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International Society of Sons and Daughters of Slave Ancestry

Inside this issue:

President's Message	1
Juneteenth Menu	2
Helen Robinson Hill Family	3
Slave Founded Town	4
Recommended Reading	4
Wiley Russell	5
Adeline Russell	6
Slave Memoirs	7

**Check out our new
updated website.**

www.rootsweb.com/~ilissdsa

President's Message

In partnership with the African-American Genealogy and Historical Society of Chicago and the Patricia Liddell Researchers, ISDSA recently held its Annual Juneteenth celebration at the Carter G. Woodson Regional Library in Chicago.

Dr. Margaret Burroughs, noted author and founder of the DuSable Museum of African- American History, was the keynote speaker and recipient of the 2004 Sojourner Truth Literary Award, for her contributions to the field of African-American historical research and writing.

Chicago Public Schools teacher, Lawaune Moorman, was also honored for her contributions to intergenerational literacy. Moorman is founder of the Small School of the Arts at the South Shore Multiplex. Under her direction, the school's theatre and dance troupe performed excerpts from a play they co-wrote with Moorman, titled, *Inspiration From Our Past*. The play features the students' interpretations of oral histories collected from parents, grandparents and elders in the South Shore community. The students received a standing ovation.

Continued on page 2

ISDSA Philosophy

The Sons and Daughters of Slave Ancestry are proud of their enslaved ancestors, not ashamed; want to remember the past, not erase it; want to celebrate their heritage, not mourn it; and want to promote dialogue about this chapter in world history for the purpose of documenting and preserving slave genealogy for future generations.



ISDSA President Patricia Bearden with renowned actor and producer Robert Townsend and his mother standing in front of the Former Slaves in Freedom: A Visual History exhibit at the NAACP Freedom Fund dinner held by the Chicago Westside Branch on May 14, 2004.

Photo by Steven Page.

President's message continued from page 1

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Also on the program was Steven Haymes, DePaul professor and award winning author of Race Culture, and the City. Dr. Haymes is currently working on a book titled, "Pedagogy of Our Ancestors: The Existential Wisdom of African American Slave Culture. Haymes is collaborating with ISDSA on research study designed to illuminate the effects of the construction of ancestral memories, as revealed through the tellings and recordings of oral histories. (If you would like to participate in the study, call 773.238.2686 to schedule an appointment.)

The American Family History Institute, our Education Division, has been busy working with two of our strategic partners, Saving Our Stories Coalition and Changing Worlds Teacher Training Institute. On 6 May 2004 we took a group of Chicago Public School students to the Illinois State Capitol to interview the Honorable State Senator Emil Jones, Jr. about his family history. The students were also introduced to their peers from schools across Illinois. Together, they shared personal and family stories, discovered that they were more alike than different, and celebrated their differences.

In July we collaborated with Changing Worlds to train a group of Chicago Public School teachers in effective strategies for integrating art, storytelling and family stories across the curriculum to personalize learning and increase students' proficiencies in reading, math, social studies, writing and critical thinking.

Our prayers go out to ISDSA board member Andrew J. Williams who is recovering from a stroke.

ISDSA ancestral photo quilt and pictures are featured in an article titled *Juneteenth: Freedom Jubilee* in the September/October Footsteps magazine. Be sure to pick up a copy.

Please continue to share your time, expertise and donations with ISDSA.

Juneteenth Menu

By Belzora "Bell" Cheatham

(Past President of the Afro-American Genealogical & Historical Society of Chicago)

When I was a girl growing up in Cass County, Texas every Negro [1]; young and old looked forward for the nineteenth of June and Christmas. I can't tell you which "holiday" we liked the best. Yes, to us June 19th was a holiday. At the time our white brothers and sisters didn't agree but that made no difference to us. We celebrated anyway. We always had Barbecued Pork. The whole hog was roasted over a slow fire for many hours. The smell was to die for and the meat was worth waiting for. A typical menu consisted of:

- Barbecued pork sandwich with a dab of the most delicious barbecue sauce
- Homemade Ice Cream, Cookies, Cake or whatever sweets were being sold
Ice cold Soft drinks, especially strawberry

This was what was sold at the neighborhood functions. At home we might have fried chicken, cake or cobbler, some type of vegetable, penny drink (today you call it Kool Aid), cold water from our well or anything that mother wanted to add.

