to documents you don't want to be shared or edited by others. There are lots of options.

## Where can I get my own cloud?

There are a number of different cloud services available online, with two of the more popular being Dropbox and Google Drive. We'll cover basics of these two.

**Dropbox.Com** allows a user with a free account to have two gigabytes (2 GB) of storage. With additional plugins, you can actually save documents right from your computer to a Dropbox folder that is displayed right along with your C or hard drive. You can create links to the files you want to share or give access to everything to specific people.

Google Drive provides the same functionality as Dropbox. Additional features are that it has five gigabytes (5 GB) of storage for free accounts and gives you the ability to create word processing documents, spreadsheets, PowerPoint-like presentations, drawing objects and more by integrating with Google Docs. Google Drive is great when you want to create a document, but may be on a computer that has an internet connection but doesn't have the Microsoft Office Suite on it. You can simply use the word processing component to type up notes and have them accessible wherever you have access to the internet.



Photos courtesy of Dropbox.Com and Google.Com

These are just a few of the features of each of the two more popular cloud storage systems. For details on each, please visit [www.dropbox.com](http://www.dropbox.com) or <http://drive.google.com> Have fun in the cloud!

**Nicka Smith** is the chair of the Outreach and Education Committee and co-editor of *The Baobab Tree* for the African American Genealogical Society of Northern California (AAGSNC). She's been researching her family since 1999. Email her at [oande@aagsnc.org](mailto:oande@aagsnc.org)

# Genealogy 101

*Starting your search at home can save you time, money, and give you more info than you had.*



Phone books or city directories have become nearly obsolete. These books may be housed deep in the recesses of your home and hold significant genealogical value. They may list things like name, address, race, and occupation of your ancestors.

by **Annette Madden**  
Co-Editor, *The Baobab Tree*

One of the resources you might overlook when you begin your research is right under your nose—what is in your home and the homes of your relatives. Many important documents and other genealogy sources are probably there and will contain a wealth of valuable information that can inform your hunt and perhaps save you lots of valuable research hours in the process.

Once you have searched your own home, contact relatives that live nearby and ask them to also look for documents and other items. Volunteer to come over and help them. This will also give you an opportunity to talk to them as they pull out things and begin to talk about them. A tour through a scrapbook can open many of their memories, giving you valuable information and insights into your family.

Call, email, or write more distant relatives and let them know that you are working on documenting the family and can use their help. Ask them to look through their documents, photographs, etc., and to send you scans, copies

or photographs of them. If they cannot do this themselves, find out if another relative living nearby can help them. Be aware that some people do not want to let their Bible or photographs out of their house, so your helper may have to photograph them. Today's digital cameras take scan-quality pictures.

A chart developed by Brigham Young University can serve as a guide to the items you may find in your home or the homes of your relatives. To access it, please visit <http://www.byub.org/ancestors/charts/oldpdf/checklist1.pdf>.

**Annette Madden** has been researching her family history since 2000 with great success. She has traced her history back to the late 1700s, has met many cousins she never knew she had and was instrumental in organizing a reunion of parts of her family that had not been together since the 1880s. She is a member of the African American Genealogical Society of Northern California and is currently the co-editor of the organization's quarterly journal, *The Baobab Tree*. Email her at [journal@aagsnc.org](mailto:journal@aagsnc.org)

# My Long Road Back to William Grimes

*A grade school project and simple question lead to a once in a lifetime discovery.*

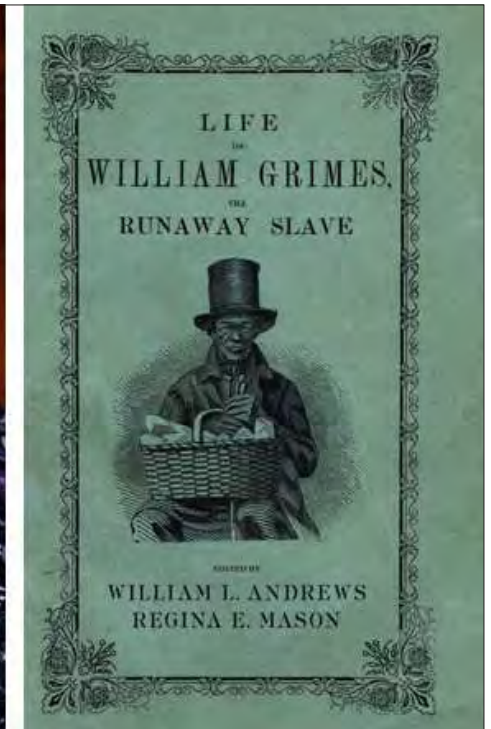
by Regina Mason  
Contributor

I was in fifth grade in the spring of 1971 at St. Augustine School in Oakland when my teacher, Sister Helen Walsh, instructed her students to prepare an oral report based on their true county of origin. Sister wanted to illustrate that America was the new world and that although we were all Americans, each one of us had relatively recent or lost ties to another country. I had no interest in making an African connection, let alone articulating one to my predominately white classmates. It was enough for me to be black and proud of it.

Nevertheless, as simple and as innocent as this assignment on “origins” was intended to be, it made me deeply curious *not* for Africa, but for my American heritage. That evening I asked my mother to tell me about my roots.

She began with thinly remembered sketches of people and places I had vaguely recalled hearing about maybe once before. It was a sketchy history with high points consisting merely of hazy references to family ties to New England, an early history in California, a Shakespearian actress, a coachman to a former California governor. Slavery and the South came up only when the conversation shifted to Mom’s grandfather, Grandpa Fuller, who, it was clear, had married into our apparently *free* (as far back as we knew) New England family. This revelation fascinated me for two reasons. It was the first time I had heard talk of my family’s enslaved heritage.

On the day of the class assignment, when it was my turn to present before the class, I mumbled something insignificant about Africa to my peers and quickly sat down. I was glad to have survived the self-imposed history ordeal and content to return to important



Author, speaker, and genealogist, Mason, left. The cover of the book she discovered and later added to, right.

kid things like school-yard games and chatty girlfriends. I couldn’t foresee the struggle that this assignment had touched off inside of me.

Sensing my misgivings about my history, a few weeks after she and I had our talk about roots, Mom took me to see her first cousin Katherine Webb, keeper of the family’s lore. As Aunt Katherine reminisced, fragments of family lore emerged that stuck in my memory. One dimly remembered yarn about a male ancestor captured my attention, maybe because my aunt knew only three concrete things about him: that his last name was Grimes, that he was from New Haven, Connecticut, and that he, in some unknown way, had a connection with the Underground Railroad. This Grimes who had defied slavery in some unknown way became my personal hero. I hungered for more information about Grimes, but my aunt had given me all she knew.

