Chapter Four
Sotterley - "Equals at Last"

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1. Agnes Kane Callum.
Photo courtesy of Historic Sotterley

Introduction

Of the six chapters that I have written about Sotterley, it all started with this one.

To me, the important story was the collaboration between genealogist Agnes Kane Callum and former Speaker of the House of Delegates John Hanson Briscoe. As I researched this topic, it became clear that the main character of this story was Agnes. She returned to school in Baltimore while in her 50s and chanced upon a reference to relatives previously unknown to her. These ancestors were owned by a doctor on a plantation in St. Mary's County. Her years-long effort of discovery culminated in her multiple appearances on national television to explain why she, the descendant of a slave, would work together with a descendant of her great-grandfather's slaveowner to save the slave cabin on Sotterley Plantation. Her story is, as you will see, a tremendous account of reconciliation.

My very first interview for this Sotterley series was with Agnes Kane Callum in the early spring of 2015. The opportunity to meet with her and to discuss this storyline was extremely moving for me and gave me the sense that her accomplishments remain relevant to this day. In my opinion, Sotterley Plantation could not be where it is today were it not for that research done by Agnes Kane Callum. This chapter is dedicated to her.

How and Why Agnes Researched the Kane Family

Agnes Kane Callum was a mother in her 50s when she returned to school at Morgan State University in Baltimore. She began her genealogical research on bits and pieces of information she found while doing a college paper on acquisition of land by free blacks in St. Mary's County. "I kept coming across names that my father had mentioned, places that I remembered hearing about. I jotted down things at first, then I started really compiling and cataloging information," she explained. [1]

Agnes Callum: *Well, when I was looking for the Kanes, I found them in the censuses with different spellings, I think it was at least seven spellings, different spellings. So one day I was just looking through inventories, just to see what I could see, and I ran across Doctor Briscoe's name. Well he had purchased a slave, a mother and four children. And then I read on about him. He had a brother-in-law named Billingsley, who was the judge of the Orphan's Court [for St. Mary's County] and he purchased a Cane, but the name was C-A-N-E. So I asked my father, "Did your father have any brothers or sisters by the name of Frank, Temperance, Matilda, Henrietta?" He said yes, and they were all on Dr. Briscoe's slave list, and that's how I found the Kanes.*[2]

"My father Philip Moten Kane provided me with oral history. His own father was a free man born on Sotterley in 1865. He had it in his mind, so I interviewed him, then checked it against the records. More often than not, he was right. As I obtained more and more information, I began writing to those I had found out about. Everybody was willing to help. I asked for photographs, and I got them. The oldest one I received goes back to 1878."[3]

Video 1. Agnes Kane Callum interviewed by Sotterley Plantation.

[1] Sue A. Challis, "A Search Leads Family to Plantation," *The Washington Post* (Washington D.C.), May 29, 1979.
[2] Agnes Kane Callum, *Sotterley Oral History Project,* By Meredith Taylor, April 21, 2008.
[3] Sue A. Challis, "A Search Leads Family to Plantation," *The Washington Post* (Washington D.C.), May 29, 1979.

Hilry Cane

Hilry Kane was born a slave in St. Mary's County in 1818. He was born to Raphael Kane and Clara, slaves who were owned by different masters. Hilry lived with his mother on the plantation owned by William Neale of Jeremiah until he was about eight years old. At this time, his mother was sold to another plantation. In 1827, at the age of nine, Hilry was given to James J. Gough to settle a debt. On Gough's plantation, Hilry learned the craft of plastering and also farming techniques. In 1837, he married fourteen-year-old Mariah, another slave on the plantation. Frank, their youngest child, was born in 1848. That same year, slave owner J.J. Gough died, and his will dictated that the family be divided among Gough's seven children.[4]

From Professor David Brown's, "Sotterley, Her People and Their Worlds:"

Hilry Cane and his family of five were slaves. They came to the Sotterley plantation in 1849 as the result of a public auction. It was a sale of the personal and real property of James J. Gough's held at the request of his widow, Sarah Gough. The liquidation of the estate was executed to give the widow access to one-third of her deceased husband's estate. Since slaves were an integral part of a slaveholder's negotiable property, rating second to land in equity, the sale of the Cane family did not present a problem. Hilry and his family were the first items disposed of in the last will and testament of James J. Gough, a wealthy St. Mary's County planter.

Thus, Gough's will set into motion a series of events that concluded with Hilry and his family being sold at public auction. At the time that Gough made his will, Hilry was thirty years old. His wife, Mariah, was about twenty-nine years old and his children were Ellen, seven years old; Philip, five years old; George, two years old and Francis, seven months old. The provisions of the will stipulated that Gough's wife, Sarah, would be endowed with Hilry, his wife, and their child Philip, as her share of the estate. Sally Ann, Gough's daughter, was bequeathed Ellen, the oldest child of Hilry and Mariah. James Gough, his son, was willed George, the third child of Hilry. To his youngest child, Nelly Mariah Gough, he gave Francis, the seven month old baby of Hilry and Mariah. Gough named his best friend, Benedict Heard, and his wife Sarah as the executor and executrix of his estate.

