

Editor: Steven Page



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# International Society of Sons and Daughters of Slave Ancestry

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**Reminder, ISDSA dues of \$15.00 are due January 2004.**

### 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.

## President's Message

We encourage the documentation, publication and preservation of slave genealogy and historical information for public awareness and education. As we go into a brand new year, we continue to evolve to meet new demands and challenges.

ISDSA has changed its name to the *American Family History Institute* effective January 2004. This name change will help us garner grants from a broader base of private foundations and local and nationwide funders, and to reach a wider audience. There are two divisions of the organization .

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### UNCLE TOM – DESTROYING THE MYTH

Thousands of books, motion pictures, plays and individual comments have twisted the image of a positive Black Leader – Reverend Josiah Henson, known as “UNCLE TOM”.

The real story of Uncle Tom was based on the life of Rev. Josiah Henson, a Black man who was born into slavery on June 15, 1789. After witnessing a tragedy involving his father, who was then separated from the family, Josiah grew to adulthood where he married and at the same time he was admitted as a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Josiah's slave master entrusted him to take and sell other slaves in another state and return with the money from the slave market to his original plantation. As he traveled, he began to think about purchasing his own freedom. He preached in various churches as he moved across the country and saved his collections to purchase his freedom.

When he returned to the Riley Plantation, the slave owner tricked him and took his money. Rev. Henson never received his freedom papers. After being in slavery for 41 years and deceived by his master, Rev. Henson took his wife and family and with the help of friendly Indians, walked from Kentucky to Canada. Believing that Canada was a safe place for African people, he returned to Kentucky as an agent of the Underground Railroad and freed 30 Kentucky slaves in 14 days and helped another 118 slaves escape to freedom.

His roots now firmly planted in Canadian soil as Rev. Josiah Henson – not Uncle Tom – Rev. Henson continued the struggle for the rights of African people until he died, preaching that Black people must become financially independent from white people before they can be truly free.

Remember a positive image of a positive Black Leader – when using the term “UNCLE TOM” – REV. JOSIAH HENSON.

Source: *THE BEST OF THE LITTLE KNOWN BLACK HISTORY FACTS*, a book which is written by Lady Sala S. Shabazz on page 27.

**ISDSA Boards and Founders**

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**President's message continued from page 1**

*ISDSA*'s purpose is to collect, preserve, and interpret the slave experience and its aftermath from multiple perspectives, and the lineage society will continue to operate under the ISDSA division.

The *American Family History Institute* (AFHI) advocates for the study of Family History in schools and communities nationwide. The AFHI education division includes a traveling exhibit and offers teacher training, parent/student workshops and classroom consulting on various topics, such as Rethinking Our Teaching About Slavery, and Merging Family History With Public History.

By offering services to educational institutions, The American Family Institute will become self sustaining and remain viable to the world community--- long after funding has ceased.

When we started ISDSA over seven years ago to promote dialogue about the slave experience, and to preserve research for future generations, we knew it would not be easy to grapple with this topic. Unfortunately many people--- black and white--- do not want to be reminded of slavery. But with the support of many people with diverse viewpoints, the story can be told in a multi dimensional way.

Although the economy for non - profits continues to lag behind the rest of the economy, the *American Family History Institute* is committed to seeking funds in all venues, so that our Initiatives can be fully realized.

We are reaching out to the community to aid us in reaching our goals and objectives . You can support our programs by sending names, photographs and oral histories of your ancestors who were once enslaved. . You can spread the word about the importance of family history by promoting family history in your community.

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**ELIZABETH FREEMAN**  
**ABOLITIONIST**

Elizabeth Freeman was born into slavery in the home of Colonel John Ashley during the time when American colonies were becoming more and more dissatisfied with British rule. The Ashley household constantly talked about liberty, freedom and equality but not particularly for slaves.

In an attempt to gain her freedom, Ms. Freeman left the Ashley household after the Revolutionary War ended. Arguing the principles of the Declaration of Independence, "Mum Bett" as she was known, convinced a young lawyer named Theodore Sedgwick to take her case before the Courts.

In her case ***BROM AND BETT v. J. ASHLEY, ESQ.*** heard by the County Court of Great Barrington, Massachusetts, is where she raised the point that as a result of the American Revolution, slavery was illegal and she should be free. As a direct result of her case, Elizabeth was granted freedom and slavery in Massachusetts ended. She adopted the last name Freeman upon winning her case.