[1] We were Negroes and Colored people when I was a girl. This was before African American was created.

Six Families

By Helen Sarah Alice Elizabeth Robinson-Hill

Helen Sarah Alice Elizabeth Robinson-Hill was born in December 26, 1909 in North Little Rock Arkansas, Pulaski County. Helen Robinson-Hill had the pleasure of being named after both her maternal and paternal grandmothers. Both sets of Helen Robinson-Hill's grandparents were present at her birth. Helen and her daughter, Marion Hill came into the office of ISDSA on July 29, 2004 and presented documents of their slave ancestors.



Picture taken at the ISDSA office of Marion Hill (standing) and mother Helen E. Robinson Hill who submitted photos of her slave ancestors to Robert H. Williams.
Photo by Pat Bearden

Six families (Jones, Hardin, Davis, Meacham, and Robinson & Watson) were United during the Post Civil War years in the State of Arkansas. According to census and land deed records, James Madison Jones (1834-1871) married Eveline Hardin (1840-1892), and raised his family in the County of Conway. The Davis/Meacham branches were originally from Alabama and Tennessee; and sometime during the Slavery Period were brought to Mississippi by their owners. During the Reconstruction Era they moved to Arkansas. The Robinson/Watson clans from the Carolinas were moved to Arkansas in the early 1890s.

Although no records have been found in the USCT data for him the children and grandchildren of James Madison Davis (1835-1915) have passed the story down to succeeding generations that he ran away with Richard Meacham and his son Claiborne Meacham in 1863 and joined the Union Army (COF59) in Tennessee. It is probable that he temporarily changed his name. James returned to Mississippi in 1865, only to find that his wife, Mary had married a Mr. Stephen Coppage. In 1866, according to a bible entry, James married Sarah Jane Booker, a young woman from Tennessee, and they had two children (Lucy and Madison). With three other families, the Foote's, the Douglas', the Alexander's, and the Davis' all moved to Arkansas.

Lucy (1872-1970), who was in Buntyn Station, Tennessee, could be called the family Griot. She enjoyed talking about the trip to Arkansas; traveling in buckboard wagons; stopping for a while; living in a cabin that the men had built with everyone including the children; and having a job to do. Census records and tax records show that by 1880, Madison owned land in Faulkner County, Arkansas and that two children (Wyatt and Thomas from the union of his first wife Mary) also lived with him and his new family. The Foote family is enumerated near them.

During the 1870's, two Meacham brothers (Robert and Claiborne) married two Davis sisters (Mattie and Clara), who were children from James Davis' first marriage. By the 1880's both families were residing in Ft. Smith, Arkansas according to oral history and census record.

In 1887, Sarah Jones married Wyatt Davis. In 1907, Mary Davis married William Robinson.

Frank Robinson (ABT. 1850-1940) was born in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. In 1870, the census indicates that Frank, his brother Ande and his sister Dora Green were working on a farm belonging to Jordan Carreton a black man. The story is told that Frank's family name was originally Green, but after his parents were sold; and a new owner (Mr. Robinson). The son-in-law of the original owner took over to which he and some of his 7 siblings changed their name to Robinson. He married Elizabeth Ingram (ABR. 1855-1935) of South Carolina in 1877. The 1880 census shows Frank and Elizabeth residing in Mecklenburg County with three children John, James and an infant (William). In the early 1890's, the Robinsons, along with two other families, the Winklers and the McDowells, left North Carolina

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

by train (as told by grandpa Robinson) and traveled to Arkansas “The land of milk and honey.” Upon the arrival somewhere in Pulaski County the men left the train and walked to the County Courthouse to file papers to obtain farm land. The 1900’s census enumerates Frank Robinson, his wife Lizzie and four children living on land he owned in Mineral Township of Pulaski County, Arkansas.

