US Black Heritage Project on WikiTree

Virginia Beach Genealogy Society

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Introduction to Myself (brief!)

- At-large member of the board of the VBGS.

- Admin for the [US Black Heritage Project](#).

- Co-leader of the South Carolina Team for USBH.

- Admin for [Linked Descendants](#).
  - A working group under [Coming to the Table](#).

- Liaison between USBH and the [Lemon Project](#) at William and Mary.

Introduction to WikiTree

- Purpose: to create a one world tree in which every person has ONE profile.
- Free and always will be!
- Includes hundreds of special projects:
  - By country
  - By special interest
- WikiTree is first and foremost a WIKI!
  - Flexible formatting.
  - Links between pages.
- Multiple custom apps to assist researchers.
- Emphasis on collaboration.
- Required: Honor Code

Introduction to the USBH Project

Mission

- This project is a sub-project of the United States Project and the Global Black Heritage Project.
- To collect in one place information and resources to assist in building and documenting African-American Genealogies.
- To create the largest online public database of connected African-American families.
- To bring together WikiTreers interested in connecting African-American families to the Global Family Tree.
- To process all types of documents regarding free and enslaved ancestors with the goal of creating their profiles and connecting them to their descendants.
- To provide and maintain a logical and organized structure to help individuals identify their ancestors and celebrate their history.
- To improve all profiles of ancestors with Black heritage, which may include biography building, sourcing, and making correct connections.

USBH Projects and Teams

- Family Builders (assistance with African-American family trees)
- Notables (all periods)
- Cemeteries
- Heritage Exchange: Plantations/Enslavers/Slaves
- Data Doctors (quality control)
- Profile Improvement (quality control)
- Military

Heritage Exchange and Plantations

- The Heritage Exchange Program uses the FAN (friends, associates, and neighbors) principle--that by working with groups of people who were in close proximity to each other, we can more easily build their family trees.

- Each of the Heritage Exchange teams helps with a different part of the process that will help us:
  - Identify clusters of enslaved people (which will include the slave owners)
  - Find additional documents for each cluster
  - And then connect the entire cluster to their family tree(s).

State Teams

- Alabama
- Florida
- Georgia
- Louisiana
- Maryland
- Mississippi
- New York

- North Carolina
- Ohio (new)
- South Carolina
- Texas
- Virginia
- Others pending
  - Arkansas
  - Missouri

Plantation Research

- Purpose: To organize enslaver and slave information (lists and profiles).
- NOT to create the authoritative profile for any specific plantation!
  - If someone else wants to take this on, that's great.
- Priorities:
  - Named plantations
  - Large, unnamed properties hosting 40+ slaves
- Why 40+?
  - Start with low-hanging fruit, large numbers of potential connections.

Enslaver Profiles (1)

- Another way to organize slave research based on available records:
- US Census (1790-1840)
- Slave Schedules (1850-1860)
- Wills
- Probate packages
- Estate inventories
- Journals/diaries/day books
- Ads for runaways
- Cohabitation records
- Ship manifests

Enslaver Profiles (2)

- Cluster research/FAN to detail family connections
  - Inheritance
  - Births/deaths/purchases/sales/transfers
  - If one member of a family is involved, it is likely that many or all related families are involved!
- Problem: How to track slave population changes?
  - Some enslavers kept meticulous records of all events, including property activities.
  - Many were destroyed during the Civil War.
  - Gold mine: often the only way to determine specific dates and locations.
- Sample: [Francis Bucher Clinkscales Jr.](#)
- Note: show categories
- Demo Sourcer app

Enslaver Slave Pages

- "Slaves of" pages with details of all known slaves.
  - Multiple plantations/locations
  - Multiple sources
- Census summaries (no names)
- Slave schedule lists (no names)
- Inventories with names and often other information:
  - Ages → estimated birth dates
  - Special skills
  - Family grouping
- Sample: [Slaves of Francis Bucher Clinkscales Jr., South Carolina](#)

