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the Baobab Tree

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Legacy of the Slave Masters: The Scoggin/Scoggins Family

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress at <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/fsa/item/fsa2000001826/pp/>

Peggy Lloyd
Contributor

One hundred and fifty years ago Arkansas was in the middle of the Civil War. Abraham Lincoln had just issued the Emancipation Proclamation freeing the enslaved blacks in the Confederate states still in rebellion. Enslaved people in southwest Arkansas, which was under Confederate control, were not instantly emancipated. They remained with their slave masters until the end of the war.

With the end of slavery, the newly freed people had many choices to make. One of those choices was the selection of a name. Many enslaved persons opted to take the name of a previous master or selected another name, but many took the family name of their then master as their name. Those names are still prevalent throughout the region and even farther away today: Block, Carrigan, Cheatham, Johnson, McFadden/

McFaddin, Muldrew/Muldrow, Scoggin/Scoggins, Stuart, Turner, Walker, Yerger, and so on.

Let's look at Scoggin or Scoggins. Generally, to be considered as part of the planter class, a man had to own a minimum of twenty slaves. James W. Scoggin fit the bill of a Southern planter nicely. In the slave schedules of the 1860 U.S. Census, he

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Isn't it time you told **your**
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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 black African-ancestry family history research. The society provides a unique approach to education, research skills, and support to anyone interested in genealogy.

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- To promote interest in genealogy, biography, and related history of 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 material and make such material available to all.
- To promote and maintain ethical standards in genealogical research and publications.

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The Branch

Words from the Society President

This Is YOUR Do-Nothing Congress



Photo courtesy of M. Howard Edwards

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

We cannot escape the constant discussions about how little of substance the

Federal government has accomplished lately (ever?). In reality, the government, at every level, as our representative, does what we wish it to do. If it does nothing perhaps it is because we do nothing.

Recently while browsing our Yahoo! Group site, AAGSNC-Research, I found a couple of posts from our members that gave me some pause for thought. These postings alerted us to government action in the name of the protection of privacy or other considerations. Unfortunately, these actions inflicted the collateral damage of further restricting the resources available to genealogists to conduct their research.

The first posting advised us that an entry in the Social Security Death Master File (the Social Security Death Index, or SSDI, is the version available to us) would not be accessible to the public for three years after the death of an individual, effective immediately. Second, a posting gave the distressing news that 160-year-old documents from Franklin County, North Carolina, had been destroyed on purpose. A link in this article revealed that the state of Louisiana permits any state agency to destroy any records when signed off by the governor. This permission has resulted in the lack of any voter registration or participation records for the state from 1921 through 1953.

I do not propose that we could have done anything to prevent these adverse actions, but we should have raised the alarms to let those responsible in government know the damage such actions would cause to the pursuit of family history research. Without opposition, these measures were enacted to our detriment. With our intervention perhaps we could have modified or delayed the adverse effects on our research.

We ordinary folks rely heavily on public records for our research in the absence of letters, wills, deeds, newspaper society page entries, programs from society events, and other such documentation established by what society deems America's more newsworthy. We should do all we can to protect free access to these public records. We should write OUR representatives in government whenever we get a whiff of yet another gate being closed against our research. They need to know how valuable these records are to us as researchers, and how few avenues we have to follow to do our research.

If we do nothing, our government cannot be expected to do anything to protect our interests. We need to let our voices be heard.

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Genealogy 101

Learning the Lingo: Speaking a Genealogist's Language

by **Annette Madden**
Board Member, AAGSNC

Every occupation or hobby (or in this case, obsession!) has its own language or jargon. Genealogy is no exception. This column is second in a series that will give beginners some assistance and serve as a refresher for old-timers.

As you begin your genealogy journey, you will come across many terms you may not be familiar with and some that you ARE familiar with, but which are used in a different way. This is only a partial list of some words you will run across in your research. For more complete lists, search the Internet for "genealogy glossary."

Abstract

Summary of important points of a given text, especially a deed or will, that includes the date of the record and often every name it contains; it may also provide relationships or descriptions.

Administration (of an estate)

The collection, management, and distribution of an estate by proper legal process.

Administrator (of an estate)

One appointed by the court to handle distribution of an estate by proper legal process.

Ancestors

The relatives you descend from directly: your forefathers (and mothers).

Ancestor chart

Report or chart that shows a person and all of his ancestors in a graphical format. Also known as a pedigree chart.

Autosomal DNA

Genetic material inherited equally from mother and father. Genetic tests to determine ethnic origins typically analyze autosomal DNA.

Bequeath

To give personal property to someone in a will.

Bond

A binding agreement to perform certain actions or duties or required payment of a specified amount of money as a penalty; at different times required of estate administrators and executors, grooms (for marriage), and certain elected officials (such as constables).

Census

An official enumeration, listing, or counting of citizens. The U.S. government began collecting census data in 1790 and has done so every 10 years since then. Several territories and states have conducted their own censuses over the years.

Certified copy

A copy made and attested to by officers having charge of the original and authorized to give copies.

Chattel

Any property other than freehold land, including tangible goods (chattels personal) and leasehold land (chattels real). Slaves were considered chattel.

Chromosome

A threadlike strand of DNA that carries genes and transmits hereditary information.

Citation

Page or section reference of a source.

Codicil

An addition explaining, modifying, or revoking a will or part of one.

Collateral relative

Descended from the same ancestors but not in the direct line.

Consort

A husband or (more commonly) a wife.

- Deed**
A document transferring ownership and title of property from one person or entity to another.
- Descendant**
A person who is in a direct family line from an ancestor.
- DNA**
The molecule that contains each cell's genetic code, organized into 23 pairs of chromosomes.
- Dower**
Legal right or share in real estate which a wife acquired by marriage to her husband, allotted to her after his death for her lifetime. Laws regulating dower rights are dependent on the year and place; under English common law it was one third of the property.
- Enumeration district**
Division of a county or a large city used to make census-taking more efficient and accurate.
- Estate**
All of a person's property and debts.
- Evidence**
Evidence in genealogy is direct when a fact is explicitly stated, such as the date on a birth certificate. It is indirect when it must be inferred from one or more facts within a record.
- Executor**
One appointed in a will to carry out its provisions.
- Family group sheet**
A report listing the father, mother, and each child of a family.
- Free person of color (FPC)**
A free person who was neither (100%) white nor a slave.
- Freedman**
A male released from slavery; an emancipated person.
- GEDCOM**
An acronym for "GEnealogical Data COMmunication." A standard format created by the LDS Church that allows genealogical software programs to transfer data.
- Gene**
A hereditary unit consisting of a sequence of DNA that occupies a specific location on a chromosome, and determines a particular characteristic in an organism.
- Grantee**
One who buys property or receives a grant.
- Grantor**
One who sells property or makes a grant.
- Haplogroup**
An identification of the genetic group your ancient ancestors (10,000 to 60,000 years ago) belonged to; sometimes referred to as your branch of the world's family tree.
- Information**
Information is the facts that a record may contain. Primary information is that recorded by a knowledgeable eyewitness or participant in an event. Secondary information comes from someone who was not present at the time of the event or who was not knowledgeable at that time; for example, a person was present at his own birth but was not a knowledgeable witness at the time. Some sources may contain a combination of primary and secondary information; a death certificate has primary information on the date of death but secondary information on the decedent's birth date and place.
- Instant**
Of or pertaining to the current month (abbreviated inst.).
- Intestate**
Description of a person who died without leaving a will.
- Inventory**
An account, catalog, or schedule made by an executor or administrator of all the goods and chattels and sometimes the real estate of a deceased person.
- Issue**
Offspring; children; descendants; progeny.
- Marriage bond**
A financial guarantee that no legal impediment to a marriage exists, furnished by representatives for the intended bridegroom and intended bride.
- Maternal**
Related through one's mother; on one's mother's side of the family.
- Metes and bounds**
A land survey method using compass directions, natural landmarks, and distances between points.
- Mitochondrial DNA**
Genetic material both male and female children inherit from their mother.
- Mortality schedule**
Enumeration of persons who died during the year prior to June 1 of 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880 in each state of the United States, conducted by the Bureau of the Census. Some states also had mortality schedules in conjunction with a state census.
- Mulatto**
Technically a person of one white and one black parent, but commonly used for any person of mixed heritage.
- Née**
Born (from French, the feminine form of the past tense of "to be born"). Used to denote a woman's maiden name.
- Octaroon**
A person with seven white great-grandparents and one black great-grandparent; 1/8 black.
- Oral history**
Family stories told by a member of the family or by a close family friend. Oral histories often yield stories and information you won't find written in records.
- Paternal**
Related through one's father; on one's father's side of the family.
- Plat**
A drawing that shows the boundaries and features of a piece of property. In genealogy, platting refers to creating

Evil Soundex versus Wonderful Wildcards

Someone who used to love Soundex now prefers to search another way.