In the Early 1900’s two of Frank Robinson’s daughters (Ollie and Allie) married two Watson’s men (John and Harvey_ who were from South Carolina. The 1920’s census lists all of the Robinson/Watson families living in Pulaski County.

Frank, his wife Lizzie, and several family members are buried in a cemetery near that original parcel of land owned by Frank. It is along Frenchman’s Road in the town of Cato, Arkansas.

Dig unearths long-lost Downstate town founded by freed slave

Researchers have unearthed buttons, chunks of porcelain and about 10,000 other artifacts they hope will turn a remote western Illinois pasture into a national historic site marking the earliest known town incorporated by a black man in the United States.

Crews are to wrap up their first archaeological dig this weekend in a field about 30 miles southeast of Quincy, where historians say freed slave Frank McWorter launched his integrated frontier village New Philadelphia in 1836, a quarter century before the Civil War and other black-founded towns.

“‘Free Frank’ is every bit as much an American hero as Frederick Douglass or Martin Luther King,” said Vibert White, a history professor and consultant to the effort to resurrect the long-lost town as a cultural and tourist attraction.

Researchers have been combing the plowed field just east of Barry for nearly two years, uncovering thousands of artifacts, said Paul Shackel, the project’s lead archaeologist.

They started digging deeper last month, using a \$200,000 National Science Foundation grant, which will also pay for digs the next two summers and laboratory analysis, said Shackel, director of the University of Maryland’s Center for Heritage Resource Studies.

So far, excavation has turned up traces of about a third of New Philadelphia’s 30 or so residences, as well as trash pits, which could provide clues to dietary habits, he said.

McWorter, whose grave is near the lost town, was a slave for a Kentucky man who allowed him to earn wages in his spare time. He saved, bought a small farm and earned enough money to buy his wife’s freedom and his own.

He later traded his Kentucky farm for a farm in western Illinois that prospered, enabling him to buy the freedom of his slave-born children and other relatives. He then bought more land and established New Philadelphia, giving the newly freed slaves a place to buy homes and become independent.

New Philadelphia grew to about 170 people – 35 percent black – until it began to slowly fade away when it was bypassed by the railroad in 1869, Shackel said.

Supporters of the town plan to apply to add New Philadelphia to the National Register of Historic Places.

Source: *Chicago Sun-Times*, Sunday, June 27, 2004, **By Jan Dennis**

Recommended Reading!

On The Altar Of Freedom *A Black Soldier’s Civil War Letters From The Front* by Corporal James Henry Gooding, 1837-1864.

Edited by Virginia M. Adams
Copyright 1991 by the University of Massachusetts Press

Cousins, Unlimited *The Survival of the Freedmen* by Willie Alvin Williams.
Published by Xlibris Corp
Copyright 2003



The Known World by Edward P. Jones
Amistad/HarperCollins.2003

An Imperfect God: George Washington, His Slaves, and the Creation of America by Henry Wiencek (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)
Copyright 2003

WILEY JOHN RUSSELL

by Adeline William Russell

Wiley John Russell was born in March 1856 to John Russell and Harriet Glasco Russell. His brother and two sisters were: Glasco born 1855, Charlotte born 1854, and Leah born 1858. Nothing more is known about Glasco.

After John Russell's death, Harriet married Charles Stevenson, a farmer from Alabama. They lived in "Stevenson Colony" in the LaVernia area. The Colony consisted of a church, school, lodge hall, small grocery store and a cemetery.

