



Finding "descendants of enslaved laborers" who built Thomas Jefferson's University

Dr. Shelley Viola Murphy ("familytreegirl" ©2021)

### Overview



2007-UVAbackground



Understanding Slavery



Understanding the challenges



The strategies



The Plan



Going forward

## Students rallied-"That's not enough"

After surveying students, MEL resolved that the University required more of a memorial than the small, easily overlooked plaque devoted to the free and enslaved laborers who had built the Rotunda that was installed in March 2007.



This plaque, between Pavilion I and the Rotunda, was installed in 2007.

- 2007 The Board of Visitors of Virginia apologized for Slavery
- They formed a student led group, Memorial to Enslaved Laborers (MEL) Committee, which engaged in awareness- raising programs that culminated in a 2010 memorial design competition. (can hold up to 4,000 enslaved laborers names)
- Partly in response to the student activism, President Teresa A. Sullivan created in 2013 the President's Commission on Slavery and the University (PCSU).
- https://www2.virginia.edu/slaverymemorial/

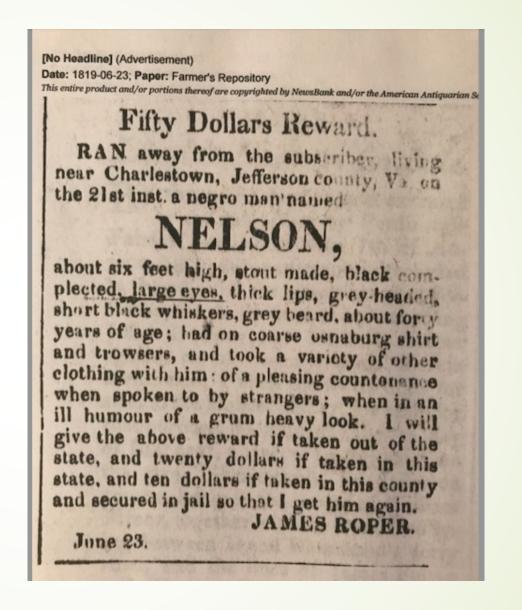
#### What I know:

- Local area-Historical Homes, etc.
- Have a passion to see the records and hear the stories
- Wealth of resources and support in the area-Historical Societies & Libraries
- The local community: CVHR, CVGA, BBS AAHGS, Area Historical Societies, UVA Special Collections, Getting Word, Descendant & Descendant groups, individuals and families, etc.
- There will be lessons learnedthere will be some that will not be found
- Understand there will be many emotional times



#### Basic understanding of African American Genealogical Research

- Slavery=Economics \$\$
- People were property
- Buying, Selling, Renting
- Sold to the Deep South=Gone
- Free People of Color



## African American Genealogy Research



Research for African-American ancestors begins just like any other search for ancestors; you begin with **what you know**, then think about **what you don't know**, and then ask yourself **who or what would know?** 



Stop jumping outside of the box. You need to stay inside the box and begin deeper research and analysis.



Remember every Record should create another Record



Challenges: Expect them, Embrace them and Expand your research skills

# Dealing with the African American Research Challenges

- Records not recorded or destroyed
- Denial-don't want to know, it's in the past
- Knows the info, but won't share-its going to the grave with them
- Online research, hmmm
- Spelling of names, don't count

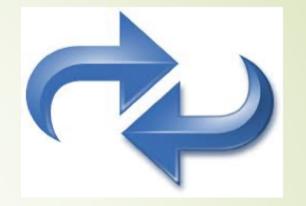
- Received information that is not reliablequestionable-Oral History
- Families stories & expectations vs. the research
- Someone born early 1800s might not make it to the 1860s or 1870s,
- Analysis not done on the records
- Emotional aspects
- 21st century thinking

## Strategy #1

- Listen and Ask Questions
  - Stay "LOCAL" due to timeframe
  - Learn the Slave Holders, some were TJ's friends, UVA Professors and more

- Census-(1950 release-April 1, 2022)
- Google-is my friend
- Need to Seek out Descendants
- Need Descendants will find me
- Will use Online databases: Ancestry.com
   & Familysearch.org, newspapers, military,
   and much more

## Strategy #2: Reverse Genealogyaka "back and forth"



- From the list I have, dates, names (first name only, not the same as slave owner); slave owner, status: enslaved and/or free, occupations and notes from the financial ledgers.
- **▶** No location!