Lisa B. Lee
Member, AAGSNC

In many genealogical searches, if you don't find the person's name spelled exactly as you entered it, you have the option to modify the search by doing either a Soundex search or a wildcard search. I'm a big fan of wildcards and use them for nearly all of my searches as a matter of course.

For instance, if I'm looking for my third cousin George Douglass (born in Ontario, Canada in the 1870's, then moved to Oklahoma about 1910) in or near Kingfisher County, Oklahoma, I automatically search for him as "Geo* D*glas*", using a total of three wildcard characters (the asterisks [*]).

By searching for him in this manner, I cover the following bases:

- His given name might have been recorded as either Geo or George, and
- His surname could have been spelled Douglas, Duglass, Douglass or Douglass.

But I'll talk about the wonders of wildcards later. First I'll cover their polar opposite: Evil Soundex (even though I used to love Soundex).

Why Is Soundex So Evil?

The short answer is math, or as former president Bill Clinton might say, "It's arithmetic."

Soundex is *supposed* to group similar-sounding surnames together into the same Soundex code, so that if you do

a search for, say, SANDERS (Soundex code S536, which I'll explain later), you'll also receive results for:

SANDER
SANDERCOCK
SANDERSON
SANDOR
SAUNDERS
SAUNDERSON, etc.

In this respect, Soundex works pretty well, and I refer to these as the "A names."

Because of the way Soundex was devised, however, we don't stop with just those Sanders-sounding surnames. We have to include a whole lot of others, most of which sound nothing like SANDERS, such as:

SANTORO
SANTRY
SCHAMTHORN
SCHMETTERER
SCHMIEDER
SCHMITTERT
SCHNEIDER
SCHNIDER
SCHUSETTER
SENATORE
SENER
SHANDRY
SHANDRAY
SMITHERMAN
SMITHERS
SMOTHERMAN
SMOTHERS
SNIDER
SNYDER
SUNDERLAND
SZENDREI

So, when you do a Soundex search for SANDERS, you're going to get a lot of hits with the "B names" above. These less-than-useful surnames are going to add a lot of waste to the total list of hits you receive and what you'll have to wade through, making it more difficult for you to find the Sanders cousin for whom you're searching.

The screenshot shows the Ancestry.com search interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'Historical Records', 'Family Trees', 'Stories & Publications', and 'Photos & Maps'. Below the tabs, there is a search bar with the text 'Find census, birth, marriage, death records and more.' and a 'Search tips' link. The search criteria are: 'Exact matches only' (checked), 'First & Middle Name(s)' set to 'william', 'Last Name' set to 'sanders', 'Spelling' set to 'Soundex', 'Lived in' set to 'USA', and 'State' set to 'Michigan'. There is also a 'Year range' field with 'e.g. 1827 to 1903'. A 'Search' button and an 'Advanced Search' link are at the bottom right of the search area.

Images from Ancestry.com, courtesy of Lisa Lee

View Record	William Saunders		City, Arenac, Michigan	abt 1916	Michigan	info	help
View Record	William Saunders	name	City, Cook (Chicago), Illinois	abt 1919	Michigan	info	help
View Record	William H Saundry	name	City, Las Animas, Colorado	abt 1872	Michigan	info	help
View Record	William H Sautter	name	City, Kent, Michigan	abt 1875	Michigan	info	help
View Record	William Schamthorn	name	City, Jackson, Michigan	abt 1866	location	info	help
View Record	William Shandray		City, Kent, Michigan	abt 1870	records	info	help
View Record	William Shander	name , name	City, Menominee, Michigan	abt 1897	location	info	help
View Record	William Shanders		City, Dunn, North Dakota	abt 1888	Michigan	info	help
View Record	William Schusetter	name	City, Saginaw, Michigan	abt 1894	Michigan	info	help

What Does Math Have to Do with It?

The simple answer is that, in Soundex, too many things equal the same thing.

Here's what I mean. The Soundex inventors took the 26-character English alphabet and reduced it down to just 18 letters by removing all the vowels (A, E, I, O, and U) plus the letters H, W, and Y (which commonly act as vowels in English). From there, they distributed the remaining 18 letters among only six numbers (1–6) and created the Soundex codes. You might think that they would have distributed the letters evenly, maybe assigning three letters to each number—and you'd be wrong.

Instead, the Soundex designers thought that it made more sense to group “roughly” similar-sounding consonants together into the same number value. At first glance, this makes perfect sense, such as pairing M with N, and C with K and S (since C can sound like either K or S). But in my opinion, the groupings stretched a bit too far, and they ended up pairing J with X, Z with G, B with F, Q with S, and J with K—pairings which never should have been made. *[Editor: Linguistically, these letters do represent similar sounds, which is why they were grouped together.]*

In the end, four letters share the Soundex value of 1, but a whopping eight letters all share the same Soundex value of 2. This is where it really gets messy and why I feel that Soundex is truly evil—and something to be avoided like the plague.

How Soundex Is Supposed to Work

Soundex codes consist of four characters:

- The first letter of the surname, plus
- A three-digit number based on the next three letters remaining, once the vowels and letters H, W, and Y have been removed.

If the surname has double letters (as in Matthews), the second of the double letters is removed with the vowels before creating the Soundex code. If fewer than three valid letters remain, zeroes are assigned to account for the missing letters.

Let's code a few surnames so you can see what I mean.

Soundex Values

- 1 = B, F, P, V
- 2 = C, G, J, K, Q, S, X, Z
- 3 = D, T
- 4 = L
- 5 = M, N
- 6 = R

- Coding the surname MATTHEWS
Step 1: Remove all vowels = MTTHWS
Step 2: Remove the letters H, W, and Y = MTTT
Step 3: Double letters are counted as a single letter = MTS

Step 4:

- M = the first letter of the surname
- Letter T = Soundex value 3
- Letter S = Soundex value 2
- No more available letters, enter 0

Therefore, Matthews = M320.

- Coding the surname LEE
Following all the steps above, you end up with a single letter, L.

- L = the first letter of the surname
- 0 for each letter not available

Therefore, Lee = L000.

Grouping similar-sounding names into the same Soundex code makes it easier to account for variant spellings. But it just doesn't work most of the time.

Too Many Possibilities

It's simply a matter of possibilities.

- A smaller number of variations increases the chance that you'll find the correct name.
- A larger number of variations reduces the chance that you'll find the correct name.

This is easy to understand. For example, with a surname such as SMITH, the number of variations is pretty small (SMITHE, SMYTH, SMYTHER, that's about it), making it pretty easy to find your Smith relatives. On the other hand, a surname such as ERVIN is going to be harder to find because it has so many variations/misspellings (EARVIN, EARVINE, ERVING, EARVING,

IRVIN, IRVING, IRVEN, IRVENG, ERVING, ERVAN, etc.).

Because Soundex groups so many letters into the one Soundex code of 2, it forces the grouping of dissimilar surnames together, increasing the number of surnames in your results, often making it next to impossible to find the ones you really want or need.

The sheer number of possibilities increases past the point of reliability when Soundex value 2 equates C with G, J, K, Q, S, X, and Z. They just grouped too many letters into the same value, which results in most, if not all, Soundex searches returning surnames that have little resemblance to the original name.

In my opinion, three more numbers were still available (7, 8, and 9), and had the Soundex creators put G and J in their own group, C, S, and K in their own group, and left only oddball letters Q, X, and Z in their own “leftover” group, breaking up the Soundex values in this manner might have worked more effectively. But we can't change the past, so we're stuck with Soundex in its present form, which is lousy. *[Editor: Other researchers have seen the same deficiencies in the original Soundex and have created alternatives, such as Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex and Beider-Morse phonetic matching.]*

Soundex provides largely useless search results while burying good results underneath dozens or even hundreds of duds. Plus, Soundex assumes the name is an English or German name, so surnames with French origins are butchered like crazy. In a Soundex search, a name like Lisle (pronounced Lyle) is converted to LIZ-el, and search results will include surnames with the S or Z sound, such as Lascola, Lassley, Layzell and Leslie—none of which sound anything like Lisle.

