

# **The Hayden Springs Freedom Colony Project**

## Family and Property Histories of Hayden Springs Community Members

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## **Sandy Hayden – Family History**

By Reynaldo Josue Funez Sanchez

Sandy Hayden was born in North Carolina around 1825 and was the head of household according to the 1880 Census. He was married to Elizabeth Hayden who at the time of the 1880s Census was 36 years old and her occupation as listed on the Census as keeping house. Sandy Hayden's occupation was listed as a blacksmith.

According to the 1880 Census, Sandy Hayden has seven sons and two daughters. His eldest son being James Hayden 20 years old, Jefferson Hayden 18 years old, Johnny Hayden 16 years old, Samuel Hayden 8 years old, Louis Hayden 6 years old and Andrews Hayden who was just a year old during the 1880s census. The two daughters listed in the 1880 Census were Rosa Hayden who was 22 years old at the time and the youngest Fanny Hayden who was just 3 years old.

In the 1900 Census, Sandy Hayden was recorded as being 77 years old and lives in Webberville, Texas with his wife Eliza(beth) Hayden. By this time, they have been married for 30 years and Sandy Hayden was still listed as the head of household. The Census also indicates that Sandy Hayden can write and that he is mortgage free, owning his own farm. His oldest son James Hayden and oldest daughter Rosa Hayden no longer live with Sandy Hayden, most likely because they are both married by this time. The children that still live under his roof are Louis Hayden who is now 25 years old, Andrew Hayden who is now 21 years old and Charlie Hayden who is now 18 years old. His daughters also still live at home in 1900, starting with Fannie Hayden who is 23 years old, Sarah Hayden who is 16 years old, Sussie Hayden 13 years old, Leah Hayden 10 years old and finally Delia Hayden who is only 9 years old. Unfortunately I was unable to find any more direct information about Sandy Hayden past the 1900 census.

According to the 1900 Census James A Hayden, Sandy Hayden's son, was 40 years old and living in Webberville, Texas. He was the head of household and married to Leah Hayden. On the census it is listed that he can read and write however he does not own a farm, just a house, and his occupation was not listed. It is listed that he has 3 sons and 4 daughters. His oldest son John J Hayden 18 years old, Sandy F Hayden 16 years old and Obedia Hayden at 5 and a half years old. James A Hayden's oldest daughter at this time is Stella Hayden 13 years old, Dovie Hayden 11 years old, Octavia Hayden 6 years old and Bertha Hayden who was only 4 years old.

There was no information about any of Sandy Hayden's other children past the 1920 census. However, one of Sandy Hayden's grandchildren, a son of Johnny Hayden, was born between the 1930 and 1940 Census and may still be a living descendent of the family.

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Year: 1880; Census Place: Travis, Texas; Roll: 1329; Page: 40A; Enumeration District: 122

Year: 1900; Census Place: Webberville, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 12; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673

Year: 1900; Census Place: Webberville, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 17; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673

## **Sandy Hayden – Property History**

By Berkley Kading and Matthew Medina

The earliest newspaper mention of Sandy Hayden is on October 25, 1883, when he purchased 25 acres of land from T.M. Rector. This is the first time his name appears in the *Austin Statesman*. Property Deed Records from the Travis County Clerk's office also details the sale of 79 acres from Sandy Hayden to Hinton Banks, in September of 1878, earlier that month Hayden purchased the land from a J. W. Darlington. On September 18, 1884, Sandy Hayden is mentioned again with the sale of 50 acres to W.M. Mackenzie for \$400. This land was quite expensive, considering other land purchases of similar size were selling for less than \$100. It was another five years before Hayden is mentioned again in the paper, this time for his purchase of lots 7 and 9 on block 18 in Manor, TX from W.M. Luedeck in October of 1889.

That Sandy Hayden purchased land from T.M. Rector is notable. The identity of T.M. Rector was revealed in an oral history of John Crawford, interviewed in 1938 as part of the WPA Slave Narrative Project for Texas. Crawford states that he was from Manor area in his oral history and was enslaved on Judge Thomson Mason Rectors' plantation. This was known as the Rector plantation in what was Manor, Texas before its official founding. Crawford accounts the day all the enslaved workers on the Rector plantation were made aware of their emancipation, explaining that they were given the option to become sharecroppers, however only two families stayed and worked the land, Crawford among them. The Rector family is one of the founding families of Manor, Texas, settling in 1853 long before the towns official creation. T.M. Rector Sr. owned a block of the city and the plantation, even creating a private cemetery named "Rector Cemetery" where most of the family is buried. It is possible that Sandy Hayden was a former slave on the Rector plantation. It is likely that T.M. Rector sold off large portions of his

Plantation to Sandy Hayden.

Dealing in Manor once more, November of 1895, Sandy sold lot 10 on block 4 to Caroline Williams. I searched the Sanborn Maps for both lot 10 and block 4 but found neither. Also mentioned in the November 21st issue of the Austin Statesman was the sale of 30 acres by Sandy Hayden and his wife (Eliza/Elizabeth) to Henry Williams. There isn't another mention of Sandy Hayden until 1902, when he's mentioned three times throughout the year. First in February when he and Eliza sold 20 acres to their son, Charley Hayden. Next in July when they bought 40 acres from D.B. Gracy, and later in July when they sell another 7-10 acres back to D.B. Gracy.

Mentioned in these articles is the Gordon C. Jennings league along with the Oliver Buckman survey, both of which are mentioned numerous times throughout the papers and deed records. In our research, one group member found a house listing the Gordon C. Jennings league in its information. The address is 9200 Lockwood Springs Road in Manor, TX which is located off Blake Manor Road and lies almost perfectly in the center of Manor, Webberville, and Littig. Not only that, but the house is also just down the road of East Metro Park and presumably the location of the Sandy Hayden School. If this house listing is correct, it's safe to assume the Gordon C. Jennings League is the entire area that lies between Manor, Webberville, and Littig. And if that is true, then based on descriptions given in the deed records, the Oliver Buckman survey land is just south of Gordon C. Jennings, including the town of Webberville. Notably, the 1900 Census lists that Hayden indicated "F" for the question "Farm or House" According to the 1900 Census guide for enumerators, this is a specific indication for Farmers who own their farm, free of "mortgage incumbrance", but who reside off of the farm in a "town or village."

In Census Records, Hinton Banks, both in the 1880 and 1900 Census, has the same indication “F” regarding the ownership of his farm, and house. Also in the 1880 census record, “Sam and Lyddia Hayden” are listed on the same Census sheet, suggesting close proximity, Samuel being Sandy Hayden’s son, and Lyddia Hayden being the daughter of William Hill, another notable landowner in the Hayden Springs area. Another very interesting find is that “Bacon” and “Brown” families are shown as Black landowners on this sheet as well, which is significant because those are names of large landowners in the Hayden Springs area as well listed on the Rural Directory from 1894. The Family history on William Hill notes that Lyddia Hill she was married to a “S. A. Hayden”. All of this information suggests a thriving freedom colony in the area and displaying the economic, and personal interactions between these founding families. The clear parallels between the census records of Sandy Hayden and Hinton Banks indicate a close-knit community

Sandy Hayden appears in the press again in 1905. On March 12, 1905, D.B. Gracy filed a suit with the 53rd district court against Sandy Hayden for a note of \$325 and the foreclosure of his property. Later that same year in July, Sandy and Elizabeth are mentioned again when they are forced by sheriff to give 1-3 acres of land to T.E. Thrasher. The following year in 1906 he is yet again mentioned multiple times. Once for the transfer of 58 acres to their son Charley Hayden, another for the sale of 50 acres to Pinton Banks and the last was the sale of lot 6 on block 35 in Webberville to Gerry Hunter. Then in 1907 Sandy and Eliza Hayden sold lots 3 and 4 on block 35 in Webberville to J.D. Poe. In another interesting turn, Sandy Hayden is then mentioned as a deacon for the St. Johns Church Association in 1908.

The earliest record of Sandy Hayden found in available Property Deed Records was his sale to Ambrose O. on February 26, 1866. Two years later Sandy would sell another piece of



land to J.B. Banks, then to M.P. Hall in 1869. In 1870 he again sold a piece of land to, what's listed as, Rector and son and in 1874 to R.C. Meeks. His 1878 transactions are interesting because Sandy Hayden not only sold 79 acres of land to Hinton Banks but also bought land from James Manor. Both pieces of land are mentioned numerous times throughout the rest of the deed records. The last deed entry, before the entries become more detailed, is on August 14, 1884, when Sandy sold land to Travis County. On the same page in the deed records, Travis County School Purposes is listed as the grantee of some land from J.T. Pruitt in 1877.

Sandy and Elizabeth Hayden sold lot 10 block 4 in Webberville to Caroline Williams. From 1889-1902 that's the only mention of Sandy or Elizabeth available. In 1907 however, there are two tangible pieces of evidence. First, in the deed record book 218, page 359, it states that on May 20, 1907, Sandy and Eliza sold lots 3 and 4 on block 35 in Webberville. Not only that, but the lots are also described in detail, backing up to the Colorado river off Water Street, which itself is off Webberville Rd. Water Street is still very much there in the town of Webberville. Next in 1907 comes from the deed record book 232, pages 249-250, where it states that Sandy and Eliza(beth) Hayden sold all their land north of their home on Manor-Webberville Road to their son Charley Hayden. Even further, an address is provided, house no. 814 E. 12th Street.

The 1907 sale appears to be the last time Sandy or Eliza Hayden purchased or sold any land themselves. Deed record book 286 has two vastly different entries mentioning Sandy Hayden. First being on page 175 when J.P. Lockwood, J.N. Littlepage, and J.C. Giles file a notion that 50 acres of land, claimed to be owned by Sandy Hayden, actually belonged to the 176 acres owned by W.W. Green. Sandy Hayden is again mentioned on page 624 in a deed from Travis County, June 14, 1915, for the St. Johns Baptists Association Orphanage. Again, I tried to follow this up but could only find stories of an orphanage burning down in the area. These are

two leads worth following up.

W.H.C. Lovett bought 25 acres of what used to be Sandy Hayden's land in 1917. This is the first entry where the tract of land, formerly referred to as the Sandy Hayden tract, is referred to as the Thomas Puckett tract.

In 1925, deed record book 383 is the first time we see an oil and gas company purchase land that was formerly owned by Sandy Hayden. In 1925 the Plateau Oil Company bought the 50 acres previously sold to Hinton Banks by Sandy Hayden. That's the only time Plateau Oil Company is mentioned, however, in January of 1926 the Gulf Production Company bought another 50 acres of land that was once sold by the James Manor to Sandy Hayden in 1876. After this, in 1927, the Mid-Kansas Oil and Gas Company buys another 30 acres of land formerly owned by both Sandy Hayden and T.M. Rector. Also in 1927, A.S. Walker sold 150 acres to Houghton Brownlee, that 150 acres was also sold to Sandy Hayden by James Manor in 1876. A.S. Walker was also listed as the receiver of the Farmers National Bank of Manor.

From here on out the rest of the mentions for Sandy Hayden are of his children and grandchildren collecting payments from a man named Henry Faulk. Throughout 1929, Mr. Faulk made payments to multiple different Hayden descendants ranging anywhere from \$1-\$20. Presumably for rent on the Hayden Homestead, but this has not been confirmed. He paid some amount to Frank who was now in Ohio, R.A. Hayden now in Illinois, and Clarence and Olivia Hayden, daughters of Tom Hayden, in California. Also in California are Bertha Hayden Lewis and Dovie Hayden Dennis to whom Mr. Faulk also made payments. Along with Charley Hayden, the final person Mr. Faulk paid was a woman named Alberta Allen, daughter of Martha Moore who was the daughter of Tom Hayden.