Sometime in October 1991 I took up genealogy as a hobby and soon after began pairing its methods with books on abolition and the Underground Railroad. I was hoping to find mention of a man named Grimes from New Haven with an Underground Railroad connection that might authenticate the family lore—thin as it was.

On a luminous summer afternoon in August of 1992, as my little girls played together, I gathered library books that were due to be returned. I noticed a title that I hadn’t read. Taking a seat on my living room couch, I began thumbing through Charles L. Blockson’s *The Underground Railroad*. Settling on the chapter Free New England, within the first few pages I stumbled upon a passage that made my heart race:

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# My Brick Wall

How a \$4 book helped unearth names and vital dates for ancestors unknown.

by Patricia Bayonne-Johnson  
Member, AAGSNC

When Donna Potter Phillips, president of Eastern Washington Genealogical Society, presented the lecture, "Is There A Book With My Family In It?," I thought: no way, unless I wrote it. Well, I was wrong. Not only is there a book with my family in it, I had a copy of the book in my library!

My brick wall came tumbling down with a tip from Michael Willis, my cousin and fellow AAGSNC member. Michael forwarded an email from Shawn Taylor, another cousin who related that excerpts from *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom 1725 – 1925* by Herbert G. Gutman contained the names and the birthdates of our Morgan and Weathers families. The first thing I did after reading her email, was to go to [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) to find a used copy. When I saw the cover of the book, I realized that I purchased that book years ago from Half-Price Books in Berkeley, CA, and it was sitting somewhere on a shelf in my office. I retrieved that book immediately, but not before purchasing a used, first edition, hardback copy for \$3.98!

The book contains several tables, charts and a couple of pages of a birth register that included my ancestors. This is what I learned from Shawn's email and the book on first notice:

- My ancestors resided on the Stirling Plantation in West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana. Lewis Stirling was the owner of this large sugar and cotton plantation.

- There were three birth registers which listed the names of 337 children born to 79 slave mothers between 1807 and 1865 on this plantation.
- I learned the names of my great-great grandparents. Their names were George also known as Long George and Linda also known as Linder.
- George and Linda had ten children.



Photo courtesy of Patricia Bayonne-Johnson

Their names and birth years were listed in tables.

- There was a copy of a page from the Slave Birth Registry, Stirling Plantation, West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, 1807-1865, in Gutman's book which included the complete birth record for Martha, my paternal great-grandmother.

I did some research and discovered that the Stirling Family Papers were at LSU in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I hired Judy Riffel, a professional genealogist who worked for me before, to go to the library to examine the birth records of Lewis Stirling. Judy found them on reel 25<sup>i</sup> and sent me two TIFF files consisting of 24 pages of birth records.

I found the names and birth records for my first, second and third great-grandparents, their children and a few death records. Listed below are the records of my direct ancestors from the birth registers. These people assumed the surname Morgan:

- Major and Fortine - my paternal great-great-great grandparents
- George, the son of Major and Fortine, was born Aug 1807
  - my paternal great-great grandfather
  - George died in 1863. (was written on the birth register)
  - Martha, daughter of Linder and Long George, was born July 8th 1851 – My paternal great grandmother

The following ancestors would become the Weathers:

- Leven – my paternal great-great-great-grandfather
- Big Judy – my paternal great-great-great-grandmother
- Linder, daughter of Leven & Big Judy, was born Feb 1814 – my paternal great-great grandmother

Birth registers were not the only documents that Judy found. She sent a list of Negroes who were issued shoes in 1832 and lists of taxable property which included my family from 1849 to 1861. Judy also found a sale dated 3 April 1807 of Leven, aged 22, from Isaac Shute to Foster & Withers. He was assigned to Lewis Stirling on November 7, 1807. Note that Leven's last name is Weathers, similar to Withers, his slave holder.

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All photos AAGSNC

# African American Research Workshop

Once a month, AAGSNC member Judith Collins leads a group in the pursuit of all things African ancestored genealogy at the Oakland Family Search Library. In their own words, they describe what they've learned, how they've grown, and why they keep coming back.

"Somebody has to do it and I think the ancestors said 'She's crazy enough, she's persistent enough, she's diligent enough, she'll do it.' So I think in every family somebody...gets chosen and you just have to step up and take the honor because it's indeed an honor. And I love it. I love people. I like the information and I've always loved history.

You know Ms. [Electra] Price, she's real smooth. I think what Ms. Price was doing was surveying the landscape for a little while and I think she said to herself 'I'm not going to continue to do this at the pace I've been doing it.' Then one day out of the blue she said 'Oh, you know I think you should take over this class.' She didn't want the music to stop...and I would never ever want to disappoint her."

—Judith Collins, Instructor

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1 - "I get to see people grow intellectually. I get to see that 'Ah ha!' moment. There's a pride that they didn't have before. There's a self-assurance that they didn't have before. There's an ability to go off and deal with this insanity in this world that they didn't have before because they feel that they are saddled with other information and other spirits working on their behalf. You see that transformation." - Judith Collins

2 - "[I've] learned different techniques such as going back 10 pages on a census. I would have never thought of that. I found lots of ancestors by doing that or even just by researching your area." - Willie Russell

3 - "The most important thing I've learned in this class with Judith is the background of the Great Migration and the pathways that different people took and why most people in California have roots in Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana because they were on the western edge of the slave area." - Janice Sellers

4 - The class participated in a group project where they mapped out their ancestors on one time line covered with the photos and documents they discovered.



5 - "I [have] just learned so much about the importance of family, the importance of knowing where you came from. It helped me to feel close to my mom and her people that I didn't know about. I just want to know everything I can...I've gotten back to 1840, to my great great great grandfather...so I am just determined to get it all together." - Karen Oyekami

6 - The workshop is packed with new, intermediate, and seasoned researchers. Each session is held the fourth Wednesday of the month, begins with instruction from 6:00-8:00pm, and ends with individual assistance from 8:00-8:45pm.

7 - "I've learned a lot [like] how to use the computer, how much of a resource the internet is, and some of the websites that are available at the Mormon Temple." - Donna Hegler

8 - Collins leads the workshop in the discussion of how traditions and customs from the south can give you clues about the locations your ancestors lived.