In spite of the seemingly generous bequest, the provisions of the will were not satisfactory to Gough's widow. As the will was written, it was a good, sound, legal document, but the provisions of the document did not meet with Sarah Gough's approval. Her motives for rejecting the stipulations of her husband's will have been obscured by time. Nevertheless, Sarah Gough signed an affidavit in July, 1848 renouncing the one-third portion of her husband's estate that was allotted to a widow. Because of this turn of events, the court had no other recourse but to accept her renunciation of the will and ordered the sale of the property belonging to the estate of the late James J. Gough. The court order had a direct bearing on the future of the Cane family. They were slaves and the human property of the Goughs. This signified that the Canes would be sold and possibly separated.

Consequently, the slaves were sold at public auction in Leonardtown, the county seat of St. Mary's. Hilry was sold for the appraised price of six hundred dollars to Col. Chapman Billingsley of Hollywood, St. Mary's County, on December 2, 1849. Mariah and the children were

[4] "A Guide to the History of Slavery in Maryland," *The Maryland State Archive and the University of Maryland College Park* (Annapolis: The University of Maryland College Park Press), 2007.

not sold at that time because Mariah had been appraised for five hundred dollars and the auctioneer could only gender a bid of four hundred dollars. The executor of Gough's estate requested that the court give the permission to sell Mariah and the children at a private sale. The court granted him the permission. On March 13, 1850, Mariah and her children were sold at a private sale to Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe of Sotterley plantation in Hollywood, St. Mary's County, Maryland. They had been purchased for the appraised price of: Mariah – five hundred dollars; Ellen – two hundred and twenty-five dollars; George – one hundred and seventy-five dollars; Francis – fifty dollars. Philip, the son of Hilry and Mariah, had been mentioned in the will but his name was not listed at the time of sale. It is assumed that Philip died, since an exhaustive search of archival records did not reveal what happened to the five year old child.

The delay and controversy surrounding the sale of Mariah and her children meant that the family was purchased by two slaveholders who were friends and neighbors. Soon after Mariah and the children arrived at Sotterley, Col. Billingsley and Dr. Briscoe agreed on a plan which enabled Hilry to live there as well. Hilry and Mariah were lodged in one of the slave cabins much like the one that stands today at Sotterley. The arrangement worked well as Billingsley was able to reap the benefit of Hilry's labor, and the Cane family remained intact.

Col. Billingsley had purchased a slave with a unique skill. He was a plasterer. Billingsley realized that Hilry was an asset and he could earn revenue from his labor. For this reason, Billingsley contracted plastering jobs for Hilry in all areas of St. Mary's County. Philip Moten Kane, the grandson of Hilry, said that his father told him that Hilry worked as a plasterer on some of the best homes in St. Mary's.

He expressed pride in the fact that his grandfather did some plastering at Sotterley and at Charlotte Hall. Hilry taught several of his sons the art of plastering, but it appears none of them became as proficient at the trade as their father.

2. A scene from the filming of "Prince of Slaves," a historical movie filmed on Sotterley's grounds.
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

After the Canes were at Sotterley for a few years, Hilry's wife, Mariah, became ill and died. She was about twenty-nine years. Later, he took unto himself another slave lady for a wife named Alice whom everyone called Elsa. As a result of the two marriages, Hilry fathered eighteen children, fourteen of whom were born at Sotterley. The children born

on Dr. Briscoe's plantation were: Matilda Cane, Temperance Cane, Henry Cane, Alice Cane, Eliza Cane, Sara Cane, Hilry Cane, Henry Cane, Mary Cane, John Cane, Webster Cane, and Sam Cane

The Cane's sojourn at Sotterley lasted for thirty years. Hilry and his family remained on Sotterley during the Civil War. Maryland adopted a new constitution that freed her slaves on November 1, 1864, and the Canes lingered on at Sotterley. They remained with Dr. Briscoe until about 1879, when they moved from the plantation to establish a home of their own. Hilry and his wife, Elsa, died between 1885 and 1889. [5]

Agnes Kane Callum: *When I found the Kanes I felt that they had been on Sotterley all of their life. But they came to Sotterley in 1848, and I was researching up around the Civil War—up around 1861. Where were the Kanes before Sotterley? I continued to research and I found that they came from Bushwood. And that some of them were buried in the Sacred Heart Cementary up in Bushwood. So I went up there. Of course I couldn't find any markings or monuments or gravestones in the cemetery, but I was up there for two days. Then I found out that before the Briscoes owned the Kanes, a white family named Gough owned the Kanes. And the Goughs died. The Gough man- a cholera epidemic came through St. Mary's County and killed quite a few people. And this man named James Judson Gough owned the Kanes before Dr. Briscoe. He left in his will—he didn't call the Kanes slaves, he called them servants. "My manservant Henry Hilry, my woman servant Henrietta and the mother. It was a mother and four or five children. It was the mother, father, and children.*