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## Hinton Banks – Family History

By Montana Copeland and Travis Leffall

According to the 1880 United States Census, Hinton Banks was born around 1840 in the state of Tennessee. According to the record, Hinton Banks also could not read or write, was married to Mary Banks, with whom he had eight children. Mary was born around 1843, also in Tennessee. His occupation is “Farmer” and hers is listed as “Keeping House,” which suggests their class level. Mary is listed as “Black” in 1880 but listed as “Mulatto” on later Census records. Of their children, Henderson Banks was the oldest at 20 years old, followed by Margaret Banks at 13 years old, Haywood Banks at 9 years old, James Banks at 7 years old, Willie Banks at 6 years old, Hinton Banks (Jr. I am assuming) at 4 years old, Holly Ann Banks at 2 years old, and lastly Burrell Banks at just two months old in 1880.<sup>1</sup>

In 1910 the Census tells us that Hinton Banks continued to live in rural Travis County and owned his own farm. The only discrepancy found between the 1880 and 1910 Census was that the 1910s census places Hinton Banks’s birthday in 1838. By this time all the kids that he had were no longer living with whom they were living with one another in different parts of the states. Where did these children go?<sup>2</sup>

Ten years early, in 1900, the Census lists Hinton’s son Hinton Banks Jr. (born in 1876). In 1900 Hinton Jr. (misspelled “Henton”) lives in Webberville with possible younger siblings or children. The first is (another) Mary Banks at 19 years old; Lizzie Bacon at 15 years old; Henry Bacon at 13 years old; Eugene Bacon at 12 years old; and lastly Emanuel Bacon at 10 years old.

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<sup>1</sup> Year: 1880; Census Place: Travis, Texas; Roll: 1329; Page: 50A; Enumeration District: 12

<sup>2</sup> Year: 1910; Census Place: Justice Precinct 1, Travis, Texas; Roll: T624\_1594; Page: 7B; Enumeration District: 0057; FHL microfilm: 1375607; Year: 1910; Census Place: Austin Ward 5, Travis, Texas; Roll: T624\_1595; Page: 16B; Enumeration District: 0078; FHL microfilm: 1375608

It should be noted that another family with the last name “Bacon” is known to live near the Banks in the Hayden Spring area. His brother, Henderson Banks, also lived in Webberville by 1900.<sup>3</sup>

In 1920, Hinton Banks Sr. lived with his daughter Hollie Meeks, who was born in 1879. Hollie is likely the same “Holly Ann Banks,” his daughter listed in the 1880 Census. Hollie married Edward Meeks, born around 1877. Hollie’s husband, Edward Meeks, was in the same job occupation as her father being a farmer. He was educated (could read and write) and owned the house that they lived in Austin and was paying mortgage on it. As of 1920 they had five children: 2 daughters and 3 sons. Their daughter Bertha Meeks was born around 1900; Henry Meeks born around 1902; Rena Meeks born in 1904; Willie G Meeks born 1911; and lastly Leon Meeks born in 1917. All their children could read and write according to the Census record. The family lived in Austin, on Street W 10, suggesting the Banks family left the Hayden Springs area for Austin between 1910 and 1920. Hollie was a washwoman on wage salary as she cared for her children and elderly parents.<sup>4</sup>

Bertha Meeks – daughter of Hollie Meeks, granddaughter of Hinton Banks Sr – may have moved to Brooklyn, New York on Block G house number 515 street address Tompkins Ave in 1930. She married a John Riley born in Alabama, who worked as a dentist while she cared for the family at home. This “Bertha Riley” in the 1930 Census is likely the former Bertha Meeks, born in Austin in 1900. In 1930 Brooklyn, Bertha is listed as housing her mother “Hollie Meeks” and father-in-law “Edward Meeks” of Texas. Living with her is also her younger brother Leon

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<sup>3</sup> Year: 1900; Census Place: *Webberville, Travis, Texas*; Roll: 1673; Page: 13; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673; Year: 1900; Census Place: *Webberville, Travis, Texas*; Roll: 1673; Page: 14; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673

<sup>4</sup> Year: 1920; Census Place: *Austin Ward 2, Travis, Texas*; Roll: T625\_1852; Page: 124; Enumeration District: 96

Meeks and sister-in-law Marion Shepard. Edward Meeks worked as an elevator operator in an apartment building and brother Leon Meeks was in school. Interestingly, and probably due to Census error, Bertha is listed as “white” while the other residents are listed as Black.<sup>5</sup>

Burrell Banks, the youngest son of Hinton Banks Sr., moved up north to Toledo, Ohio by 1920 during the first Great Migration. Like his mother, Burrell is listed as “Mulatto” in Census records and lived in Ward 11 on Avondale Ave. He worked in the woodman's industry and was married to a Minnie Banks. Notably, she was self-employed with her own business as a seamstress. They most likely met in Texas (born in Texas) and moved up north together.<sup>6</sup>

### **Henderson Banks – Family History**

By Darrell Correia and Blakley McCullough

Henderson Banks first appears in the 1880 Census, born in 1860 in Mississippi. Henderson is listed as living at home with his father, Hinton Banks (see previous essay). Henderson was the only member of his household born in Mississippi according to the 1880 Census. The rest of his family was born in either Tennessee or Texas. His younger sister, Margaret Banks, was born in 1867 in Tennessee and brother James born in 1873 in Tennessee. His youngest sibling, Willie, was the first of the siblings to be born in Texas around 1874, suggesting the family relocated that year to the Hayden Springs area. In total, Hinton and Mary Banks had 8 children according to the 1880 Census. They had 6 sons and 2 daughters, ranging in age from 20 years old to two months old. Henderson was the oldest of all of the children in the

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<sup>5</sup> Year: 1930; Census Place: Brooklyn, Kings, New York; Page: 13A; Enumeration District: 0657; FHL microfilm: 2341262

<sup>6</sup> Year: 1920; Census Place: Toledo Ward 11, Lucas, Ohio; Roll: T625\_1410; Page: 17B; Enumeration District: 124

household.<sup>7</sup>

According to the 1900 census records, Henderson Bands (misspelled “Danks”) married his wife, Josie Banks, in 1882, only two years after the last time we saw him in the 1880 records where he was still living with his parents. In 1900, the couple had no children together. However, their niece and nephew, Maggie and Joe Banks, were living with them. Maggie was 12 years old in 1900. Her father was born in Tennessee and her mother was born in Mississippi. We know that none of Henderson’s siblings were born in Mississippi, so Maggie’s father must be one of Henderson’s brothers. By process of elimination, I believe Haywood Banks (Henderson’s brother) is her father. He was born in Tennessee, and would have been 16 or 17 when Maggie was born. Haywood was the next oldest son of the Banks siblings, so it is the most logical that he be her father.<sup>8</sup>

In the 1900 census Henderson is following in his father’s footsteps and has become a farmer. It does not look like Josie had a job, perhaps she was unable to work. Both Joe and Maggie, however, did have jobs. Joe was a farm laborer, probably working for his uncle, assuming they had their own farm. Maggie was a day laborer, picking up odd jobs from day to day.

Henderson’s occupation changed by the 1910 Census. I am weary in claiming the Henderson Banks in the 1910 census as the same Henderson Banks we have been looking into, as there are small details that do not fit into the Henderson Banks from the 1880 and 1900 census. In the 1910 census, it says that his mother was born in Mississippi, but we know his mother was born in Tennessee. It also says that he cannot write, however, in the previous census

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<sup>7</sup> Year: 1880; Census Place: Travis, Texas; Roll: 1329; Page: 50A; Enumeration District: 122

<sup>8</sup> Year: 1900; Census Place: Webberville, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 13; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673



it is listed that he can write. What has convinced me that it is indeed the same Henderson Banks is that his wife's name is Josie, and he was born in Mississippi. It looks as though Joe and Maggie have moved out, and there is a change of address indicating Henderson and Josie moved to Austin between 1900 and 1910. Henderson is no longer a farmer, but rather a wagon driver. Interestingly, the couple has a 5-year-old named Leon Banks living with them and is listed as a "lodger." I wonder if it is another one of their nephews, as they share the same last name.<sup>9</sup>

By looking at the Directory of Austin, we learn exactly where Henderson and Josephine lived, 1503 Hackberry St.<sup>10</sup> When living in a rural area, it is hard to pinpoint an exact address, so we may not know exactly where Henderson was living while in Hayden Springs. However, now that he has moved to a large city with actual street addresses, we can see where Henderson and Josephine lived. Turning to Sanborn Maps, we can get a sense of their community and lifestyle. Religion was an important part of any American's life at this time, however it seems more valued by black Americans. When looking for a new place to live, it is important to consider whether or not you will be attending church. Henderson and Josephine chose to move right next to a colored Church of Christ.<sup>11</sup> Because of this choice in living next to a church, we can understand how important religion was to Henderson and Josephine. The couple also lived relatively close to a colored public school. By looking at census records, we know that Henderson and Josephine did not have any kids of their own, but they were housing a 5-year-old boy, Leon Banks.<sup>12</sup> They did not have any kids of their own, but they took care of the one living

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<sup>9</sup> Year: 1910; Census Place: *Austin Ward 5, Travis, Texas*; Roll: *T624\_1595*; Page: *16B*; Enumeration District: *0078*; FHL microfilm: *1375608*

<sup>10</sup> 1906-7 City Directory of Austin With Street Directory of Residents, book, 1907; Austin, Texas. (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph46836/>; accessed May 5, 2022), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

<sup>11</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Austin, Texas, 1921, Sheet 82.

<sup>12</sup> Henderson Banks, Year: 1910; Census Place: *Austin Ward 5, Travis, Texas*; Roll: *T624\_1595*; Page: *16B*; Enumeration District: *0078*; FHL microfilm: *1375608*

with them, making sure he had access to church as well as an education. Because they are so close to not only a colored church but a colored public school as well, we can assume that they were living in a predominantly black community.

The 1920 Census showed that Henderson (misspelled Helison) Banks is still married to Josie (now “Josephine”). They do not have children but more young lodgers listed as niece and nephew: Mattie Moore, 17 and Leon Lunt, 15. Henderson Banks worked as a “Teamster” in Austin (which, I believe, in modern times usually means a driver of commercial vehicles) as well as being labeled an “Express Mger”- keeping consistent with the 1910 record. It is interesting to note that in the 1920 Census, the race of every member of the Banks household was listed as “Mulatto” as opposed to Black on the previous records. Tier Austin address in 1920 is 1300 E 14th Street. I find the pattern of young household members that are not listed as descendants to be extremely intriguing. Why were they housing so many different youths over the decades? Why were they always listed as niece and nephew? <sup>13</sup>

An “H Banks” born in 1860 Mississippi is listed in the 1940 Census. However, H Banks was not married to Josie or Josephine Banks - his wife is listed as Minerva Banks, born around 1881. Realizing I had not even stopped to check what year Josie was born, I went back to 1930 and saw that Josie was listed as being born around 1860, so if this was in fact, *the* Henderson Banks, he now had a different wife. The only other information listed from the 1940 Census record is an Austin address: 1400 Bob Harrison Street. It is unclear whether this is the same H Banks from the previous records. <sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Year: 1920; Census Place: Austin Ward 5, Travis, Texas; Roll: T625\_1852; Page: 11A; Enumeration District: 112; Year: 1930; Census Place: Austin, Travis, Texas; Page: 19B; Enumeration District: 0022; FHL microfilm: 2342136

<sup>14</sup> Year: 1940; Census Place: *Austin, Travis, Texas*; Roll: *m-t0627-04149*; Page: *9B*; Enumeration District: 227-39

## Hinton and Henderson Banks – Property History

By Darrell Correia and Blakley McCullough

Searching Travis County Deed records for “Hinton Banks” we found a Direct Index to Deeds Transcript covering 1842-1893. Travis County Deed Record 234, on page 517 describes a tract of land with “as conveyed and described by deed from Sandy Hayden to Hinton Banks dated July 1, 1878.” Hinton Banks, thus, purchased his land from Sandy Hayden in 1878 when he relocated to Travis County.