Genealogy is about time, place and asking questions:

- What do I know?
- What do I need to know?
- Who or what would know the information I am missing?
- Plan the research for resources & seek out what I need

- Review the law during the research era!
- Finding Emancipation or Manumission papers
- Slave narratives, family genealogy records
- Bill of Sales, Plantation records: Inventories
- City & County directories, Public notices or records, local courthouse records (wills, probates), city halls & more!
- Find resources where Slave research has been successful...keeping in touch with the local genealogy groups, libraries, and historical societies-local
- Sharing, sharing, sharing

Strategy #4 Following the rules to find descendants & slaveholders:

Murphy's rule: Follow the ...

Money

Land

Water

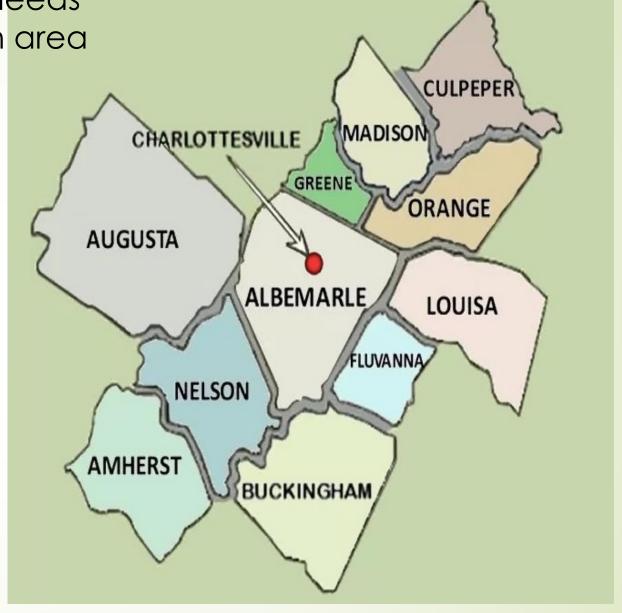
Community, & the

Faith of the People

Strategy #5 Research always needs a MAP-Determine my research area

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If individuals had ancestors who lived in the central Virginia counties of Albemarle, Buckingham, Greene, Fluvanna, Louisa, Nelson, Orange areas, etc., including the city of Charlottesville.



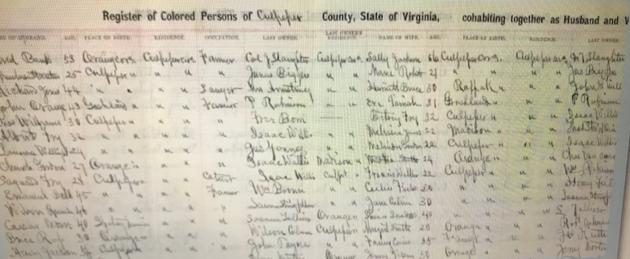
# Strategy #6 Know the Records/Resources for the Enslaved and Free Individuals

- Slave Narratives
- Co-habitation records
- Military files
- Court cases
- University Records-Special Collections, JUEL site, public libraries
- Oral Histories
- ► Freedman's Bureau Records (Rations, labor contracts, etc.)
- Books, books and more books

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Co-habitations Records



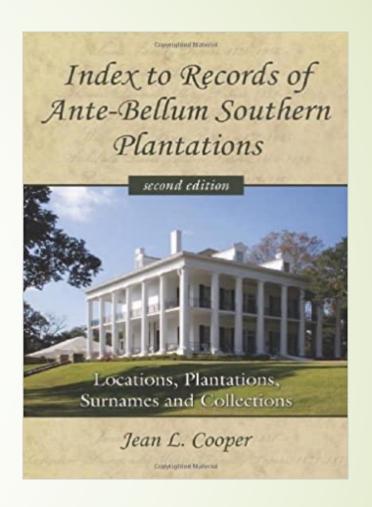


Censulis, books, libraries, societies, etc.