Long Surnames Are a Problem

If you're searching for someone with a fairly long surname, Soundex will let you down. Remember, Soundex looks at only the first letter plus the next three consonants when it decides to group surnames together. Any consonants that

come after those first three are discarded, and surnames that sound nothing like yours are all lumped in together, creating a situation I call false positives.

Problems with Initial Letters

Here again, Soundex fails miserably. With surnames that sound the same and are spelled the same except for the first letter (*e.g.*, CONNER versus KONNER), Soundex will not find the second variation of the surnames. Remember that many people in the 19th century couldn't read or write, and may not have known how their own surname was spelled, so census enumerators and other record keepers often used their best guess as to the proper spelling.

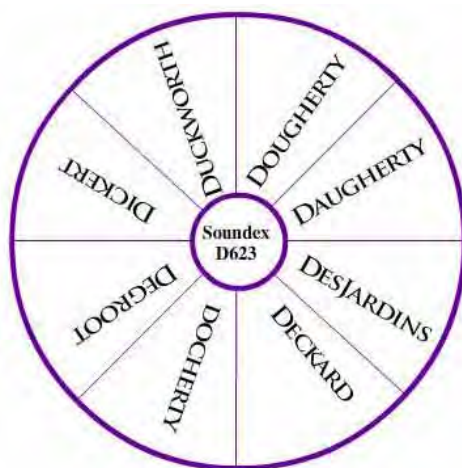
What if a surname has a silent first letter, *e.g.*, PFISTER? Though this name sounds like FIST-er, Soundex searches will always include surnames with an initial P and never include surnames with an initial F

Some common surnames with silent first letters are Honor, Knight, Knott, and Wright. There are hundreds of other not-so-common surnames where the initial letter is silent. Soundex doesn't recognize this concept, so any Soundex searches for these names using the given first letter will result in surnames that sound nothing like the original surnames.

Silent Consonants

Soundex also doesn't recognize silent consonants anywhere else in the name, so a Soundex search for a name such as MAUGHAN (pronounced MAWN) will return results including MacQueen, Mason, McCain, McGowan, McKenna, McKinney, and Messino, to name a few. When Soundex codes MAUGHAN, after the initial letter, M, the next three consonants are G, H and N. The H is ignored, and N is coded with Soundex value 5, which is the same as the letter M in Soundexland.

Then the G is coded with Soundex value 2, but remember that value also



Images courtesy of Lisa Lee



equals C, J, K, Q, S, X, and Z, hence the list of names that contain all these other letters, which explains why, in Soundex, MAUGHAN = MCKINNEY and MEACHEM. In Soundex, there is no distinction between these surnames; they're all identical to one another.

Results Not Ranked

Suppose you do a Soundex search for CRITON. Because Soundex doesn't have a way to rank your requested name versus any of the other results, the results will be displayed in alphabetical order. Many of the results will include those vowels and consonants that Soundex ignores, starting with names such as CARDEN, CARDINAL, CARRADINE, CERTAIN, CHARITAN, CHURTON, CORADINE, COURTNEY, CRAYTON ... and finally, after clicking through dozens and dozens of pages of useless search results ... CRITON.

Common Variations Are Often Missed

Okay, so you get that I'm not a fan of Soundex. But there's one more huge reason why Soundex is a poor search solution: A Soundex search only searches within one Soundex code.

Perhaps I can illustrate what this means graphically. Soundex code D623 is shown in the left wheel above and includes the surnames DAUGHERTY

and other surnames that share the same code. When you do a Soundex search for Daugherty, your search results will include all of the names within this one wheel. However, Daugherty is one of those surnames that can be pronounced and mispronounced a number of ways, such as DOWER-tree, DOCKER-tee, DAW-ter-ee, DOW-dee, DAW-tree, etc., and along with these variant pronunciations come variant spellings, each with its own Soundex code:

Surname	Soundex Code
DAUGHTERY	D236
DOWDY	D300
DAUTRY	D360

If we compare the Soundex wheels for D623 and D236, you can see that the two wheels contain very different surnames, even though DAUGHERTY and DAUGHTERY look and sound very much alike, and one is often mistaken for the other.

Each Soundex wheel is exclusive, meaning that a Soundex search for any surname will give you results of surnames only within that one code, contained within the same Soundex wheel. In a nutshell, you cannot jump from one Soundex wheel to another using a Soundex search. For surnames that have common variant spellings or are often misspelled, Soundex searches probably won't help you find them all. In my personal and professional research, I can spend hours each day,

online, searching the remote crevices of the Internet for information—and I can count the number of times in the last year that I've done a Soundex search on one finger. I rarely use Soundex searches, if ever, because I've found that they are unreliable and provide few good search results.

If Not Soundex, Then What?

There is an alternative to Soundex: wildcards. I'm a big fan of using wildcards in pretty much all of my searches, and I could go on and on about the virtues of using them. You can find a detailed explanation about wildcards and a quick three-minute video about them on my Web site (GotGenealogy.com).

It amazes me when I ask Ancestry.com users if they've ever used wildcards, and most have never heard of them and/or have never tried them. Wildcards can be useful in dealing with common abbreviations (for example, Jo*e* will search for JOE and JOSEPH), variant spellings (Mat*hew will search for MATHEW and MATTHEW), and many misspellings and transcription errors (A*ders*n will search for ANDERSON, ANDERSEN, and AUDERSON (a common transcription error where the cursive N is mistaken for a U)).

Wildcards won't break anything, so start using them—now! The sooner you stop using Soundex and embrace wildcards, the sooner you'll make amazing breakthroughs and find your missing relatives.

Here are a few quick examples of ways to use wildcards in your genealogical searches.

Where is Mary Campbell?

MARY is one of those names that is often misspelled or mistaken. Her name may have been recorded as MARYANN, MARYANNE, MARIE, MARIA, MARIANNA, MARY ANN, etc.

CAMPBELL can be spelled as CAMBELL, CAMBO, CAMPO, CAMPEAU, CAMBEL, CAMPELL, etc. Just because your family never spelled this surname like any of these examples doesn't mean that someone else didn't. You can take the time to search each variation and combination of the first and last names, or you can save some time by using wildcards in your searches. In Ancestryland, you can use a question mark (?) to replace one character, or you can use an asterisk (*) to replace multiple characters.

In order to use wildcards in your searches, you must select EXACT spelling in the search window. Soundex spelling searches won't work with wildcards.

I would search for Mary Campbell using either MAR* CAM*L or MAR* CAMP*L

IND = INDIA

What are the odds that a 19-year-old white woman living in Bowie County, Texas was born in India? Well, in Ancestryland, the odds are actually pretty good. In the 1870 U.S. Census, Precinct 5, Bowie County, Texas, Elizabeth Price was probably born in Indiana, but this was transcribed (or perhaps just miscoded) as India.

BIG difference, huh?

If you have been searching for your ancestor and including the place of birth in the search, if you don't find him, try doing the search without that qualifier and you may have better success. Another option would be to do a wildcard search using the birthplace IND*, which will include India, Indiana, Indio, Indus, etc.

KEN = KENYA

The 1870 U. S. Census for Marlin, Falls County, Texas shows the family of John Price, whose 14-year-old apparent son,

John, was born probably in Kentucky. His birthplace was input into Ancestry's database, however, as Kenya, in east Africa! I guess what troubles me most about these seemingly simple errors is the lack of checks and balances (not to mention the implicit cultural blindness).

Didn't anyone proofread these entries? *[Editor: No, they didn't. Ancestry doesn't spend money on quality control.]*

ALBERT/ROBERT/BERTIE?

Suppose your ancestor's name was Bert Nelson. When you search for him try using *BERT and/or *BURT to ensure that you get some of the common variations of Bert, such as:

Burt
Hubert
Bart
Hurbert
Albert
Talbert
Elbert
Robert
Wilbert
Gilbert

The only way to catch all of them is to do two wildcard searches. (And yes, you can put a wildcard as the first character on Ancestry.com. But you must have a minimum of three actual letters.) If you want to cover all the bases, you should also search for BERT* and BURT* (Bertie, Bertram, Burton, etc.).