"But the judge of the Orphan's Court, he purchased the father, Hillery. So after Billingsley purchased Hillery, then Dr. Briscoe- they took the mother and four children off to the auction block because they didn't bring their assessed value. So Dr. Briscoe bought the mother and the four children at an attorney sale. He paid six hundred dollars for Mariah Kane and for the baby, Frank Kane, he paid fifty dollars. He was four months old."[6]

Hilry was often away from Sotterley, as his master, Colonel Billingsley, often hired him out for plastering jobs. Oral tradition relates that Hilry Kane plastered many of the finest homes in St. Mary's County. He also plastered the small cabin he lived in along the Patuxent River with his family. There is a story of hog killing time on the plantation, when slaves would collect the bristles that were scraped from the skin of the newly killed hog. These bristles, when mixed with clay and salt from the river served as important "chinking" between the cabin's rough hewn logs for the winter months – a kind of plaster.

When Hilry Kane was with his family at Sotterley and not laboring in the fields, he made furniture including beds, chairs, and tables for the cabin. He also made, and played quite well, the banjo. Knowledgeable about medicinal herbs, Hilry was considered the "doctor" for the plantation's slaves. He used roots and herbs to treat a variety of ailments. The family also spent time outdoors, cooking their rations of fatty pork and corn which they received at the back door of the manor house on Saturdays, and hunting for rabbit, deer, and opossum to supplement those rations. On Sundays, although Catholic by all accounts, the Kanes attended the local Episcopal church with their masters, the Billingsleys and the Briscoes.[7]

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[5] Dave Brown, "Sotterley, Her People and Their Worlds"

[6] Agnes Kane Callum, *Sotterley Oral History Project,* By Meredith Taylor, April 21, 2008.

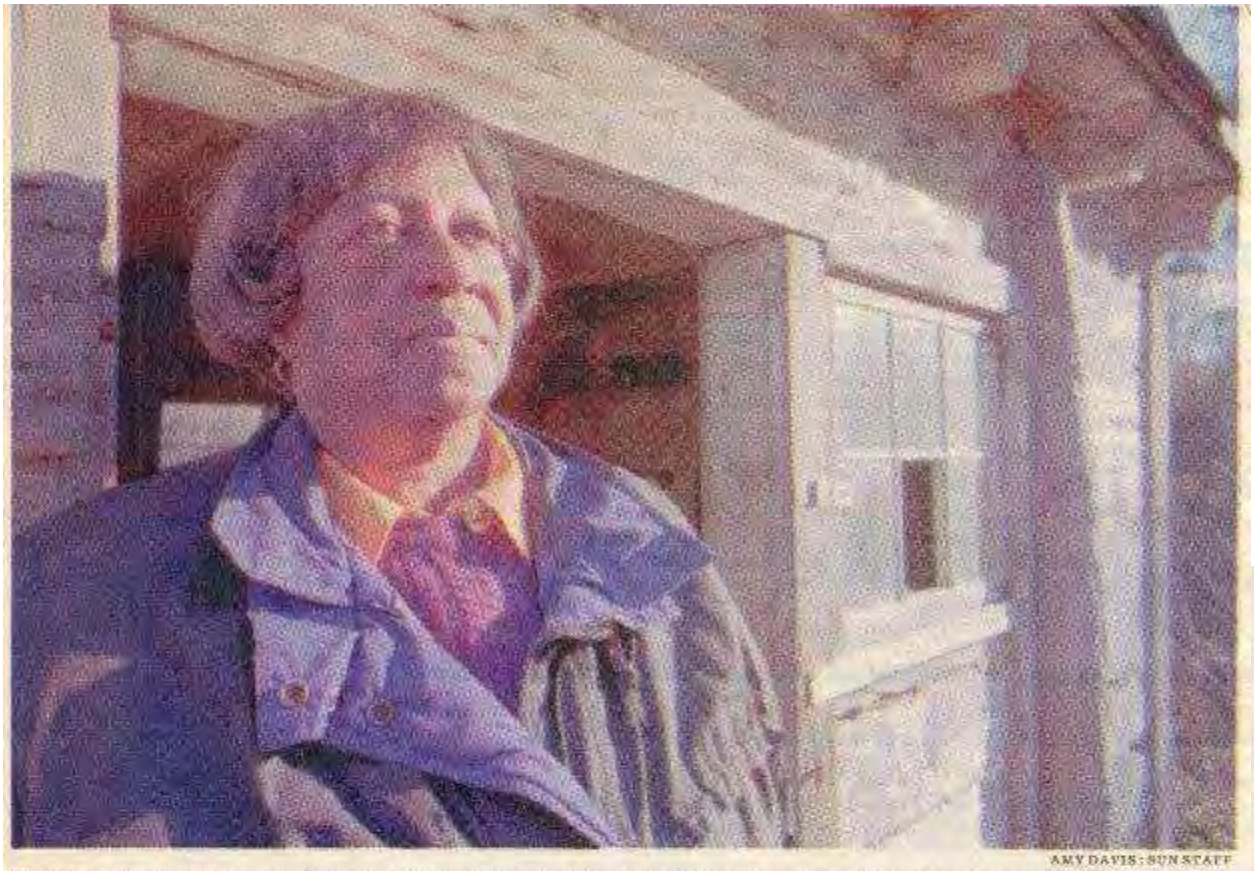
[7] "A Guide to the History of Slavery in Maryland," *The Maryland State Archive and the University of Maryland College Park* (Annapolis: The University of Maryland College Park Press), 2007.