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## Locating Records & Resources

- House Repositories
- Recorded property records-inventories, tax records-Courthouses
- Historical societies, libraries, & archives
- Look for the plantation owners-who were the neighbors? Use the FAN principle (E. Shown Mills)
- Plantation owners-find out if there is any information regarding the plantation in local city or county records, historical society. Keep *Jean Cooper's book a*nd the *Slave Birth Index* close
- Staying close to my local friends in CVHR & BBS and more
- Look for plantation owner descendants-maybe they are looking-build ancestry trees, books, etc.
- Google "surnames" and properties, look for historical events.



Register of Colored Persons, Cohabiting. Records at the Library of Virginia, etc.

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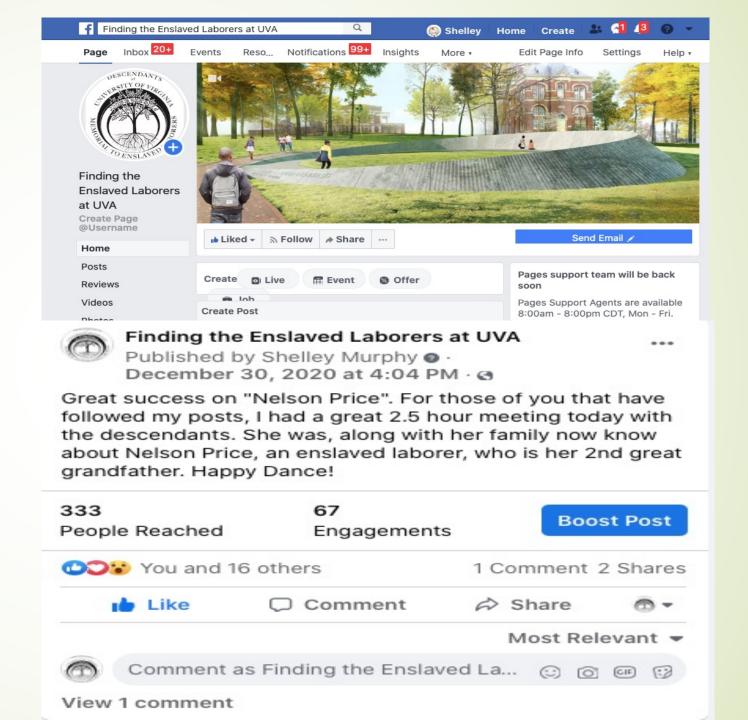
Albemarle County, VA. John Craven's 1841Will

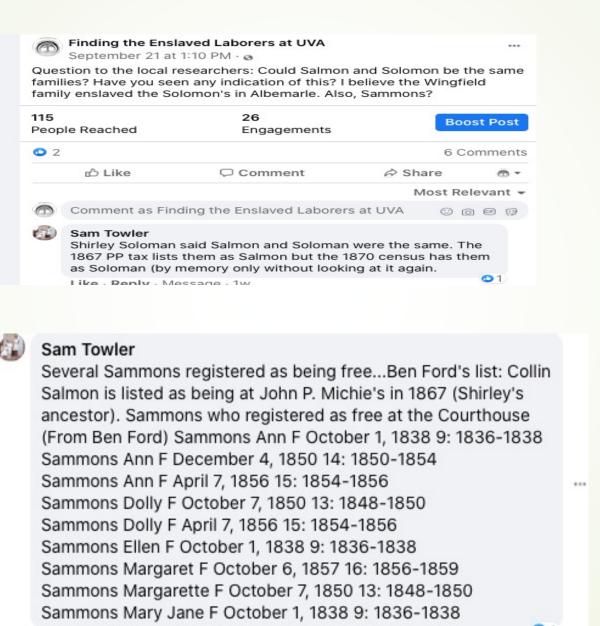
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# Strategy #7 Getting the word out

- Use Social Media
- https://www.facebook .com/Finding-the-Enslaved-Laborers-at-UVA-960038024340461 and/
  - Twitter: @seeking\_uva





#### Social Media -Twitter

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#### v :

#### **Pinned Tweet**

TOEC-UVA

Descendants of Enslaved Communities at UVA @descen... Dec 8 ...