At any rate, forewarned is forearmed. I hope this information will help you overcome some of your search obstacles. Good luck in your searches. Wildcards rock!



Photo courtesy of Lisa Lee

Lisa B. Lee once used to like Soundex and wrote about how to use it in "Speling Dousn't Cownt", which appeared in the Spring 2004 issue of *From the Baobab Tree* (see page 10). She is the owner of GotGenealogy.com and can be reached at Lisa@GotGenealogy.com.

Baobab Classic: Speling Dousn't Cownt

Published in *From The Baobab Tree, Spring 2004, Volume 9, Number 1, page 6*

Lisa B. Lee
Editor

I started doing my own genealogy over 30 years ago, inspired by a visit Alex Haley paid to my high school prior to the publication of his landmark book, *Roots*. At the time, I was 14 years old, with far more enthusiasm than good sense, so when I started trying to document the lives of my ancestors, I made tons of mistakes.

Thirty years later, I still make mistakes. I just try to make new ones, and every time I think I've made every sort of genealogical mistake possible, I'm often amazed to find there are still more mistakes to be discovered and experienced first-hand.

That said, I have come up with a set of genealogical golden rules that I try to obey at all times. Had I known these in the beginning, I would have saved myself tons of grief and months of searching down the wrong paths. Over the next few editions of *From the Baobab Tree*, I'll share these rules with you and I invite you to write me and let me know of your own rules and any suggestions you may have about mine.

Golden Rule No. 1: Speling Dousn't Cownt

Either intentionally or unintentionally, many of our ancestors' names have been changed over the years. In many cases, it was simply due to a mispronunciation or a local official who couldn't spell. Since many newly freed blacks were illiterate (it was illegal in most states to teach a black to read or write), when it came time to create a vital record or other document, they simply didn't know how to spell their own names, and the local official did the best he or she could to decipher how to spell the person's name.

It was not uncommon to add an ending "s" to a name, so that the surname PITT became PITTS, or vice-versa, changing COLES to COLE. In other cases, simply the pronunciation of a surname could lead to a totally different spelling. In the case of VERDUN, if the accent was placed on the first syllable, the spelling could range

anywhere from VIRDUN to VERDON to VIRDEN. However, if the accent was placed on the second syllable, the spelling could, and did, range from VIRDINE to VERDONE to even VIDRINE. And in every case, the spelling is correct!

On a visit to my mother's hometown of Richmond, Virginia years ago, I asked my aunt for directions to a local shopping mall. She told me to take I-95 and exit at what sounded like "PAIR-em Road." Off I went on my merry way, but I didn't see an exit that looked like what I'd expected to find.

When I got near the PARHAM ROAD exit, I thought to myself, "Is that what she meant?" I'm from a suburb of Detroit, Michigan, where PARHAM is pronounced PAR-ham, certainly not PAIR-em. Had I been a census enumerator back in the day, who knows what kind of damage I could have done to people's names?

But do you see my point?

What this means to a genealogist is that you must expand your searches and even your thought processes if you want to be successful in documenting your family's history.

Vital records are fraught with errors, and the census is probably one of the worst records when it comes to accuracy of information. Don't get me wrong, the census is a very valuable tool, but it must be used as a guideline which you can use to obtain other independent sources of information to verify anything you find in that census record.

The job of the census enumerator was often given out as a political plum by the local powers-that-be, and there were no educational or other requirements for the job. If you could fog up a mirror, you could be a census enumerator. Ask anyone who's ever done any census work and they'll tell you about all the chicken scratch they've had to try to decipher, words and names that were misspelled, and even the racial prejudice that found its way onto a census page. In one case, I found a census record in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, with the notation

from an obviously annoyed enumerator which stated, "These colored people don't know nothing, don't do nothing."

Ouch! I guess he was in a bad mood that day. Can you imagine how his obvious displeasure from dealing with those "know nothing" black folks could cause him to get sloppy with his record keeping?

When the Soundex system was first created in 1935, its original intent was to facilitate the indexing of birth information for the newly created Social Security system. The Census Bureau hired the Rand Corporation to devise a phonetic system for coding like-sounding surnames in order to deal with variant spellings and outright spelling errors. *[Current editor: Soundex was actually created by Margaret K. Odell and Robert C. Russell and patented in 1918 and 1922. The Bureau of the Census modified their existing system.]*

Though the Soundex system was a great improvement, it's not perfect, and many surnames have multiple Soundex codes based on either the way they are pronounced or the way they're spelled.

I recently did some family research for a friend. His great-great-grandmother's surname was DOWDY (Soundex code D300). But some public records for this family appear as DAUGHTERY (Soundex code D236), DOUGHTY (Soundex code D230), DORTY (Soundex code D630), DORTRY (Soundex code D636), and DAUGHERTY (Soundex code D263).

Some online genealogical databases allow you to do Soundex searches (e.g., FamilySearch.org, Ancestry.com, Ontario Cemetery Finding Aid), and I recommend you take advantage of this whenever possible. Even if you use a Soundex search, though, there are no search engines that will do a cross-Soundex search, as would be needed with the DOWDY example, above.

Whether you do your research online or in an archive/library, make sure you check for variant spellings in order to maximize your results. It may take a bit more time in the short run, but in the long run, you'll be glad you did.

Twelve Years a Slave: Book Review

The story of a free man who was sold into slavery and his journey back to freedom

Dera Williams
Recording Secretary, AAGSNC

Title: *Twelve Years a Slave*
Author: Solomon Northup
Foreword: Dolen Perkins-Valdez
Publisher: Simon & Schuster/Atria
Publishing date: September 17, 2013

In the year 1841 Solomon Northup was living a life as a free man of color with his wife and three children, like any other citizen in Saratoga Springs, New York. Born to a former slave who later obtained his freedom, Northup was progressing in his career, having been a building contractor for various employers and working in agriculture, as his father before him. The move to Saratoga Springs was ascent into the next stage of bettering his family's status. A much sought-after fiddler of classical music, Northup was approached by two gentlemen who offered him a lucrative fee to play his fiddle in New York City. From there, they enticed him with an even more profitable venture if he would accompany them to Washington, D.C. After obtaining freedom papers as suggested by the gentlemen, since they would be entering slave territory, Northup continued traveling with the men he had befriended, but after his performance circumstances changed. He was tricked and drugged under false pretenses and woke up in chains, a free man no longer. Flabbergasted, heartsick, and beaten into submission, he found himself on the slave auction block in New Orleans, Louisiana, and eventually on a plantation several hundred miles from New Orleans, near the Red River.

There Northup met other slaves, who had been enslaved their entire lives, who were illiterate and unlearned, who warned him against saying he was a free man. In fact, his new master and overseer not only threatened to kill him for claiming his free status, but gave him a new name; from then on he was known as Platt.

Northup was indeed in despair, but he refused to give in to defeat. He was determined to regain his freedom but meanwhile went about the business of slavery, deferring to others, enduring beatings, and witnessing cruel, inhumane beatings of others on an almost daily basis. Northup was ever vigilant and attempted to send word to Mr. Northup, the man whose family formerly owned his father, but was thwarted when he was yet again deceived.

Northup did an excellent job of detailing the life of a working slave on both sugar cane and cotton plantations. He broke down the stages of the operation of the sugar cane process from the way it was harvested to the intricacies of the refining process up to readying it for sale. Picking cotton was an art; it took a great deal of skill to pluck the plants at the right time in the correct manner. The telling of the story is vivid, distinct, and clear with a sense of place and time.

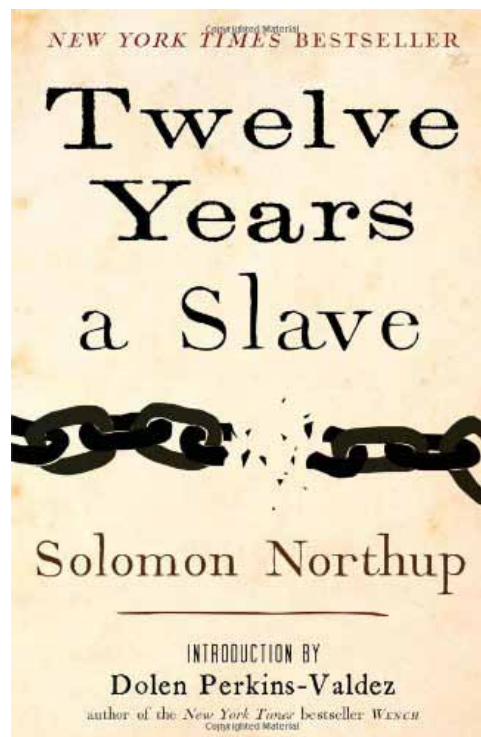
In his narrative, Northup recalled Eliza, who appeared to be somewhat educated, and who had two children; the boy was sold and the girl was left with her

after much begging and hysterics. There was also Patsy, who drew the ire of the mistress because the master fancied her through no fault of her own; she was beaten for the slightest provocation, until the will was beaten out of her. Early on Northup pledged he would not let them break his spirit or his will to live, always hopeful and prayerful that one day he would see his wife, Anne, and his children again. Immensely talented with the violin, it was his saving grace. It was music that soothed his soul.