Elizabeth Freeman died December 28, 1829. Fighting for her freedom through the legal system, this extraordinary lady was the great-grandmother of another great African American hero, W.E.B. DuBois.

*Source: THE BEST OF THE LITTLE KNOWN BLACK HISTORY FACTS, a book which is written by Lady Sala S. Shabazz on page 37.*

***ANNIE GREEN CRAFT A WOMAN OF LOVING COURAGE***  
***1856-1904***  
***By Betty Craft***

Annie Green was born in November 1856 on the plantation of John Harrison in Liberty Grove, Hinds County, Mississippi. Her life began as a child of slavery. In 1863 the estate of John Harris lists Annie with her family:

Sam	50	\$1500
Lucy	24	\$1100
Ann	5	300
Mary	4	200
Perry	4/12	100



**Annette Green**

Lucy Died in a fire during the Civil War. Sam left for the army and was never heard of again. However, a Sam Green died 28 June 1917, about the age of 75, in Liberty Grove, Hinds County, Mississippi. He was a farmer on Kingston Road, at Mr. Friers (?) Place. He would have been born about 1832. Annie's father was born about 1833. It is possible that this Sam Green was Annie's father. If he returned to the area after the War, he may not have known the whereabouts of his children. Or, he may have assumed that they had died in the fire with Lucy. No further records of Mary or Perry have been found. They may have died or been apprenticed to another family.

At six years of age Annie went to work in the home of Isabella Tillman, Where she remained until her marriage. She was possibly apprenticed to the white family. In 1866 the Mississippi State Legislature had established the custom of assigning destitute and orphan slave children to white persons until the children reached the age of eighteen. Annie worked in the Tillman kitchen from the age of six. She was taught to read and write.

Annie married Henry Miller Craft on October 10, 1877 in Raymond, Mississippi. They had four children: William, Paul, Laura and Cleveland. Henry served as a minister in AME Church in Raymond, Mississippi. In the late 1880s, the AME Church burned. The Crafts lost most of their possessions including the Family Bible. Only two singled pages remain a Treasured possession of the family. About 1890, the family migrated to Natchez, Mississippi, where Henry converted to the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Henry was a circuit rider on the Clinton Circuit. In the ME church usually, the minister served on a circuit that was two to three hundred miles long and four weeks were required to make the trip around it. The ministers preached almost every day in the week and twice on Sunday. Thus, Henry was away from home most of the time. While Henry was the rearing of the family was left to Annie's care.

In May 1899, Henry came home sick. He sat on the porch with his feet on a chair. He was in bed about three weeks. He was not able to work all summer. He complained of fever and chills. He had nightmares. He coughed a long time. Finally, Henry was diagnosed as having consumptive. Annie stayed at his side as loving wife and nurse. Henry died November 10, 1899. Their daughter, Laura, also died of tuberculosis in 1901. Annie also contracted the disease, as did her second son, Paul (died in 1908).

(Continued from page 3)

Annie died May 26, 1904, and is buried in the Natchez City Cemetery, Fields Plat, Addt.

Annie Green Craft is remembered by her children, grandchildren and neighbors as a loving mother and friend...

Sources:

1. Military Pension File of Pat Dilet, alias Henry Craft, #973688, National Archives
2. Probate File #186, John Harris, Hinds County, Mississippi
3. US Population Census, 1870, 1880 and 1900
4. Interview with Cleveland Craft, 1980
5. Interview with Joseph Craft, 1990
6. Marriage Record 1877, Hinds County, Mississippi
7. Sexton Death Records, Natchez, Mississippi

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**MARY JOHNSON AND HER SON WILLIAM**  
**FREEDOM IS A BIRTHRIGHT**

In 1820, Mary Johnson's former owner, a wealthy planter, decided to free her son William. However, the complex laws of the day required Blacks to post bonds guaranteeing their character as free persons of color. Neither slave parents nor their children could post bonds because the law required adults of color to be bonded or sponsor themselves, and as parents they had insufficient legal standing to take custody of their own children.

But the planter, William Johnson got the Legislature to pass a special law all his own. On January 21, 1820, William Johnson presented an eloquent petition to the Mississippi Assembly's Lower House for the boy's freedom and declared that he was acting to give "Liberty to a human being which all are entitled to as a birthright." A special Bill was passed and approved by the Governor on February 10, 1820, giving young William his freedom.

Using the former master's surname, young William Johnson became well known in business and letters as William Johnson, the "Diarist of Natchez", a literary success.