Last year, @slaveryuva invited a group of us to see the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers before it was completed. We spent the past year organizing ourselves as a descendant community. Follow us here to stay up to date on our progress & news related to descendants.





M

#### BlackProGen Retweeted





#### PCSU & PCUAS UVA @slaveryuva · Dec 19

July 1852: UVA pays \$27.50 to C. Meriwether for the rental of enslaved man Charles. #uvalegacies #slaveryuva











## Strategy #8 Part of the Plan

- Review the spreadsheet & JUEL site, books, other resources
- Have individuals fill out a form or send a link
- Gathering information
- Meeting with possible descendants
- Build from the Descendants info
- Build searchable Ancestry Trees
- Communication-be out there for them to find me
- Google docs
- Work with DEC at UVA-They should complete an Intake form: <a href="https://forms.gle/7/wswetQXsFMBsACy/">https://forms.gle/7/wswetQXsFMBsACy/</a> if any questions, they can simply email enslavedlaborersuva@gmail.com

To date: over 110 trees, close to working with 100+ people-all at various stages. 55+ descendants identified.

#### INTAKE: Descendants of the Enslaved Laborers at UVA

#### Gathering information about your family for genealogy research

What is your name, email and phone number for me to follow-up with you:

What are your parent's names, birth location (city or county, state if not Virginia, and if they have passed, please include the death date and location:

Mother's Side:

1.

2.

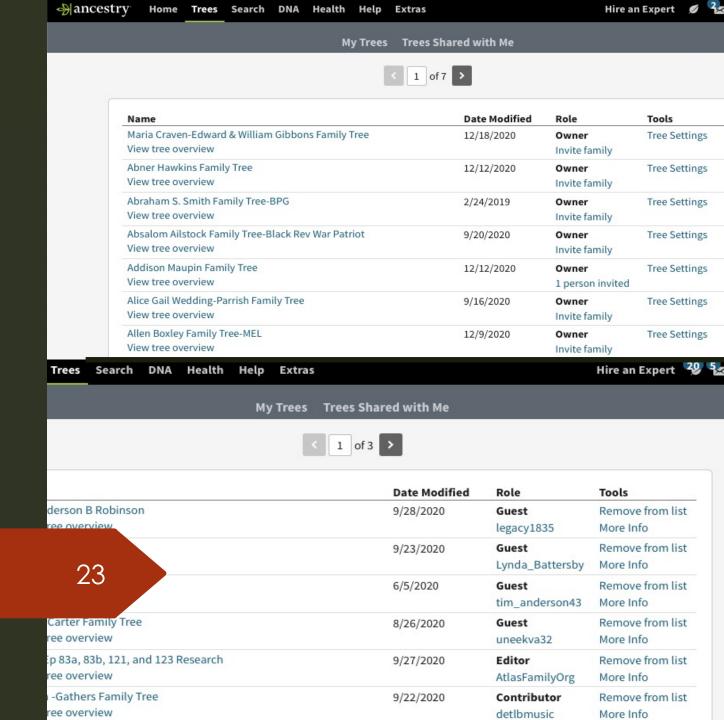
Father's Side:

1.

2.