Agnes Kane Callum: *One of the children that came with the mother in 1848 was Evelyn. Evelyn married a Johnson, who was owned by the Greenwells. And she had about 8 to 10 children. And I researched them all the way down to the present day, but they died early- they all died early with TB [tuberculosis]. In that day they called it the Consumption and they were in their teens. But they were field workers. Temperance and Matilda worked in the field but Henrietta worked as a wash-woman along with her mother, that was her job on the plantation. Every day they went to this washhouse or whatever, and that's all that they did, day after day.*

"These people slept on the floor with corn-shucks and wheat-shafts as a mattress. Then they get up in the morning and they go up on the hill to this mansion where they have lace on the pillowcases and linen sheets. The slaves were not stupid, they knew that they were slaves and they were governed by certain rules and regulations. They had a house just for sewing. And some of those ladies could really make fine dresses and suits of clothes. Because after the war, one of the children of Hilry's went to Washington and they had a business doing fine sewing."[8]

3. The slave cabin at Sotterley, redecorated to period furnishings. Used for filming "Prince of Slaves." Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

[8] Agnes Kane Callum, *Sotterley Oral History Project,* By Meredith Taylor, April 21, 2008.



AMY DAVIS : SUN STAFF

Trustee: *Agnes Callum stands in front of Sotterley Plantation's remaining slave quarters, which she works to preserve.*

A Sense of Ownership

"I dare say I am the first one who has ever done serious work on the blacks of St. Mary's County," Callum says. "And they played a significant role in the growth of the county. Much of the wealth has come off the backs of the black people. So we have to leave something."

But she [Agnes Kane Callum] doesn't think Dr. Briscoe was a harsh master. She knows of only one slave who fled from Sotterley. And after emancipation, many stayed on as tenant farmers. Twelve Kanes then lived on Sotterley. But by 1880, census reports show all had gone. Dr. Briscoe died in 1885. [9]

Not everyone worked in the fields. Remember that slaves were carpenters, blacksmiths bricklayers, ship's carpenters, coopers, painters, plasterers, stonemasons, sawyers, wheelwrights, cabinetmakers. Slaves not only built elegant houses like Sotterley Mansion but

[9] Carl Schoettler, "A Sense of Ownership Pain and Pride: History Weighs Heavily on the Old Sotterley Plantation in St. Mary's County, and on those who labor to save it, black and white," *The Baltimore Sun* (Baltimore, MD), Jan. 22, 1996.

public buildings, like the capitol building in Washington.[10] Records indicate that tobacco, wheat, and corn were grown at Sotterley along with other minor crops. Doctor Briscoe also raised some cotton, hogs, and sheep, for wool and slaughter.[11]

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In 1997, St. Mary's College of Maryland gave a class in ethnography and cultural diversity, and the topic of study was Sotterley. Students in that class had to write research papers on different aspects of slavery and/or Sotterley. Those papers were turned in as part of the class's work, and those papers also became part of the Sotterley archives. While I have included several of the research papers on this chapter about Sotterley, I have to stress that these papers do no necessarily reflect life on Sotterley Plantation specifically; rather, these papers describe life of the enslaved in more general terms. With that said, I now present portions of several of those papers.

"Domestic Slavery"
St. Mary's College of Maryland Research Paper, authored by Kelly Ann McLaughlin

One side of slavery is almost always overlooked; domestic slavery. Domestic slavery consists of two separate, but often intertwined, categories. One category, being that of domestic work, included preparing all meals, preserving meat and vegetables, maintaining the living quarters of the master, his family and his guests, caring for and nursing children, repairing and laundering clothing, and personal services. Housewifery makes up the second of the two categories of domestic slavery. The responsibilities of a slave who was a "housewife" included, but was not limited to; tending to the livestock and poultry of the plantation, and the production of clothing, linens, soap, and candles.

While the list of chores laid out above are abbreviated; one living in the twentieth century cannot fathom the amount of tedious work that goes into accomplishing any of the aforementioned. Meal preparation alone included,

> "…carrying water, chopping and hauling wood, and building fires. Serving fresh vegetables meant gathering produce in addition to shelling, peeling and washing it. Game, poultry, or fish required dressing, plucking, or scaling and retrieving other meats from the smoke house. After the final preparations, the final chore involved cooking, serving, and cleaning the kitchen."