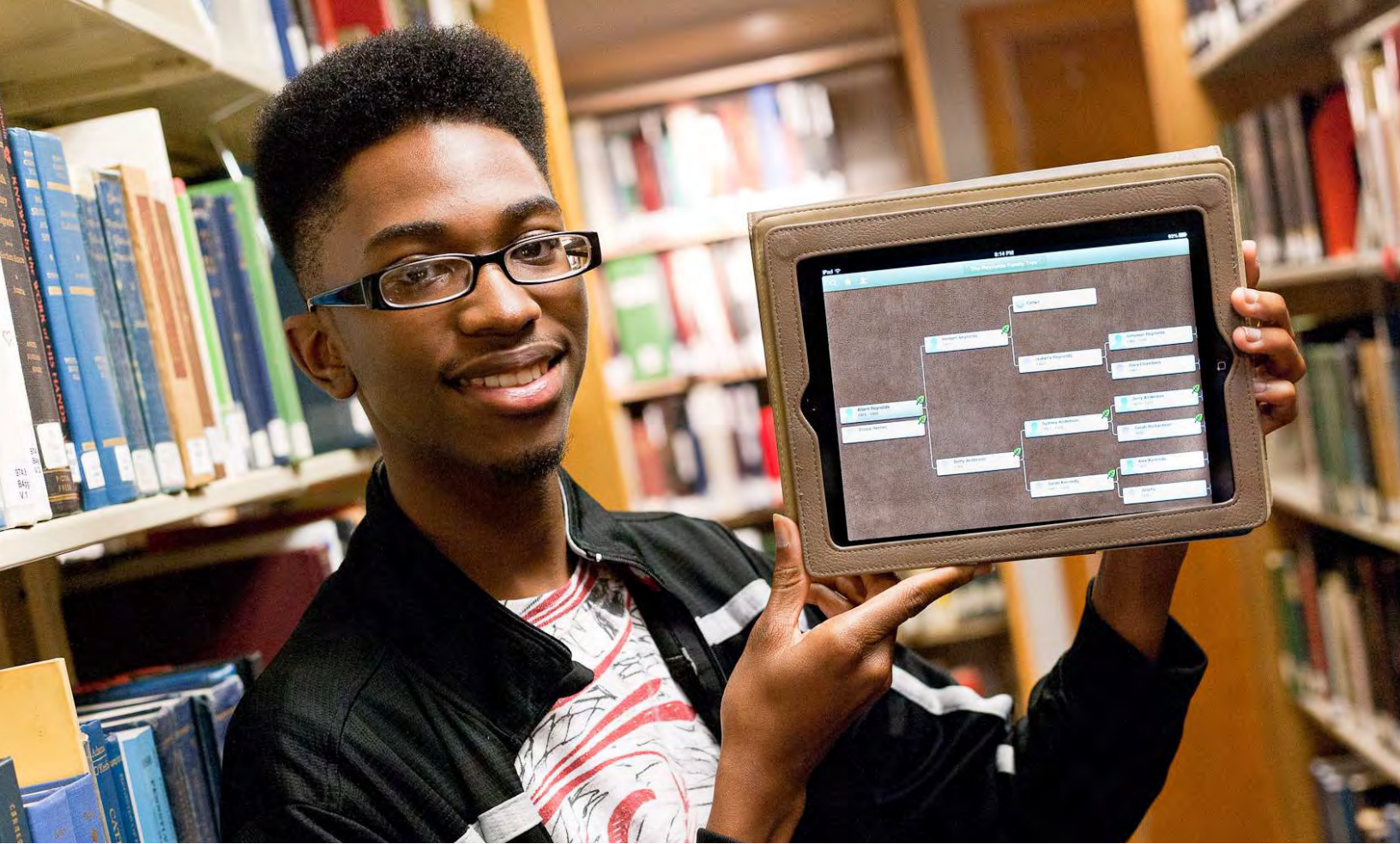


Photo credit: AAGSNC

Both the technologically new and seasoned participate in the workshop. Participant Willie Russell often uses his mobile device to take notes during class and to pull up his pedigree chart which is stored online.

“I’ve been doing this for about five years. I’ve always been interested in African American history. I just never realized that I could research my own history as well. I used to watch Henry Gates’ show and so I guess that’s what prompted me.

The best thing about the class is the knowledge and feeling of support because everybody helps each other. I do like that.”

—Willie Russell, Workshop Participant

“I joined because there’s always something new to learn and it’s free...it’s convenient...[and] this particular one [because] I had good experiences working with Electra [Price]...”

...I started doing black genealogy because I do full family research on my own family and I was researching my aunt’s family. She married my mother’s brother and I was sharing the information with both of her sisters. One of her sister’s husband’s was black and asked me if I’d like to research his family. This was about 10 years ago. Right now, I’m stuck but I will get through the 1870 barrier because I’m stubborn and I’m going to go and look for his family names in the Freedman’s Bureau records.”

—Janice Sellers, Workshop Participant

“I joined [the class because of] my mom. We wanted to find out more about her real father. We were so excited and had a little information and just kept going from there. Before she passed, we found all [this] family that we didn’t know she had.

[The class] is just like going to church. You’re being with those of like mind. It’s like family and everybody’s just as excited as I am about connecting with their ancestors and finding out who we are. It’s so important. Where there’s that hole that so many African Americans feel, it’s being filled with information about my people.”

—Karen Oyekami, Workshop Participant

“I felt it would be instrumental in assisting me with finding some of my ancestors. I thought it would be really enjoyable to have the kinship of other people in the process.

[I] enjoy most the camaraderie with the people and the enthusiasm they have about their ancestors.”

—Donna Hegler, Workshop Participant

The African American Research Workshop takes place the fourth Wednesday of the month from 6:00-8:45pm at the Oakland Family Search Library located at 4766 Lincoln Avenue, Oakland, CA 94605.

# Aubrey Preston Simms - His Story

*A beloved niece memorializes a life well lived.*

by Barbara Tyson  
Member, AAGSNC

Aubrey Preston Simms personified the French expression “*joie de vivre*,” meaning love of life, living the life, or joy of living. He did indeed embrace life fully and he was always out and about seeking fun and excitement. His memorable spirit of engagement never diminished and he fought to be free right up until the very end. I have images of him striking out with his feet to fend off a Certified Nursing Assistant attempting to physically direct him in his bed at the nursing home.

Uncle Aubrey loved to tell his story. From the time he came home to Pleasantville, New Jersey, from World War II in 1945 and taught us children French phrases, until his last appearance at the annual Family History Seminar in Sacramento in March 2010, he freely contributed to our knowledge of Black soldiers’ experiences during the war. He was always willingly compliant whenever I asked him to accompany me on presentations about World War II at Black family history events and genealogy workshops. The time was forever ripe for his telling and retelling of his World War II exploits and his service in the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps, 449th Gas Supply Company.