What are your grandparent's names, birth location (city or county, state if not Virginia, and if they have passed, please

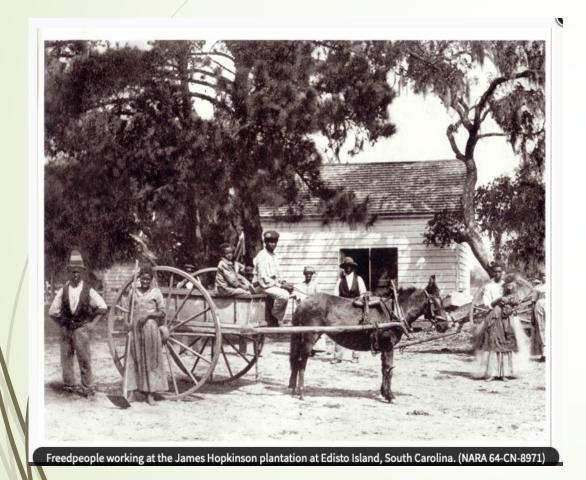
# Strategy #9 Building Trees



## Strategy #10 Record Group 105

- The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (also referred to as the Freedmen's Bureau)
- Federal Record-under the military
- Created March 3,1865 at the end of the Civil War to supervise the relief efforts including education, health care, food and clothing, refugee camps, legalizing of marriages, employment, and labor contracts
- The collection covers the years 1865 to 1872. Pre-Bureau Records-1863 Mississippi
- Various records, Marriage, Destitute, Ration, Transportation and much more

#### Who's who in the Bureau?



The Bureau is full of "Federal Records"

#### WAR IS OVER!

- Refugees: Poor White
- Freedmen: Formerly Enslaved
- Abandoned Lands: returning land to former landowners, etc.

### The Gems of Information in the Bureau

- Marriages
- Letters, Complaints, Reports
- Transportation
- Rations
- Labor Contracts
- Teachers reports, Education
- Applications for Land
- Miscellaneous, and much more
- Medical conditions
- Former location before the Civil War
- Military information
- Relationships, and more
- Includes time, place and locations

- Event dates
- Ages
- Race
- Occupations
- Residence/Locations
- Birth dates
- Marriages, also former marriages and children
- Death dates
- Former slave owners
- Other family members
- Records after the Civil War
- Names & Ages before 1870 Federal Population Census

## The Enslaved Laborers-"the list"

Received a list of names and dates (abt. 2000+ entries, from 1817-1867) which some enslaved individuals with a first name only, a few had surnames, some had slave owners, and the duties the enslaved conducted

1873		ĺ						
	1863	31-Dec	Egbert R. Watson	Nelson Price	Enslaved	unknown	"Wm. A. Pratt Supts Dept Income Accoun Nelson Price per Rect No. 72"	to 18.00
1874								

There is "no location" as to where the slave owner and enslaved individuals lived. Some of the duties the enslaved conducted included: brickmaking, carpentry, etc. and so the research begins.

			1	I O				
1822	26-Nov	John Nunn	Squire, John, Nelson	Enslaved	Slave hire	1822	"John Nunn for hire of Squire, John & Nelson"	187.50
1822	26-Nov	John Kelly	Willis	Enslaved	Slave hire	1822	"John Kelly for hire of Willis"	70.00
1822	26-Nov	John Douglass	John	Enslaved	Slave hire	1822	"John Douglass for hire of John"	65.00
1822	26-Nov	Richard Price	James	Enslaved	Slave hire	1822	"Richard Price for hire of James"	65.00
1822	26-Nov	Edmund Bacon	Isham, Lewis, John, Wilson	Enslaved	Slave hire		"Edmund Bacon for hire of Isham, Lewis, John & Wilson \$280, off agreed on 61.66"	218.34
1822	26-Nov	David Watts	Harry	Enslaved	Slave hire	200	"Labour Acct. for Dft to David Watts for the hire of Harry"	5.50
1822	2-Dec	Unknown	Unknown	Enslaved	Harvest		"Labour Acct. for hand hire in harvest"	3.00

http://juel.iath.virginia.edu/people



#### Freedmen's Bureau Field Offices

This map marks the sites of Freedmen's
Bureau Field Offices and Contraband
Camps. You can scroll in to see the sites
nearest your area of research interest.
When you click on a marker, you will see
the microfilm rolls for that location. If the
microfilms are online, you can click the link
to go directly to the microfilm to begin
reading!

