

NJ-AAHGS Newsletter

New Jersey Chapter: Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, Inc.

N.J. Chapter begins '96-97' season with enthusiasm and energy

More than twenty New Jersey AAHGS members gathered at Jersey City's Afro-American Historical Society-Museum on Saturday, September 14th, to kick-off the new season of AAHGS meetings. Chapter President **Lucius Bowser** led a lively and informative discussion of the members' historical and genealogical endeavors over the summer, which included the **Pruitt Family's 116th reunion**. Our own **Billy Pruitt** gave

valuable pointers to the membership on how they, too, can have successful reunions. Former President **Lloyd Washington**, gave a brief presentation on convenient and inexpensive methods of copying family photographs. Lloyd will also explore the possibility of NJ-AAHGS presenting a family history/genealogical seminar in the Newark - East Orange area in November. **V.P. Glenn Cunningham** spoke about the 1880 Census Project. Thousands of names have been extracted thus far. **Mr. M.L. Banks** has joined the volunteers and spent several hot summer days gathering census data on Hunterdon County African-Americans.

Conference is upon us, October 29st - November 1st, and some of our members again are making presentations.

Your Officers need your support to continue programs, and to make NJ AAHGS a household name. Help us to help you. Together we will grow larger and greater. Bring your family, especially the young ones, and your neighbors to our monthly meetings. This will help us spread interest in the Nation's biggest hobby - genealogy.

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From the President

Many great things are happening to NJ-AAHGS in 1996, and being planned for 1997, which makes contributions and support by members most important. NJ-AAHGS, again, will be manning a table at the Family History Fair at NYU on the 2nd Sunday in October, as we have done for the past six years - offering start up kits, Journals, and information on family history and genealogy.

A November workshop is being planned, as is a Christmas, Kwanza and book sale for December. Black History Month in February, and seminars and lectures around the State in March and April. The annual National AAHGS

Crawley completes museum studies

An AAHGS member since 1989, **Lisa Crawley** has completed graduate studies at Hampton University, and will receive her Masters degree in December. Lisa will be one of a small number of African-Americans to have a graduate degree in the field of Museum Studies. Hampton University is one of approximately 30 colleges and universities to offer this degree program. As part of her studies, she participated in an oral history project, in which she interviewed a long-time Newport News, Virginia activist. Her research will be published as "**Anettie Banks Edwards: A Life In Newport News,**" in December 1996.

National Conference to begin Oct. 31

This years National AAHGS Conference will take place in Washington, D.C. beginning October 31st. It will end with the conference banquet on November 2nd. National President **Barbara Dodson Walker**, has promised us the most exciting conference to date. The conference theme is **Global Challenges in African-American Research**. The agenda offers beginning and advanced workshops on research, indexing and reunion planning; more than 40 sessions on genealogical research; and an exciting and educational computer lab, featuring software demonstrations, training sessions, and personal lab time for research. Please refer to your September 1996 newsletter for hotel information and conference registration.

Directory of NJ-AAHGS Officers/Chairpersons

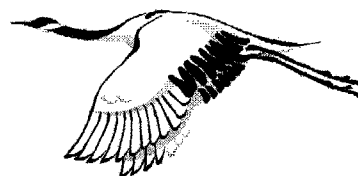
Lucius A. Bowser, President.
201-763-5892
Glenn .Cunningham, Vice President.
.201-433-3487
Bernice Jackson, Sec., 201-837-0642
Sandra Bolden, Tres. 201-795-3142
Aaron L. Keys, Membership Chairman
908-756-1731
Billy Pruitt, Family Reunion Chairman
201-332-3330
Amanda Edwards, Queries Chair'sn
908-671-1216
Patricia Barrett, Clipping File Co.
908-232-3430
Nettie Johnson, Photos. 908-940-6245
Elizabeth Peale Johnson, Newsletter Ed.
201-875-4802

Dickenson donates books to AAHGS

The NJ-AAHGS book collection is richer, today, because of two publications which were donated to the Association by Richard Dickenson, who, by the way, is an active member of NJ-AAHGS. Dick is the author of numerous historical and genealogical articles and several publications, including our recent acquisitions. They are "Afro-American Vital Records and 20th Century Abstracts: Richmond County, Staten Island, NY, 1915 and 1925 NY State Census reports"; and "Census Occupations of Afro-American Families on Staten Island, 1840 to 1875." Richard Dickenson is a retired college professor, and is presently the official historian for Staten Island.