There are many slave narratives, painful stories of runaway attempts and capture, of constant beatings, of not having enough to sustain one's body but being expected to toil day after day in unbearable conditions. Each and every story reveals another way our ancestors lived and survived under that vile institution that robbed them of their dignity and freedom. But rarely do we hear about a free person who was sold into slavery, especially one who was born free and lived as such for 30 years. It took twelve years for someone to come into his confidence who would post a letter to the proper people and begin the cycle that would regain his freedom.

There are numerous versions of Northup's autobiography, which he wrote in 1853. The version read for this review had a foreword by Dolen Perkins-Valdez, author of the novel *Wench*, who states that every American needs to read this story, which is still relevant. So very true.

Dera Williams lives, works, and plays in the Oakland/East Bay arena. She has retired from working in curriculum at a local community college. She is a writer who has been published in several anthologies and journals and is co-author of *Mother's Wit: Stories of Mothers and Daughters*. She writes fiction, nonfiction, memoir, articles, essays, book reviews, and academic writing. She is the family historian and storyteller. She has written a collection of childhood stories about growing up in her beloved Oakland. E-mail her at dwilliamsfrequent@gmail.com.



Annetje Christiaansz and Moïse Dupuis

Robert Jackson, Ph.D.
Contributor

Moïse Dupuis was born in Québec on July 8, 1673, the second child of immigrant parents who later settled in Laprairie, near Montréal. As a teenager Moïse followed the path taken by many young Frenchmen in Canada and became a *coureur-de-bois*—an independent (and often unauthorized) trader of furs who plied the rivers of the north by canoe and exchanged European goods for the hides of animals trapped by Indians. By 1696 his trade—which may have included smuggling—had taken him to the Hudson River and to the Dutch settlement at Schenectady. There, he fathered a child with a “semi-black” woman named Anna, whom seven months later he evidently married, in the Reformed Dutch Church of Albany, New York. In the marriage record of July 21, 1697, her name was given as Annetje Christiaansz.

Annetje Christiaansz, according to the findings of reputable researchers, was probably the out-of-wedlock daughter of a Dutch settler in Schenectady named Christiaan Christiaansz and an African woman, possibly a slave leased to him. Christiaan married soon after Annetje’s birth, and it is likely that she was raised in his household. There is evidence that Annetje was abducted from Schenectady by an Indian raiding party while still in her teens and taken by them to Québec, where she was ransomed and then returned to Schenectady.

What do we know of Annetje’s parents? Her father, Christiaan Christiaansz, was born in the Netherlands about 1640 and arrived on the Hudson River in 1659, where he had been hired as an indentured laborer by the prominent van Rensselaer family of Rensselaerswyck, near Albany. By 1671 he had completed his indenture and purchased a small plot of land in Schenectady, which was then a community of fewer than 200 settlers on the frontier of Mohawk country. He was

still a junior member of the community five years later when Annetje was born.

Annetje’s mother, whose name we do not know, was of African descent and undoubtedly a slave. At that time there were about a dozen African slaves in Schenectady, most of them female, engaged in domestic and farm labor for individual families. It is likely that she had been imported from one of the plantation settlements in the Caribbean—Curaçao, Barbados, or Jamaica—rather than directly from Africa, since the Hudson River settlers preferred to purchase slaves who had worked on the plantations, considering them more pliable than recent arrivals from Africa.

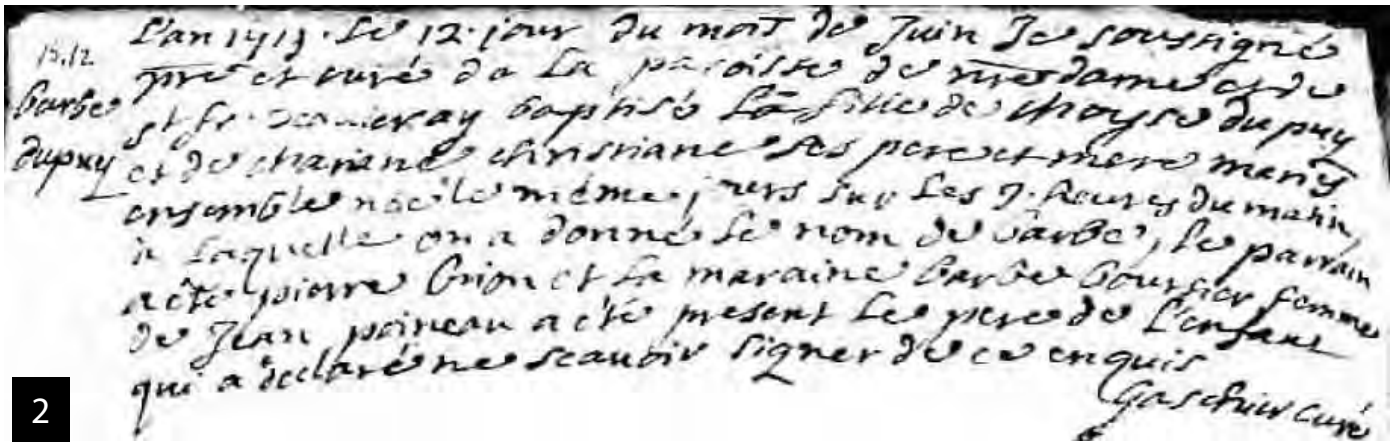
Edgar McManus, the leading authority on slavery in New Netherland, notes that the Dutch were largely free of racial prejudice and treated their slaves in much the same way as they treated indentured European workers, as an expensive source of labor to be sensibly



Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Coureur_de_bois.jpg

exploited but not abused: “Despite their unequal relationship, masters and slaves worked together at the same tasks, lived together in the same houses, and celebrated the Dutch holidays together on terms of easy familiarity.” We do not know if Annetje’s mother and Christiaan were more than casual acquaintances. It is unlikely that he owned her, since he was not yet wealthy enough to afford the current price of a slave, which was about one year’s wages for an adult male worker. Instead he may have leased her, a common practice at that time.

In 1697, soon after their marriage, Annetje and Moïse moved to Québec, where in 1699 she was baptized in the Catholic Church and given the name Marie Anne Louise. The couple settled in Laprairie, near Moïse’s parents, and had nine children, most of whom survived to adulthood. I descend from their daughter Barbe, born in 1715. Both Moïse and Annetje died in 1750.



2

1: Woodcut of a *coureur de bois* by Arthur Heming (1870–1940). 2: Baptismal record of Barbe Dupuis, Robert’s seventh-great-grandmother. 3: Nicholas Veeder Slave House, 205 Green Street, Schenectady, Schenectady County, New York. The house was built in 1789 and represents a time, later than that of Moïse Dupuis, when many Schenectady residents owned slaves.

The University of Montréal’s authoritative Programme de recherche en démographie historique (PRDH; “Historical Demography Research Program”) considers it “probable” that the “semi-black” Anna who was the mother of Moïse’s out-of-wedlock child was the same person as Annetje Christiaansz, whom he married seven months later (PRDH record 21959). PRDH notes that it has not been proven that Christiaan Christiaansz was Annetje’s father, but researcher Barbara Barth has provided evidence by noting that the family who sponsored the out-of-wedlock child of Moïse and Annetje also sponsored a child of Christiaan Christiaansz’s sister-in-law. Contrary to the assertions of several researchers, there is absolutely no evidence that Annetje was a daughter of Christiaan Christiaansz and his wife Elizabeth Ysbrant Eldersz, and the dating of relevant events makes it very unlikely in any case.