You can also scroll down this page for a detailed tutorial on using the maps on this site.



#### More Maps

#### Freedmen's Bureau Hospitals

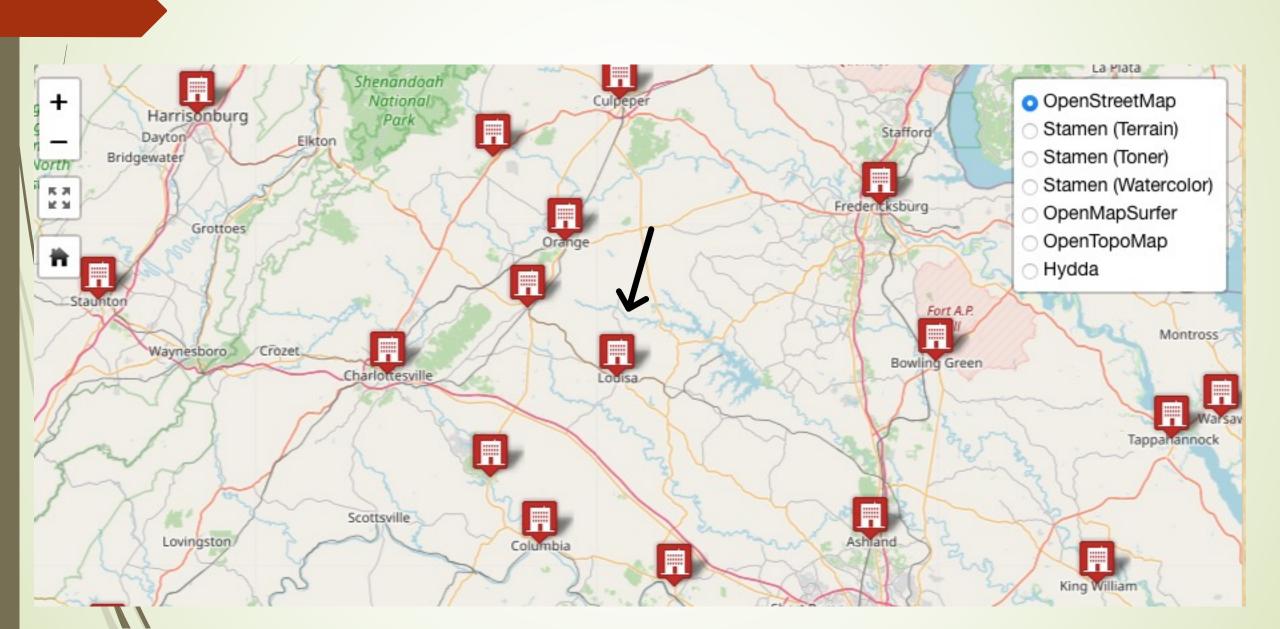
In addition to Freedmen's Bureau Field Offices and contraband camps, we have mapped Freedmen's Bureau Hospitals, Freedman's Savings Bank Branches and USCT Battle Sites.