Charles Stevenson and Harriet Russell had 2 daughters, Harriet Stevenson and Anna Stevenson. Mr. Stevenson's 2 children and Harriet's 3 children completed the household in 1870. Fourteen year old Wiley was the only son in the family.

The Wash and Rodgers families were related to the Russell and Stevenson family. Anna Stevenson married Orange Wash and Harriet Stevenson (daughter) married Walter Rodgers. Wiley's sister Leah Russell married Thomas Hegwood in 1879 and his sister Charlotte Russell married 3 times – William Wash, Joseph Brown, and a Mr. Whipple.

Wiley's stepfather Mr. Stevenson had been in Wilson County since 1851, and was one of the first freedmen in the county to purchase land. He became one of the largest African American landowners in the vicinity. After Charles Stevenson's death in 1879, Harriet was made an administrator of this estate. Judging from one annual inventory she submitted to the court, they had become somewhat prosperous. In 1880 the estate had an income of nearly \$1200.00.

Wiley could read and write which was unusual for African Americans at that time. However, it is not known where he acquired his education.

In 1880, Wiley, aged 24, was not yet married and was living with his widowed mother Harriet and younger sisters Anna and Harriet. At Christmas time 1885, 29 years old Wiley married "the prettiest girl" he'd ever seen, Adeline "Addie" Williams, 20 years old. Reverend John T. Gibbons, Minister of the Gospel, performed the wedding.

The newlyweds probably moved to Floresville around this time. Wiley was a farmer and grew cotton and other crops. He was adamant about never working for anyone—to always be self employed. This was a pledge he kept.

From 1887 to 1910, 15 children were born to the couple. Callie (1887), August "Gus" (1888), twins Jesse and Bessie (1890), Isabelle (1892), Richard (1894), Annie (1896), Daisy (1898), twins, James and John (1900), Bertha (1902), Norine (1904), Lewis (1906), Alonzo (1908), and Lucille (1910). At one time, the household also included Wiley's niece and nephew, Hattie and William Hegwood, and Adeline's mother, Jennie Williams.

Around 1910, the family moved to the Muskogee/Taft area of Oklahoma seeking better schools and better farmland. However, the soil was poor and the weather was bad. So the Russells' returned to Floresville.

Religion and education were family priorities. This was a God-loving, church-going Christian family. Wiley's mother, Harriet Stevenson, and her neighbor, James Reese, donated the land on which the St. Paul Methodist Episcopal Church stood. Wiley served as superintendent of Sunday school at the church for 50 years. His home was where the ministers ate Sunday dinner. The Russell's were at every church service.

One son, August "Gus" became a Methodist minister and later district superintendent of the Victoria District. All the children served prominently in Methodist churches all over the State of Texas. Jesse, James and John were trustees, stewards, and other officers at St. Paul Methodist Church in San Antonio for many years. The Russell grandchildren have continued this tradition.

The importance of education was evidenced by moving the family to another state for improved educational opportunities. All the Russell offspring attended the Floresville "colored" school. Many of them finished high school in San Antonio and went on to college. One son Alonzo "Lonnie" taught in the Floresville "colored" school, and later taught many years at an Austin, Texas high school.

Wiley Russell was a well-respected man in his community. He lived by the Golden Rule and taught his children to do the same. As a husband, he was a loving man and a good provider. As a father, he was strict disciplinarian and was a true patriarch.

Wiley died in November 1940 at age 84. At his funeral were hundreds of people who came to pay tribute to this African American pioneer of Wilson County, Texas.

Adeline Williams was born in July 1865 in Wilson County. She was the youngest daughter of Jim and Jennie

(Continued on page 6)



Wiley John Russell and his wife
Adeline "Addie" Williams Russell.

(Continued from page 5)

Williams, native Mississippians. The other children were Bertina (1853), Margaret (1857), Millie (1861) John (1869) and Gus (1870).