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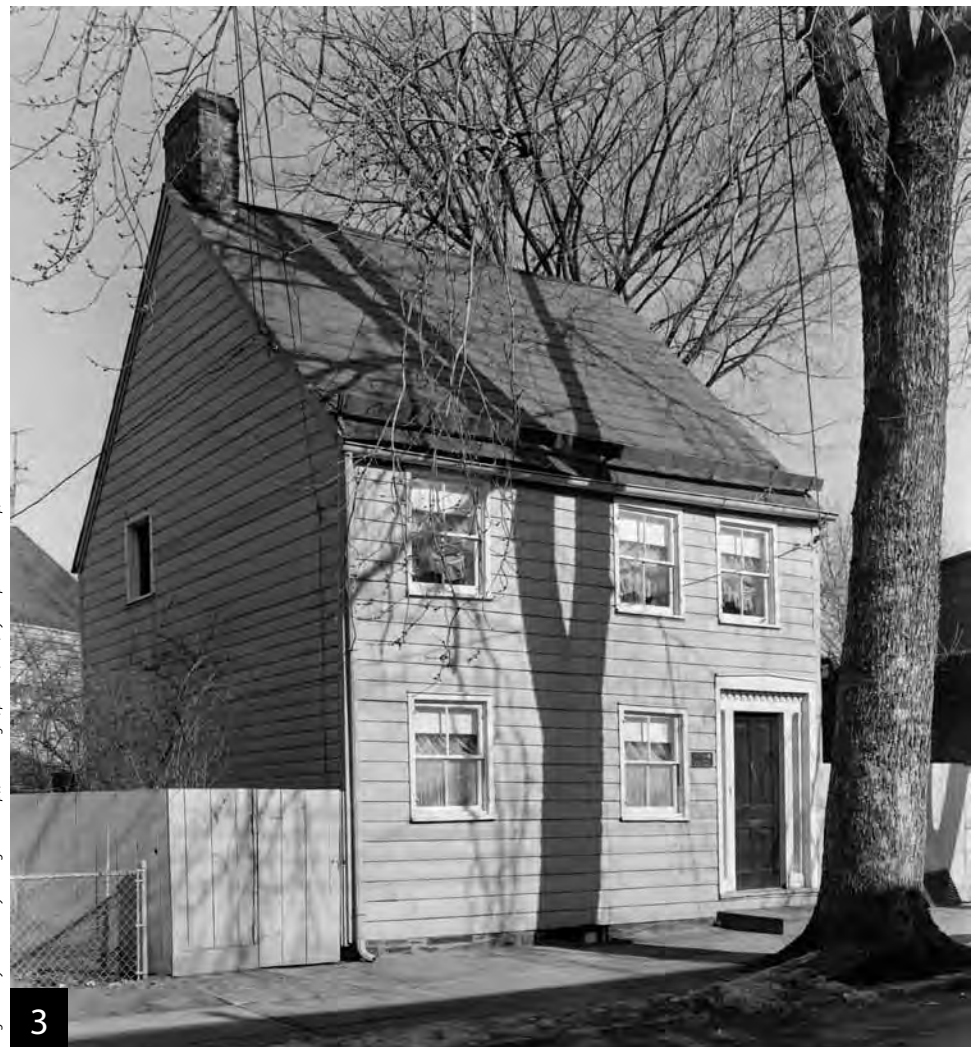
Photo courtesy of Robert Jackson



Robert Jackson taught history and worked in finance. His Harvard doctoral dissertation was “The Twenty Years War: Invasion and Resistance in Southeastern Nigeria, 1900–1919.” In his retirement he spends many hours doing genealogical research

in the Oakland FamilySearch Library. His current research emphasizes German and French-Canadian family and village history. Annetje was his eight-great-grandmother, and her unnamed African mother was his ninth-great-grandmother. You can read more about his family at his Web site, <http://sophocles.com/>.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress at <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/n0738/photos.122978p/>



3

Transcriptions

Have documents that you've transcribed? Submit them to The Baobab Tree to share the info with others.

Janice M. Sellers

Editor, *The Baobab Tree*

Petition from Citizens of Leon County [Florida] to Remove All Free Persons of Color from the State (1850)

To the Honorable the General Assembly of the State of Florida

The undersigned citizens of the State of Florida residing in the County of Leon respectfully represent unto your Honorable body that at a crisis like the present when the stability of the institution of domestic servitude is threatened and every means are adopted by our enemies to compass their ends it is not only the right but the duty of the Southern States to protect themselves by every means in their power. The safety of our lives and of our property demands that energetic measures should be adopted to remove from our midst not only the cited(?) agencies which may be destructive to either or to both, but also those which may at any time contribute to such a result. Your petitioners are impressed with the necessity of moving beyond the limits of the State all free persons of color resident therein who may not be entitled to exemption from the operation of such a law as may be passed for that purpose, by treaty stipulation or otherwise. They respectfully represent their continuance amongst us as an evil of no ordinary magnitude, and one for the removal of which they believe they State should take prompt action. Your petitioners do not deem it needful to give at length the reasons for the conclusions they have come to, because they believe these to be so obvious as to suggest themselves at once to the mind of every reflecting man. Your petitioners therefore pray that your Honorable body will at the present session pass a law providing for the removal of all free persons of color in this State who can be made subject to its operations, and if necessary that a sufficient sum may be appropriated to defray the expenses attending their removal. And your petitioners will ever pray etc.

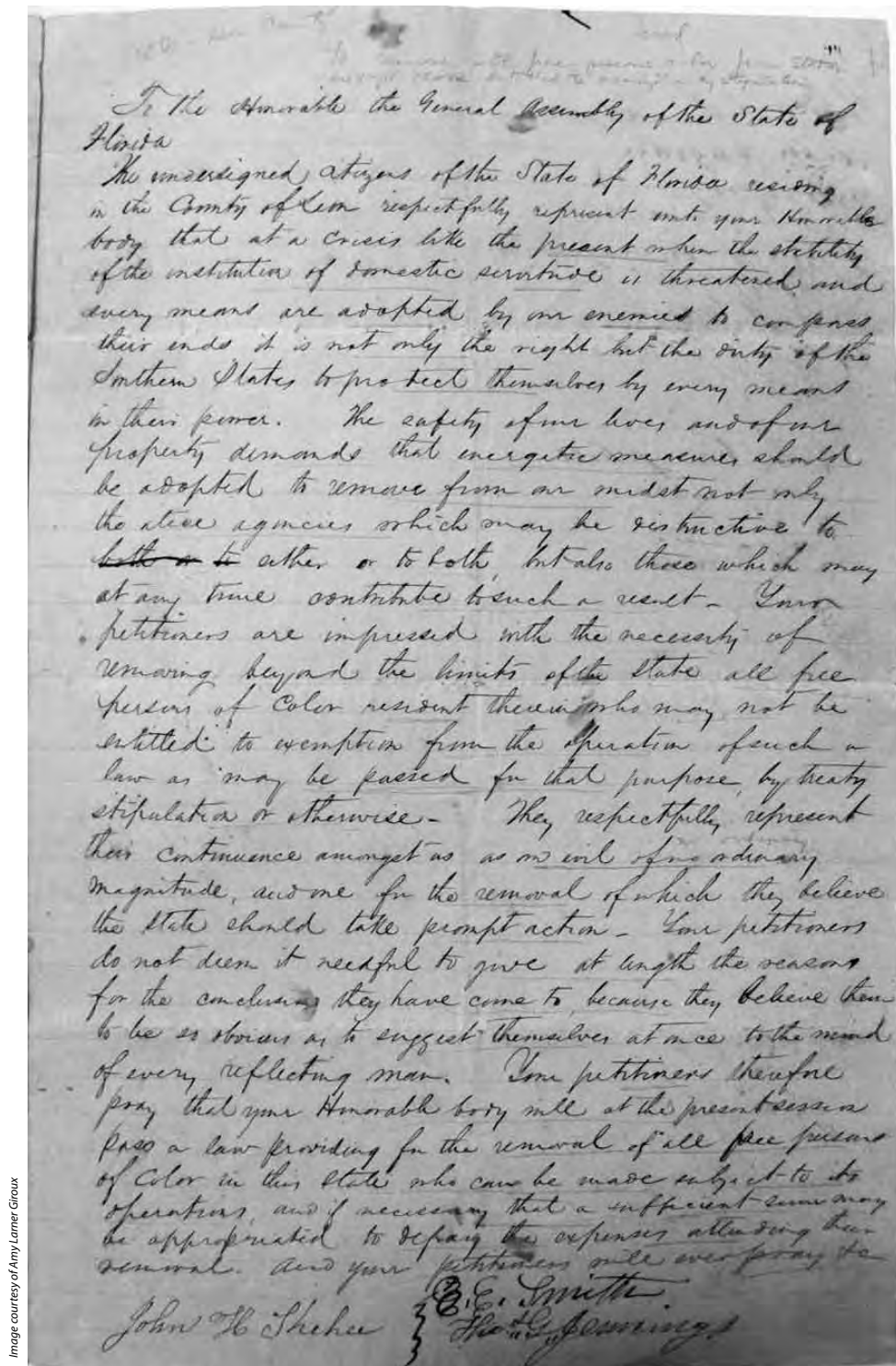


Image courtesy of Amy Lamer Groux

attending their removal. And your petitioners will ever pray etc.