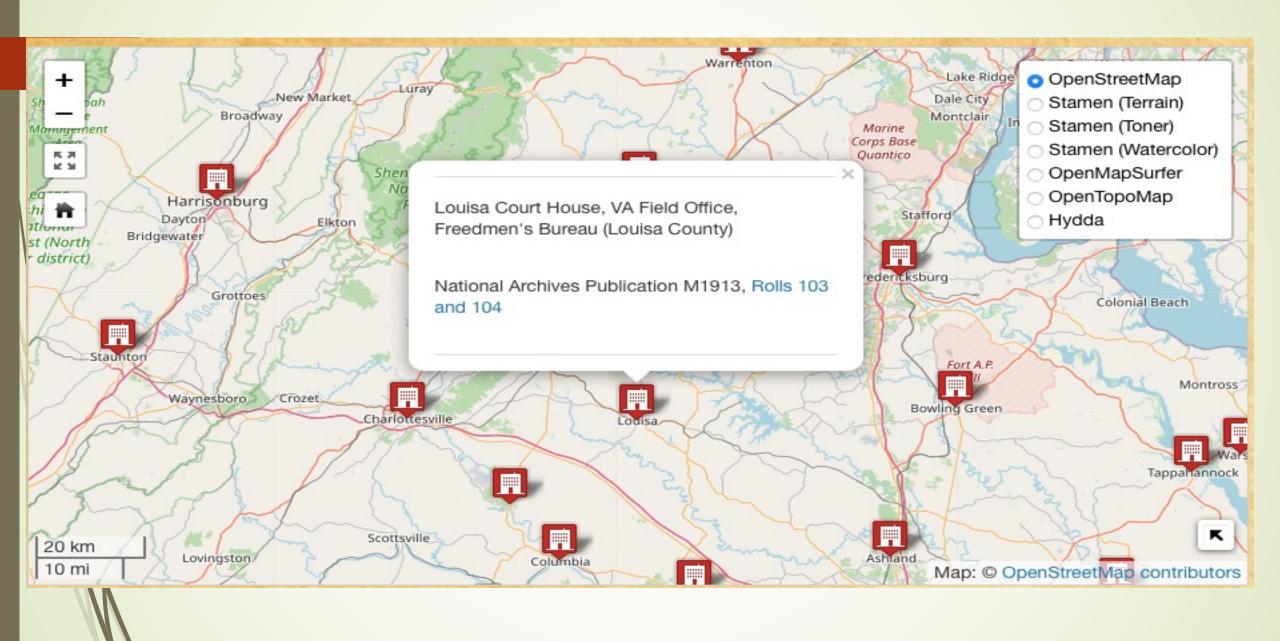
To access these maps, please click on the tab for the map you wish to view, then click the "View Map" button.

#### Freedman's Bank Branches

#### **USCT Battle Sites**

## Louisa Courthouse Field Office





## Virginia Field Offices

commissioner)

commissioner)

Boydton (Mecklenburg County,

assistant subassistant

**■** Sourc Virginia, Freedmen's Bure...Office Records, 1865-1872 Freedmen's Bureau Office or Subordinate Field Location Abingdon (assistant subassistant Dinwiddie Courthouse (Dinwiddie subassistant commissioner, 3rd commissioner, 2nd division, 8th County, assistant superintendent) division, 3rd subdistrict) subdistrict) Drummondtown (assistant Lawrenceville (assistant subassistant A descriptive pamphlet subassistant commissioner) commissioner) Fairfax Courthouse (Fairfax County, Alexandria (superintendent) Leesburg (Loudoun County, assistant subassistant commissioner, 3rd assistant subassistant Amelia Courthouse (assistant commissioner) division, 10th subdistrict) superintendent) Farmville (assistant subassistant Lexington (assistant subassistant Appomattox Courthouse (assistant commissioner) commissioner) subassistant superintendent) Farmville (subassistant Liberty (assistant subassistant Ashland (assistant superintendent) commissioner) commissioner) Bowling Green (Caroline County, Fort Monroe (assistant subassistant List of book records assistant subassistant commissioner)