Laundry of the time required an enormous amount of labor by one or two individuals. Wilma King, the author of *Stolen Children,* describes wash days:

> "The entire process of washing and ironing clothes was no less complicated; therefore, the laundress had a separate day for washing and another for ironing. One weekly wash for an average-sized family requires at least fifty gallons, or four hundred pounds, of water. Hot water was necessary for washing the clothes; therefore, hauling wood and building fires added for work. Heavily soiled clothes required over-night soaking in cold water before scrubbing and boiling in large kettles to further remove stains. Each time the laundress removed wet clothes from one container to another, from the wash to rinse

[10] "The Slave Cabin," *Sotterley Archives*.
[11] David G. Brown, *Sotterley: Her People and Their Worlds, Three Hundred Years of a Maryland Plantation*, (Baltimore: Chesapeake Book Company), 2010.

> or from the soaking water to the wash pot for boiling and then into the rinse, she removed the clothes and squeezed the water out. The final process involved lifting and wringing water from ordinary garments before hanging them on clothes lines outside. The “fancy wash”- special clothes and some household linens- might need starch, therefore requiring another process before hanging the laundry out to dry. The total weight lifted in one day was monumental and exhausted the best of the laundresses.”

Drying the clothing required the least amount of work, although it was a weather permitting endeavor. Any sudden downpour would ruin the entire washing cycle and it would have to start all over again. During the winter or when rain was inevitable, makeshift clothes lines were stretched across the kitchen. This presented problems of its own. Clothing soured easily and was a breeding ground for mildew. Therefore, laundresses kept a watchful eye over garments that were dried inside. Ironing required that flat irons that were heated over a stove be used to remove wrinkles from fabrics. One of the biggest problems that arose from this method was that the temperature was never consistent. As a result the fabrics were easily scorched. An inexperienced domestic slave doing the family's ironing could be disastrous.

* * * * *

“Food as a Class Barrier in Southern Maryland: A Case Study at Sotterley Plantation”
St. Mary’s College of Maryland Research Paper, authored by Ruth Wrenn

It is certain that the slaves would have regularly eaten fish, whether it was supplied to them or they caught it themselves. Many Works Progress Administration accounts of ex-slaves in Maryland mention fish. Most narratives are so uniform on this one issue that they are not likely to be false. “Aunt” Lucy Brooks, when asked about her diet during slavery, responded, “I had mostly clabber, fish and corn bread. We get plenty of fish down on the bay”.

James V. Deane, a Charles County slave, reported,

> “Our food was very plain, such as fat hog meat, fish and vegetables raised on the farm and corn bread made up with salt and water. My choice food was fish and crabs cooked in all styles by my mother. You have asked about gardens, yes, some slaves had small garden patches which they worked by moonlight”.

Slaves were given the least desirable, fattiest parts of the hogs, sometimes known as fatback. The masters’ reason for choosing this portion to feed the slaves reflects their rationalization for slavery itself. They claimed that fattier meat provided more energy for manual laborers. This was merely an excuse, although probably an unconscious one, to save the choice parts for themselves while literally feeding their scraps to the slaves.

Food preparation was limited for the slaves to those foods which they had the time and tools to prepare. For the poorly stocked hearths of the slaves, one-pot preparation was a necessity. Thus a tradition emerged of cooking the green vegetable and the meat, usually pork, in the same pot. This method allowed the slaves to save the juices or “pot likker” and thus to retain the vitamins which would have been lost through other cooking methods.

The most necessary utensil, and often the only utensil, was a three-legged iron pot with a lid, sometimes known as a Dutch oven. Gourds served various purposes in addition to carrying water: they were used for storage or as bowls. Home-woven baskets were widely used. Finally, some slaves also had an iron skillet. Given their limited kitchen supplies, any other tools which could serve a double purpose often did. The blades of hoes were used in place of a skillet for frying cornbread or "hoecake" over an outdoor fire. Indoors, at the hearth, hoecakes were known as "ashcakes" because they baked in the ashes on the bricks of the fireplace. Sweet potatoes could also be baked in the coals, and thus were a convenient "pre-packaged" food.

The reason, obviously, for the time limitation on food preparation was that the slaves were working all day, and could not tend a fire in their homes. When slow-cooked meals were prepared, it was usually by an older woman who stayed behind and watched the children.

Inside the manor house at Sotterley, entrees were not limited by the time or tools required for preparation.

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Agnes Kane Callum: *Here at Sotterley they weren't permitted to have a garden of their own and every Saturday they would go to the cookhouse door and they would be issued a piece of middlin meat – that's fatback. A peck - in that day they used peck instead of bushel that we use today. A peck of white potatoes or a peck of greens.*

4. Photo of vegetables and produce to be used as set pieces during the "Prince of Slaves" filming. Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

Well that didn't suffice 18 people in one slave cabin. So the men would get up in the middle of the night and then they would set traps for possum, squirrels, and rabbits. Not only that – they'd go down to that creek and dam the creek so the fish couldn't go but so far and they could just pick 'em out of the water. And this way they'd supplement their diet.[12]

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[12] Agnes Kane Callum, *Sotterley Oral History Project,* By Meredith Taylor, April 21, 2008.