Source: *THE BEST OF THE LITTLE KNOWN BLACK HISTORY FACTS*, a book which is written by Lady Sala S. Shabazz on page 25.

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**Recommended Reading!**

*Locating Free African American Ancestors*

*A Beginner's Guide* by Aaron L. Day

Published by Carlberg Press

1782 Beacon Avenue

Anaheim, CA 92804-4515

*Who Is Black: One Nations Definition* by F.

James Davis

The Pennsylvania State University Press

University Park, Pennsylvania, Copyright 1991

Volume 6, No. 1



*Medicine, Nutrition, Demography, and Slavery*  
edited with an introduction by Paul Finkelman  
Garland Publishing, Inc. New York & London  
1989

*Spirits of the Passage: The Transatlantic Slave  
Trade in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century* by Dr. Madeleine  
Burnside

Published by The Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage  
Society and edited by Rosemarie Robotham,  
includes a Foreword by Dr. Cornell West of  
Princeton University

**Wilson's Ashes: The Last Confederate**  
**By**  
**Roland Barksdale-Hall**

*Our Harps Hang On The Willows*  
*Clipped-winged cherubim*  
*Like nomads wander the earth;*  
*Reapers of gold, some gatherers,*  
*Others sowers, soulful eye athirst.*

*Kaffir boy, driven to plow fields,*  
*Chants: "Steve Biko, he is our own,"*  
*Born into their pride, lion's mane*  
*Chieftains wear,*  
*Scarification marks the tribe.*

**Through the art of shucking and jiving enslaved Africans shielded themselves with a finesse that became a hallmark of Black culture. As the family story sheds light, African Americans have inherited from their ancestors a complex system of masking what they think and feel to protect themselves from emotional anguish and even physical abuse.<sup>1</sup> Nearly 40,000 African Americans served in the Confederate ranks, often slaves were assigned to masters as bodyservants.<sup>2</sup>**

The spring of 1849 there were several big frosts which was quite strange for that time of the year.<sup>3</sup> The normally lush Georgia country side looked blighted like in the fall of the year. An old Negro conjurer woman, who closely watched the spirit world, looked upon the unnatural weather with foreboding. When the sudden death of Marse Moore Stevenson followed, ripping the slave world apart, she tied the unnatural weather to a bad omen. Poor fellow left a widow, Missus Linnah, and eight, hungry children.

Now, Marse Moore was missed in the quarters. Poppa Archie Willie and he settled the wild Creek frontier and they got pretty tight, dislodging rattlesnake dens, clearing farmland and fighting wild injuns. He and Poppa Archie Willie were there together when they buried the first white person---his name was Pollard. They laid that Pollard boy to rest—he was but a little biddy fellow ---by a large poplar tree. Not far from there he shot at a panther, stalking Archie Willie.<sup>4</sup>

Those were some tough times. Colored and whites had better watched each other's back or else they'd be found dead together.

Long after freedom came poppa Archie Willie still was heard calling Marse Moore, an aristocrat. Now, our Steversons was what you might call big shots back in the day. Of hearty Scotch Irish Presbyterian stock, thar was a long line of dem, goin' all the way back to the Revolutionary War and Belfast, Ireland. Marse Moore be a judge.<sup>5</sup> Other niggaras on other plantations couldn't tell our folks nothin'. We had somethin' to point to.

Oh, but how the mighty fell! The next generation of Steversons were not as aristocratic. Marse Moore's absence called for them to step forward. Now they was good people, but they were just more like common folks, just trying to make a living, having bills and that. Missy Emily was fixin' to attend the Newnan Academy<sup>6</sup> Lord knows, didn't want no squabbling among the poor white chillen. That's why, we reckon, dey did what dey did.

Why Ma Hattie carried more than fourteen chillen. Spent eleven years with her belly full and she fetched a good price, as much as a strapping buck.<sup>7</sup> Each suckling she dropped put 'bout two hundred dollars in the steverson's pouch.

Ma Hattie told ten-year-old Wilson, hush you's a slave. Now, the slave owning Steversons divvied up our side of the family. Divvied up right with Henry the bay mule, Fox the midnight mule, and the hogs and the chickens, we was.<sup>8</sup> Put our names in a hat, everything being fair.

Sure the women folk and children carried on. Made quite a racket! What you think? Still, the menfolk sucked the pain in, holdin' it close to dey's chest, like colored men do.

As fall turned to winter, followed by spring, the cycle of life repeating itself, Wilson sprouted. He was a fine looking man. Looked sort of like me. Hee! Hee! What folks might call a stud.