One example was in February 2007 when I received a call from a teacher-librarian in Sutter County requesting Uncle Aubrey’s participation in its Literacy Program at an event at Veterans Memorial Hall in Yuba City, California, during African-American History Month. She had learned about Uncle Aubrey from some Korean students to whom he had been relating his World War II stories. It was through his stories of D-Day and references to Normandy, Cherbourg, Saint Lo, loading and unloading supplies and ammunitions on trucks, that I came to the realization that

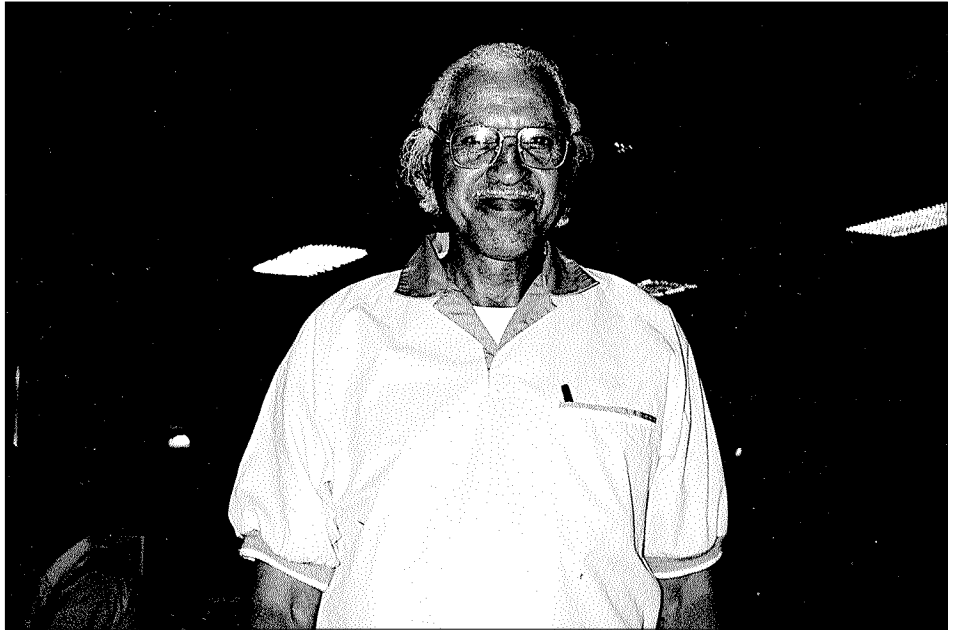


Photo courtesy of Barbara Tyson

he had been involved in the renowned “Red Ball Express,” about which so much has been written and filmed.

The name Red Ball Express came from a railroad phrase to “red ball” or to ship it express. It was an Allied innovation in August 1944 that provided an endless

## Uncle Aubrey was part of the “Red Ball Express” during World War II.

flow of trucks between Normandy and the forward divisions requiring over 800,000 gallons of gasoline for the U.S. First and Third Armies. It was operated around the clock, mainly by Black service troops. Nearly 75 percent of all Red Ball Express truckers and loaders were African American. The truck convoy stretched from Saint Lo in Normandy to Paris and eventually to the front. It lasted only three months from August 25 to November 16, 1944, but without it, the Allied campaign in the European Theater might have dragged on for years. The continuous supply of ordinance and gas to units fighting at the front lines struck the balance.

Hollywood immortalized the development and operation of the Red Ball Express in a 1952 movie of the same name starring Jeff Chandler, Sidney Poitier, and Robert Davis. In 2007, Uncle Aubrey shared top billing with Colonel Anjil Morris-Jones on the Yuba City African-American History Month program and his storytelling appearance landed his photo on the front page of the local newspaper, the *Appeal-Democrat*. He was also awarded the American Legion Certificate of Appreciation for his patriotic service and participation as a “Red Ball Trucker” during one of World War II’s most massive logistic operations.

On another occasion in 2009, Uncle Aubrey traveled with me to Oakland, California, for a meeting of AAGSNC where the topic of the day was finding ancestors who had served in World War II. He contributed to the discussion by describing his experiences in France and Belgium where he had guarded German prisoners and he told of dodging German “buzz bombs” by falling into foxholes.

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All photos AAGSNC

# Rediscovering 16th Street Train Station

On Saturday, September 29, 2012, the 16th Street Train Station located in the western part of Oakland, California, commemorated its 100th anniversary. In honor of this event, the station was opened to the community for viewing. Performers and food trucks abounded, and attendees could provide feedback on what they would like to see happen with the landmark in the future. The event was organized by BRIDGE, a San

Francisco, California, based affordable housing developer, and sponsored by Kaiser Permanente.

The 16th Street Station was the termination point for the Transcontinental Railroad, the West Coast headquarters for the first black labor union, the Brotherhood of the Sleeping Car Porters, and featured the first elevated train tracks west of

the Mississippi River. Many who participated in the great migration of African Americans out of the southern United States first landed on the west coast at the station. The station closed to the public during the 1990s and its ownership later changed hands many times. It then became the target of vandals and needed millions of dollars in repairs.



2

3



4

1- HBO added faux elevators for their filming of Hemingway and Gelhorn in 2011. This is a close up image of one.

2 - The tower of the 16th Street station, foreground, the effects of urban sprawl, background. The freeway structure was built after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake.

3 - Years of neglect are apparent inside the station.

4 - An inside view of the expansive interior.

5- Artifacts from the station's history were also featured. Some them include photos, a song book, and cuff links.

6 - A modern dining car jacket that was worn by a steward employed by Amtrak.

As development abounded in Oakland, so did the area around the station. By 2005, BRIDGE purchased the site. Working with the City of Oakland, the area has been revitalized and includes rental properties and lofts.

Time will tell regarding what exactly will happen to this diamond in Oakland. For more info on the project, please visit <http://www.16thstreetstation.com>