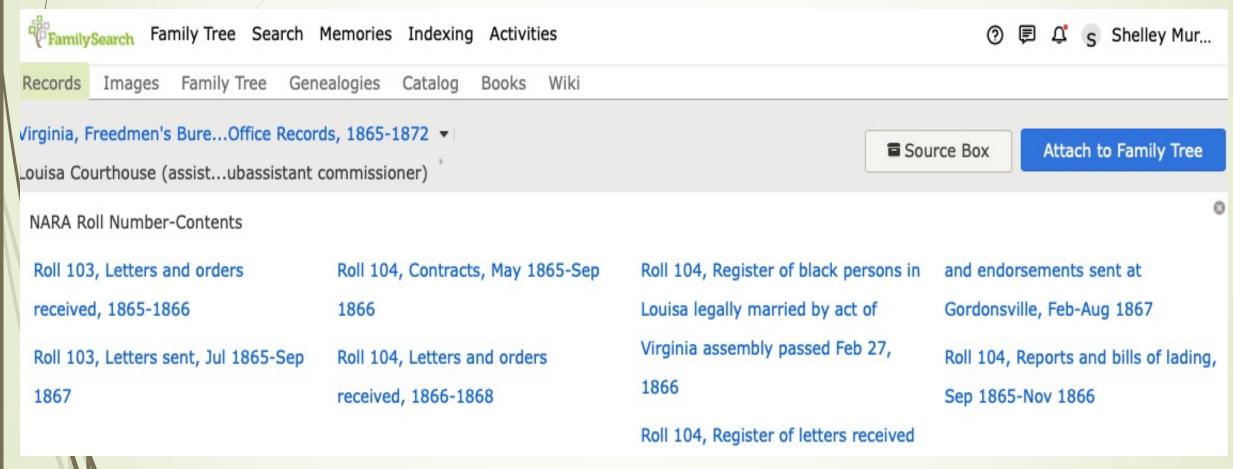
> Fort Monroe (department of negro affairs, 1863-1865; departments of Virginia and Virginia and North Carolina)

Louisa Courthouse (assistant subassistant commissioner)

Lovingston (Nelson County)

Little Washington

# Louisa Courthouse (assisted Subassistant commissioner)



## Louisa County FB Marriages 1866

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4/5. Jackeow Andrew	25	Milded	24	"	. "
476, Robinson Ocerton	30	Lucy	19	" "	"
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## Strategy #11 Research everyone in the family

#### U.S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current

View Record

Name Mrs Gussie Price

Birth Date 12 Feb 1904

Birth Place Moultrie, Colquitt County, Georgia,

United States of America

Death Date 26 Dec 1982

Death Place Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Penn-

sylvania, United States of America

Cemetery Allegheny Cemetery

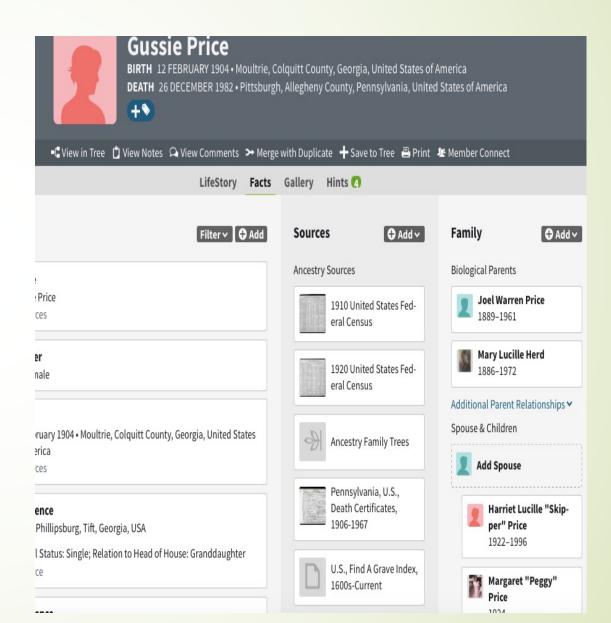
Burial or Cremation Place Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Penn-

sylvania, United States of America

Has Bio? N

Mother Mary Lucille Jackson

Children Harriet Lucille Baker; Margaret Price



Finding Nelson Price-He had a surname, know the name of slave owner, checked 1870, followed Obits,



## DEC-UVA RECLAIM - HONOR - REPAIR



## Going Forward

- A private & public virtual event happened in April 2021
- Continue to work with Descendant Enslaved Communities, a nonprofit-& helps locate more descendants, etc.

(https://www.descendantsuva.org)

Continue to seek Slave owners and Enslaved Descendants