We found in Travis County Deed Record 244 a sale of land from Hinton and Mary Banks to an H.A. Thurmond, dated 1911 with a description that reads “50 acres of land, more or less, apart of the Gordon C. Jennings Headright League.” In 1911 there were 3 “mechanics liens” notes, all set at \$333.33, totaling to over one thousand dollars, that would be paid to H.A. Thurman. It would take years to pay this off, as the note was written on January 12, 1911, and they would continue to make payments in the years 1913, 1915, and 1916.<sup>15</sup> The notes do not specify what they were getting paid to do, but we can assume it was a big project. Hinton had about 50 acres at this time, so perhaps he was adding onto his family’s house, or even building a house to go on the property, as their family was big and they still had younger children to take care of.

Of Hinton and Mary’s children, Henderson Banks was the oldest. When they migrated to Texas, Henderson would have probably been 18 years old. He lived with his parents for a few years, as he is listed as living in Hinton’s household in the 1880 census record.<sup>16</sup> While still

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<sup>15</sup> Travis County (Tex.). Clerk's Office. Travis County Deed Records: Deed Record 254, book, 1912-12/1913-01; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth1110896/>; accessed May 5, 2022), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Travis County Clerk’s Office.

<sup>16</sup> Henderson Banks, Year: 1880; Census Place: Travis, Texas; Roll: 1329; Page: 50A; Enumeration District: 122

living with his parents, it seems as though Hinton and Henderson bought land together, and received the deed on January 28, 1890. They bought the property from a man listed as J.W.<sup>17</sup> It is interesting that they are buying land together, as census records indicate that Henderson married his wife, Josephine in 1882<sup>18</sup>. Perhaps they bought it together so that Henderson could finally get a place of his own for him and his wife, and Hinton, being the loving dad, he seems to be, wants to help his son and daughter-in-law out in buying their first home.

Like his father, Henderson wanted to make some home improvements. W.A. Brooks was the man they hired to do the renovations on their house. He was also in charge of helping to furnish their home. The job would cost Henderson and Josephine \$830. The payment plan is laid out plainly. They would begin making payments on November 7, 1929, and would continue to make payments on the 7<sup>th</sup> of every month. They would make payments of \$20. There was an 8% interest rate on the mechanic lien that they would pay off semi-annually.<sup>19</sup> It is also stated that, if something were to happen to W.A. Brooks, the payments would then go to his heirs. It must not have been a big project, as it is also stated that W.A. Brooks would finish the renovations and construction approximately 30 days after the mechanics lien note was issued.<sup>20</sup>

We searched up H.A. Thurman in the 1920 census, after the date of the deed book sale.

H.A. Thurman was a white male farmer living in Justice Precinct 2 in Travis County. H.A. and

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<sup>17</sup> Travis County (Tex.). Clerk's Office. Travis County Deed Records: Direct Index to Deeds 1842-1893 A-D (transcript), book, 1842/1893; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph975514/>; accessed May 5, 2022), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Travis County Clerk's Office.

<sup>18</sup> Henderson Banks, Year: 1900; Census Place: *Webberville, Travis, Texas*; Roll: 1673; Page: 13; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673

<sup>19</sup> Travis County (Tex.). Clerk's Office. Travis County Deed Records: Deed Record 432 - Mechanics Liens, book, 1929-03/1930-01; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph1318834/>; accessed May 5, 2022), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Travis County Clerk's Office.

<sup>20</sup> Travis County (Tex.). Clerk's Office. Travis County Deed Records: Deed Record 432 - Mechanics Liens, book, 1929-03/1930-01; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph1318834/>; accessed May 5, 2022), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Travis County Clerk's Office.

Maud had three children listed in 1920: Edgar (17), Grady (15), Jody (8). Jodie Thurman is listed in the 1940 Census, married to a Kathrine living in Travis County. Grady Thurman is also listed, living in Travis County, and with one son: Gerald Thurman, aged at just one years old.

In a 1958 Travis County Rural Directory, Grady Thurman lived at 1387 RD 58BE and Jody Thurman, living at 2224 RD 14BN, along with his wife, Katherine. This address likely corresponds with the former Hinton Banks property purchased from Hayden in 1878. Additional research on the names found in the 1958 Travis County Rural Directory could follow a trail of deed transactions that ultimately uncover the actual plots of land within the freedom colony during its existence.

Were any descendants of Hinton Banks listed in the 1958 Travis County Rural directory? The surname Banks and came across four entries: Algie Banks, Effie Banks, Mrs H Hood Banks, and Mary Banks. In the 1940 Census, Algie Banks was 29 years old and living at home with his parents, Haywood and Mary Banks in Travis County. Moving backwards, to 1880, is listed at age 9, living at home with his parents, Hinton and Mary Banks in Travis County. Thus: Algie Banks is likely the grandson of Hinton Banks, you bought land from Sandy Hayden in 1878.

Algie Banks, listed in the 1958 Travis County Rural Directory, lived at 72AE (with no house number, only the road is listed- perhaps the first or most prominent property on that route). The Mary Banks listed in 1958 is described as “retired” and living at 2121 72AE, the same road as Algie, whose mother was named Mary. This could mean that Algie and his mother lived near each other in 1958. The locations of the roads listed for the Thurmans and the Banks seem to generally align in the same road cluster, southeast of Manor proper. The areas around RD 58BE, 14BN, and 72AE is very likely to be the location of the tract of land sold from Sandy Hayden to Hinton Banks in 1878.

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## **Louis Meeks – Family History**

By Alyssa Cradit and Chloe Johnson

In the process of identifying Lewis/Louis Meeks of Hayden Springs, there are three likely candidates in the Census: Lewis Meeks of Mississippi (Age 69 at 1870), Louis Meeks of Mississippi (Age 44 at 1880), and Louis Meeks of Kentucky (Age 54 at 1870). The first Meeks is the least likely candidate.

Lewis Meeks of Mississippi resided in Precinct 1 of Travis County, near Webberville, TX. Meeks was a farmer and resided in his home with Rachel Meeks — a 25-year-old white woman from Texas — and her three inferred children: Worth, Walter, and Emma. Lewis Meeks does not appear further in Travis County within the census record, though Rachel does appear in 1880 married to a Randolph Meeks with whom she had multiple children. Thus the relationship between Rachel and this Lewis Meeks unknown. Why a 45-year-old Black man stayed in the same household as a 25-year-old white woman, both bearing the same last name, and with Rachel already bearing three children with no identified father, is currently restricted to the realm of speculation. While it is highly unlikely that Lewis Meeks of Mississippi is the subject of the Hayden Springs investigation, further resources should be dedicated to identifying the relationship between Lewis and Rachel, as it presents a strong possibility of expanding the historical understanding of race relationships within Travis County during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>21</sup>

The two more likely candidates are Lewis Meeks of Mississippi and Louis Meeks of Kentucky. To begin, Lewis Meeks born in 1836 in Mississippi. In 1880, this Lewis Meeks resided in rural Travis, Texas. He was married to Mary J. Meeks, with both persons being labelled as “Mulatto” by the Census bureau. They had ten children at the time of the census

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<sup>21</sup> Year: 1870; Census Place: Precinct 1, Travis, Texas; Roll: M593\_1606; Page: 156B <https://bit.ly/379qF9O>

recording: Ellen, Thomas, Sarena, Sandy, Mary J., Louisa, Julia, Henry, Edmond, and Carrie.

Other names affiliated with Hayden Springs appear on the same Census sheet as this Lewis Meeks including William Hill and Ben Meeks, which suggests this is likely the Lewis Meeks in question.<sup>22</sup>

Of the nine children listed in the 1880 census, only one – Sandy Meeks – could be determined as still living in the Travis County area after 1880. In 1900, a Sandy Meeks was listed as a boarder in the home of Marian Jones, living with his wife Eliza (married in 1892) and working as a farm laborer. At some point between 1900 and 1920 Eliza dies – as Sandy is listed as a widower in a 1920 Census. By 1920 Sandy Meeks is listed as living at on Angelina Street in Austin, Ward 5, Travis, Texas. While his wife may have passed, he did produce three adult children between 1900 and 1920: Timmie, Ray, and Lewis Meeks (named presumably for this father). Unfortunately, none of his children re-appear in the Census records, making the lineage of Sandy Meeks inconclusive. There is a Sandy Meek in 1930, but he is listed as “married” with a son – 16-year-old Lewis Meek. Both his marital status, and the fact that Lewis Meeks would be around 26 years old in 1930, renders Sandy Meek a different person than Sandy Meeks.<sup>23</sup>

Louis Meeks of Kentucky is a possible candidate for the “Louis Meeks” of Hayden Springs. In 1880, this Louis Meeks was a 54-year-old “mulatto” farmer married to Mary Meeks, also living in rural Travis County, Texas. They had 7 children at the time: Oran, Caroline, Janie, William, Ross, Bell, and Celia. Louis was listed as from Kentucky, and Mary from Arkansas.<sup>24</sup> In 1900, the Kentucky-born Louis Meeks moved to Webberville in Travis County, TX, adding

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<sup>22</sup> Year: 1880; Census Place: Travis, Texas; Roll: 1329; Page: 40B; Enumeration District: 122 <https://bit.ly/3HYFvNa>

<sup>23</sup> Year: 1900; Census Place: Sprinkle, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 6; Enumeration District: 0109; FHL microfilm: 1241673 <https://bit.ly/3KoHjR3>; Year: 1920; Census Place: Austin Ward 5, Travis, Texas; Roll: T625\_1852; Page: 12B; Enumeration District: 112 <https://bit.ly/3CEQiv4>

<sup>24</sup> Year: 1880; Census Place: Travis, Texas; Roll: 1329; Page: 47D; Enumeration District: 122 <https://bit.ly/316zjCG>



their granddaughter Bertha and their grandsons, Louis Meeks, and Henry Edmonson, to their household.<sup>25</sup> Oran, meanwhile, moved to Littig with his family, renting a farm within Travis County. Oren was married to Bettie Meeks (married in 1884), with six children: Effie (13), Birdy (10), Jeff (8), Willie (6), Lennie (4), and an unnamed “Baby” (1 month). It is likely that “Oren” is the same person as “Oran,” as his mother is listed as from Arkansas, the same as Mary Meeks, and the age of Oren matches with the potential age of Oran in 1900.<sup>26</sup>

A Louis Meeks Jr owned a home in Webberville in 1900.<sup>27</sup> His birth year would have been around 1835 in Missouri, he could not read nor write, and his occupation was farmer. He was married to a Nancy C. J. Meeks, born in Texas in 1862, she was marked as “colored” and could read and write. They had 2 children together and 3 stepdaughters from what seems to be Nancy’s first marriage. Louis Jr. also did live next to a John Marshall, whom was marked as colored and a farmer. This may be the same John Marshall from the 1894-95 Rural Directory lived as owning 10 acres of land.<sup>28</sup>

By 1910, Louis Meeks had died, as Mary Meeks is now the widowed head of the Meeks household.<sup>29</sup> They hired hand on their farm — Blake Hunter, a 20-year-old Black man whose listed profession is “odd jobs.” This indicates a degree of wealth, as a widow has enough capital to hire on an additional farmhand to increase labor output. By 1920, Mary Meeks resided with Bell and Bill Meeks, with Bill as the head of the household in Justice Precinct 1 of Travis

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<sup>25</sup> Year: 1900; Census Place: Webberville, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 13; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673 <https://bit.ly/3I4H6kC>

<sup>26</sup> Year: 1900; Census Place: Littig, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 22; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673 <https://bit.ly/35JbLex>

<sup>27</sup> Year: 1900; Census Place: Webberville, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 20; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673

<sup>28</sup> Year: 1900; Census Place: Webberville, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 20; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673

<sup>29</sup> Year: 1910; Census Place: Justice Precinct 1, Travis, Texas; Roll: T624\_1594; Page: 3B; Enumeration District: 0057; FHL microfilm: 1375607 <https://bit.ly/3IUJyLE>

County. At this point, the rest of the children disappear from the record of Travis County – except for Oran.<sup>30</sup>

In 1930, Oron Meeks is 73 years old, living with Bettie Meeks and his daughter, Ruth Meeks, on 2 Travis Avenue, Fort Worth, TX.<sup>31</sup> The property is a cotton farm, which Oron owns and operates. Most importantly, Oron's grandson, Stanley Scott, lives with the Meeks family, aged six years old.<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately, no substantial evidence of Stanley Scott exists in the 1940 Census records, preventing further investigation as to whether he produced children or was still alive in 1940. Potentially, Stanley Scott is still alive today, or he had children that would be within five generations to Louis Meeks. At any rate, with the specific location of the home and a child young enough to be under 100 years old in present, Stanley Scott should be a subject of further investigation.