# Tracked for Freedom

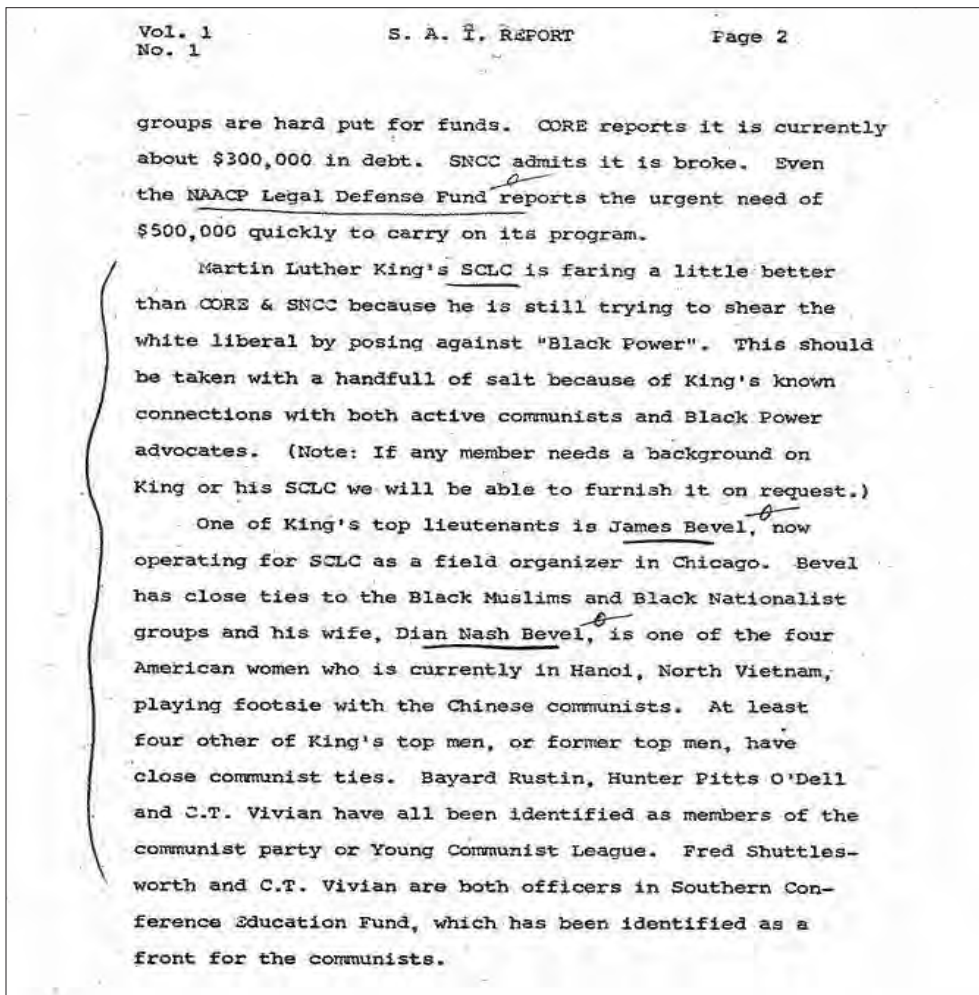
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Created to protect the state and its sister states from the threat of integration, the commission was charged with "...[doing] and [performing] any and all acts deemed necessary and proper to protect the sovereignty of the state of Mississippi, and her sister states ...' from perceived 'encroachment thereon by the Federal Government or any branch, department or agency thereof.'" In plain terms, the commission existed to protect a centuries old culture deeply rooted in segregation. While ambiguous, the charge of the Commission allowed immense investigative powers not just in Mississippi, but in other southern states.

Members of the state senate, House of Representatives, governor, attorney general, and legislators made up the staff. Over time, the scale of the operations within the commission increased and by 1960, it began funding White Citizens Councils, had paid informants within the African American community, and backed national efforts to block civil rights legislation.<sup>ii</sup>

Just about anything and everyone who was a threat to segregation was monitored by the Sovereignty Commission. Organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and Congress of Racial Equality knew that they were being tracked by the state and other entities. On the other hand, the extent to which they were being followed and documented is almost too hard to believe.

Files were created for individuals and organizations. Contents included name or alias, address, affiliations, letters, speeches, photos, rosters of members and flyers from civil rights groups, congressional records, and even newspaper articles. Documentation was available through a complex indexing



Included in Rev. Cordy T. Vivian's Mississippi Sovereignty Commission file is a S.A.I. Report on January 15, 1967, from the Alabama Legislative Commission to Preserve the Peace. This report stated that Rev. Vivian was an officer of the Southern Conference Education Fund "which has been identified as a front for the communists."

system where numbers were assigned to every piece collected. Among the photos were mug shots of those who were arrested in various areas across the state, including those who were part of the Freedom Rides of 1961. Some of them have been married with current photos of those arrested in the book, *Break of Peace: Portraits of the 1961 Mississippi Freedom Riders* by Eric Etheridge.

Commission staff created investigative reports on incidents that involved integration attempts and also placed those in a file. Investigators interviewed

city and county officials who blocked integration activities for their accounts of what happened, their opinions on the activities, and thoughts on the relations between African Americans and whites in the area. African Americans were also interviewed and asked similar questions.

Despite the passing of a number of pivotal pieces of civil rights legislation, the Commission did not cease operations until 1973 and wasn't officially dissolved by the state until 1977. That same year bills were introduced to dispose of Commission

Document courtesy of Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission Online



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# Tracked for Freedom

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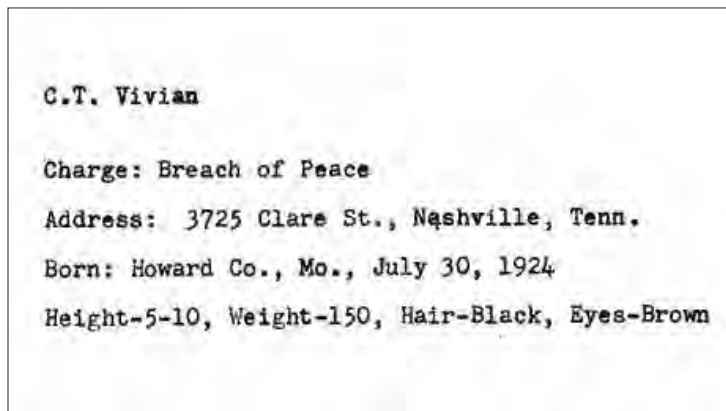
records but lengthy debate ensued regarding their final fate. In the end, it was determined that they would be sealed at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) until 2027.<sup>iii</sup> That was not the end of the story. Years of legal battles ensued until 1998, when “United States District Court Judge William H. Barbour, Jr., ordered all Commission records not involved in litigation to be opened to the public.”<sup>iv</sup> MDAH made the documents available online on March 17, 1998, and added more on July 31, 2000, and January 18, 2001. In 2002, the current, full text version of commission records was made available through the MDAH website.<sup>v</sup>

Most of the documents that remain are included in the online collection although some information has been redacted. Additionally, individuals mentioned had the ability to submit rebuttals to the information published. These rebuttals are available online.

It’s likely that a researcher will find a record of an ancestor or relative that was involved in integration or segregation activities in the state of Mississippi in these records. Information within a person’s file can place him or her at a particular place at a point in time or even give a researcher insight on dealings with others in their community. Search results can also provide a researcher with information on race relations within a community they descend from or provide insight into how their family was involved in such an integral piece of American history.

Documents are fully text searchable. Name searches, browsing, and folder searches are also available. Using different spellings of names will achieve maximum search results. To access, please visit [http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital\\_archives/sovcom/index.php](http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital_archives/sovcom/index.php)

Despite its pervasive and unwarranted tracking, the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission unknowingly preserved the history of one of the most important movements in the world. One of those documented put it best. “All in all, I am delighted to have these documents. The ‘Sovereignty Commission’ did us a real favor in recording what we were too busy to record. Oh, I suppose some of these things are recorded somewhere, but this is an easy way to remember some of the things we did and said back then. Some of us, myself included, have remained active (we are now called ‘human rights activists’) and it is good to have a glimpse back at our roots, because that is what our time in Mississippi was for many of us: the solid foundation for a lifetime of activism,” Joanne Gavin, Houston, TX<sup>vi</sup>



Identifying information about Rev. Cordy T. Vivian during his arrest for breach of peace on May 20, 1961 in Jackson, MS.