*****NOTICE*****

Due to repair work being done on water pipes and the wall in the Afro-American Historical Society- Museum, there is a possibility that NJ-AAHGS may **NOT** be able to hold it's October meeting at the regular location. President Lucius Bowzer is looking into the matter, and will develop a plan to notify all members of the meeting place in ample time to make appropriate plans.



AAHGS member has two Civil War ancestors

Arnold Brown, a descendent of two Civil War soldiers, attended the Washington D.C. commemoration of the long-over due memorial to the African-American soldiers who fought in the Civil war. These soldiers, or United States Colored Troops, as they were officially known, fought to preserve the Union, and to bring about an end to the institution of slavery. Almost 200,000 free African-Americans and slaves answered the 'call to arms.' Various events related to the memorial took place from September 8th -12th. Activities included re-enactors of the **54th Massachusetts Regiment** (of Glory fame), Buffalo Soldiers, and a calvary unit. Certificates were issued to those who are descendants of U.S. Colored Troops. Arnold is a descendent of **George W. Brown** and **Thomas Stewart**, members of Company A, 26th US Colored troops.

Brunson visits South Africa

N.J.-AAHGS member **Theodore Brunson** traveled to South Africa this past August. Representing the Afro-American Historical Society-Museum, for which he is the Executive Director and Curator, he traveled with an educational group led by Professor Saunders of Jersey City State College. From all reports, the trip was both educational and beneficial to the Museum. Ted was able to acquire several artifacts for the Museum. The NJ-AAHGS members will also benefit from Ted's experiences. He is scheduled to present a lecture and slide show at one of our future meetings.

Lillian Page Speaks Out

AAHGS member Lillian Page was interviewed for a Daily Challenge article which was published on August 28, 1996. When asked what she thought about Minister Farrakhan's efforts to bring one billion dollars from Libya to Black America, she stated "If he can get it and put it to good use for our people, I go along with it. As long as they are doing it in good faith, I fully support it." She emphasized her belief that if the U.S. can give humanitarian aid to foreigners, than African-Americans should be able to get relief from other countries.

Civil War blacks on the net

WASHINGTON (AP) - The national Park Service has placed more than 230,000 names of black soldiers who fought in the Civil war on the World Wide Web computer network, completing the first phase of a project to honor those fighters.

Internet users will be able to look up a soldier, find out what regiment or unit he served in, read a brief history of that unit and find some information of the battles in which he fought.

"We're just letting technology catch up with history," National Park Service Park Director Kennedy said yesterday.

"This is just our way of making it a little easier for Americans of African descent to get the facts as to their own specific family experience of fighting for their own freedom (and) achieving that freedom," he added.

After the names are double checked for duplication, they will be turned over to the African-American Civil War Memorial for inscription on the first monument in Washington to honor those troops.

The memorial, expected to be completed in about a year, will be a semi-circular three foot high curved stone inner wall holding

stainless steel plaques with the names of the black Union soldiers, and the 7000 white officers who led them.

The data base on the "United States Colored Troops," as the soldiers were called, was compiled from military history information at the National Archives in the form of general index cards. The names of the rest of the 3.5 million soldiers who also fought in the war will also be placed on the Internet.

The Internet address is: <http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/>.

Be sure to study your history!

Why God Made Families

When creation was finished,
Each star in its place,
God cradled the earth
in his thoughtful embrace,
And, knowing that there would be
Problems to face,
His wonderful plan came to be...

For he wanted his children
To learn to be strong,
And not become frightened
If things should go wrong,
So he placed in each heart
a desire to belong

Somewhere they felt needed, yet free...
Then he added acceptance
And patience and trust,
Love that was selfless
and caring and just,
Where questions were welcome
and laughter a must...
And he called his great gift "family."



Tips for visiting historical societies

Historical societies may have:

- Cemetery listings
- City and County published histories
- Family histories
- City and County directories
- Newspaper clipping files
- Scrapbooks
- Business, school and church records
- Organizational records
- Maps and atlases
- Census records -State and U.S.

What is a City Directory?