John H. Shehee
E. E. Smith
Thos G. Jennings

Source: State Archives of Florida, 500 South Bronough Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250. Record Group 000151, Series number S.2153, Collection: Territorial and early statehood records, 1821-1878, Box 5, FF66

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Legacy of the Slave Masters: The Scoggin/Scoggins Family

continued from cover

Image courtesy of FamilySearch.org

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Page No. 39207

SCHEDULE 1.—Free Inhabitants in *Mine Creek Township* **in the County of** *Hempstead* **State** *of Arkansas* **enumerated by me, on the** _____ **day of** _____ **1860** *James A. Marsh* **Ass't Marshal**
Post Office *Nashville*

Dwelling houses—numbered in the order of visitation.	Families numbered in the order of visitation.	The name of every person whose usual place of abode on the first day of June, 1860, was in this family.	DESCRIPTION			Profession, Occupation, or Trade of each person, male and female, over 15 years of age.	VALUE OF ESTATE OWNED		Place of Birth, Naming the State, Territory, or Country.	Married within the year.	Attended School within the year.	Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, pauper, or convict.	
			Age	Sex	Color		Value of Real Estate.	Value of Personal Estate.					
1	3	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
39	384	<i>James W. Scoggin</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>16250</i>	<i>69879</i>	<i>Virginia</i>				
40		<i>Sarah G. Scoggin</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>White</i>				<i>Kentucky</i>				
No. white males, <i>21</i> No. colored males, _____ No. foreign born, _____ No. blind, _____ No. white females, <i>19</i> No. colored females, _____ No. deaf and dumb, _____ No. insane, _____							<i>30.711</i>	<i>102.667</i>	No. idiots, _____ No. paupers, _____				No. convicts, _____

Photo courtesy of Darlene Watson



Cover: Mississippi Delta landscape in Arkansas, 1938; photographer Dorothea Lange.

1: James W. Scoggin's enumeration in the 1860 U.S. census, including the value of his real estate and personal property.

2: James W. Scoggin's tombstone in Ozan Cemetery, Mine Creek Township, Arkansas.

owned sixty slaves—twenty-nine males ranging in age from one year to sixty and thirty-one females from one year to forty in age. He provided eleven houses for their quarters. Those sixty nameless human beings were considered personal property on the tax rolls. Interestingly, only 35 of them were considered taxable property, valued at \$17,500. Personal property also included livestock, carriages, gold watches, and expensive furnishings. He stated the total value of his personal property at \$69,879 and his real estate at \$16,250. He was a wealthy man.

But who was James W. Scoggin? Sam Williams, who grew up in Washington, Arkansas, in the years before the Civil War, gives a brief character sketch of the man in his history *Printer's Devil*: "James W. Scoggin, who was a Tennessean [he was actually born in Virginia and grew to manhood in Tennessee], made his advent into Hempstead county along in the forties [1840's], settling in the neighborhood of what is now Bingen, formerly Pine Grove. He was a very shrewd, money-making man, and accumulated a handsome fortune, but the war [the Civil War] swept away the largest portion of it. He was a great man for fine horses and mules, and always owned the best of stock. He died near the close of the war. His son Gillespie

now lives on the old homestead, and is, I am told, strikingly like his father in personal appearance and manner." Scoggin lived in northwestern Hempstead County.

The son of Rev. John Scoggin, J. W. Scoggin was born in Virginia in 1805. His father, a native of Pennsylvania, was of German descent and a veteran of the American Revolution. The family moved to White County in east central Tennessee. There J. W. met and married Sarah Greene, a native of Kentucky. They moved to Cooper County in central Missouri in 1830 and to Hempstead County in southwest Arkansas in 1846. Perhaps they were attracted to the booming Southwest Cotton Frontier. By 1860, Scoggin employed overseer James T. Lane to manage his sizable enslaved workforce.

By 1860 J. W.'s son W. G. Scoggin (known as "Gillespie", according to Sam Williams) was grown, married, and the owner of two enslaved boys. He served in the Confederate Army in Company I of the 19th Arkansas Infantry. On January 11, 1863, he was captured at Arkansas Post in eastern Arkansas and sent to Camp Douglas, Illinois, as a prisoner of war. Scoggin managed to escape and made his way home, serving in a home militia company in Arkansas until the end of the war. He

was later a farmer with land interests in Hempstead, Howard, and Pike Counties and a partner in a general store in Nashville, Arkansas, before his death in 1893.

J. W. Scoggin died on December 4, 1864, at the age of 59 and is buried in Ozan Cemetery in Mine Creek Township near Bingen, Arkansas. By the time his estate was settled, his slaves had been emancipated. They begin to appear with the names Scoggin, Scoggins, Scogin, and other variations in the census and in county records in Hempstead and later Howard counties.

Some of the former anonymous Scoggin slaves appeared in the 1870 census in Mine Creek Township. Steve and Betsy Scoggin listed their birthplace as South Carolina. Steve was a farmer. B. F. Scoggins gave Virginia as his birthplace

and declared his occupation to be “mechanic.” His wife claimed North Carolina as her birthplace. Charles Scoggins, a 30-year-old black farmer, listed Louisiana as his birthplace. His 27-year-old wife Winnie came from Missouri, where the Scoggin family once lived. Not far away were other black farmers Frank Scogin, John Scogin, and Lilburn Scogin. They and their wives came from a variety of states, but all their children were born in Arkansas.

So it goes as these families and their descendants spread out over southwest Arkansas. There were other slaveholders by the name of Scoggin, but probably few had such a large number of enslaved persons attached to them as did James W. Scoggin—one of the largest slaveholders in antebellum Hempstead County. Descendants of J. W. Scoggin

are still in the region, as are descendants of the enslaved persons who were attached to him and took his name as part of their own history.

This article was first published in the *Hope Star*, Hope, Arkansas. Reference for 1860 tax value of slaves: <http://goo.gl/cUUuby>.



Photo courtesy of Peggy Lloyd

Peggy Lloyd, a native of Hope, Arkansas, is the Archival Manager of the Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives at Washington, Arkansas, now a branch of the Arkansas History Commission. Peggy's research interests are the history of Southwest

Arkansas, cemetery preservation, African-American history, maps, history of the land, and family history. She speaks frequently to a wide range of groups on courthouse research, local history, and black history. She is a long-time member of the Arkansas Archeological Society and works closely with its archeologists.

Genealogy 101

continued from page 5

such a drawing from a metes-and-bounds or legal land description as a surveyor would have done.

Postnominal

Initials after a name indicating rank, honors, or academic achievement.

Probate records

Records related to the disposition of a deceased individual's property.

Quadroon

A person with three white grandparents and one black grandparent; ¼ black.

Relict

Widow; surviving spouse when one's husband or wife has died.

Repository

The place where a source is found, *e.g.*, library, FHC, etc.

Social Security Death Index (SSDI)

An index of deaths of individuals who had Social Security numbers, drew Social Security benefits, and had their deaths reported to the Social Security Administration. Not all deaths appear in the SSDI. Due to recent federal

legislation, the SSDI no longer includes deaths occurring in the previous three years.

Soundex

A system of coding surnames based on how they sound, as opposed to how they are spelled, which was used by the U.S. government to index the federal censuses from 1880–1930.