Why Willson could piss straight up in the air and run under it before it hit the ground. Now the Steverson boys wasn't all dat up on national politics, but then who was? All the boys truly knew for certain was that it was in they's interest to look out for their kinfolk and Georgia home.

Reckon dat led to Wilson dawnin' the butternut. But things got sort of muddled.

Sure dem colored boys wanted freedom, what you think! As best as they figured: If the 'federates won, they'd free us out of gratitude. If the Yankees won, they'd free all us colored folks—just to give de rebbie boys hell.

Dem colored boys lived by mother wit, you see. Well, there was no use frettin' – It was all in the good Lord's hands anyways.

Wilson stood proud for a glorious moment as it were<sup>9</sup> You see, our 'federates near licked dem.

Now, any of you hear tell of Confederate Mary? She was the gray's secret weapon. A colored spy, she were—the 'federate version of Harriet Tubman. Wreaked havoc behind them union lines.<sup>10</sup>

Whatever the colored Yankees was doing for the blues our boys was proud to do. There was heaps of Colored 'federates from Gettysburg to Ole Miss. There were jus' too many of dem in blue. Now, Wilson always stood by he did the right thing:

“Marse George had his own family to look out for, and I mine.”<sup>11</sup>

**Roland Barksdale-Hall, wrote the satirical script for and performed this one-man act as the keynote speaker for the ISDSA's First Juneteenth, held at the DuSable Museum on June 20, 1998. Across the country he has performed the one-man act, based on the author's meticulous genealogical research as portrayed through the vivid narrative of his slave ancestor Wilson Steverson (1838-1948), who was the last known person to be born in slavery living in PA. He is a national speaker, member of the National Association of Black Storytellers (NABS) and author of numerous books, including *Healing is the Children's Bread* from which this excerpt is printed with permission. He is available for presentations and can be contacted at best@surf724.com**

<sup>1</sup> Richard Majors and Janet Mancini Bilson, *Cool Pose: The Dilemmas of Black Manhood In America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), pp. 59-65.

<sup>2</sup> “Wat the Confederacy Stood For,” *Opportunity Journal, Equal Opportunity Journal*, (February 1998), p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> Mary G. Jones and Lily Reynolds, *Coweta County Chronicles* (Easley, South Carolina: Southern Historical Press, 1928), P. 95.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 493-4.

<sup>5</sup> Files of Georgia Department of Archives and History.

<sup>6</sup> In 1850 the Newnan Academy issued its first catalogue. The student list was published in the 31 December 1926 *Newnan Herald*.

<sup>7</sup> Sarah Blackwell Gober Temple, *The First Hundred Years* (Atlanta: Cherokee Publishing, 1980), p. 203. Figured out Ma Hattie's value the same way as a man's, by multiplying the price of cotton per pound by 10,000, she being worth it, pound for pound.

<sup>8</sup> Moor Stephenson Estate Records. Inventory and Appraisal, 2 July 1849. Probate Court, Coweta County, Georgia; Sarah Blackwell Gober Temple, *The First Hundred...* (Atlanta: Cherokee Publishing Company, 1980), p. 203.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Rollins, “Black Confederates at Gettysburg,” *Journal of Confederate History Series*, 11 (1994), pp. 129-41; Leon F. Litwack, *Been In the Storm So Long* (New York: Random House, 1980), p. 37. In southern lore there was no more celebrated figure than the 'federate body servant. At Fort Mill, South Carolina today there stands a monument recognizing them: Dedicated to the faithful slaves who, loyal to a sacred trust toiled for the support of the Army with matchless devotion and with sterling fidelity guarded Our Confederate States of America. Colored hands tended to cavalymen's steeds, erected fortifications and constructed railways. Some worked with explosives and armament production. Others were grand musicians, playing triumphant battle charges. Military service was a great equalizer that made the playing field level for all.

<sup>10</sup> List of Confederate Soldiers, Probate Court Coweta County, Georgia, pp. 62-5; “Ex-Slave Marks 103<sup>rd</sup> Birthday,” *Sharon (PA) herald*, 3 November 1941, pp. 1,6.

<sup>11</sup> Minute Book D, p. 238. Ordinary Court, Coweta County, Georgia; Letters from James Doster to author, 7 Feb. 1982 and 2 March 1982; “Former slave, 100 today, to be honored by family,” *Sharon (PA) Herald*, 3 Nov. 1938, p. 1. Emily Steverson married George Fambrough, whom Wilson followed into conflict as a bodyservant.