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<sup>30</sup> Year: 1910; Census Place: Justice Precinct 1, Travis, Texas; Roll: T624\_1594; Page: 3B; Enumeration District: 0057; FHL microfilm: 1375607 <https://bit.ly/3MJQca8>; Year: 1920; Census Place: Justice Precinct 1, Travis, Texas; Roll: T625\_1852; Page: 7A; Enumeration District: 86 <https://bit.ly/3MK2izW>

<sup>31</sup> Year: 1930; Census Place: Precinct 2, Travis, Texas; Page: 4B; Enumeration District: 0006; FHL microfilm: 2342135 <https://bit.ly/36cuUkH>

<sup>32</sup> Year: 1930; Census Place: Precinct 2, Travis, Texas; Page: 4B; Enumeration District: 0006; FHL microfilm: 2342135 <https://bit.ly/36cuUkH>

## Louis Meeks – Property History

By Alyssa Cradit and Chloe Johnson

On 19 December 1887, Lewis Meeks Sr. and Lewis Meeks Jr. sold 148 acres of land to Ben Meeks in Travis County for six-hundred dollars.<sup>33</sup> Of the three previously identified potential candidates for the register’s “Louis Meeks,” Lewis Meeks of Kentucky is the only candidate with a known descendant to share the same name<sup>34</sup> -- however, his grandson “Louis” was only nine in 1900, making him unlikely to be the landholder named within this transaction.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, it is unlikely that the land seller was the Louis Meeks of Hayden Springs, but it is highly probable that the Ben Meeks of this property deed document is the historical Ben Meeks from the Hayden Springs area.

To begin, there are a number of difficulties in attempting to identify the “Ben Meeks” within this property exchange. The initial document lists Ben Meeks’ wife as “Texanna Meeks,” with corresponding property deeds corroborating her name<sup>36</sup>. However, of the 3 Ben Meeks listed in the Census Records in the State of Texas, none of them have a spouse by the name of Texanna. One, the most likely, is Ben Meeks of Texas (25 in 1880)<sup>37</sup> married to one Millie Meeks of Tennessee (23 in 1880) with a ten-month old baby named Orange Meeks and their niece, Hattie Meeks.<sup>38</sup> In 1900, Ben and Millie still lived in Travis County, adding John Meeks

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<sup>33</sup> Pg. 672, Travis County (Tex.). Clerk's Office. Travis County Deed Records: Deed Record 231, book, 1907-10/1909-02; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph1110914/>; accessed May 5, 2022), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Travis County Clerk’s Office.

<sup>34</sup> Year: 1880; Census Place: Travis, Texas; Roll: 1329; Page: 47D; Enumeration District: 122 <https://bit.ly/35VptGK>

<sup>35</sup> Year: 1900; Census Place: Webberville, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 13; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673 <https://bit.ly/3I4H6kC>

<sup>36</sup> Referring to Travis County Deed Records: Deed Record 383 and Travis County Deed Records: Deed Record 377. For full citation, see endnotes *xiv* and *x*

<sup>37</sup> Year: 1880; Census Place: Travis, Texas; Roll: 1329; Page: 41C; Enumeration District: 122 <https://bit.ly/3vKrsrI>

<sup>38</sup> Year: 1880; Census Place: Travis, Texas; Roll: 1329; Page: 41C; Enumeration District: 122 <https://bit.ly/3scxhMb>

(18), Willie Meeks (16), Ross Meeks (13), Caroline Meeks (10), and Athelena Meeks (9) to their family.<sup>39</sup> Interestingly, they're listed as living with one William Coleman as the "father-in-law" (83). It is this Ben Meeks that is the most likely to be the purchaser of this land, as a July 1925 application for oil and gas leasing on the land lists Ben Meeks' children as Orange, Will, Ross, Caroline (and her husband Milton Nobles), and Ethel Meeks (and her husband Robert Collins) – all of which match the names of the children listed in the 1900 census.<sup>40</sup> As to why "Millie" became "Texanna" in the record – in 1910, Ben Meeks is listed as *widowed*, meaning that he remarried after 1910 to Texanna Meeks.<sup>41</sup>

The land itself is listed as the "Richard Duty Headright," which according to Deed Record 231, is a swath of land encompassing around 296 acres, with Meeks only possessing 148 acres. A headright refers to a land grant issued to settlers within Texas, with the Richard Duty headright qualifying as a first-class headright, as it was established prior to the 1836 Texas Declaration of Independence. The age of the headright can be ascertained from a 4 September 1847 issue of the *Texas Democrat*, wherein the State of Texas compelled the heirs of Richard Duty to appear before Noah M. Smithwick and Thurza Smithwick for claim to the league that comprises the Richard Duty headright.<sup>42</sup> The article establishes the estate as being granted in 1835 – a year before the Declaration of Independence. Unfortunately, the location of the land is unknown, as all references to the land refer to physical characteristics and not its presence in

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<sup>39</sup> Year: 1900; Census Place: Webberville, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 21; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673 <https://bit.ly/3LQLvdE>

<sup>40</sup> Pg. 24 – 26 Travis County (Tex.). Clerk's Office. Travis County Deed Records: Deed Record 377, book, 1925-06/1925-10; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph1300768/>; accessed May 5, 2022), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Travis County Clerk's Office.

<sup>41</sup> Year: 1910; Census Place: Justice Precinct 1, Travis, Texas; Roll: T624\_1594; Page: 3B; Enumeration District: 0057; FHL microfilm: 1375607 <https://bit.ly/3P5xLhk>

<sup>42</sup> The *Texas Democrat* (Austin, Tex.), Vol. 2, No. 34, Ed. 1, Saturday, September 4, 1847, newspaper, September 4, 1847; Austin, Texas. (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph48362/>; accessed May 5, 2022), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History.

relation to other landmarks.

Additionally, Ben Meeks acquired an additional portion of the Richard Duty Headright from one W. C. Brown on 6 March 1907, costing three-hundred dollars to the Meeks family.<sup>43</sup> To reiterate, Ben Meeks spent nine-hundred dollars in 1887 and 1907 cumulatively, indicating a great degree of wealth to purchase such large swaths of land for such a hefty sum of money. In 1887, Ben Meeks would have been 32 years old, and in 1907, Meeks would have been around 52 years old. Ben Meeks was a man of substantial wealth without any present indication of where that money came from. In further investigations for the Hayden Springs Project, the origin of Ben Meeks' wealth should be in order to understand how such wealth was able to accumulate in the hands of a Texas-born Black man, formerly enslaved, after 1850.

However, here is what is known about the land: the headright has a substantial oil and gas deposit, as indicated by the oil and gas leasing document found in Deed Record 377. The document describes how the family was awarded \$193 in 1925 for the leasing of land for the construction of oil and gas pipelines. An additional document in Deed Record 383 describes a sale of 1/56<sup>th</sup> of all oil, gas, and mineral deposits on the land to one B. F. Carroll and Joe L. Foster.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, the land is surmised to encompass around 296 acres, is a first-class headright granted prior to the establishment of the Independent State of Texas, and had large enough oil and gas deposits present to lead to the creation of pipelines and mining materials on the land.

Identifying what happened to this piece of land will clarify where the Meeks family when in the historical record. There is an Orange Meeks alive in 1910 whose age – fifty-three –

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<sup>43</sup> Pg. 676, Travis County (Tex.). Clerk's Office. Travis County Deed Records: Deed Record 231, book, 1907-10/1909-02; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph1110914/>; accessed May 5, 2022), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Travis County Clerk's Office.

<sup>44</sup> Pg. 563, Travis County (Tex.). Clerk's Office. Travis County Deed Records: Deed Record 383, book, 1925-11/1926-04; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph1300774/>; accessed May 5, 2022), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Travis County Clerk's Office.

matches the probable age of Ben Meeks child who was born around 1880, and he has a family with a newborn child.<sup>45</sup> Ross Meeks, also of a similar age to his 1900 profile, is also alive with a newborn and family as well.<sup>46</sup> However, there are no re-occurrences of these Meeks after 1910. Ethel Meeks appears in the 1920 census as Ethel Collins, with her husband Robert Collins, but I am unable to confirm where she went after this point.<sup>47</sup> It is possible that Ethel divorced Robert after 1930, re-appearing as a lodger in Kendall, Texas in 1940, but that cannot be confirmed without the annulment papers to confirm her prior marriage to Robert Collins.<sup>48</sup>

Reviewing the evidence, it is probable that Ben Meeks of Texas is: a) the Ben Meeks of the 1887 purchase of a portion of the Richard Duty headright and b) the Ben Meeks of Hayden Springs. His degree of wealth in the purchasing of such a large amount of land and familial relationships after the death of his wife all indicate as such.

Two other property deed records offer relevant information. Deed Record 274 references the exchange of land between an Ida Bell Doxey and Van Buren Doxy to John C. Lockwood. This land exchange was described as the Louis Meeks Homestead Tract. It was recorded that Ida Bell and Van Buren were the children of Spencer and Mary Doxey. In the Rural Directory for 1894-95, a Spencer Doxey Jr. is listed with 50 acres in Webberville. Family history research on the Meeks family suggests that Mary Doxey was the daughter of Louis Meeks. This exchange took place in Austin on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1914, with the witnesses being W.F. Smith and Jno. A.

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<sup>45</sup> Year: 1910; Census Place: Justice Precinct 2, Travis, Texas; Roll: T624\_1594; Page: 32A; Enumeration District: 0059; FHL microfilm: 1375607 <https://bit.ly/3PdSb7V>

<sup>46</sup> Year: 1910; Census Place: Justice Precinct 1, Travis, Texas; Roll: T624\_1594; Page: 3B; Enumeration District: 0057; FHL microfilm: 1375607 <https://bit.ly/3LP5Ujm>

<sup>47</sup> Year: 1920; Census Place: Justice Precinct 1, Travis, Texas; Roll: T625\_1852; Page: 7A; Enumeration District: 86 <https://bit.ly/3KNrofa>

<sup>48</sup> Year: 1940; Census Place: Kendall, Texas; Roll: m-t0627-04086; Page: 8A; Enumeration District: 130-5A <https://bit.ly/3KOMiuc>

Gracy.<sup>49</sup>

Lastly, we recognized some of the names from Deed Record 245. This references an exchange of property to an Isaac Washington on November 25th, 1904. It seems that Isaac paid \$87.50 to Louis Meeks and his wife Eliza, Charlie and Louisa Norris, Ed and Julia Jackson and a few other Meeks. He paid for what was described as “a fractional part of a block known and added upon a plat of the town of Webberville as block No. 39.” It was also described that, the land was on the north east side of Washington St. and extended to the League Line. Also being the same land conveyed by I.B. Banks to Lewis Meeks on October 15<sup>th</sup> 1868. The Rural Directory lists a C.H. Norris around Littig in 1920, which may be the Charles Norris mentioned.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Travis County (Tex.). Clerk's Office. Travis County Deed Records: Deed Record 274, book, 1915-02/1915-05;(<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph1151141/>; accessed May 5, 2022),University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Travis County Clerk’s Office.