Bertina married Azar Walker in 1868 and had 9 children: Jane, Jim, Isiah, Joe, Birda, Gabe, Millie, Frank, and Maggie.

Margaret Williams married Abe Jefferson in 1879. Ida and John were their offspring. Descendants of Bertina Walker and Margaret Jefferson still reside in Floresville.

In 1897, Millie Williams wed Alex Edwards. No children were born to this couple.

Nothing more is known about Gus and John Williams.

After Adeline's marriage to Wiley Russell in 1885, her life was spent supporting her husband's work and nurturing their 15 sons and daughters. She was proud of her children's accomplishments. She was loved and revered by her family and her community.

University of Alabama apologizes for slavery

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. – The University of Alabama apologized Tuesday to the descendants of slaves who were owned by faculty members or who worked on campus in the years before the Civil War.

The apology, approved overwhelmingly by the Faculty Senate, was the first at the university and possibly the first of its kind in the nation, officials said.

Last Thursday, university officials announced the school will erect a marker near the graves of two slaves on the campus and place others on buildings where slaves worked.

Al Brophy, a white law professor who wrote the apology, documented years of bondage at the university, which was founded in 1831.

Two university presidents and some faculty members owned slaves during the years before the Civil War. Brophy found, and several of the oldest structures on campus contain bricks made by slaves.

The president of the Faculty Senate, John Mason, called the apology "very important symbolism" at the school, scene of Gov. George Wallace's stand in the schoolhouse door" against integration in 1963.

Wallace tried to block the admission of two black students to the all white university. Now about 15 percent of Alabama's 20,000 students are from minorities.

"I think this sends a message to people of color that, "You are welcome here,"" Mason said of the apology.

Marvin Johnson, a music professor, spoke against the apology, saying there was no way faculty members could apologize for something that happened so long ago.

"The university as it existed at the time of the war is not representative of the university today," he said.

Robert Turner, a black senior, said the apology would make the university more inviting.

"I think it shows the University of Alabama does not shy away from its history, but shows the university making great strides to be more inclusive," he said.

Last month, Brown University, in Providence, R.I., began a two-year inquiry into its connections with the New England slave trade.

Source: *Chicago Tribune*, April 21, 2004, **By Jay Reeves** (Associated Press Writer)

ISDSA Certified Members for 2004

Zola Crowell of Buffalo, New York for Charity Butler born 1844 in Alabama.

Celestine Edwards of Chicago, Illinois for Mary Ann Coleman born 1863 in Alabama.

Jeffrey Steven Johnson of Country Club Hills, Illinois for Tennessee Hawkins Clark born July 4, 1848, Muskogee, Oklahoma.

Daphne Kennedy Johnson of Country Club Hills, Illinois for Lucinda Estes born 1825-30 in South Carolina and for Cherrokee A. Bailey born 1817 in North Carolina.

Viola M. Johnson of Willow Grove, Philadelphia for Tom Johnson born in 1845 Carlton plantation, Virginia.

Gerry Dean McNeal of Escondido, California for West Baird born 1833 Baird Plantation, Robertson, Tennessee; and for Susan Hart born ca. 1839 on Hart Plantation, Robertson, Tennessee.

Madeline Easley Scott of Amhest New York for Rachel Ware born 1853 in Nashville, Tennessee and for Henry Barnes born 1802 in Hagerstown, Maryland.

Samantha Simmons of Chicago, Illinois for Daniel Gates born 1852 in Alabama.

One-time slave's memoirs rare find

BURLINGTON, Vt. – The last time Jeffrey Brace saw his parents was in western Africa as he headed to the river for a swim with friends.

“My mother pressed me to her breast, and warned me of the dangers of the waters, for she knew no other,” Brace recalled in his memoir.

His father placed his own formal cap on his son’s head and told him, “return before the setting of our great father the sun.” Brace, 16, never returned home. The danger was not from the waters, but from English slave traders who came across the sea.