"Family Life among African-American Slaves"
St. Mary's College of Maryland Research Paper, authored by Kimberly A. Potter

Life was especially difficult for slave women who dealt with harsh working conditions under circumstances in which they were pregnant and trying to raise children. It seemed as though their work never ended; they toiled in the field or in the master's house all day and then had to concern themselves with their own families.

The group that was probably most severely affected by slavery was the children. While in rare cases the slave children were allowed to play with the masters' children and were educated, for the most part children of American slavery had very little childhood. One source indicates that children joined their parents in the tobacco fields to work between the ages of seven and ten. Other slave children were left in the care of others, while mothers had to go work in the fields. These others included other siblings and older relatives and kin. The kinship network that was established on these plantations also helped in the responsibility of child care. Even though there was someone usually watching the children, it was inadequate supervision. When there was no one to watch a child, the mother would have to take them with her to the field, an equally unsafe environment for children.

There is no reason to believe that many of these traditions were not a part of the slaves' lives on the Sotterely plantation. From records, such as the Slaves Census of 1864, there were probably families constructed on the plantations due to the similar last names and ages of some of the slaves.

Oftentimes, it was necessary for the slave to trick the master for survival. Some African American folk stories simply described means for survival. Agnes Kane Callum told me the following story, handed down through her family;

> "Old Dr. Briscoe did not allow his slaves to grow their own food. They were often left hungry, and wanting for protein. In the middle of the night, slaves would go out to catch possum, squirrels, rabbit, or fish. They would bring the small game back to the slave quarters, where it would be prepared for Sunday's meal. This is how slaves supplemented their diet."

* * * * *

"The Making of a Nation"
St. Mary's College of Maryland Research Paper, authored by Krissy Hudgins

What sort of techniques did the master use to control and intimidate his slaves? A popular means was the ghost story. This was employed in order to keep slaves from wandering off at night or leaving for "vacations". Such stories were enhanced by groups of white men roaming around in white sheets. And when the more subtle tactics did not work, direct measures were taken. These included locking the slaves in their cabins when the work day was done. And of course the master had the power to punish his slaves, either directly or indirectly. A master may impose a beating on a slave he does not like. A master may be so inclined to sell off family members of a slave he does not favor. In being the central authority figure of his plantation and as a part of the ruling class; more often than not the master had the upper hand in most power struggles.[13]

[13] "The Making of a Nation," Krissy Hudgins, *Sotterley Archives*.

Sotterley's Slave Cabin

5. Sotterley's slave cabin. The only remaining slave quarters at Sotterley, the slave cabin is also one of the few original structures left intact in the state of Maryland.
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

In 1996 Sotterley retained the services of several archeologists from Colonial Williamsburg to conduct a thorough archeological survey of Sotterley's grounds, including the remaining slave cabin. Some of the findings of that survey are listed below:

The last surviving workers' house at Sotterley has a timeless, unchanged appearance, offering an evocative glimpse of the material lives of slaves in the decades just before the Civil War. It is remarkably informative and unspoiled yet it has experienced the complex history of most such buildings, with the changing expectations and interests of various occupants and owners. It began as a home for slaves associated with the main plantation, possibly including people who did domestic work at the nearby owners' house as well as laborers in the fields of the house farm. Modest improvements were made soon after the Civil War, and further changes some thirty years later brought the house up to something approaching conventional standards for many Chesapeake rural workers. Several changes made at mid-twentieth century returned elements of the house to their nineteenth-century appearance without erasing much evidence of the people who lived in the house thereafter.

6. Sotterley's slave cabin, with window pictured.
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

The building's location, the nature of the accommodation it provided, and its technological character are significant. It is said to have been one of about five such houses located in a narrow strip of flattened ground between a deep ravine and an old road stretching from the plantation's agricultural buildings south of the house.

Both the building site and road were cut into sloping ground south of the field between the main house and river. As a result, only the top of the house was visible to people living on the hill, and the mansion would not have been easily visible from the quarter. This general pattern of partial visibility can be recognized at other eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Chesapeake plantations such as Carter's Grove in James City County and Prestwould in Mecklenburg County, Virginia. The owners held large acreage and among the largest numbers of slaves in their respective counties, and in all three cases, the known quarter may have housed families that did work at the owners' house as well as people specialized in trade and agricultural work on the house farm.

Sotterley's remaining quarter reflects this status as well as its date. The latter is perhaps about 1840 and almost certainly between 1830 and 1850.