*Caption for photo on front cover:* On May 24, 1961, Rev. Cordy T. Vivian of Nashville, Tennessee was part of a Congress of Racial Equality Freedom Ride which went from Montgomery, Alabama to Jackson, Mississippi. The mug shot from his arrest in Jackson is included in the Mississippi Sovereignty Commission records online.

## Endnotes

- i “Sovereignty Commission Online, Agency History.” Mississippi Department of Archives and History. n.d. Web. 01 Nov. 2012. [http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital\\_archives/sovcom/scagencycasehistory.php](http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital_archives/sovcom/scagencycasehistory.php).
- ii *Ibid.*
- iii *Ibid.*
- iv *Ibid.*
- v “Sovereignty Commission Online - Access Chronology.” Mississippi Department of Archives and History, n.d. Web. 01 Nov. 2012. [http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital\\_archives/sovcom/chronology.php](http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital_archives/sovcom/chronology.php).
- vi “Sovereignty Commission Online. Joanne Gavin Rebuttal File, SCR ID # 50-5-0-1-3-1-1.” Page 3. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, n.d. Web. 01 Nov. 2012. [http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital\\_archives/sovcom/](http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital_archives/sovcom/).



Photo Credit: Jasmine Braggis

**Nicka Smith** is the chair of the Outreach and Education Committee and the co-editor of *The Baobab Tree* for the African American Genealogical Society of Northern California (AAGSNC). She’s been researching her family since 1999 and had at least 20 family members involved in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement. Email her at [oande@aagsnc.org](mailto:oande@aagsnc.org)

## President's Column

continued from page 3

We tend to ultimately circle around to family history research no matter where the subject starts, but it is all good. I encourage all members to go out and do a little missionary work before the awakened fall asleep for another year.

AAGSNC's year-around activities serve our membership and interest others to join the society. These activities have been ambitious, successful, and far-reaching. We held two Black Family History Days. One was held during Black History Month and the other in October during Family History Month—both with the outstanding hospitality and generosity of the Oakland Family Search Library of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. We are continually updating our website ([www.AAGSNC.org](http://www.AAGSNC.org)) to bring more and relevant content for our membership and for the public. On the internet, we broadcast our first ever public webinar on DNA testing.

Our regular monthly presentations were exceptionally well received by the membership and provided tips, techniques, and shortcuts (and some long cuts) to ease the struggles with our brick walls. We reactivated a couple of state study groups. This year shows every intention of being more eventful, fulfilling, and educational than the last. Come join us.

We do family history. That's how we roll.

## A Penny for Your Thoughts - The Results

continued from page 4

### Society Journal

- 42% had received seven or more issues
  - 51% have read seven or more issues
  - 53% were very satisfied with the journal becoming a digital only publication
  - 53% were neutral regarding the usefulness of the journal for their genealogy research
  - 89% like reading the personal stories
  - 83% like reading the genealogy how-to's
  - 61% like reading the society updates and stories
- \*Respondents could check more than one answer\**

### Society Website

- 91% have access to AAGSNC Members Only
  - 42% access Members Only sometimes while 35% very seldom access it
  - 53% said they would access Members Only if more content (such as indexes and info) were added
  - 33% said if we made it easier to use they would access Members Only more
- \*Respondents could check more than one answer\**

### Gauging Interest

- 47% were somewhat interested in AAGSNC sponsored research trips to Salt Lake City, Washington, DC, and so on
- 44% were not interested in a society fundraising rummage sale
- 44% were somewhat interested in a society social
- 60% were very interested in society workshops, seminars, and webinars (with an additional fee to participate)
- 56% were very interested in participating in a cemetery index and database (creation and maintenance)
- 47% were very interested in participating in an obituary index and database (creation and maintenance)
- 44% were very interested in participating in the Ancestral Project (Genealogy and Youth)
- 56% were very interested in participating in Their Stories (Genealogy and Elders)
- 37% were both not interested in participating as a host or presenter on a webinar
- 49% were not interested in participating as a host or presenter on a podcast

# My Long Road Back to William Grimes

continued from page 8

The Underground Railroad developed in New Haven during the late 1820s. Among the first fugitives to reach this city via the “freedom road” was William Grimes from Savannah, Georgia who escaped that southern city with help from friendly seamen who hid him among bales of cotton. After the vessel landed in New York City, Grimes became connected with Underground Railroad workers who directed him toward Connecticut. Trudging mile after mile through Greenwich and other coastal towns, he finally arrived in New Haven.

Was this the shadowy Grimes Aunt Katherine had spoken of all those years ago? A cousin, with whom I shared my find, found an anthology, *Five Black Lives*. Included was the account I had been searching for: Life of William Grimes, the Runaway Slave, Brought Down to the Present Time. Cody’s Books on Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley had three copies for sale. Following my gut feeling, I bought all three.

Page by page I sifted through this man’s 1855 story like an excavator mining for raw gemstones, only my gems of choice were names and places that might ring a bell with Aunt Katherine, the family appraiser. It wasn’t until I came to the end of the book that I noticed Grimes’s wife identified as “the lovely and all accomplished, Clarissa Caesar.” Immediately I phoned Aunt Katherine.

“Is Caesar a family name?”

“Hmmm,” she thought, searching her mind, “I think it is—but I’m not sure.”

Her next comment brought me to my feet. “Oh Gina, I’ve got to get you the family Bible. All the family names are written in it.”

“A Bible?” I exclaimed, “Who has it? Where is it? And why hadn’t I heard about this before?”

But Aunt Katherine was insistent. “Oh, we do have a family Bible,” she assured me during another phone conversation, “and when the weather gets better, I’m going to Portland to see if it’s tucked away in my sister’s attic.”

That was fall 1992. Better weather for Aunt Katherine was nearly a year away.

Taking a different route into my family’s history, one that a professional genealogist would surely scorn, I decided to look not for my family but for William Grimes’s family. There were days when I knew with conviction that I had been trailing the right family lines. Sometimes, however, doubt made me think that I had been wasting my time—if not my life—on this project.

The timing could not have been better when my mother phoned to announce that Aunt Katherine was en route home from Portland, Oregon, with important pages she had found tucked inside the family Bible. I was floored. So engrossed

was I in my search that I had forgotten my aunt’s promise to me nearly one year before. It was Memorial Day weekend of 1993, and a family barbeque was fittingly planned in honor of her fruitful homecoming.