<sup>50</sup> Travis County (Tex.). Clerk's Office. Travis County Deed Records: Deed Record 245, book, 1911-02/1911-06;(<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph1110898/>; accessed May 5, 2022),University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Travis County Clerk’s Office.

## **Charlie Morrow – Family History**

By Elijah Harms and Willow Shaw

“Charley” Morrow appeared in the U.S. Census records during the surveys of 1880 and 1900 along with his wife, Anna Morrow. Charley Morrow, according to the U.S. Census record of 1880, lived in Travis County, Texas and was the head of his household of three, which consisted of him, his wife Anna Morrow, and his young son, William Morrow. Charley's occupation was that of a farmer. The same Census sheet lists an African American man of age fifty-five named Sandy Haden. I suspect this to be a misspelling of Sandy Hayden, the man who founded the Hayden Springs Freedom Colony. The Census lists Haden as a blacksmith married to Elizabeth Haden with two daughters Rosa and Fanny Haden, and his seven sons, James, Jefferson, Johny, Samuel, Louis, Robert, and Andrew Haden. James, Samuel and Andrew Haden are also neighbors of interest as they could possibly be names affiliated with the people found on the "1894-95 Travis Rural Directory" within the Littig and Webberville areas. Other neighbors of interest from the 1880 Census page include Dannel Bell who also has a name that could possibly be linked to people listed on the "1894-95 Travis County Rural Directory" in the Webberville and Manor areas.

In the 1880 census, it is stated that Charley was twenty-four years of age and was born in Texas around the year of 1856. His wife, Anna Morrow, was stated to be twenty years of age and born in Texas around the year of 1860 and his son, William Morrow is stated to have been born in Texas sometime within the year of 1879 and was eight months of age by the time that this U.S. Census was being taken, and though neither of Charley's parents names are listed, it is stated that his mother was born in Virginia.

Variations in the Census record exist after 1880. This Census of 1900 lists him as living



in Littig with a birth year of February of 1858 instead of 1856. The names of both his wife and son also show some changes, as Anna Morrow is now listed as Annie Morrow, born in July 1859 instead of 1860, and William's name is changed to Willie Morrow, born in August of 1878 instead of 1879. Another difference is that it now lists both of his parents as originating from Mississippi which contrasts the 1880 statement, that his mother originated from Virginia. These are minor changes that suggest the same family living in rural Travis County in 1900. Neighbors of interest from the 1900 Census in Littig include “Willie Meek, Lula Meek, and Baby Meek” of the Meeks family.

The 1900 Census states that Charley and Annie Morrow have six more children in addition to Willie Morrow. Four daughters, Louya, Lena, Cassie, and Mattie, and two more sons, Doughtey, and Jessie Morrow. Willie Morrow was twenty one years of age at the time of the 1900 census and unmarried, Louya was age at 18, Lena was twelve, Cassie was nine, Mattie was six, Doughtey was four, and Jessie was two. In the cases of Louya Morrow, Cassie Morrow, and Mattie Morrow, I was only able find them in the 1900 Census, after which they all just seem to vanish from the US Census records.

A Will Morrow appears in the 1930 census record in Dallas, Texas living with a half-sister by the name of Pheobe Davis. I think her original name was Pheobe Dyer as her full blooded brother lives with her as well, under the name of Percy Dyer. While I am still not completely certain that this Will Morrow is the same as William Morrow from 1880 or Willie Morrow from 1900, he is stated to be an African American male, fifty years of age and born around 1880 in the state of Texas. It is also stated that his parents were both born in Texas too, and that he was originally married at the age of twenty one. So, he possibly married sometime shortly after the census of 1900, however it is also stated that he was widowed in the 1930

census. Perhaps his wife's name might appear in the Travis county marriage records?

Doughtey Morrow also proves to be rather difficult to find after the 1900 Census record. However, while I am still not certain that it is him, there was a promising African American individual recorded on sheet number 6B of the 1920 US Census. Aged to be twenty three at the time, he went by the name Doughty Morrow, had an occupation as a chauffuer, and lived in Austin Ward 3, Travis, Texas, W 14th Street specifically. His birthdate varies by about two years from Doughtey Morrow in the 1900 census and it is also stated that he was the brother to the head of the house, John J. Tobin. Despite these differences, I believe that he is still worth looking into more in the future. Sadly, I could not find any other US census records mentioning him after 1920.

As for the other two children of Charley and Annie Morrow, I believe that I was able to track down Jessie and Lena Morrow to the 1920 Census Record where a Jesse Morrow is stated to be living with a sister by the name of Lenia, who is married to the head of the house, a man by the name of Benjamin Gregg. I believe that they are the same Lena and Jessie from 1900 because their birthdates remain roughly around the same time as stated in the 1900 census and the age gap between the siblings has not changed from the 1900 Census Record either, and both are stated to be African Americans living Manor, Texas. Much to my disappointment, it seems that neither Jesse Morrow nor Lenia Gregg make an appearance on the US Census records after 1920.

Benjamin Gregg might be the son of another one of the possible residents of the Hayden Springs Freedom Colony listed in the "1894-95 Travis County Rural Directory" - Austin Gregg. In another sheet off of the 1900 Census record, specifically sheet number ten, I found a seventeen year old man by the name of Ben Gregg who is stated to be the third eldest son of a man by the name of Austin Gregg and his wife Elisa Gregg, living in Justice Precinct 1, Travis,

Texas. While there are some differences in birthdates between the 1900 Census and the 1920 census records, the variations in age are minimal.

In the 1920 Census Benjamin Gregg is stated as living in Manor Texas and a farmer and an employer living in a rented house. It is also stated that Benjamin and Lenia Gregg had one son by the name of E.J. Gregg around the year 1916, and while I cannot find any other records with his name after 1920, it is stated that E. J. Gregg was four years of age at the time of the census and an only child. He is quite possibly the grandson of Charley Morrow as well as the grandson of Austin Gregg. Ten years later in 1930, they were placed in Travis County Precinct 2 on Manor Elgin Road. This is likely a different place because their neighbors were totally different. They were still living in Travis County in 1940, still living with their son E J Gregg. By the 1940 Census E J Gregg had apparently been married and divorced at the age of 24.

Other possible relations to Charley Morrow that appeared on the 1894-95 Travis County Rural Directory included a Jack and Sam Morrow. While I could not find any mention of Jack or Sam in the US Census Records, I did find a rather interesting general entry article regarding the history of Littig, Texas and the a man by the name of Jackson Morrow. According to the "Texas State Historical Association, Handbook of Texas," the land that the town of Littig was laid out and built on was owned by a man called Jackson Morrow, who was stated to have been formerly enslaved. He is said to have donated the land in 1883 in order for the town to be built there. The article also mentions that the town of Littig is one of the oldest black communities within the state of Texas.

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Charley Morrow. Year: 1900; Census Place: Littig, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 23; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673

William Morrow. Year: 1880; Census Place: Travis, Texas; Roll: 1329; Page: 40A; Enumeration District: 122

Willie Morrow. Year: 1900; Census Place: Littig, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 23; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673

Will Morrow. Year: 1930; Census Place: Dallas, Texas; Page: 19B; Enumeration District: 0011; FHL microfilm: 2342047

Doughty Morrow. Year: 1920; Census Place: Austin Ward 3, Travis, Texas; Roll: T625\_1852; Page: 6B; Enumeration District: 102

Jessie Morrow. Year: 1900; Census Place: Littig, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 23; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673

Jesse Morrow. Year: 1920; Census Place: Manor, Travis, Texas; Roll: T625\_1852; Page: 28B; Enumeration District: 88

Louya Morrow. Year: 1900; Census Place: Littig, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 23; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673

Lena Morrow. Year: 1900; Census Place: Littig, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 23; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673

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Cassie Morrow. Year: 1900; Census Place: Littig, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 23; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673

Mattie Morrow. Year: 1900; Census Place: Littig, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 23; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673

Ben Gregg. Year: 1900; Census Place: Justice Precinct 1, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 10; Enumeration District: 0104; FHL microfilm: 1241673

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Austin Gregg. Year: 1900; Census Place: Justice Precinct 1, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 10; Enumeration District: 0104; FHL microfilm: 1241673

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## **Charlie Morrow – Property History**

By Elijah Harms and Willow Shaw

As mentioned in our previous essay concerning the Morrow family, Charlie (or Charley) Morrow and Annie Morrow were last recorded in the Federal Census in the year of 1900 with their four daughters and three sons: Louya, Willie, Mattie, Lena, Doughtey, Cassie, and Jessie Morrow. Upon looking through the Travis County Deed Records, a specific document from the deed record 301 on page 521 through 523 references one of the Morrow children, Louise (Louya) Morrow, now married to F.M. Henson. Louise Morrow sold her one-eighth portion of Charley Morrow's property to her brother-in-law, Ben Gregg, who was married to her sister, Lenia (Lena) Morrow.

There were four parcels of land listed to be inherited by Louise (Louya) Morrow Henson and were sold to Ben Gregg on the 23rd of October 1917 under the Notary Public, C. W. Webb. All of them had the names of the people who had originally sold these plots of land to Charlie Morrow and the various Travis County deed record volumes in which they were recorded. In the order of which they were listed within the Deed records 301, the first plot of land was recorded to be measured at sixteen and one-sixth acres and was sold to Charlie Morrow by a J. W. Bitting on March third of 1890. The second plot was measured to be seventy-four and one-half acres of land that was originally sold to Charlie Morrow by a Mary A. Bush on December 9th of 1880. Finally, in the case of the third and fourth plots of land sold to Ben Gregg, there was actually no listing of a measured amount of acreage for these plots in the 301 Deed records. It is stated however, that the third plot was sold to Charlie Morrow by a Geo. W. Walling Jr. on the 27th of June in 1891 and the fourth plot was sold by two other founding Hayden Springs residents, Ben Meeks and Minne Meeks, on the 22nd of December, in the year of 1894.

The deed records of Morrow's original property offer similar description of the four lots, referencing earlier deed records that contain more detailed information about the properties. The first plot of land is clearly somewhere south of Littig. With the faded looping handwriting and the references to specific trees, it is hard to figure out exactly where this plot is, references to Willow Creek and Dry Creek are clear, which come near each other just south of what is now Littig Road. The second description<sup>6</sup> is similarly difficult to parse, but seems to mention a "Wilbargers? Creek." The deed describing the third plot references the railroad and a mention of the "Amos Alexander League." The final deed describing a property sold to Morrow mentions the same "Amos Alexander League," and mentions the presumably same railroad. It specifically mentions the property's proximity to the Littig Railway Station. The Railroad runs through the town from east to west. If this plot is connected to the others, it would probably be south of the railroad because the above-mentioned creeks are south of the railroad. We have listed them in the works cited as a means for keener eyes to be able to decipher that script with more accuracy.

In another deed record, F. M. Henson, his brother J.C. Henson, and his widowed mother, Mrs. Maggie Henson, gave up any claim to their father's property in the city of Austin, Texas and conveyed it to their mother instead.

According to the 301 Deed Records, all of the land sold by Louise Morrow Henson and her husband to Ben Gregg was listed to be within an area called the Amos Alexander League of Travis County, Texas. This area of land is mentioned again in the 474 Travis County Deed records on pages 256, 257, and 258, and addresses that the Amos Alexander League is located within the city of Elgin, Texas and that Ben and Lenia Gregg were paying land mortgage dues to a Mrs. Lucy J. Rivers and her heirs, W. H. Rivers, Jr. and W. C. Rivers, upon her death, during the decade of the 1930s and through to the early 1940s. In the 1930 Census, Ben Gregg was

listed as a cotton farmer and that he outright owned his own land and had the street address of “Manor Elgin Road.” Ben Gregg also had two nephews listed as household members under the names of, Hammond and Roy Humphrey, aged eight and six at the time of the 1930 census.