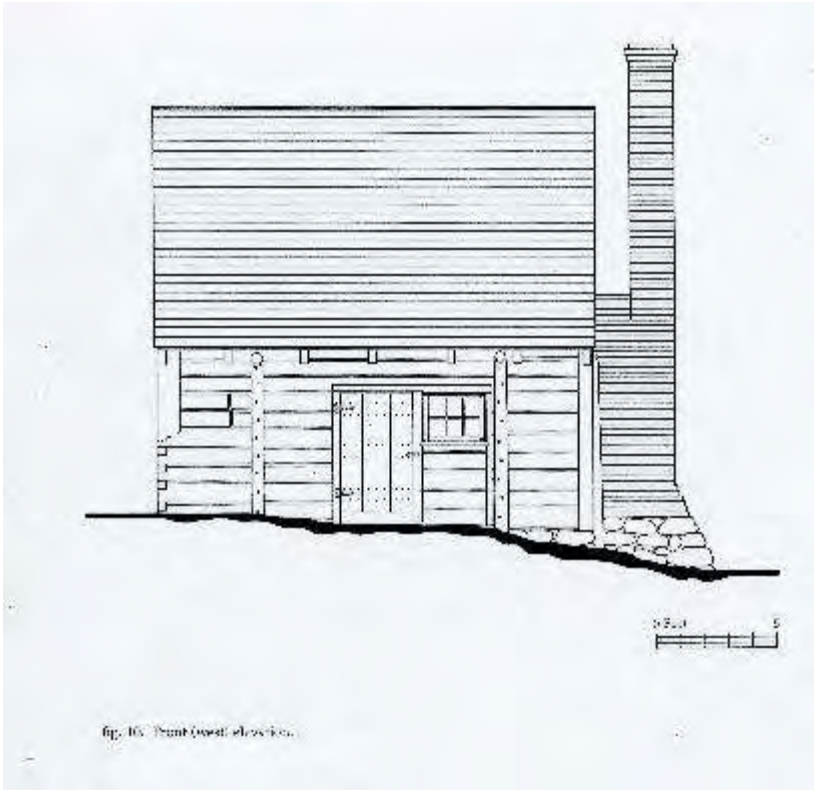
Mabel Satterlee Ingalls told Elizabeth Harman that her father, Herbert L. Satterlee, burned the other four houses as useless soon after buying the property in 1910.

Much of its size (relatively large, at 18' by 16') and substance are related to the development of what passed for model slave housing in the late antebellum era. Headroom in the single first-

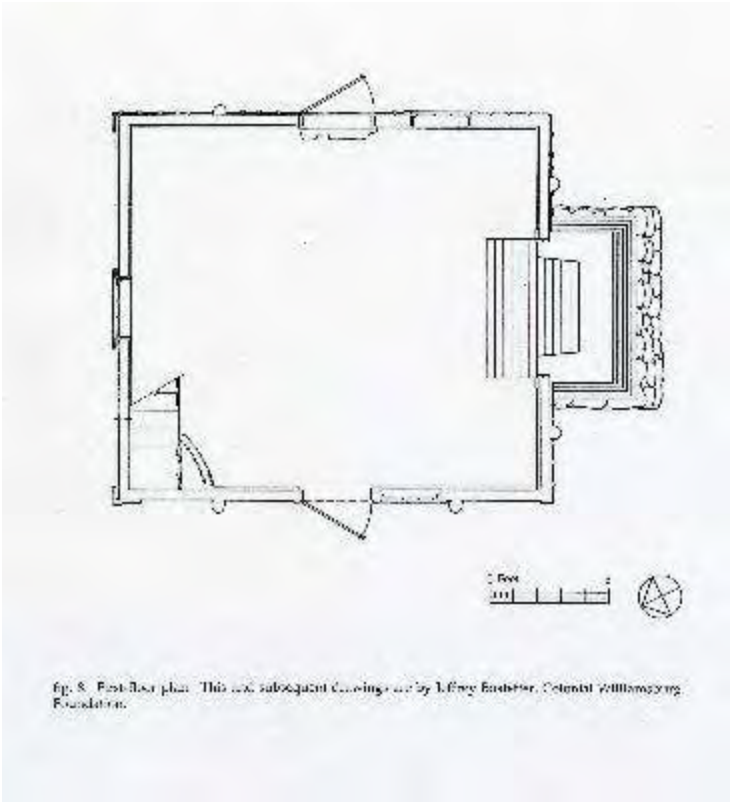
floor room is now 6'8' (to the top of attic joists, 6' ½" to the bottom of joists), roughly what it probably was in the nineteenth century, and there has always been a usable attic. The plank walls now touch the ground in places, but some of this is the result of slow subsidence, and the structure was built sufficiently solid to survive for a century and a half. The present brick and chimney appears original, and it would have been superior to the many wooden chimneys still used for much poor housing at mid-century. The frame is also entirely hewn and sawn, rather than left partially unworked in the manner of some cheaper quarters.

On the other hand, this was no easy house in which to live for people who were intimately familiar with the many well-finished spaces occupied by their owners. For all its solidity, the house is constructed like agricultural buildings such as corn cribs, with plank walls unfinished inside and out. Likewise, the ceiling framing and attic flooring were visible below, and the main floor was originally clay, not wood. The attic was lighted by two windows with hinged wood shutters rather than sash. While it would be reasonable to assume there were similar or better windows downstairs, indirect evidence suggests there may have been no openings other than doors there. Outside doors are much more like those commonly used on work buildings than well-finished houses. They were wide (2'11") but so low (roughly 5') that one has to lean over to enter the house. A more subtle feature linking these to agricultural buildings is that the door leaves swing out rather than into the room.