I was the first to study the aging pages that had, over the years, completely separated from the original spine of the book. As generations of names stared back at me, the awe of the moment struck me in such a way I could hardly speak. For in my hands, on paper so fragile and crumbly, blotted and stained, I held a large piece of my heritage. For the first time in my life I felt like I had roots. Not just spindly roots—easily upturned—but anchored roots as solid as the mighty redwood tree. In all, there were two front and back pages of script

spilling to the edges where portions of names and dates had crumbled to dust. As I skimmed further down the page, there was the name William Grimes followed by a death date of August 21, 1865. Undeniably, William Grimes—author of the first fugitive slave narrative published in America—was my great-great-great-grandfather.

Late into the night, after my family and I arrived home from the festivities and had gone to bed, I could not sleep. The culmination of where my journey had taken me thus far and the magnitude of the day fell upon me; I could do nothing but weep. I felt as though the souls of my people had reached across time and generations and were urging me to tell their stories. Then I realized that finding Grimes was not the end of a glorious and at times painful search; it was the beginning. Now, with pages from our Bible, I had more lives to unravel and more tangled roots to untwine—a quest that would take many more years out of my life and carry me thousands of miles away from home.

**“To him who has feeling, the condition of a slave, under any possible circumstances, is painful and unfortunate, and will excite the sympathy of all who have any.”**  
- William Grimes, 1824

CONT. ON PAGE 22

In November, my husband, Gerald, and I went to St. Francisville, Louisiana and visited the West Feliciana Historical Society Museum. I talked to two society members who gave me a map and directions to the Wakefield Plantation. Wakefield Plantation is referred to as the Stirling Plantation in Gutman's book. The plantation was about ten minutes up the road from the museum. Upon arrival, we saw a plaque on the fence post which stated:

**WAKEFIELD**  
1834  
Built in 1834 by  
Lewis and Sarah  
Turnbull Stirling.  
Two upper stories  
removed in 1877  
to effect partition  
of estate.  
Private

We thought about the private sign for about thirty seconds; it didn't say Keep Out or No Trespassing and the gate was open, so we drove in. The plantation was located at the end of a long road which was lined with trees, probably oaks. We started snapping pictures as soon as the Wakefield came into view. We saw an African American man sweeping the veranda but he did not pay any attention to us so we continued to take pictures and left after a few minutes.

Prior to the building of Wakefield Plantation, Lewis and his wife, Sarah Turnbull Stirling, lived in a log house that was built in 1807, the same year that George, my great-great grandfather was born on that plantation. Wakefield had two and one-half stories originally but was divided by the heirs into two other houses. Those two houses burned down, leaving the original diminished house.

In March 2013, the 42nd Annual Audubon Pilgrimage will be held in St. Francisville, Louisiana. In celebration of John James Audubon's stay, the West Feliciana Historical Society pilgrimage permits visitors to tour the Wakefield and five other plantations, four of

which have connections to the Stirling family: Catalpa, Beechwood, Oakley, and Rosedown. Whereas some of these plantations are open year round, the Wakefield is only open for tours at this time. I plan to attend this event.

*The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom 1750 – 1925* by Herbert G. Gutman is a valuable resource for anyone who is researching the origins and culture

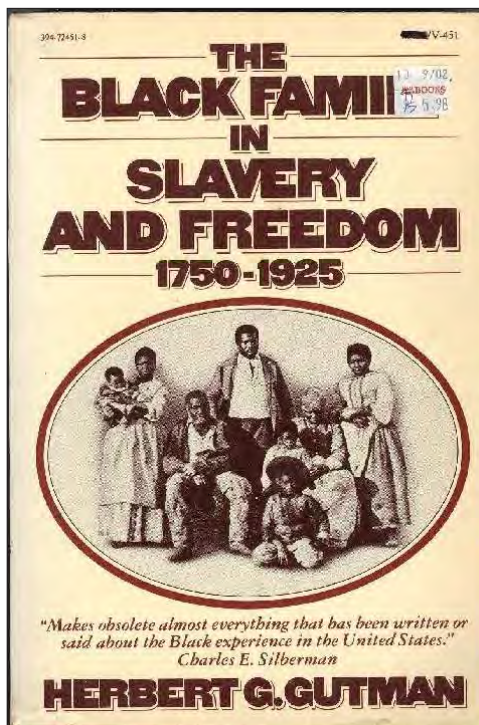


Photo courtesy of Pat Bayonne-Johnson

of African Americans on six southern plantations. Information in this book led me to the slave birth registers of my direct and collateral ancestors, their place of birth, the last slaveholder of my family and the family papers of the slaveholders. In the spirit of giving back and paying it forward, here is the list of all of the plantations that are studied in Gutman's book:

- Stirling Plantation, West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana
- Carlisle Plantation, Concordia Parish, Louisiana
- Good Hope Plantation, Orangeburg, South Carolina

- John C. Cohoons's Cedar Vale Plantation, Nansemond County, Virginia
- Benehan-Cameron Plantation, Orange County, North Carolina
- Henry Watson Plantation, Alabama

Gutman includes charts and tables of family and kinship structures, naming patterns and a few illustrations of birth registers, one which had a complete birth record—day, month, year—for my great-great grandmother and three of her siblings.

My family tree is growing. I have added twenty-eight people and I am back six generations on that line. There is one less brick wall in my research now thanks to my cousins, Michael and Shawn, who I have only met on the internet.

## Endnotes

- Record of the Births of Negroes All Now Living*, taken from Original Record, January 20th, 1846 by Lewis Stirling, MF: 5322, Reel 25 Frames 672-685 and Frames 660-671



Photo courtesy of Pat Bayonne-Johnson

**Patricia Bayonne-Johnson** has been researching her family history since 1999. She has traced her family back to the late 1700s and has met many cousins who she only knows online. After retirement, she moved to Spokane, Washington in 2004 to escape the high cost of living in the Bay Area. Pat is a lifetime member and past 1st vice president of AAGSNC, member and past 1st vice president of the Eastern Washington Genealogical Society in Spokane, member of the Washington State Genealogical Society, NGS, Louisiana Historical and Genealogical Society and the Creole Heritage Center. She currently writes columns for the Digital Digest for EWGS and Spokane African American Voice. Contact her at [Pbj524@aol.com](mailto:Pbj524@aol.com). Visit her blog at <http://africanroots-pbj.blogspot.com>.

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- Type all submissions. Times New Roman font, 12-point size is best.
- Write 1 to 3 pages. We always need some one-page stories; more than three pages is too long.
- We may edit. All submissions are subject to review by our journal committee and editors, and may be edited for clarity and to fit the space available.
- Send your bio along with your story; include your contact e-mail and phone number(s). Bio should be in narrative form if possible, not a resume; we will still edit as needed.
- Send your portrait. E-mail a JPEG photo of yourself along with your story or article. A good clear head-and-shoulders shot of you is best, in front of a solid color background that contrasts with your hair and skin tone. If you only have a shot of yourself with other people, we may be able to crop it (i.e. cut out the other folks).
- Photos, documents and other graphics are always welcome, in JPEG format. Make sure pictures are at least 150 dpi (dots per inch), sharp, clear and have enough contrast to show up well in black and white. All photos and documents must have credit and captions submitted in a separate document.
- Respect the deadlines you're given for submissions and corrections. If your material is late, it might have to be held for the next issue or drastically altered to fit the space.

