

# Gene news

**“A PEOPLE WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF ITS HISTORY, IS LIKE A TREE WITHOUT ROOTS” ~ MARCUS GARVEY**

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## *A Message from the President:*

### A Historic Moment

History is a rich, ever-changing fabric woven by stories and experiences that move us, inspire us, and ultimately change us forever. History occurred in 2008-2009 with the election of Barack Obama as president of the United States. Your oral and written history should evolve around those moments with questions such as: how you were involved in the election process, what were your thoughts as you watched the election results and where were you, how did you feel after Obama was declared the winner of the election, where were you on January 20<sup>th</sup> and what went through your mind as he took the oath of office? Was there one thing about the election you absolutely can't forget? These are examples of questions that could assist you in writing your history about the election of Barack Obama and what it meant to your family.

~ Robert Scott, President

## Grandison

Grandison Harris, a Gullah Slave, was 36 year old when he was purchased from an auction block in Charleston, SC. He was purchased by the dean of the Medical College of Georgia in 1852 for \$700. Grandison's "job" was to obtain cadavers for the College.

He got the freshly buried bodies from the Colored Cemetery (Cedar Grove). He was dubbed "The Resurrection Man". Grandison studied the way people laid a grave out and how the flowers were arranged. He memorized where everything was placed so that when he removed the body, he would be able to restore the grave to look exactly like it did before he touched it.

Grandison was allowed to make frequent visits to see his wife in Charleston, SC. The railroad fare, round trip, between Augusta and Charleston was \$12. In 1858 the College purchased Grandison's wife and son for \$1250. This way the College saved money, but also had Grandison always at hand.

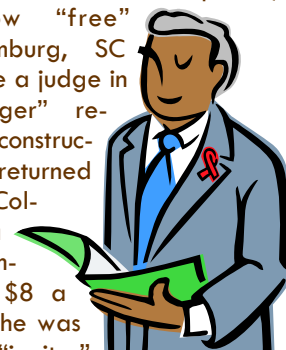
Grandison was a flashy dresser. He wore a Panama straw hat in the spring and summer and a derby in the winter. On Sunday he wore a boutonniere in his lapel. He gave elaborate parties, copying the style of party-giving he saw when he worked at parties given by the college faculty.

Grandison was also granted many privileges. He was taught to dissect cadavers, the nature of the human body, and embalming techniques. Grandison became very proficient at anatomy instruction and dissection. He became an "unofficial teaching assistant". He was in the lab with the students, showing and instructing them. Students were told that Grandison held an honorary doctor's degree. The college employees and students were fond of Grandison. It is said Black people considered him the first black doctor at the college.

After the Civil War and emancipation, Grandison, now "free" moved to Hamburg, SC where he became a judge in the "carpetbagger" regime. When Reconstruction ended, he returned to the Medical College of Georgia as a full-time employee earning \$8 a month. In 1895 he was promoted to "janitor" earning \$15 a month during the school year and \$10 a month at other times of the year. His son was hired as his assistant. They worked as a team for 6 years. As Grandison became older his son took on more and more of his father's responsibilities. When Grandison retired, his son George was retained as janitor.

On January 21, 1905, Grandison Harris was granted a pension of \$10 a month. His last public appearance at the school was in 1908. He returned to lecture students on the practice and perils of resurrection. Grandison Harris died in 1911 and is buried in Cedar Grove Cemetery.

**This story was submitted by Pat Clark. On a visit to Augusta, GA, I learned that Grandison Harris was a relative of mine.**



## Family Pursuit Announces the Release of Private Family Trees

### By Family Pursuit:

Family Pursuit, a leader in online collaborative genealogy research tools, today announced the release of Private Family Trees. Designed specifically for collaboration regardless of distance or time, this unique wiki-based website is now available for private use for the genealogist who is looking for a better way to work with others. Family Pursuit's private family trees allow researchers to share not only conclusions, but their ongoing research, sources, extractions and theories with those invited to join the trees.

Some of the unique collaborative tools available for private family trees include:

- Inviting an unlimited number of family members to join a private tree
- Organizing and sharing ongoing genealogy research
- Creating and assigning tasks
- Sharing research logs and extractions
- Adding living individuals
- Keeping all information about living and deceased individuals private
- Participating in family discussions

Along with these new private trees, Family Pursuit continues to offer its free Community Tree which has been created for genealogists to share research with the genealogy community to reduce duplicate efforts, accelerate research, and network and connect with distant relatives.

"We have found that many genealogists feel more comfortable working privately with those they already know. A Private Family Tree offers this security," said Mike Martineau, founder of Family Pursuit. "When genealogists feel confident in their research conclusions, they will be able to easily copy their conclusions to the Community Tree for others to view and add to. A Private Family Tree also allows the inexperienced genealogist to be privately mentored by more knowledgeable relatives. We are excited to offer a bridge between those who are overwhelmed by the amount of research and those who want to help but don't know how. We look forward to continuing our progress in developing these important tools, and being a part of bringing more people into the work."

### About Family Pursuit

Started in 2004, Family Pursuit, a Provo, Utah company, provides web-based applications to accelerate family history work by providing a framework for genealogy researchers to work together in their efforts and to easily share their ideas, theories, research and conclusions. Family Pursuit enables genealogy enthusiasts to involve family members who have never engaged in family history work, bringing families together in sharing the rewarding experience of researching, exploring, and creating a personal understanding of their heritage. Visit [www.familypursuit.com](http://www.familypursuit.com) for more information.

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## GENEALOGY GRANDMA

### Author Unknown

There's been a change in Grandma; we've noticed her of late. She's always reading history or jotting down some date.

She's tracking back the family, we'll all have pedigrees.

Oh, Grandma's a hobby – she's climbing FAMILY TREES.

Poor Grandpa does the cooking, and now, or so he states, that worst of all, he has to wash the cups and dinner plates.

Grandma can't be bothered; she's busy as a bee, compiling genealogy for the FAMILY TREE. She has no time to babysit; the curtains are a fright, no buttons left on Grandpa's shirt, the flower bed's a sight. She's given up her club work and the soaps on TV, the only thing she does nowadays is climb the FAMILY TREE.

She goes down to the courthouse and studies ancient lore. We know more about our forebears than we ever knew before. The books are old and dusty; they make poor Grandma sneeze, a minor irritation when you're climbing the FAMILY TREE.

There are pioneers and patriots, mixed in our kith and kin, who blazed the paths of wilderness and fought through thick and thin. But none more staunch than Grandma, whose eyes light up with glee, each time she finds a missing branch for the FAMILY TREE.

## FREE EMAIL ACCOUNTS

As another added member benefit, we would like to offer all our members the opportunity to email in style! If you are interested in an AAGG email address, please send your request to Natasha at: [nscott@aagg.org](mailto:nscott@aagg.org).

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Their skills were wide and varied, from carpenter to cook, and one, alas, the records show, was hopelessly a crook. Blacksmith, slave, weaver, farmer, judge – some tutored for a fee; once lost in time, now all recorded on the FAMILY TREE.

To some it's just a hobby; to Grandma it's much, much more. She learns the joys and heartaches of those that went before. They loved, they lost, they laughed, they wept – and now for you and me, they live again in spirit, around the FAMILY TREE.

At last she's nearly finished and we are each exposed. Life will be the same again, this we all supposed.

Sad to relate, the preacher called and visited for a spell. We talked about the Gospel and other things as well. The heathen folk, the poor and then – 'twas fate, it had to be, somehow the conversation turned to Grandma and the FAMILY TREE. He never knew his Grandpa, his mother's came was...Clark?

He and Grandma talked and talked, while outside it grew dark. We'd hope our fears were groundless, but just like some disease, Grandma's become an addict – she's hooked on FAMILY TREES.

Our souls are filled with sorrow, our hearts sad with dismay. Our ears could scarce believe the words we heard our Grandma say, "It sure is a lucky thing that you have come to me, I know exactly how it's done. I'll climb your FAMILY TREE

\* \* \*

## African American Genealogy Group

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# Sergeant Richard Kirkland - Angel of Marye's Heights

By Robert Scott

One of the places I visited with my grandsons this past summer was the Civil War Museum in Harrisburg, PA. Upon leaving the museum we stopped to view a statue outside of a soldier giving water to a fallen soldier. His name was Richard Kirkland and he was a confederate soldier from SC.



One of the family surnames I am researching is the Kirklands of SC. I wondered if Richard lived in Kershaw County, SC and was related to the slave owner of my ancestor. I had researched my roots back to the slave owner who owned my ancestor by using the 1870 census and following-up that by visiting the Kershaw County Courthouse, Camden, SC to search for probated wills. I discovered two probated wills with property inventories that provided information about my Kirkland ancestor. One of the probated wills was for Daniel Kirkland who left his estate to his wife, Permilly, and two sons, Samuel and Joseph when he died in 1828. The second probated will was for Joseph Kirkland, son of Daniel, who died in 1857. Both inventories listed my ancestor Jerry. Previously, my research of the Kirkland name in SC revealed there were several Kirkland families that settled in Kershaw County and one was Daniel Kirkland. I must admit however, that I had not completed my research of the slave owner's family so I was unsure about which family Richard descended from.

I did not follow-up on Richard Kirkland until December 2008, when I Googled the name "Richard Kirkland" which provided numerous articles about him and his family. I determined that Richard was born August 1843 in Flat Rock, Kershaw County, SC, the fifth son of Mary and John Kirkland (born March 1802, died June 1868).

John was the son of Mary and Samuel Kirkland (born 1772 in Kershaw District and died February 1851 in Kershaw County) and Mary, who was the son of Permilly and Daniel (born 1755 Kershaw

District died after 1828 in Kershaw County) Kirkland. Richard was in fact an ancestor of Daniel Kirkland, the slave owner of my ancestor, Jerimiah Kirkland.

Richard enlisted in the Confederate Army April 9, 1861, not long after war was declared, before his older brothers. He was first assigned to Company E, 2nd SC Volunteer Infantry, but was later transferred to Company G of the same regiment, and was promoted to sergeant. As SGT Kirkland, he gained his title as "The Angel of Marye's Height" during the Battle of Fredericksburg. The battle was fought in and around Fredericksburg, Virginia, from December 11 to December 15, 1862, between Gen. Robert E. Lee's Confederate Army of Northern Virginia and the Union Army of the Potomac, commanded by Maj. Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside. Early in the morning on December 13, 1862 Union forces began a desperate and doomed assault on one of the most impenetrable of positions which was a long stone wall at the base of a sloping hill known as Marye's Heights.

In order to reach the enemy, Union soldiers had to ford a canal ditch and then cross a vast open field with little or no cover. As soon as they left the tree line, a massive artillery barrage, joined by almost uncountable rifle fire, rained down upon the advancing men. Those that were able to escape the cannon, were slowed by a slope that led to the fortified stone behind which the Confederate forces were massed. Behind the wall, soldiers knelt two and three ranks deep, with the front line firing and the rest reloading musket after musket. The result was a continuous hail of fire that cut rows and rows of men down before they could even get into position.

The death toll was staggering: in just one hour, the Union troops suffered over 3,000 dead. After 15 unsuccessful charges, the fighting ceased for the night, leaving the field littered with thousands of bloody Union bodies. Around midnight, Federal troops ventured forth under cover of darkness to gather what wounded they could find, but many were too close to the Confederate line to retrieve. Throughout the night, screams and cries of the wounded penetrated the peaceful silence of the cease-fire.

SGT Kirkland was a combat veteran who was used to the dead and dying, having seen action at Manassas, Savage Station, Maryland Heights and Antietam. By the

morning of the 14th, he could take it no longer and requested permission to aid the enemy. Initially, his commanding officer was reluctant, as Kirkland would likely be shot dead by Union sharpshooters when he cleared the wall. After obtaining permission from his commander, Brig. Gen. Joseph B. Kershaw, also from Kershaw County, and with total disregard for his own safety, Kirkland grabbed several canteens and leaped over the fortification without a flag of truce (BG Kershaw denied his request for the flag). Instantly several shots rang out as the Union soldiers thought their wounded were under attack. Realizing the sincerity of Kirkland's effort, the Federal marksmen lowered the barrels of their rifles. Thus, the fatal shot never came and both sides looked on in amazement as the sergeant moved from one wounded man in blue to another. Going back and forth over the wall for an hour and a half, Kirkland only returned to the safety of his own lines after he had done all he could do.



SGT Kirkland's action was more than a moment of mercy. It was a moment that reminded those around him, that regardless of their circumstances, one should always strive to show compassion for his fellow man. I'm not sure who thought of the title but it is appropriate for Kirkland.

Richard's final fight would come during the bloody battle at Chickamauga September 20, 1863 where he was mortally wounded. Richard R. Kirkland was eventually returned home to be buried in Quaker Cemetery, Camden, SC.

# AAGG Surname Research

## ALABAMA

SURNAME	COUNTY	SURNAME	COUNTY
Burlong	Barbour	Mixon	Wilcox
Clark	Wilcox	Stamford	Barbour
Craddock	Barbour	Thompson	Tuscaloosa
Daniels	Barbour	Turk	Conecuh
Luffborough	Tuscaloosa	Vincent	Wilcox

## CALIFORNIA

SURNAME	COUNTY	SURNAME	COUNTY
Drakeford	Los Angeles	Logan	Los Angeles

## DELAWARE

SURNAME	COUNTY	SURNAME	COUNTY
Brown	New Castle	Henry	New Castle

## FLORIDA

SURNAME	COUNTY
Akins	Leon

For more information, email: [info@aagg.org](mailto:info@aagg.org).

# Upcoming Events

## Virginia Beach Genealogical Society 2009 Annual Conference.

Mar 28, 2009, Virginia Beach, VA.

For more info: [www.rootsweb.com/~vavbgs](http://www.rootsweb.com/~vavbgs)

## Googling Great Grandmom: Using the Internet to Trace Your Roots.

Apr 18, 2009, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 252 Evesham Road, Cherry Hill, NJ

## National Genealogical Society Conference in the States 2009.

May 13-16, 2009, Raleigh, NC.

For more info: [www.ngsgenealogy.org](http://www.ngsgenealogy.org).

## Outlaw/Outler Family Reunion.

Jul 10-12, 2009, Sheraton Park Ridge Hotel, King of Prussia PA. Contact C. Outlaw, PO Box 744, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004. For more info: [clo331@aol.com](mailto:clo331@aol.com).

## Drakeford-Gaskin-Kirkland Family Reunion.

Jul 23-26, 2009, Homewood Suites, Richmond, VA. Contact Bob Scott.

For more info: [sco2000@verizon.net](mailto:sco2000@verizon.net)

## Federation of Genealogical Societies/Arkansas Genealogical Society Conference.

Sept 2-5, 2009, Little Rock, AK.

For more info: [www.fgs.org](http://www.fgs.org).

## International Black Genealogy Summit.

Oct 29-31, 2009. Fort Wayne, IN. For more info: [www.blackgenealogysummit.com](http://www.blackgenealogysummit.com)



African American  
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**AAGG meets the 2nd Tuesday of  
each month (from September to June)  
at 7 pm at the  
Community College of  
Philadelphia located at  
4725 Chestnut Street in  
West Philadelphia**