A city directory looks very much like a telephone book, and served much the same purpose, which was to identify people by name and address. City directories, however, also provided a person's occupation, and in the earlier years, his or her race. City directories were published in hundreds of cities and towns in the 1800's and early 1900's. A collection of a city or town important to your research may be available in that locale's public library. A city directory may be useful in conjunction with census records. Since telephone books are comparatively recent publications, a city directory is an excellent source of old addresses. These directories were usually published annually. While the Library of Congress has the largest collection in the world, the New York Public Library also has an outstanding collection of directories.

TELEPHONE BOOKS

The New York City Public Library has the largest collection of telephone books in the world.



IN MEMORIAM

James Dent Walker, organizer and charter President of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, Inc., died in Washington, D.C. on October 6, 1993.

Many of us remember Jimmy for his leadership in genealogical research methods; for the many lectures he presented to audiences throughout the Nation; and for his publication: *BLACK GENEALOGY, HOW TO BEGIN*. We were fortunate that he served as Charter President, and then as treasurer in the Association's pioneering days.

Many of us in the New Jersey Chapter were attracted to genealogical research when Alex Haley published *ROOTS*. But it was James Dent Walker who led us to the tools to uncovering the hidden past of our family histories. He traveled widely and willingly to share his knowledge.

James Dent Walker was born on July 9, 1928, in Washington, D.C. The son of Grace Dent Walker and William Henry Walker, he attended the Washington public schools. He began a career of public service with the U.S. Treasury Department in 1946. He entered the U.S. Navy in 1947, serving in the Elite SEABEES, and in the Korean War when that conflict broke out. He left the armed forces in 1951.

He spent most of his adult life with the National Archives, where he worked his

way up to Director, Local History and genealogy Programs. He had also served as the supervisor of military records, genealogist and research consultant. He was recognized nationally for his expertise, and served as a consultant on numerous projects, including the Ellis Island Restoration Commission, the D.C. Bicentennial Commission, and the Alex Haley and Kinte Foundation.

James Dent Walker's loving wife, **Barbara Dodson Walker**, continues his life's work. She is presently the President, and driving force behind National AAHGS, and is a highly respected leader in the genealogical field in her own right.

Navy Gets First Muslim Chaplain

With crescents gleaming on his epaulets to signify his Islamic faith, the first Muslim chaplain in the United States Navy was welcomed recently into the ranks of military chaplains.

Lt. j.g. Monje Malak Abd al-Muta' Ali Noel Jr. received his Chaplain's commission at a Pentagon ceremony attended by Secretary of the Navy John Dalton, and Navy Chief of Chaplains, Rear Admiral Donald Muchow.

Noel, a native of Salem, New Jersey said the unique epaulets on his uniform are a positive sign for Muslims.

"I think it's good for the Muslim community to be able to see them in the service," he said. "It lends an air of legitimacy and credibility. We are represented. We are here."

Muchow described Noel's chaplaincy as "historic" and said it would enable the Navy to provide "the kind of ministry that we've never had the chance to deliver before" in the 1000 member Navy Chaplain's Corps.

Navy chaplains are predominantly Protestants, but include Catholics, Jews,

Seventh Day Adventists, other Christian faiths, and now, a Muslim.

Noel joins one other Muslim in the military. Imam Abdul-Rasheed Muhammad was commissioned an Army chaplain in 1993.

Still Family publications available for purchase again

The Still Family Society, Inc. has made available for distribution the reprints of the original of two historical publications: *The Underground Railroad*, first published in 1872 by William Still; and *Early Recollections and Life of Dr. James Still*, an autobiography published in 1877.

In compliance with a resolution of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, and his having connections with the "Underground Railroad," he compiled and published his personal reminiscences and experiences relating to the Underground railroad.

It proved to be a most interesting narrative relative to the escape of many men, women and children, from the prison houses of bondage; from the cities and plantations; from rice swamps and cotton fields; from kitchens and mechanical shops; from border States and Gulf States; and from cruel and mild masters. Some were guided by the North Star alone. Penniless, they braved the perils of land and sea. They eluded the keen scent of the bloodhound and the pursuit of savage slave hunters. The schemes and plans of escape defied imagination.