“Eleven out of fourteen were made captives, bound instantly,” Brace later wrote. They “were hurried to their boat, and within five minutes were on board, gagged, and carried down the stream like a sluice; fastened down in the boat with cramped jaws.

Night of horror

“I was pressed almost to death by the weight of bodies that lay upon me; night approached and for the first time in my life, I was accompanied with gloom and horror.”

So began Brace’s life as a slave in 1758. It ended many years later in freedom, on a farm in Vermont.

His story was recounted in a memoir published in St. Albans, Vt., in 1810. A new edition of “The Blind African Slave; Or, Memoirs of Boyrereau Brinch, Nicknamed Jeffrey Brace” will be published this fall by the University of Wisconsin Press.

It tells the story of Brace’s homeland, the horrific passage across the Atlantic Ocean to the United States, his slave owners in Connecticut, fighting in the Revolutionary War and his final years in Vermont, where he married and had children.

The memoir is a rare first person account of the early years of slavery and, perhaps, the first book published in St. Albans, said Karl Winter, an associate professor at the University of Buffalo who researched the book and wrote an introduction to the new edition.

“I was very compelled by it. I was astonished,” said Winter, who, at the urging of a colleague, found the original book in the special collections library at the University of Vermont, where she used to teach.

“This book is really a find,” said William Andrews, a professor of African-American literature at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

We have almost no autobiographies in the African-American tradition by people who were themselves African born,” he said. “Then when you add Brace’s striking story in America, being in the Revolutionary Army and so on, that’s almost unique.”

Winter found living descendants of Brace’s in Franklin County, VT, where Brace died in 1827. She discovered a Civil War veteran related to Brace buried in a St. Albans cemetery. She also went to Barbados and tracked down records of the mariner who taught the teenage Brace how to use military sign language.

Brace recalled the painted clay houses of his homeland, the king’s palace, his parents and siblings, the fruits and vegetables, birds and animals in what Winter said most likely was Mali.

“This is one of the great American stories”, Winter said. “Benjamin Franklin is often thought of having written the founding biography, which is rags to riches. Jeffrey Brace’s story is far more dramatic. He was stolen from his family... separated from his language.”

Followed by sharks

He was starved, shackled and whipped. He watched others stashed below the ship die of starvation and beatings. Bodies were thrown into the sea, “which made food for sharks, as they continually followed us being well baited by the frequent deaths on board,” he wrote.

After his capture, he was enslaved on an English trade ship in Barbados and then sold to a New England ship captain. He ended up in Connecticut, where he was sold several times, the last time to a widow, Mary Stiles, in Woodbury, Connecticut.

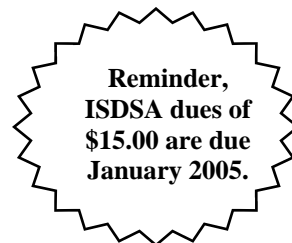
“This was a glorious era in my life, as widow Stiles was one of the finest women in the world; she possessed every Christian virtue,” he wrote.

Stiles sent him to school and taught him to read.

Source: Chicago Tribune, Thursday, June 17, 2004, By Lisa Rathke (Associated Press)

The International Society of Sons and Daughters of Slave Ancestry is a not-for-profit lineage society committed to documenting and preserving slave genealogy for future generations. Membership is open to any individual without regard to sex, race, color, creed or national origin who can prove slave ancestry. We encourage you to apply for membership by contacting us at:

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Web address: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~ilissdsa>



ISDSA APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Date _____ New () Renewal ()

I apply/renew membership in the International Society of Sons and Daughters of Slave Ancestry. I have enclosed a pedigree chart showing lineage back to a slave ancestor, and annual dues of \$15.00.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State Zip _____

Telephone _____

Make check or money order payable to ISDSA, P.O. Box 436937, Chicago, IL 60643-6937.
To request an application for certified membership, please check here [] and submit a \$5 application fee.

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