Slave Profiles

- Based on limited information, often from only one record.
- Dates are usually guesses based on the available record(s).
- Birth locations are also guesses.
- All profiles MUST be sourced!
- For information that is suspected but uncertain → research notes.
- Contain links back to plantations they lived on (if known) and enslaver profiles or enslaver "slaves of" pages.
- As much verifiable detail as possible:
  - Birth/death/locations/transfers to other locations/sale/inheritance
- Sample: Mingo Townsend (bef. 1782)
- Note: show categories

Issues and the USBH Approach

- Naming convention for slaves (Last Name at Birth – LNAB).
- Organizing plantations and enslavers.
  - Slaves of pages for large numbers of slaves.
- Tracking enslaved persons as they are bought, sold, moved, inherited.
- Adding slave information to existing enslaver profiles.
  - If the information is sourced, they can't argue!
- Use of categories to filter lists and involve profile improvement team.
- Reconciling multiple slaves with same starter info on same list.

Coordination between USBH
and Linked Descendants (CTTT/LD)

- [Coming to the Table](#) is an organization devoted to Truth, Justice, Healing.
  - Working together to create a just and truthful society that acknowledges and seeks to heal from the racial wounds of the past, from slavery and the many forms of racism it spawned.

- [Linked Descendants](#) is a working group under CTTT with its own web site called "Bittersweet".
  - Facing the pains and schisms embedded in that history and its present-day legacy, seeking reconciliation, if possible, and supporting action to open eyes and hearts, and to dismantle institutionalized racism.

- The USBH is coordinating with Linked Descendants on training workshops for using WikiTree to assist with connecting descendants of enslavers with descendants of their enslaved persons.
  - Several LD members have joined USBH and have either completed the PATH training or are in process of the PATH qualification.

Coordination of USBH and the Lemon Project at the College of William and Mary

- The Lemon Project is a program at the College of William and Mary focused on identifying all of the enslaved persons who were owned by the College or rented to the College by local enslaver families.
  - [Lemon Project](#) at W&M
  - [Lemon Project](#) on WikiTree
- As a loyal graduate of the College of William and Mary, Class of 1979, I volunteered to be the liaison between W&M and USBH.
- Support is provided mostly by the [Virginia State Team](#) at USBH, who are most familiar with Virginia records.

Future Directions

- More connecting of modern descendants with enslaved ancestors and enslaver ancestors.

- More documentation sources, including plantation diaries (day books).

- Better technologies for tracking connections.

Links

- US Black Heritage Project
- USBH Heritage Exchange
- African-American Genealogy Resources
- Virginia Team (USBH)

- South Carolina Team (USBH)
- African-American Resources for South Carolina
- South Carolina Plantations
- Edisto Island One Place Study (OPS)
- Plantations of Edisto Island (alpha)
- Plantations of Edisto Island (by family)

Sample profiles and records

Plantations

- Lake Hall Plantation, Arkansas
- Goodwood Plantation, Florida
- Mount Mourne Plantation, North Carolina
- Meggett Place Plantation, South Carolina
- Old Dominion Plantation, South Carolina
- Bellevue Plantation, Virginia
- White House Plantation, Virginia

Enslavers

- George Brownlee Clinkscales (1813 - 1864)
- Ephraim Mikell Seabrook (1797-1846)
- Francis Bucher Clinkscales Jr. (1786 - 1858)
- Edward Macon Ware (1800 - 1863)

Sample Profiles (2)

Slaves of Pages

- Slaves of George Brownlee Clinkscales, South Carolina
- Slaves of David Wyatt Aiken, South Carolina
- Slaves of Abraham Dupont, Florida
- Slaves of Daniel Townsend II, South Carolina

Slave Profiles

- Mingo Townsend (bef. 1782)
- Frank Clinkscales (1800 - aft. 1857)
- Phebe Hamilton (bef. 1839)
- Ibby Hunt (abt. 1829)