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We invite you to join us for our annual  
**Juneteenth Celebration**

**Saturday, June 19, 2004**

**1:00 p.m. – 5 p.m.**

**Carter G. Woodson Regional  
Library Auditorium  
9525 S. Halsted Street,  
Chicago, IL**

**Former Slaves In Freedom: A Visual History  
Exhibit at Malcolm X College  
1900 W Van Buren Street  
Chicago, IL**

**February — April 30, 2004**

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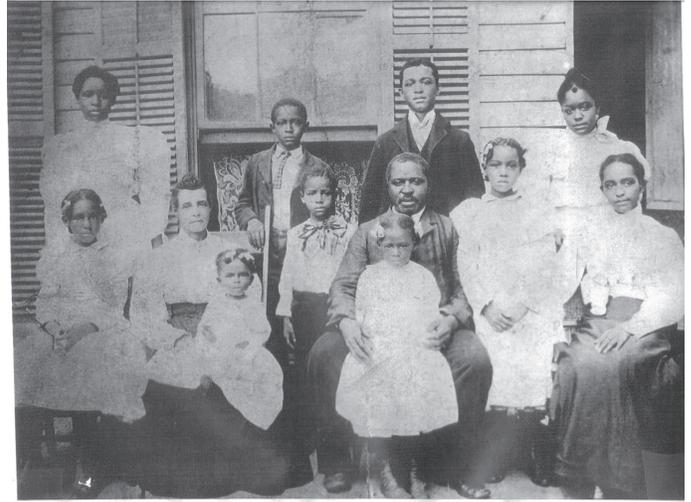
**Former Slaves In Freedom: A Visual History  
Exhibit at Chicago Bee Branch Library  
3647 S. State Street  
Chicago, IL**

**January — April 30, 2004**

## ***WILLIAM DRIVER and SALLY CAMPBELL DRIVER*** ***by Janis Minor Forte***

William Driver was born in May of 1848, a slave of a Mississippi Planter who migrated to Tennessee. Sally Driver was born in 1848 in Tennessee. There are several family stories that have been past down through the generations about William.

William was concerned about the education of his ten children. Perhaps it was because he was once a slave and forbidden by law to learn to read and write. The stories that are past down state that William insisted that all of his children complete high school. His sons had to learn a trade and his daughters had to be taught a profession. As his daughters grew into beautiful young women, he let it be known through the neighborhood that no prospective beau need approach until each girl had at least completed high school and had a profession.



William and Sally Driver and nine of their ten children are elegantly posed sitting on the front porch of their Memphis, Tennessee home about 1900.

Perhaps as a residue of slavery, William's concern was that each of his children be able to take care of themselves without the need for any owner, overseer or master.

Following emancipation, by the 1880 Census, William operated his own business as a Coal Cart Driver and by the 1900 census, this former slave and his wife are both reported to be able to read and write.

William referred to himself as "the Black African Prince". As family history goes, it is not clear if William's legend means that he was born of royal African blood or that this was a title that he gave himself.

William was extremely jealous of his wife, Sally. Even though she was constantly busy having and nursing babies, keeping house and working outside the home as a mid wife. William was distrustful that other men were 'after her.' During slavery, and after emancipation, his jealousy forced him to demand that Sally tell him everything that she has done while he was away from the home at work. One day, in spite of his jealousy, Sally insisted on going to church. The church that they attended sat at the foot of a hill on their William street home. Sally assured her husband that she was going to the church and would be there with her sister and the children. So off she went. But William's jealousy got the best of him. Even though he knew Sally was with her sister and several of the children. Even though he could have gone to the church with them; William's insecurities got the best of him. So he crept down the hill to the church carrying a wood box with him. Upon reaching the church, instead of him going inside, he put the box on the ground, climbed on top of it. This grown man with ten children by the same woman sneaked a peek into the window of the church to spy on his wife. Of course all he saw was her singing in the choir. Hoping that Sally did not see him, he immediately climbed down and went home. So embarrassed by his behavior, over the next several years, William told this story to his children hoping they would not repeat his behavior.

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:

**ISDSA**  
**P.O. Box 436937**  
**2134 W. 95th Street**  
**Chicago, Illinois 60643-6937**  
**(773) 238-2686**  
**Fax: (773) 238-2818**  
**E-mail: ISDSA@aol.com**  
**Web address: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~ilissdsa>**



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### 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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**ISDSA**  
**P.O. BOX 436937**  
**CHICAGO, IL 60643-6937**