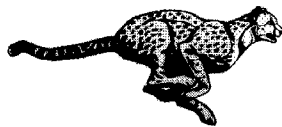
Dr. James Still's autobiography is a story of an extraordinary person who became a legend in his time. With only three months of formal schooling, he was self-taught in medical botany and anatomy. He practiced medicine for

thirty-five years. He was injected with the virus of medical ambition when he was visited by a doctor at the age of three. His fam spread far and wide. Even doctors sought his advice. A graduate doctor from a German university beseeched him to take him as a student. Of course, there were detractors. He was charged with practicing medicine without a license, but was vindicated.

By the time he died on March 9, 1882, Dr. Still was the 3rd largest landowner in the Wedford, New Jersey area.

(Source: Still Family Society pamphlet)

If you would like to purchase one, or both of the above books, here's how. Contact Family representatives **Marion Still Buck**, 420 Park Blvd, Morestown, N.J., 08057, Tel.# 609-235-1432; or **Elixabeth Still Johnston**, 421 Fairview Avenue, Moorestown, N.J., 08057, Tel.# 609-235 4488



TIP CORNER

OCCUPATIONAL NAMES

Cooper	Barrel maker
Hacker	Maker of hoes
Higgler	itinerant peddle
Hillier	Roof tiler
Hind	Farm laborer
Hooker	Reaper
Husbandman	Farmer
Leech	Physician
Lavender	Washerwoman
Maltster	Brewer
Monger	Dealer (is, etc)
Muleskinner	Teamster
Ordinary Keeper	Innkeeper
Porter	Gate/door keeper
Puddler	Wrought iron worker
Rigger	Hoist tackle worker

Roper	Maker of rope or nets
Ripper	Seller of fish
Salter	Roofer
Snobscat	One who repairs shoes
Squire	Practitioner of a profession
Teamster	Driver of horses
Tipstaff	Policeman
Vulcan	Blacksmith
Webster	Weaver
Yeoman	Farmer who owns land

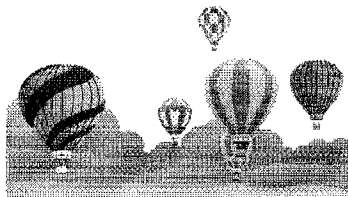
RECORDING YOUR PAST

If you have trouble remembering your life experiences, try other methods of recording them. For instance, you might try JOURNALING. Don't concern yourself with literary correctness. Simply tell the stories you remember in expansive detail Include your ideals and philosophy. Consider what life has taught you. Record your reflections on the meaning of things.

Write letters to your friends and relatives. Keep a carbon, or photocopy for your self. If you don't want to write, the tape record our stories, and better yet, video tape your stories with you in the picture.

FUNERAL DIRECTORS

Funeral directors are often able to provide important burial information about your ancestors or other relatives. However, the records prior to 1900 may not have been very well kept. Before the mid 1800's the local carpenter may very well have been the person who took on the task for burial.



Have you tried using a computer for your family history research? Try it.

White Ridge is State's oldest black cemetery?

(Extracted from Asbury Park Press 9-13-96)

Eatontown - When Teresa Davis came six years ago to White Ridge Cemetery, a 19th century burial ground intended for people of African, European and American Indian heritage, she was greeted by a stack of unfiled burial permits, acres of overgrown weeds and hundreds of defaced headstones.

Davis is the cemetery manager and superintendent. But with the help of a recently formed founding committee and local and county officials, all that has changed, at White Ridge - the oldest and largest predominantly African-American cemetery in the State.

On Sept.21st cemetery officials held a luncheon to honor the 10-member founding committee who helped the landmark earn consideration for inclusion in the State and national historic registers.

When White Ridge was incorporated in 1886 it was located on seven acres in an area called Anthony's Town. The area, also called Negro Hill at one time, was blanketed with many unmarked graves because families could not afford headstones.

Of the 6000 people buried there, one of the most noteworthy is **William H. Reed**, a Civil War veteran, Davis said. Reed, who was born in Virginia in 1840 and later moved to Red Bank, served in a **CONFEDERATE** calvary unit, and later joined the New York 26th Regiment to help defeat the south.

Davis was unique, in that he made his own casket in 1913, and dug his own crypt before dying in 1927. The father and grandfather of jazz great **William 'Count' Basie**, are also buried at White Ridge. Mayor Stominski said "its the oldest African-American in the State, and that says a lot for Eatontown.

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OCTOBER 1996



**NEW JERSEY CHAPTER
AFRO-AMERICAN HISTORICAL
& GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
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TO: