

Genealogical News

The Multicultural Genealogical Center Quarterly Publication

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THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The Multicultural Genealogical Center (MGC) Board appreciates what you have done in supporting us. We also thank you for your faith and patience. Over the past year or so, MGC did not publish the Genealogical Newsletter. Even though you did not hear from us, except to ask for help, you gave us encouraging words, you gave your time, you gave your expertise, and you gave financial support. All of your efforts have helped us to grow.

Our first president, Stephen Smith (1949-2000), encouraged us to have a newsletter as a way to reach our members who cannot attend meetings. Though it has taken awhile, we are back. Stephen was right on track and the present Board will try to live up to his expectations and bring you the news of the past, the present and the future on a regular basis.

Alvin Adams, who became our next president, reflected that, we have always heard that a baby must learn to crawl before he or she can walk. This implies that progress requires both patience and persistence, and you, our members and other supporters have been patient. Throughout the time we've

not had a Newsletter; MGC has been persistent in finishing renovations to your future genealogy research center.

During the past five years we have made great strides in preparing our historic site for use. In 2010 MGC wrote a \$25,000 matching grant through The Governor's Office of Appalachia (GOA), under the Community Facilities Initiative. With those dollars and the monies you contributed and other fundraising activities, we were able to do the renovations that brought the Center into compliance with ADA requirements.

This year, 2011, MGC wrote a grant for a GOA Matching dollar Grant of \$15,000 dollars. With these dollars, MGC will get a partial face lift on the outside of the building and prepare rooms that will be used as classrooms and research rooms.

The Center will get new windows insulation and new cedar siding on two sides of the building to make the facility more energy-efficient.

In 2011 MGC received computers and computer equipment through a 2010 Morgan County Community Block Grant. Gertrude Sawyer also made a donation for

computer laptop storage equipment that will recharge the laptops and securely locked when not in use. These additions will aid in getting the Center up and running once construction is finished.

Our Board member and Master Gardener, Emilie Wood, with the help of many volunteers, has added to the beautification of the Center with landscaping efforts. The Center is not open for research yet, but we have been holding meetings and social events. The Center, also serves as a stop for UGRR Tours. Many positive comments have been made about the improvements to the Center.

We are past the crawling stage of making our Center into a useable space and have begun the walk, taking one step at a time. The longest journey starts with a single step. A single step begins with a dream, and the next step is belief.

The next step is persistence and faith in our dream. Our next step in faith is believing we can attain our goal of reaching \$40,000 by the end of the year. We are half way there! Maybe you have given, or maybe you have intended to give.

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Meet MGC Board Members

Ada Woodson Adams..President
 Dr. Nancy Aiken
 Karyn Armstrong.....Treasurer
 David Butcher
 Dr. Anita Jackson
 Dr. Ron Luce
 Tony Mayle
 Nelson Myers.....Vice President
 Virginia Norris.....Secretary
 Junior Walker
 Emily Wood
 Dessie Workman

*"Here they turned the
 horses loose and broke for
 the mountains."*



"To reach our members in a more economical way the Newsletter will be emailed. If you prefer a hard copy, contact Junior Walker at:"

740-678-8511

walkerplus@yahoo.com

Web site is under construction
www.mgcenter.org

Newsletter Questions
 Karen Stevens Walker
 kstevenswalker@yahoo.com
 Phone 740.678.8511

AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN EARLY MUSKINGUM COUNTY, OHIO RECORDS

By Michel Perdreau and
 Nancy E. Aiken

Records of African-Americans in early Ohio are rare. Thanks to a late 19th century newspaper article we learn a little about Mess Johnson who was reported to be in Zanesville as early as 1800. A few other blacks show up in court records. What follows are these records and what information could be found from other records to attempt to provide a brief glimpse into the lives of these early pioneers.

"Adapted from an article which appeared in the *Zanesville Daily Courier*, March 17th, 1877"

"The Early History of Zanesville" by E.H.C.: Early Black Residents

When John McIntire moved to Zanesville in 1800 he brought two colored men with him to help with the flat boat on which his goods were stored. Mess Johnson was one and the other was just called Sam. Mess Johnson or Black Mess, as he was called by the old settlers, was a noted character in those early days. Mess was born a slave and lived in Maryland. In the fall of 1799 he discovered that his master was contemplating selling him, and he entered into a plot to escape with another colored man named Sam, who attended to race horses for his master. They collected some provisions. When night fell each man mounted a fast horse and started at night for the mountains arriving at their foot just as day was breaking eighty

miles from old Massa's farm.

Here they turned the horses loose and broke for the mountains. While traveling through the mountains they happened upon two white men who were engaged in horse stealing. They traveled together to Pittsburgh and boarded a boat there bound for Wheeling. Here the white men talked of selling the colored men into slavery. To protect themselves Mess and Sam threatened to report the white men as horse thieves. Then Mess and Sam came across Mr. Ebenezer Zane and hired with him to work on the ferry boat running across the river at Wheeling to the Ohio shore. They worked the ferry until spring and then hired with John McIntire to help bring his goods on a flatboat to Zanesville.

They arrived in Zanesville about the first of May, 1800 after a slow and tedious voyage. Sam stayed awhile, but moved on to Philadelphia, where his master heard of him, captured him, and took him back to the old farm in Maryland. Soon afterward, his master heard of Black Mess through Sam and came after him. Mess saw his master first, dodged him, and kept out of his way. McIntire told the master that Mess had escaped into the woods, and it would be difficult to find him. McIntire offered the master \$150 for him. The old master accepted the offer, and Black Mess was a free man.

Mess was a great favorite with McIntire being a good fiddler and a jolly fellow – al-

ways full of fun and ready for sport at all times. Black Mess furnished the music for many a merry-making among the old pioneers to "skip the light fantastic" until the wee hours of morning. At such times Mess was in his glory. Like almost all of the old style fiddlers, he was a little fond of the "crether," and at times became quite happy, but he was always in an excellent humor. Black Mess was known to everybody in the city in those days and no merrymaking could pass off without the aid of the old darky's fiddle. On one occasion Black Mess got into a scrape, but McIntire interceded for him enabling him to escape the clutches of the law.

Black Mess finally fell in love, and after the usual "billing" and "cooing," he married the woman. The happy girl who was fortunate enough to capture Mess was named Ann Thomas. She had lived with the McIntire family for several years previous to the marriage. Mess finally, after a great deal of skirmishing, screwed up his courage to the sticking point and asked Ann Thomas to take him for better or for worse. With black men being dreadfully scarce in Zanesville at that time, Ann thought it better to join onto Mess than to run any further risk. The nuptial ceremony of Black Mess and Ann Thomas was a great event. Mess and his dusky bride were bound together while life would last by Samuel Thompson, Esq.

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THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

(continued from page 1)

Please take the time now to make your end-of-year tax deduction by giving to MGC to help us achieve our dream.

Eleven years seems like a long time, but looking at where we started and the journey of getting to where we are today, we must

say we've come a very long way. That has happened because you have worked with us and you have been both patient and persistent. Hang in there. The effort will be worth it.

We sit on the main street in Chesterhill, and the Center is a showcase landmark that represents a piece of Morgan County's historic Underground Railroad. We believe in our mission of "Ensuring that all people have a voice and a place in history" as we "seek out history, document and

remember the past that will enlighten and educate all people about the rich stories that make up America's history." Those voices and that history will be found at the Multicultural Genealogical Center.

One of my dearest friends, Mildred Vore "1941-2007" had a dream. She would often say, "Gees! Let's get this Center opened!" Mildred, Al and Stephen we stand on your shoulders and we go with your spirit. We will "get 'er done!"

Ada Woodson Adams

"The longest journey starts with a single step."

P.S. Nominations are open for MGC Board of Directors. Send in your name or nominate a person. We also need volunteers; we need your expertise (writing, webpage design, library skills, data entry, and more!)



THE MULTICULTURAL GENEALOGICAL CENTER
MEETING HOUSE

Tidbits of The Past

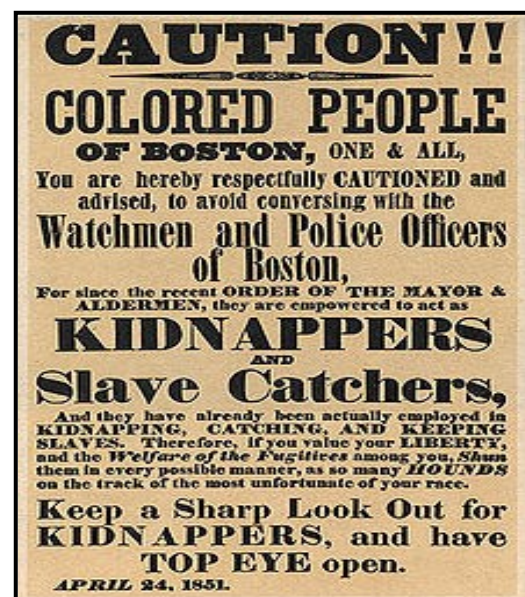
After the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law was passed it became even more dangerous for People of Color to maintain their freedom, if free and to flee to freedom if enslaved. Massachusetts had abolished slavery in 1783, but the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 required government officials and private citizens to assist slave catchers in capturing fugitives.

It was common to capture free people of color and turn them in as fugitive. Once the person was declared a fugitive, the kidnapper would be paid his fee. It was enticing for the commissioner to favor the claimant; a fee of \$10 was paid to the commissioner when his decision favored the claimant, only \$5 when it favored the fugitive. This practice was common in Ohio, a free state, too.

The sign below was posted in Boston in 1851.

The sign reads: "CAUTION!! COLORED PEOPLE of BOSTON, ONE AND ALL, you are hereby respectively CAUTIONED and advised, to avoid conversing with the WATCHMAN and POLICE OFFICERS OF BOSTON, For since the recent Order Of the Mayor & Aldermen, they are empowered to act as KIDNAPPERS and SLAVE CATCHERS, and they have already actually employed in KIDNAPPING, CATCHING and KEEPING SLAVES. Therefore if you value your LIBERTY and the welfare of the Fugitives among you, shun them in every possible manner, as so many HOUNDS on the track as the most unfortunate of your race. KEEP A SHARP LOOK OUT FOR KIDNAPPERS, and have a TOP EYE open. April 24, 1851"

Submitted by, Ada Woodson Adams



Monthly Programs and Meetings

Membership Meetings are held at the Center on the first Saturday of each month at 1 PM. No meetings in January, July and September. The Center is located in Chesterhill, Morgan County, Ohio. The Center is on the corner of where routes 377 and 555 intersect. There is parking with handicap accessibility in the back of the center.

MGC SEEKING BOARD MEMBERS

"March 2012 Election"

The Multicultural Genealogical Center (MGC) is seeking nominees for the upcoming March election to serve on the Board.

Board members are volunteers who are expected to support the mission and goals of MGC. As members of a working Board, attendance at meetings, serving on at least one committee, participation in events and special projects is anticipated. MGC

board members must be committed to success and growth of the organization. As a board member you will have a chance to take part in the exciting and important work of MGC. Please notify one of the Nomination Committee Members listed below, if you would like to take part or know of someone else who would want to serve.

Emilie Wood

- Emilie Wood (740) 593-3214 emilierwood@gmail.com
- Nancy Aiken (740) 662-5701 aikennancy@yahoo.com
- Virginia Norris (740) 551-9039 norrisginger@earthlink.net

AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN EARLY MUSKINGUM COUNTY, OHIO RECORDS

(continued from page 2)

Mess entered into a contract with the squire that he would marry him just as he did white folks and he should receive the regular fee. The knot was tied in regular order, but when the time arrived for saluting the bride, as was the custom in those days, the Squire declined the honor, there being much prejudice at that time in the breast of the white man against colored ladies. After a feast as only Auntie McIntire knew how to prepare, the old fiddle was brought out and the dancing was kept up until long after midnight. About this time, Daniel Whitaker gave up the upper ferry, and McIntire got Mess to take charge of it. Mess lived in a cabin in West Zanesville on River Street near where it intersects McIntire Avenue.

Mess kept this ferry until the upper bridge was erected and lived in the cabin the remainder of his life. McIntire in his will left Mess \$50 a year or the use of fifty acres of land during his life time. Mess chose the latter and had possession during his life of fifty acres lying north of West Zanesville. About the time of Father Emery's great revival in 1827 and 1828 Black Mess got religion and joined the Methodist Church. A great many young men joined the church at the same time. Black Mess became very enthusiastic on the subject of religion and came to the conclusion that he could fly like an angel.

To test his ability to fly through the air, he cut the flaps from an old saddle and sewed straps on them so he

could run his arms through. He mounted a big stump, took a big leap upward, flapped his wings, but he was too heavy. He came to the ground like a chunk of lead knocking the breath out of him and nearly killed himself. Mess never tried to fly again, but he was a consistent Christian and was much attached to the Methodist Church to the day of his death which occurred in 1840. His oldest son, Silas, or Sile Durgry, as the boys of 1825 called him, is the oldest native inhabitant of Zanesville. He was born here in 1806.

Note: According to *Afro-American Marriages of Muskingum County, Ohio 1803-1818*, published by the Muskingum Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society Mess and Ann Thomas

"He could fly like an angel."



were married 8 Nov 1808 by Samuel Thompson.

Mess's last name is not given. The same book has Lill (no last name) married to Jess Carter (a black man) 8 Jan 1811 by Samuel Thompson. This may be the same Lill who is involved in the court case that follows.

"Part 2 of this story will continue in the next issue."

The Art of Volunteering and Making A Difference

Your Multicultural Genealogical Center Volunteers have been busy. We have continued working with United Campus Ministries and Melissa Wales, Executive Director. Melissa and her staff have been a great source of help through their efforts in arranging UGRR Tours, work-study groups, and more.

We want you to know, too, that United Campus Ministries and the Ohio University Multicultural Programs/Multicultural Center, and Dr. Winsome Chunnu-Brayda have been very supportive in their efforts to bring awareness to Ohio University students of the rich cultural history of the surrounding community. They have worked with MGC to provide programs and activities that involve the community away from campus.

Stephanie Sheeley organized several work groups from the Black Student Union, an Ohio University organization. They volunteered to help MGC via the work-study programs. They have painted, cleaned the basement and attic, and helped with landscaping at the Center. In turn, they have gotten a good meal and a good dose of local history. Gary Bergstrand's students, Sam Bachelder, Kendra Riley, and Kalman Tinker from Hocking College worked on researching and documenting the history of our site and its connection to the people who lived in our Center and their relationship with the Underground Railroad. The

presented a program and reenactment of their finds to the public.

MGC volunteers have reached out into the community of Morgan County by giving presentations at the Morgan County Historical Society, other community organizations, and reading and interacting with elementary students in presenting history. We have also interacted with other communities in Athens, Muskingum and Washington Counties in sharing history.

We want to invite you to attend our Monthly Membership Meetings, the first Saturday of each month at 1 PM at the Center. We have had some outstanding programs. Some of the people and topics were: Diane Kinser, whose two books: *I Owe My Soul...* and *The Mourning of Amalia* deal with local history; Idrissa Fane, on the history and culture of Mali, Africa; Dr. Anita Jackson, on her book *African American Professional Women in Higher Education: Achieving Against the Odds*; Dr. Yolande Helm spoke on slavery in the Caribbean; Mrs. Myrtie McVicar presented the story of Cutler, Ohio and the McVicar family history; Attorney William Walker discussed the United States Colored Troops in the Civil War; Russell Tippet, presented a program his book, *The Personal Memories of Russell Kent Tippet*; and also did a presentation on the horses of Gettysburg; Ada Woodson Adams presented "Encountering A Changing World, With An Un-

changing Message"; Attorney James E. Workman, Jr. presented a program; and Dr. Gifford Doxsee did several presentations: being a POW in WWII, his trip to Africa, and his Kairos Prison Ministries work.

Dr. Vibert Cambridge, Professor of Ohio University communication for social change and international communication in the School of Media Arts and Studies directed the Ohio University Center for International Studies to MGC to do an Underground Railroad Workshop for international students working for UNICEF. The Workshop consisted of the history of Ohio University and how and who helped found OU and their connection with the UGRR. A tour was given of UGRR sites in Millfield, Amesville and Chesterhill.

On a side note to our readers: Chesterhill was once part of Athens County, but now is in Morgan County. The workshop was enlightening to MGC as we were able to learn about the different cultures represented from the UNICEF Group.

We also have sponsored or been co-sponsor with the Amesville Village Productions in their Harvest Fest History and Quilt Day. We had our Annual Cutler Heritage and Legacy Day, and served food at the Bernard Mayle Day. We had the ODOT Roadside Coffee Break Fundraiser, participated in the Morgan County Master Gardener's Day, and had two MGC and UCM Work/Study Days at the Center.

MGC worked with Deanda Johnson of the Ohio University African-American Studies,

Research Institute in planning and implementing a Reunion African American Heritage Bus Tour in Athens, Ohio, during the OU Black Alumni Reunion. Ms Johnson is now working with the National Park Services, (National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom). She will aid our Center in gaining recognition as a site on the National Underground Railroad.

At the Appalachian Studies Conferences, one held in Portsmouth, Ohio and the other in Georgia, Nancy Aiken, Virginia Norris and Ada Woodson Adams attended. Nancy and Ada presented papers on "The Underground Railroad, Quilts, & Appalachia", Kay Harris, Linda Heeter, Virginia Norris, Dessie Workman and your president took part in Donna Sue Groves 10th Anniversary "The Quilt Trail Gathering" held in Adams County, Ohio. Conferences are great opportunities for networking.

The MGC board, with deepest gratitude and appreciation, thanks all of the volunteers for all the hours you have given. We would not be able to do the things mentioned above without your help. We want to give a special note of thanks to Chairperson Kay Harris and her committee; Linda Heeter, Virginia Norris, Pauline Walker, Dessie Workman. Also, thanks to the many other volunteers that step up and help Kay by bringing food, serving and cleaning up; Dr. Nancy Aiken, *(continued on last page)*



Multicultural Genealogical Center
P.O. Box 125 - Chesterhill Ohio 43728



The Art of Volunteering and Making A Difference

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Karen Blair, David Butcher, Juanita Cunningham, Warren Fussner Family, Polly Flowers, Sue Fisher, Gregg and Sally Kennedy, Joyce Kennedy, Dr. Ron Luce, Margaret Mayle, Shelia Mayle, Ellen Mumma, Candy Norris, Debbie Rowe, Diana Stafford, Vickie Lee Thurston, Karen and Junior Walker, Sherry Walker, Susie Wells, and Bill Workman. Please, forgive me if you helped in anyway and your name was not listed. Let me know and corrections will be made in the next Newsletter.

The MGC Board

My Life

My ancestors were Scots-Irish who settled on the frontier in the 18th century near Charlotte, NC. My parents moved into town and I was born in Charlotte, growing up during the depression and World War II. I was an only child, but had lots of cousins. After high school, I attended the University of North Carolina in Greensboro where I majored in home economics. On a church group get-to-gather at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill where we were preparing an old barracks for student use, I met Bill. We were washing windows, looking at each other from opposite sides

of the glass. He was a WWII vet returning to graduate school.

We were married three years later, had three children and now have four grandchildren.

I taught home economics briefly, but for a long period I was stay-at-home mother and housewife. Then, for several years I worked in the Rural Family Life program. After Bill spent time in Indonesia on research, I hoped to teach English there and got a degree at OU in teaching English as a second language.

Bill's plans for research in Indonesia did not work out, but

I ended up teaching English to international students at OU until retirement.

When we first moved to Athens, I decided we needed flowers along the back porch. The first flower bed started an interest in gardening and plants which has grown and grown, becoming my chief interest since retirement.

Written November 27, 2010

By MGC Director and

Landscape Chair

Emilie Wood





Multicultural Genealogical Center
P.O. Box 125 - Chesterhill Ohio 43728

Membership Encouragement:

Stephen Smith, MGC first President, talked about a Newsletter to the membership, he also talked about how we need to grow MGC. He stated that the easiest way to grow is to ask everyone who is a member to rejoin and also get at least one other person to join too. The board encourages giving gift membership.

MEMBERSHIP FORM 2012
(Please Print Clearly)

Name _____
Address _____
Phone Home _____ Cell _____
Email _____

Enclosed are the dues for (please put an "X" before the appropriate category):

_____ Renewal _____ New

_____ Annual Regular Individual membership \$15.00
_____ Annual Student membership \$6.00
_____ Annual Senior membership--age 50 and over \$10.00
_____ Organization or Sponsor membership \$100.00
_____ Lifetime membership \$200.00
_____ Organization Lifetime Membership \$500.00

I am interested in supporting MGC by:

- _____ Serving as a Board member
- _____ Serving as a Webpage designer
- _____ Keeping the webpage up to date
- _____ Presenting a monthly membership program
- _____ Volunteering to work in the Center doing clerical and data entry
- _____ Donating copies of my family tree/family history data, family pictures, videos, etc.
- _____ Working on a committee to compile data from primary public sources
- _____ Sharing my experiences gathering family history
- _____ Conducting short training sessions on how to gather family history
- _____ Conducting workshops on organizational make-up and/or policy
- _____ Participating in Underground Railroad programs as a guide or speaker

MGC is 501 c (3)—Not for profit organization and any donation is tax deductible

Contributing to Multicultural Genealogical Center (MGC) Projects:

"The Old House" Building Fund: \$ _____
Other Donations: \$ _____

Return application to:

The Multicultural Genealogical Center
P.O. Box 125
Chesterhill, Ohio 43728

For more information, please contact:

Ada Woodson Adams, President
740 448-1305
adams1803@gmail.com

Virginia Norris, Secretary
740-551-9035
norrisginger@earthlink.net

BOOKS PUBLISHED BY MGC

Heritage Cookbook, Vol. 1

\$15.00



A collection of recipes that are reflective of heritage, culture and just plain goodness. Many cooking tips are collected in this publication. 8 1/2 x 11 coated soft cover, spiral bound. 110 pgs.

Heritage Cookbook, Vol. 2

\$15.00



Cookbook recipes were submitted by MGC members and friends as old family recipes, sometimes with family stories about the dish, and other historical recipes, with tips and historical treats. 8 1/2 x 11 coated soft cover, spiral bound. 110 pgs.

As Long as Hearts Remember; Tributes to Our Late Loved Ones

\$25.00



Edited by Alvin C. Adams, the original poems, stories, photographs, and obituaries which serve as tributes to deceased family members form not only lasting memorials but important historical testaments to the contributions made by families of the area. 8 1/2 x 11 soft bound, perfect binding. 175 pgs.

Hold Tight to the Hames

\$25.00



Stories about growing up black in rural southern Ohio by Alvin C. Adams who grew up to be the first black graduate of Ohio University's School of Journalism, cover the Civil Rights protests in the south, interview Dr. Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, help found the Multicultural Genealogical Center, and have a dormitory named after him at Ohio University. 6 1/2 x 9 soft bound, perfect binding. 164 pgs. With pictures.

A Significant Presence: A Pictorial Glimpse of the Black Experience in Athens County 9 Ohio

\$25.00



Compiled and written by Ada Woodson Adams and Nancy E. Aiken, this is the story told with many photographs of a glimpse of the accomplishments of blacks in Athens County, Ohio as Ohio University students, professionals, laborers, businessmen and women, activists, athletes, and pioneers. A number of these accomplishments had impact on a national and, even an international scene. 8 1/2 x 11 coated soft cover, saddle stitched. 60 pgs. Hundreds of photographs.

The Sandusky-Muskingum Indian Trail in Southeastern Ohio 1786-1807

\$15.00



A historical collection of information by Richard Walker, Ph.D. Maps and photographs add to the tracing of this ancient historical trail used by the first Native Americans and many of this country's pioneers. 8 1/2 x 11 spiral bound, coated soft cover. Approximately 140 pages.

Please send check or money order to: MGC, PO Box 125 • Chesterhill, OH 43728

Please add \$5.00 per book for shipping and handling