The 301 volume of the Travis Deed Records also mentions another child of Charlie and Annie Morrow who did not appear in our Census research. Her name was Viola Morrow and, upon the death of Charlie and Annie Morrow, she too received a portion of the land as inheritance according to the 301 Records. Census records from 1910 and another from 1920 state that Viola Morrow was born in either 1900 or 1901, which provides an explanation as to why Viola Morrow does not appear in the 1900 census records where the rest of the family is listed. In the case of Viola, by 1920 it appears that she moved away from her inherited property and took to becoming a teacher in the city of Bastrop, Texas. The census also states that she took up residence in the house of a man by the name of William Hill and his family. Perhaps this William Hill is the same as the one mentioned in the 1894-95 Travis County Rural Directory. To further strengthen my argument that Viola Morrow spent her time in Bastrop serving as a teacher and perhaps getting an extended education for herself, I found that the Texas Travis County Probate Records: Probate Minutes 43, page 531 makes mentions of Lena Gregg paying disbursement fees regarding the boarding and schooling tuition of Viola Morrow, possibly referring to her education or stay with the Hill family as a teacher in the city of Bastrop. The only documentation that I was able to find regarding Viola after the 1920 census is a “Final Report and Application of Discharge” for both Cassie and Viola Morrow that was closed and signed off by the Notary Public, C.W. Webb, and filed on the fifth of November in the year of 1920.

From the Texas County Probate Records, Probate Minutes 45, on page 62 and page 63, it is stated that Viola and Cassie Morrow were still considered minors under the guardianship of

the their older sister, Lena Gregg. This particular document refers to how both of the younger sisters are being discharged from the guardianship of Lena Gregg, Viola through marriage and Cassie though unstated means, perhaps coming of age? The document states that Viola Morrow married a man by the name of Hammond Humphries in the city of Gary, in the state of Indiana. However, I am unsure as to whether or not she gave up her portion of inherited land to Ben and Lena Gregg upon her marriage to Hammond Humphries. Hammond Humphrey and Roy Humphrey, who are stated to be the nephews of Ben Gregg and members of the Gregg household as of the 1930 census, are probably the children of Hammond and Viola Morrow Humphries.

Lastly: When searching for the location of the Littig Railway Station, one of our group members found a historical marker dedication for the Littig Cemetery from Travis County. This dedication says, "The town of Littig was laid out in 1883 along the route of Houston and Texas Central Railway on land donated by former slave Jackson Morrow... In 1891, Thomas B. and Mary E. Fowler sold two acres to trustees George Morrow, Alex Alexander and Andrew J. Campbell for the establishment of a cemetery at this location. The earliest marked burial is that of Abba Moore, who died in 1895. Many former enslaved workers, including Jackson Morrow and members of his family are buried at this site." Google Maps also revealed a Morrow Road just north of the town, which is likely to refer to Jackson Morrow. Could there be a connection between the founder of Littig, Jackson Morrow, and this Morrow family? Jackson Morrow is listed in Census records, living in Travis County, in 1880 and 1910. I think it is possible that he could be Charley's father. Jackson was 52 in 1880 when Charley was 24.



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<https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/historical-commission/marker/2011-markers>

## William Hill – Family History

By Trinity Abels and Matthew Medina

William Hill Sr. was a Black landowner who owned 189 acres in the Manor area in 1894. William Hill Sr. has his first record found in the 1880 record. William Hill Sr. and both of his parents were born in Alabama. In 1880 he is 27 years old (born 1853) and married to Jennie Hill with a daughter and two sons, Benjamin Hill and William Hill Jr, and a daughter Lyddia Hill. At this time, they are living in Travis, Texas. Jennie Hill's occupation is listed as "Keeping House", which was a sign of wealth at the time, as his wife did not have to work, she was relegated to household duties, and the record indicates William Sr. owned the land he farmed.

Almost all Hill's neighbors on the 1880 Census sheet are listed as "Black", with a couple exceptions listed as "Mulatto", and one white family, meaning that Mr. Hill did not have many white neighbors. The neighbors are for the most part also listed as farmers, with wives listed as "Keeping House." One of Mr. Hill's Black neighbors, Jasper Jones, had a white German laborer, and a Black 80-year-old servant working for him, which is also a signifier of wealth. The most interesting find in this page of the Census records are two names, Louis Meeks, and Ben Meeks, whom both appear on the 1894 rural directory.

William Hill Sr. is next listed in the 1900 Census living in Bastrop, Texas. We can tell it is the same William Hill because of his marital status to Jennie Hill, as well as his two sons from the 1880 record, Benjamin and William Jr., who are both still living in his house at this time. In 1900 the daughter is no longer in the house, it can be expected that she may have married during the 20-year period between the two Census records. They live in a rented house on a farm. In the twenty years since the last census, Mr. Hill added four sons and four daughters to the household: Samuel Hill (Age 16), Gerome Hill (Age 9), James Hill (Age 14), David Hill (Age 1), Callie Hill (Age 18), Fannie Hill (Age 12), Millie Hill (Age 6), and Werlena Hill (Age 3). The two eldest sons,

Benjamin and William Hill Jr. both still live in the household and are both listed as “Farm Laborers.” Also notable is that William, Jennie, and all children received an education indicated by their ability to read and write. The demographics of Mr. Hill's neighbors had not drastically changed from being mostly black Farmers, however now all the black farmers around him are listed as “renting” or “laborers”, meaning that they did not own the land they worked on. There are no families that followed the Hill's to Bastrop, and all their neighbors have changed from the 1880 Census.

William Sr. is last found in the 1910 Census at the age of 58. This record is where the first difference in William Sr.'s birthplace is seen as in this record it is listed as Tennessee rather than Alabama. However, this William is the correct age, he is still living in Bastrop, married to Jennie Hill. In 1910, William Sr. has only two sons, Samuel (Age 25) and Jerome (Age 19), still living in the household, and able to work the farm. Samuel is listed as “Helper”, meaning that either he is the person on payroll for William, or Samuel has an official stake in the Farm. This also means that William Hill has six children living away from the home, some of whom I was able to find in later census records, and other official documents. Thus William Sr.'s birthplace may be Tennessee or Alabama. No Census record of William Hill Sr. is available after 1910. He may have passed.

Two other possible leads on William Hill Sr. First, an 1860 Federal Slave Record Census lists a William Hill of Travis, Texas who owned six enslaved workers, one of which is a 6-year-old boy. It's possible that this enslaved child both to a white William Hill is the William Hill Sr. of Hayden Springs. Second, an 1880 record of “Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent” persons lists a 70-year-old, white, male named William Hill, originally from Tennessee in Travis, Texas. Could this be the enslaver William Hill who owned a six-year-old slave of the same name, who is our William Hill Sr.?

William Hill Sr.'s son Benjamin Hill was born around 1877 in Travis, Texas. Benjamin still lives with his father in the 1900 Census. By the 1910 Census, Benjamin Hill has moved out of his father's house and married Julia Hill, possibly around 1903-4, but he stayed in the Bastrop area. In this 1910 record, there is once again a change in the location where his father was born, here it says that his father was born in Tennessee, but it is back to Alabama in the 1920s record. The last Census record of Benjamin is in 1930, where he listed as a widower. Benjamin Hill is listed working in a grocery store and having an elementary school level education.

I possibly found Benjamin Hill in the 1940 Census but cannot confirm. It is possible he lived in Austin, Texas in 1940 and was remarried to a Hattie Hill. I think this could still be him however because it has his residence in 1935 listed in Bastrop, the correct birth year of 1877, and his father's birthplace is listed as Alabama. This Benjamin Hill has a son listed as Whalen/Wayland Hill born around 1915. By 1940 Whalen lived in Austin, Texas.

William Hill Jr., the second son of William Hill Sr., was born in 1879. Similar to his brother Benjamin, in the 1900 Census he is listed as living in Bastrop in his father's home but by the 1910 census, he is moved out on his own and married a woman named Etta Hill around 1908. He lived in Bastrop close to the rest of the family. Benjamin Hill is listed as a neighbor on the same Census sheet. The Hills have a daughter in 1910, although the gender might be a mistake because the child's listed name is Henry Hill. They rent a farm and Hill Jr. is listed as a self-employed farmer like his father. In 1930 he and Etta Hill have three daughters and two sons living in the household and address as 1910.

The most notable change for William Hill Jr comes in the 1940 census where his address changes to 1104 Chison St, Austin, Texas. William Hill Jr. and Etta Hill lived at this address up to William Jr's death in 1950 as listed on his Death Certificate. He is still married to Etta Hill, and has son Almis Hill (Age 26), grandson Ratta Tomley (Age 9), and Kathyrne Hill (Age 13), all

living at home. His occupation is listed as laborer and he rents his house. The 1940 Census shows hard times as he is listed with 71 days of unemployment, with 0 income, and 0 weeks worked in 1939. This is indicative of the Great Depression and Dust Bowl context. Almis Hill is the only family member employed in 1940. Ratta Tomley seems to be the closest link to William Hill that may still be alive, which would put him around 91 years old in 2022.

## Sources

### **Benjamin Hill**

Year: 1900; Census Place: *Justice Precinct 4, Bastrop, Texas*; Roll: 1609; Page: 18; Enumeration District: 0009; FHL microfilm: 1241609

Year: 1910; Census Place: *Justice Precinct 3, Bastrop, Texas*; Roll: T624\_1529; Page: 7A; Enumeration District: 0006; FHL microfilm: 1375542

Year: 1910; Census Place: *Justice Precinct 3, Bastrop, Texas*; Roll: T624\_1529; Page: 7A; Enumeration District: 0006; FHL microfilm: 1375542

Year: 1920; Census Place: *Justice Precinct 3, Bastrop, Texas*; Roll: T625\_1774; Page: 10A; Enumeration District: 23

Year: 1930; Census Place: *Precinct 3, Bastrap, Texas*; Page: 9B; Enumeration District: 0008; FHL microfilm: 2342024

Year: 1940; Census Place: *Austin, Travis, Texas*; Roll: m-t0627-04149; Page: 65A; Enumeration District: 227-41

### **William Hill Sr.**

Year: 1880; Census Place: *Travis, Texas*; Roll: 1329; Page: 41C; Enumeration District: 122

Year: 1900; Census Place: *Justice Precinct 4, Bastrop, Texas*; Roll: 1609; Page: 18; Enumeration District: 0009; FHL microfilm: 1241609

Year: 1910; Census Place: *Justice Precinct 3, Bastrop, Texas*; Roll: T624\_1529; Page: 6B; Enumeration District: 0006; FHL microfilm: 1375542

### **William Hill Jr.**

Year: 1880; Census Place: *Travis, Texas*; Roll: 1329; Page: 41C; Enumeration District: 122

Year: 1900; Census Place: *Justice Precinct 4, Bastrop, Texas*; Roll: 1609; Page: 18; Enumeration District: 0009; FHL microfilm: 1241609

Year: 1910; Census Place: *Justice Precinct 3, Bastrop, Texas*; Roll: T624\_1529; Page: 7A; Enumeration District: 0006; FHL microfilm: 1375542

Year: 1920; Census Place: *Justice Precinct 3, Bastrop, Texas*; Roll: T625\_1774; Page: 10A; Enumeration District: 23

Year: 1930; Census Place: *Precinct 3, Bastrop, Texas*; Page: 9A; Enumeration District: 0008; FHL microfilm: 2342024

Year: 1940; Census Place: *Austin, Travis, Texas*; Roll: m-t0627-04149; Page: 10A; Enumeration District: 227-41

### **Kathryne Hill and Ratta Tomley**

Year: 1940; Census Place: *Austin, Travis, Texas*; Roll: m-t0627-04149; Page: 10B; Enumeration District: 227-41

### **Whalen Hill**

Year: 1940; Census Place: *Austin, Travis, Texas*; Roll: m-t0627-04149; Page: 64B; Enumeration District: 227-37

The National Archives in Washington DC; Washington DC, USA; *Eighth Census of the United States 1860*; Series Number: M653; Record Group: *Records of the Bureau of the Census*; Record Group Number: 29

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## **Ike Brown – Family and Property History**

By Trinity Abels and Sophie Moore

Ike Brown's Census records were very sparse. We were only able to find two records that we assume belong to Brown, however we found more for his sons, John and Richard Brown. Ike has a 1900 Census record. He is listed as living with his two sons John and Richard, and married to Sallie Brown, and living in Webberville. The interesting thing about this record is that one of his neighbors is listed as Paul M Deates, a white man. This is significant because Deates is found in Property Deed Record 257 buying land next to Brown, as they used his land to help define Deates' property boundary.