Source

A book, document, or other record that supplies information. An original source is the first written or photographic record of an event, usually recorded close to the time of the event. A derivative source is a copy created some time later. Derivative sources include clerk's copies of legal records, transcripts, and abstracts.

Testator

A person who dies leaving a valid will.

Transcribe

To make a copy in writing.

Ultimo

In the month before this one.

Vital records

Records of births, deaths, and marriages.

Voter registration

A list of registered voters for an area. Voter registration lists are sometimes the first public records of former slaves.

Y chromosome

Genetic material passed down from father to son.

Zambo

A person with one American Indian and one black parent.

Compiled from <http://www.genealogyquest.com/glossaries/terminology.html>, <http://www.familytreemagazine.com/glossary>, and <http://www.bgc certification.org/skillbuilders/skbl085.html>.

As always, happy hunting!



Photo courtesy of Annette Madden

Annette Madden has been researching her family history since 2000 with great success. She has traced her history back to the late 1700's, 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 1880's. E-mail her at amadden45@hotmail.com.

Baobab Writer's Guidelines

Interested in submitting your work to *The Baobab Tree*? You don't have to be a professional writer! Just tell your story the best you can and be willing to work with the editors to polish it for publication.

Here are some helpful hints when preparing your submissions:

- Type all submissions. Times New Roman font, 12-point size is best.
- Write one to three pages. We always need some one-page stories; more than three pages is too long.
- We will 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 JPG 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 JPG format. Make sure pictures are at least 300 dpi (dots per inch), sharp, and 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.

Web Notes

Resources, stories, and other things found while wandering the Web

Janice M. Sellers
Editor, *The Baobab Tree*

I really don't like to write, but I'm very good at collecting information. I hope some of these links prove useful and/or educational for you.

A blog post about Alabama's participation in World War I makes several points about blacks during the war and the war's effects on blacks.

http://roadstothegreatwar-ww1.blogspot.com/2014/01/the-centennial-at-grass-roots-series_7166.html

"Negro Rights Activities in Gold Rush California", an article from the March 1966 issue of the *California Historical Society Quarterly*.

<http://www.sfmuseum.net/hist6/blackrights.html>

San Francisco Chronicle article about a U.S. National Park Ranger who works at the Rosie the Riveter National Memorial in Richmond.

<http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Federal-shutdown-puts-Betty-Reid-Soskin-on-hold-4901916.php>

Betty Reid Soskin also has her own Wikipedia page.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Betty_Reid-Soskin

Robert E. Williams was a black photographer in Augusta, Georgia. University of Georgia staff have placed 84 of his photographs in an online exhibit.

https://scout.wisc.edu/archives/r42934/robert_e_williams_photographs_1872-1898

More than 30,000 objects have been found at a highway excavation site in Savannah, Georgia. Archaeologists believe the location was slave quarters belonging to a wealthy plantation owner.

<http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2013/dec/01/slave-artifacts-found-georgia-highway-project-site/>

Goin' to Chicago is a documentary about the Great Migration of blacks out of the South, focused on the experiences of older

Chicagoans mostly from the Mississippi Delta. While the site primarily wants you to buy a copy of the movie, it also has information and resources.

<http://www.georgeking-assoc.com/gointochicago/index.html>

A story about Chicago's African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem.

<http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/154485/black-israelites-finding?all-1>

A Lincoln County, Kentucky, black cemetery, last used in 1952, is being cleared.

http://www.centrankynews.com/amnews/news/local/lincoln/lincoln-cemetery-project-rediscovering-graves-of-slaves-soldiers/article_56e60d2a-505b-11e3-99a8-001a4bcf6878.html

A manuscript bought at an estate sale in New York has been authenticated as a memoir written by a black man in prison in Auburn, New York, in the 1850's. It is being prepared for publication.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/12/books/prison-memoir-of-a-black-man-in-the-1850s.html>

Born to Run: The Slave Family in Early New York, 1626 to 1827, a 1985 doctoral dissertation, is available online.

<http://newyorkslavery.blogspot.com/2007/08/chapter-one.html>

Philadelphian William Still served as a conductor on the Underground Railroad. His diaries, begun in 1852, have information about each fugitive he met. The diaries have been digitized as part of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Preserving Freedom project.

<http://digitalhistory.hsp.org/preserving-american-freedom>

Still's 1872 book, *The Underground Railroad: A Record of Facts, Authentic Narratives, Letters, &C, Narrating the Hardships, Hair-Breadth Escape and Death Struggles of the Slaves in Their Efforts for Freedom, as Related by Themselves and Others, or Witnessed by the Author*, is available in full text on Project Gutenberg.

http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk_files=3276649&pageno=1

Marian Pierre-Louis/Fieldstone
Common interview of “Discovering Black Vermont with Elise Guyette”
<http://www.fieldstonecommon.com/fc-058-discovering-black-vermont-with-elise-guyette/>

One hundred years of historical records of Central State Hospital in Virginia, the first black mental hospital, are scheduled to be digitized before the end of 2014.
<http://www.newswise.com/articles/digital-archive-to-house-100-years-of-historical-documents-from-world-s-first-black-mental-institution>

Abstracts of records of “Stafford County African Americans, 1790–1867” have been added to the free online resources available from the Prince William County (Virginia) Public Library site.
<http://eservice.pwcgov.org/library/digitalLibrary/index.htm>

A book believed to be the first White House memoir, written by a former slave, has been digitized and is available online for free.
http://www.dailyprogress.com/starexponent/news/local_news/first-white-house-memoir-goes-digital/article_2e368c80-8b28-11e3-ab23-0017143b2370.html

A Passover seder held in 1969 in a black church in Washington, D.C., was inspired by Martin Luther King, Jr.
<http://thejewniverse.com/2014/the-passover-seder-inspired-by-martin-luther-king-jr/>

A Caribbean island group plans to sue for slavery reparations.
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/09/st-vincent-grenadines-slavery-court>

Historic papers about the slave trade, some apparently dating back to 1662, were discovered in a secret cache of documents held by the UK Foreign Office.
<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/jan/20/slave-trade-papers-illegal-foreign-office-cache>

Web site with a collection of photographs of descendants of Solomon Northup, the author of *Twelve Years a Slave*.
<http://facesofsolomon.com/>

The television show *Brooklyn Savvy* recently aired a segment called “Coming to the Table”—based on the organization of the same name, <http://comingtothetable.org/>—which is available online for viewing.
<http://yonarrative.com/coming-table-tv/>

Free “Tracing Slave Ancestors” resource from the current president of the Association of Professional Genealogists.
<http://media2.fwpublishings.com.s3.amazonaws.com/FTM/FTU/downloads/tracing-slave-ancestors.pdf>

Readex/NewsBank will release “The American Slavery Collection, 1820–1922” in March 2014. This will be an institutional subscription database.
<http://www.readex.com/blog/readex-announces-american-slavery-collection-1820-1922>

The Killer Blues Headstone Project exists to provide headstones for blues musicians lying in unmarked graves. Twenty stones have been placed to date. Dick Eastman has a short post about the project, with links.
http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/2013/12/the-killer-blues-headstone-project.html

Article on the documentary *Off and Running*, about a young black woman, adopted by two Jewish lesbians in New York, and her sometimes conflicting views of herself.
<http://forward.com/articles/124888/black-jewish-history-month-is-off-and-running/>

The 1938 jazz concert that changed history because it featured a racially integrated orchestra.
<http://thejewniverse.com/2014/the-jazz-concert-that-changed-black-and-jewish-history/>

The R-Evolution Facebook page regularly posts vignettes of blacks from different times in history.
<https://www.facebook.com/R.evoThought>

The Baobab Tree is published four times a year and is provided free to all members of the African American Genealogical Society of Northern California (AAGSNC) as a benefit of membership. Additional copies and past issues may be purchased for \$5.00 per copy.

All articles and manuscripts submitted for publication are evaluated and may be edited. Authors retain copyright. AAGSNC does not assume responsibility for errors of fact or interpretation.

Deadlines for submission of material for publication in *The Baobab Tree* are March 15 for the Spring issue, June 15 for the Summer issue, September 15 for the Fall issue, and December 15 for the Winter issue.

Correspondence on editorial matters, story submissions, and requests for permission to reprint articles may be sent to journal@aagsnc.org.

Articles and manuscripts acceptable for publication include:

Manuscripts/Articles:

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

Abstracts:

- Census transcriptions (federal, state, city, and county)
- 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



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