E-mail us at [journal@aagsnc.org](mailto:journal@aagsnc.org)

## My Long Road Back to William Grimes

continued from page 20

If the catalyst for this quest was the class assignment, the pulse of the journey came from the once-shadowy Grimes of family lore. So much of what has reached across time to me about William Grimes has been painful, unbearably painful in many respects, but I don't dwell there. To do so would place me in danger of losing sight of his accomplishments. That he penned the first fugitive slave narrative published in America is a remarkable feat. Even more inspiring to me, however, is the way in which he succeeded against almost insurmountable odds to write his story and then to get it published. If there is one thing I have learned from my forefather Grimes, it is to remain true to one's highest ambition, just as he had the audacity to remain true to his.

Excerpt from *Life of William Grimes, the Runaway Slave*, reprinted with permission of the author.

**Regina Mason**, a native of Oakland, CA is the great-great-great granddaughter of pioneering autobiographer William Grimes who wrote the first fugitive slave narrative in America. She has spent fifteen years authenticating his story that would one day culminate with a new, authoritative, edition of her ancestor's book *Life of William Grimes, the Runaway Slave*.



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# Aubrey Preston Simms - His Story

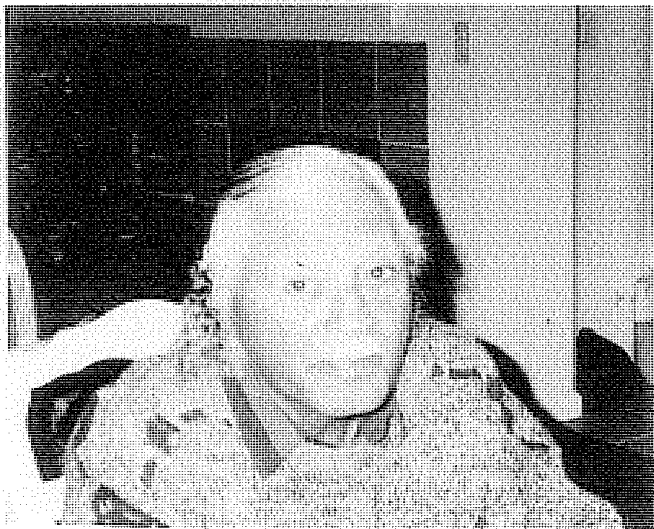
continued from page 13

In Loving Memory

of

AUBREY PRESTON SIMMS

October 1, 1921--June 2, 2012



Sacramento Valley National Cemetery

5810 Midway Road

Dixon, CA 95620, 707-693-2460

In a March 2010 Family History Seminar in Sacramento, California, he served as the subject interviewee in a workshop conducted on how to effectively interview an elderly World War II veteran. The session went over extremely well and numerous attendees came up to speak with him after the session. He obviously gloried in the attention.

The pride that Uncle Aubrey took in being a veteran, along with his eternally bold spirit, will seal in my heart forever the memory of his dedication to the country where he grew up and to his Simms family. I shall truly miss him.



**Barbara Tyson** is a retired state administrator residing in Sacramento, California. As a member of AAGSNC since 1999, she has contributed several articles to *The Baobab Tree* and participated in the planning of West Coast Summits on African American Genealogy. Her family's military roots extend throughout the United States armed services, WWII, the Canadian Expeditionary Forces of WWI, and the Napoleonic Wars. Email her at [tysonski@frontier.com](mailto:tysonski@frontier.com)

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Articles and manuscripts acceptable for publication include:

#### Manuscripts/Articles:

- African and African-American genealogy, cultural traditions, and philosophy
- Church histories
- Documentation of African oral traditions and African writings
- Documentation of African-American families
- Ancestry charts, family group records, personal family papers
- Miscellaneous topics of interest in researching African ancestors
- Resources and methods of research in Africa

#### Abstracts:

- Census transcriptions (federal, state, county & city)
- Church records (baptisms, burials, marriages, etc.)
- Court records
- Manumission and freedom certificates
- Missionary and benevolent society records
- Military and pension records
- Newspaper transcriptions
- Plantation family papers relating to slaves
- Tax lists naming free blacks or slaves
- Voter registration lists



African American Genealogical Society of  
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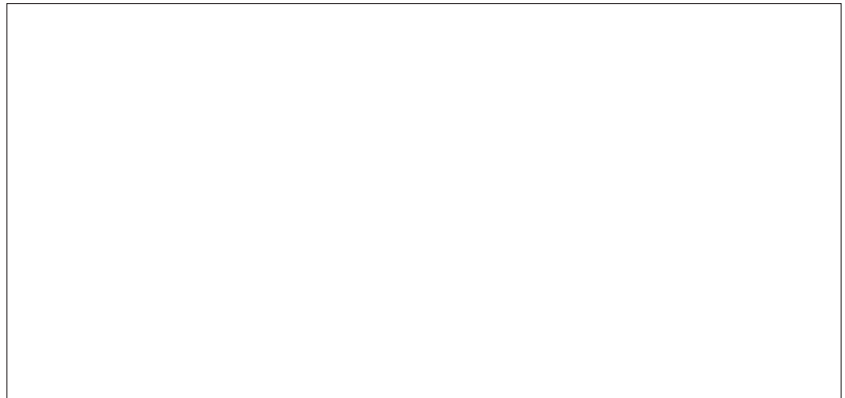
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## Beyond the Census: Other Resources and Record Sets for African American Genealogy

Take your genealogy research skills to the next level by participating in this workshop series!

**January 29, 2013-February 26, 2013**

**Oakland Family Search Library, 4766 Lincoln Avenue, Oakland, CA 94602**

**6:30pm-8:30pm**

\$35 for entire workshop series, \$7 per workshop class

### **PRE REGISTRATION REQUIRED. WALK-INS WILL NOT BE HONORED.**

Attendees can purchase the entire workshop series or individual classes. Limit 30 workshop attendees per session.

- January 29: Freedmen's Bureau Records (Instructor: Nicka Smith)
- February 5: Historical Black Newspapers (Instructor: Janice Sellers)
- February 12: Best Websites for African American Research (Instructor: Nicka Smith)
- February 19: Back Away From the Computer: You'll Find More Offline (Instructor: Annette Madden)
- February 26: DNA Research (Instructor: Alvis Ward)

For course descriptions, please visit the registration website.

To register for this workshop series, please visit  
**<http://aagsnc-btc-feb13.eventbrite.com>**