Ike Brown bought 138 acres of land in 1884 from a couple named L. B. and Lucy Harris according to Property Deed Records 446. We were, unfortunately, unable to find information on the Harris', but we think that the land was formerly a part of something called the Jeff Burluson Homestead Tract or it is right next to it. In later records there is a woman named Lizzie Burluson who is listed as a neighbor to the Browns in later Census records.

Ike Brown's son, Richard Brown, is listed as 20 years old in the 1900 Census and born in Texas in April 1880. Ike Brown is listed as 60 years old, and Ike's wife, Richards listed mother, Sallie, is only 35. There are also two other people in the house, another son, John Brown, who is 26 years old, and Mary Winson, an 8-year-old labeled as a Stepdaughter (likely the daughter of Sallie). Richard Brown likely died between the 1930 and 1940 Census records. We were not able to find a census record for him in 1930, but there is a property deed record of him and his wife Ellen acquiring some of Ike Brown's land in the early 1930s. Another piece of evidence to support this was that we were able to find Ellen Browns' 1940 Census record where she was a widowed property owner and a neighbor to John Brown, Richard's older brother. Seeing Ellen's 1940 record,

there may be chance to track down some decedents as she was living with two grandchildren, Willie Hunter, 18, and Dobbie Scott, 9.

Ike's son, John Brown, was surprisingly easy to follow in the record given how common his name is. He has the most complete record of the three Brown men. His first record, like his father and brother, is found in the 1900 Census record. He is listed as 26 years old, single, and living with the rest of the family at the farm in Webberville. In 1920, he is listed as married to Rosey Brown, with two daughters and a son, 4 years old Conery Brown. This is continued in the 1930 record, with the addition of two more sons, Johnie, 10, and Andrew, 6. The most up-to-date records are the 1940 Census records, where he is listed as still married to Rosey, living with his youngest son Andrew, now 16, and therefore a potential lead to track a few more decedents, as well as another daughter, who is 18. There is a cemetery record that lists John Brown as being buried in Ike Brown Cemetery with Ike Brown and Sandy Hayden in 1942, so even if more records were available, this would likely be the end of the census records for John. We are making the assumption that Richard Brown died before this due to Ellen's widowed status and his lack of census records, however, I think it is interesting that he is not listed as buried here in the Ike Brown Cemetery with the rest of his family.

The cemetery record lists Ike Brown as dying in 1922, but we are not sure that is accurate. Deed 425 has a record of Ike's land in 1929 and is the first to mention the property in regard to his death in its concern to his children and heirs, which includes a few names that are new. It appears in this record that they are selling the main Ike Brown property as well as some pieces in Webberville proper, but it looks like they are selling it to Ellen Brown, who is Richard's wife, per the census records. However, the record then goes on to discuss how they are paying Ellen \$700.00 plus interest for it rather than the other way around. This is then further complicated from Deed record 446 again because, at the end of 1929, Richard and Ellen Brown bought Ike Brown's former

property from a public auction for \$50.00. The best part of these two documents together is that it tells how much land Ike Brown had and for some parts of the property, it tells how many acres he bought from different people. There is still the problem of locating exactly where all this land was, many of the referenced markers were just local landmarks, and the most dependable would probably have been Cottonwood Creek.

### Sources

Year: 1900; Census Place: *Webberville, Travis, Texas*; Roll: 1673; Page: 19; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673 – *Ike Brown*

Year: 1920; Census Place: *Justice Precinct 1, Travis, Texas*; Roll: T625\_1852; Page: 1B; Enumeration District: 86 – *Richard Brown*

Year: 1940; Census Place: *Travis, Texas*; Roll: m-t0627-04148; Page: 3A; Enumeration District: 227-1

Year: 1930; Census Place: *Precinct 1, Travis, Texas*; Page: 4B; Enumeration District: 0001; FHL microfilm: 2342135 – *John Brown*

Year: 1940; Census Place: *Travis, Texas*; Roll: m-t0627-04148; Page: 3A; Enumeration District: 227-1

Year: 1880; Census Place: *Travis, Texas*; Roll: 1329; Page: 45C; Enumeration District: 122 – *Jeff Burluson*

Year: 1900; Census Place: *Webberville, Travis, Texas*; Roll: 1673; Page: 19; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673 --- *Lizzie Burluson*

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## Dock Merritt – Family History

By Berkley Kading

Dock Merritt first appears in the 1880 census. It's interesting because this is the only census where his name is spelt Dock Marritt with an A instead of the E. He's twenty-eight years old and the head of the household while his wife Elizabeth, twenty-three, is listed as keeping house. They have one son, Frank, age 9, and four daughters, Callie, Adaline, Julian, and Augusta aged 7,5,3, and 1. Dock is listed as a farmer. The Rural Directory of Travis County states that Dock Merritt owned 100 acres, but I couldn't find any record of this to confirm for myself. Sandy Hayden is listed on the same Census sheet, suggesting they lived in the same community, as well as Louis Meeks. I did find it interesting that even in 1880 they lived in an interracial farming community as many of their neighbors were white.

In 1900 Dock Merritt was 46, he had his name spelt correctly, Dock Merritt, and they were still living in Travis County. Even more specifically they were in Littig, Texas. I'm guessing this is where he owned the 100-acre farm, perhaps it's the same farm as 1880 farm, but I couldn't confirm this. The census did have his farm listed as mortgaged. He is still married to Elizabeth; however, her name is now listed as Lizzie Merritt. On top of this they now have a total of 10 living children, 3 deceased, but only 9 of their kids are listed. Callie, Julian, and Augusta all daughters of theirs are no where to be found in any census records that I looked at. I think it's safe to assume that sadly two of them passed away and one of the three got married and I just lost them in the census. Frank and Adaline are still living with them and working on the farm, Frank is now 29 and Adaline is 25. They have another daughter, Ellen, who is apparently 21 and helped as farm labor as well, but she wasn't listed in the 1880 census. New additions to the family include Ira 17, Brady 15, Oda 13, Ser/Sie/Salessie 9, Dimple 7, and Milton the youngest at 4. This is interesting because Ira, Brady

and Oda are all attending school at this time. I also saw a few familiar names skimming through their list of neighbors on the Census sheet including Louis Scott, 98 acres, and Charley Morrow who owned a whopping 166 acres.

Moving on to the census of 1910, unfortunately for our research into Hayden Springs, the Merritts moved to Muskogee, Oklahoma some time between 1900 and 1910. It also appears that they moved on from the family farming business as Dock was now a laborer for the railroad industry. Dock can also both read and write now, at least it's listed that he can now. They are renting house number 1114 on south 3<sup>rd</sup> street but again I couldn't find any actual records of them renting this place. I was even able to find a couple Sanborn maps of Muskogee from the time, but I couldn't locate a house or dwelling numbered 1114. Much like Littig, this new community was an interracial farming and railroad community, although it appears that Muskogee was mostly Black.

Another interesting discovery on this 1910 Census page is now they have him listed as 10 years older than he was previously. The census now states that Dock is 64 years old (he should be 54 if previous census records were correct) and born in 1846. Him and Elizabeth are still married, although they have her name listed differently again: Elizziebeth. This also marks the first time that Elizabeth is labeled as "Mulatto" and the first time she is listed with a job outside of keeping house. She's working as a "washerwoman" for a private family along with her daughters Sirlessie, now 19, and Ellen, now 28. Brady (24) is still with the family working as a porter for a dry goods store, and both Dimple (17) and Milton (14) are attending school at this time. I lost track of both Frank and Adaline at this point in my search, I checked both Texas and Oklahoma extensively and couldn't find a single trace of either. I may have found their daughter Oda, who would be 23 at this point, married to a man named Orang Moore. Beyond that I wasn't able to find much more on Oda. Ellen was also married at this point. Her name is now Ellen Proutt and she had two children, Dock S. Proutt (7) and Almetrice Proutt (1?), all of which are living with Dock and Elizabeth. I couldn't

confirm her husband, but if I had to guess it was Albert Proutt who was also listed as married in Muskogee, OK, but was living with his three sisters. Ira Merritt, their son was also married and living in Muskogee. He was 26 and working as a street laborer, his wife Cassie Merritt (Jones) was listed as keeping house and they lived with Cassie's family the Jones'. On top of this the Jones were neighbors with Albert Proutt and his three sisters.

Unfortunately, Dock Merritt was no where to be found in the 1920 census, which leads me to believe that he passed away some time between 1910 and 1920. Elizabeth Merritt, now 58, is still around and living with Ira and his Wife Cassie. They live somewhere on Rutherford Street but I couldn't find much else on their living situation. Ira is now working as a foreman for a yard crew in one of the railroad shops (it wasn't specified) and nothing was listed for Cassie. Elizabeth also wasn't listed with a job which leads me to believe that she stayed at home and watched after the kids. Ira and Cassie now have a daughter named Lois (2) and Almetrice Proutt, now 10, is also staying with the family. I thought this was interesting because along with Almetrice staying with them I couldn't find any records of any of the other Proutts. Ellen, Dock S., and Albert, even all of Alberts sisters, all disappeared after the 1910 census. Along with the Proutts, this is where I lost track of Brady and Milton Merritt, they may have gone to fight in World War I, but I couldn't find any records. I also lost track of both Dimple and Sirlessie, they could have just gotten married and I lost them but again I searched the census extensively and couldn't find anything.

In the 1930 census I was only able to find a few remaining relatives of Dock Merritt: his son Ira and Ira's daughter Loise. Ira is now 45 and his job is only listed as farm labor. It still has him listed as married, not widowed, but I couldn't find any sign of Cassie or a new wife. Loise Merritt, now 12, is now attending school at this time. They're living on McCloud Street with Cassie's family, the Jones', though it appears her mom remarried as they are listed as the Scotts. In

1940, I lost track of Loise as well, however, I was able to find Ira. He was still in Muskogee, living by himself on Rutherford Street and he was working as a carpenter. Unfortunately, this was the last little bit of information I could find on the Merritt family.

### Sources

Year: 1880; Census Place: Travis, Texas; Roll: 1329; Page: 48A; Enumeration District: 122

Year: 1880; Census Place: Precinct 1, Waller, Texas; Roll: 1331; Page: 383C; Enumeration District: 158

Year: 1900; Census Place: Littig, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 22; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673

Year: 1910; Census Place: Muskogee Ward 3, Muskogee, Oklahoma; Roll: T624\_1264; Page: 3A; Enumeration District: 0116; FHL microfilm: 1375277

Year: 1910; Census Place: Muskogee Ward 3, Muskogee, Oklahoma; Roll: T624\_1264; Page: 4B; Enumeration District: 0116; FHL microfilm: 1375277

Year: 1910; Census Place: Muskogee Ward 3, Muskogee, Oklahoma; Roll: T624\_1264; Page: 4B; Enumeration District: 0116; FHL microfilm: 1375277

Year: 1910; Census Place: Dallas Ward 8, Dallas, Texas; Roll: T624\_1544; Page: 2B; Enumeration District: 0063; FHL microfilm: 1375557

Year: 1920; Census Place: Muskogee Ward 2, Muskogee, Oklahoma; Roll: T625\_1477; Page: 19A; Enumeration District: 82

Year: 1920; Census Place: Muskogee Ward 2, Muskogee, Oklahoma; Roll: T625\_1477; Page: 19A; Enumeration District: 82

Year: 1930; Census Place: Muskogee, Muskogee, Oklahoma; Page: 25B; Enumeration District: 0033; FHL microfilm: 2341650

Year: 1940; Census Place: Muskogee, Muskogee, Oklahoma; Roll: m-t0627-03314; Page: 14A; Enumeration District: 51-39

## Henry Brown – Family History

By Nkundimana Claude

There were 4 Henry Browns in that 1870 census of Travis County. Two are promising candidate. In 1870, the first Henry Brown had no recorded spouse and he would have been 21 years of age at the time of the Census. He was born in Texas and was a field laborer. There were no recorded children or spouse. But there was another individual associated with him that I decided to look into, his name was Samuel Warford who would have been 19 years of age at the time.<sup>51</sup> This finding was very peculiar because these two young men did not share a name but were both Black and lived together as field laborers. When I looked up these two individuals in subsequent censuses, I could not find anything. But I was still confident that they could not be the man I am looking for because of their age. I even broadened the radius for the names nationally and could not find them. So, I moved on.

A second Black Henry Brown lived in Travis County in 1870 married to a woman by the name of Frances Brown.<sup>52</sup> The Census lists his birthplace as Maryland and he was 38 at the time of the Census. His occupation, according to the census would have been “Day Laborer.” It also says that he had two children: Howard Brown, 7 years old at the time, and Mary Brown, 4 years old at the time.

I found this Henry Brown again in the 1880, both in Maryland, in Travis County. Henry Brown is listed as 50 years in 1870.<sup>53</sup> By 1880 he and his wife (Frances Brown) now have more children (6). Another difference is that his occupation has now changed from Day Laborer (1870) to Farm Laborer (1880) and as mentioned before. He lived in precinct 6, Travis Texas USA.

I couldn't find anything on Henry or Frances Brown in the 1900 Census. But I did find

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<sup>51</sup> Year: 1870; Census Place: Travis, Texas; Roll: M593\_1606; Page: 250A

<sup>52</sup> Year: 1870; Census Place: Austin, Travis, Texas; Roll: M593\_1606; Page: 299A

<sup>53</sup> Year: 1880; Census Place: Precinct 6, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1329; Page: 157D; Enumeration District: 128

Howard Brown, one of their children.<sup>54</sup> He was 26 years old and could read and write in 1900. He still lived in Precinct 6, Travis County, Texas. He also had a wife named Belle Brown and 2 children. Furthermore, very interestingly, he resided with his brother, George Brown in a residence they rented. After not having found his sisters in the same census year, I am assuming they got married and changed their names. In the 1910 Census, Howard Brown he had gotten divorced, still living in Precinct. His occupation is listed as “Farmer”.<sup>55</sup> He was also patterned with the head of the household in which he lived.

### **Joshua Pope – Family History**

By Zavier Cienfuegos

My research goal was to find more information on my assigned individual, Joshua Pope, who was believed to have owned around 135 acres of land. I had done research on one individual who may have possibly been the Joshua Pope who lived in or around the surrounding area of the Hayden Springs colony. To begin, a census record from 1860 documented a man named J.H. Pope. Pope was 33 years old and was born in the State of Georgia. In addition, he lived in Austin, Travis, Texas and his post office was labeled in the city of Austin; his dwelling and family number were labeled 461. Furthermore, his occupation consisted of farming. He had a real estate value of about \$13,000, a personal estate value of \$34,100, and he lived in a household with two other members named M.F. Pope and L.C. Pope. Although I was able to discover this information, my attempt to ascertain if he was Black was unsuccessful as no records indicated whether he was of Black or white.<sup>56</sup>

Next, it was documented that the individuals in his household were his wife, M.F. Pope,

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<sup>54</sup> Year: 1900; Census Place: Justice Precinct 6, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 8; Enumeration District: 0115; FHL microfilm: 1241673

<sup>55</sup> Year: 1910; Census Place: Justice Precinct 6, Travis, Texas; Roll: T624\_1594; Page: 12B; Enumeration District: 0088; FHL microfilm: 1375607

<sup>56</sup> Joshua Pope, Year: 1860; Census Place: Austin, Travis, Texas; Roll: M653\_1306; Page: 269; Family History Library Film: 805306

and his daughter, L.C. Pope. M.F. Pope was a female who was 23 years old and was born in the state of Texas in about 1837. Her occupation was labeled as a house wife. Lastly, Pope's daughter, L.C. Pope, was a one-year-old female at the time of the 1860 census and was born in the state of Texas in the year 1859. I continued to dig deeper in an attempt to find the records of a J.H. Pope in the record census between the years of 1870-1940, however, I was unable to locate J.H. Pope between these years. Additionally, I began to search for any records of his wife but ultimately reached a dead-end. His daughter was not able to be found in any other census records as well. I also searched to see if J.H. Pope had any neighbors who may have been Black, self-sufficient farmers, however, the records did not convey whether J.H. Pope's neighbors were white or Black.

To conclude, I believe J.H. Pope may be the Joshua Pope we are looking for as he had a personal estate value of \$34,100 and a real estate value of about \$13,000. These numbers are indicative that he may have owned a lot of land in the surrounding areas of Travis County.

Unfortunately, I cannot be too certain that this is the correct Joshua Pope; this is a census record from 1860 and does not entirely align with the time period of the Hayden Springs freedom colony. Furthermore, at the time of the census record, J.H. Pope had a total estate value that exceeded one-million U.S. dollars in today's money. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that J.H. Pope was a Black man but instead was a wealthy white man who owned a lot of the land that would later be a part of Hayden Springs.

## **Robert Bacon – Family History**

By Zavier Cienfuegos and Reynaldo Josue Funez Sanchez

In 1870 Robert Bacon (spelled “Robt”) was 48 years old, married to Mary Bacon who was 45 years old at this time. He was born in Tennessee in 1822. His occupation was listed as a land laborer at this particular time and he had two sons Andrew and Sam Bacon whose ages were not listed. His home address was listed as Precinct One, Travis Texas with a post office in Webberville. While reading the 1870 census sheet, I found that the neighbors of the Bacon family were all Black farmers. This may prove that Robt Bacon and his family lived in a community that consisted of Black, self-sufficient farmers.

Interestingly, I found a document that was titled: ‘U.S., Selected Federal Census Non-Population Schedules, 1850-1880’. This document had an enumeration date of June 17, 1880. This document included various miscellaneous agricultural records that listed records such as wages, acres of land owned, fences built, labor, etc. In this record, I discovered that Robert Bacon owned 60 acres of land, had a total farm value of 1,430 U.S. dollars, and he had an estimated value of all farm production worth 700 dollars.

Robert Bacon lived in a household with other members named Mary Bacon, Andrew Bacon, Samuel Bacon, Leah Bacon, Walker Bacon, and Molly Bacon. His eldest son, Andrew Bacon, was born in 1857 and was aged 13 at the time of the 1870 census. Unfortunately, after searching assiduously, I was unable to find any census records and the trail went cold. Next, Samuel Bacon was the youngest son of Robt Bacon, however, his information failed to provide any other records and I hit a dead- end with him. Afterwards, I began to search for any records of his youngest daughter, Molly, but to no avail. Records regarding his eldest daughter, Leah, 9,



were unable to be found as well. Lastly, I began to search for Robt's middle daughter, Walker, aged 6, but was left with yet another dead-end.

I discovered slightly different information about Robert Bacon in the 1880 Census. His place of birth was also listed differently, he went from being born in Tennessee to being born in Virginia in the 1880 census. Now I don't know if this was just human error from back in the day or maybe they did not know for sure his original place of birth. I assumed that just like they took a guess on an individual's date of birth they also guess their place of birth. All other information however seemed to match the 1870s census: he had two sons Robert Bacon Jr age 19 and Andrew Bacon age 21. Both of his sons lived at home and he was still married to Mary Bacon whose occupation was listed as keeping house in both Census sheets. In a census record from the year 1880, 'Robert Bacon' was 65 years old and Mary Bacon was 62 years of age. She born in the year 1818. They are listed as living with two sons, Andrew Bacon and Robert Bacon.

In the 1900 Census, Robert Bacon (spelled "Robt Bacon" again) was 74 years old and he lives in Webberville. It would also appear that his wife Mary Bacon passed away because he is listed as being single or maybe they got divorced. Despite being 74 years old, Robert Bacon Sr is listed as being a farm laborer however he is no longer the head of household. That role now belongs to his son Robert Bacon Jr. His oldest son Andrew Bacon is no longer living at the house.

Unfortunately, after the 1900s census there are no written records of Robert Bacon Sr, so I decided to follow the records of his son Robert Bacon Jr. In the 1900 census Robert Bacon Jr is 39 years of age and is now head of household. He is listed as being a farmer with 3 sons and no wife, his marital status was listed as widowed. His oldest son is Noah Bacon age 12, his middle child is Marion Bacon age 8 and his youngest son is James Bacon age 6. Ten years later in the

1910 census I was able to find Robert Bacon Jr but he was now listed as Bob Bacon, age 49. His address remained the same, Webberville. Robert Bacon Sr is no longer listed which I'm assuming means that he passed away.

Bob Bacon's occupation is still listed as a farmer in 1910 but he now works on a "general farm". He only rents the home unlike on previous census sheets. His three sons are still listed as living with him during this time. Noah Bacon is now 22 years old, James Bacon is 16 years old and Marion (now Nelson?) Bacon is 18 years old. Robert Bacon Jr.'s oldest son Noah had a son in 1910. The name of Noah's son is listed as Robert Bacon age 0 because he was born that year which in reality would make him Robert Bacon the third, the grandson of Robert Bacon Jr (aka Bob Bacon).

I was able to track down James Bacon, Robert Bacon Jr's son, in the 1920s census. James Bacon was 24 years old in the 1920s. He was the head of household at this time. He was married to Ethel Bacon whose occupation was listed as being a nurse during this time and James Bacon was listed as being a farm laborer. I could not find any record of the Bacon family after 1920.

### Sources

Robt Bacon, Year: 1870; Census Place: Precinct 1, Travis, Texas; Roll: M593\_1606; Page: 156A

Robert Bacon, Year: 1880; Census Place: Travis, Texas; Roll: 1329; Page: 38B; Enumeration District: 122

Robert Bacon, Census Year: 1880; Census Place: Polling Place 2, Travis, Texas; Archive Collection Number: T1134; Roll: 40; Page: 13; Line: 8; Schedule Type: Agriculture

Robt Bacon, Year: 1900; Census Place: Webberville, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1673; Page: 20; Enumeration District: 0108; FHL microfilm: 1241673

Bob Bacon, Year: 1910; Census Place: Justice Precinct 1, Travis, Texas; Roll: T624\_1594; Page: 6B; Enumeration District: 0057; FHL microfilm: 1375607

## James Smith – Family History

By Arthur Fairchild

James W. Smith was likely a formally enslaved man. The last name Smith is an Anglo-Saxon name and likely the name passed down by the slave-owning family that he was bought and owned by. James W. Smith was likely in his twenties or thirties at the time of the American Civil War and had his first child James Smith Jr. about two years before Emancipation. According to Census data, he might have been married to a woman named Martha Smith. The information on Martha is shaky but according to the 1880 Census she would have been about thirty-six, a similar age to her husband James when they moved to the Hayden Springs Freedom Colony.

According to the 1880 census: James Smith was born in Mississippi. Martha Smith was born in Texas and the two probably met in Texas, before Emancipation, and had their first child. Emma Smith, Frank Smith, and James Smith III could have possibly been siblings of James Smith Jr. (children of James W. Smith). These names do not appear on any other federal census data before or after 1880. Census data indicates that James Smith Jr. was illiterate and seventeen years old, perhaps suggesting he and his parents did not get a formal education under slavery. James Smith Jr. was also a farmer. There is no record of James Smith Sr or Jr after 1880, which opens more areas of speculation to try and understand what happened to this family. Did the family move out of the County or the State? <sup>57</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Year: 1880; Census Place: Precinct 6, Travis, Texas; Roll: 1329; Page: 157D; Enumeration District: 12