7. The main door of the slave cabin, with ceiling beams visible.
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley



8. Architectural profile and floor plan of Sotterley's slave cabin.



9. Sotterley's slave cabin, with a view showcasing the structure's unusual chimney.
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

The building's form is conventional for single-room-plan houses built in the Chesapeake from at least the early eighteenth century until the Civil War. It is slightly longer than it is deep, with a doorway centered on the front and rear walls. Present window frames installed about 1910 to hold casement sash are located between the doorways and chimney (south) end and centered in the opposite (north) end. These are all traditional locations for windows among single-cell Chesapeake houses, but there is no evidence for earlier windows in the same positions, and the rest of the walls are unbroken inside. It is quite possible, then, that originally there were no first-floor windows. James Scriber was born and grew up at Sotterley. In 1978 he told George W. Mc Daniel that he remembered this building being without first-floor windows. McDaniel, *Hearth and Home: Preserving a People's Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), p. 72. Occupants would have had to open the doors and deal with additional discomfort in cold weather to have light, just as they had to experience the elements when opening the shutters upstairs. Upstairs shutters were hung on butt hinges in openings between the gable studs, centered on the north gable and pushed toward the front of the south gable by the chimney.

The chimney is placed outside in the normal fashion, with a stack rising free of the gable because of the lack of an attic fireplace. The brickwork consists of hard-fired red brick laid in four-and five-course American bond with lime (seemingly not shell) mortar in joints that taper back at their base, all consistent with a second-quarter date. Brickwork steps out at the base and sits on a wide and rough platform of unworked brown sandstone intended to prevent the chimney from falling down the hillside to the south. Inside, the brick around the firebox is exposed, and an iron lintel supports ordinary bricks laid as a flat arch above the opening, which is 4'1" wide, 1'10" deep and now 3'6" high. An iron trammel bar in the flue suggests that the fireplace was intended for work, including cooking, as well as heating, and there is no visible evidence for the fireplace being converted of use with a stove.

Originally a stair rose to the attic through an opening in the ceiling at the right rear (southeast) corner. This was probably a ladder stair, passing about a part of the fireplace. Lack of an enclosure below is suggested by the presence of original boxing above sufficient to separate the floors and perhaps to keep some heat trapped below. The enclosure within the attic was created by nailing rough, unplaned boards to the side and top of a door frame hung with a board-and-batten leaf. The leaf resembles the surviving exterior door and shutter, and it too was hung with cast-iron butt hinges. The rest of the attic was left unfinished, with rafters, roof collars, and shingle left exposed. A hole drilled in the side of the stair enclosure at collar height may indicate that a cloth was hung along the back (east) slope to separate a small space there for privacy or storage.

Virtually every slave house ever seen in the Chesapeake today was upgraded somewhat after the Civil War, when workers apparently demanded higher material standards. While there were no dramatic changes to the Sotterley slave house, like the construction of additional rooms and a porch, or perhaps even a stove, there were modest adjustments about 1870, when the property remained in the hands of its antebellum owners.

10. The slave cabin's stairs, leading to its attic.
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

Most of these had to do with the stairs and attic. The relative position of woodwork and clay nogging suggest that the changes took place in the following sequence. The old stair passing over the fireplace was found inconvenient, so a new stair was built in the front left (northwest) corner, with treads laid on rough stringers cut out to carry them. The old stair was torn out, and its door was cut down and nailed over the joists to block the opening, leaving the original stair enclosure to serve as a doorless closest. Then the new stair was enclosed with a similar box constructed of thin, rough boards and hung with a door of the same character. Long boards carefully cut to fit around the rafter feet were added in an effort to help seal the attic from drafts, and clay noggin was pushed into spaces around these, as well as above the closet floor and between the ends of shingle lath which would otherwise permit drafts. A partition of similar thin, rough boards was built to separate two attic spaces, the inner one provided with the old stair enclosure-cum-closet. Presumably the intent was to create separate bedrooms upstairs. James Scriber reported that while most of the small houses he remembered as a youth in St. Mary's County had undivided space in the attic, some families increased privacy by building "some kind partition with boys on one side and girls on the other. Sometimes they had an old blanket stretched across so you couldn't look right in."

Quoted in McDaniel, *Hearth and Home,* p. 81. Boards were nailed along the sides of the new stair downstairs to prevent people from falling, in the absence of a railing. Perhaps about this time a series of salvaged iron cloak pins were screwed into the adjoined joist, apparently to hang a cloth closing off the stair downstairs.

All spaces upstairs and down were whitewashed. There is no visible evidence for addition of a wood floor downstairs or improvement of windows at this time.

Such changes did not come about until 1910, when Herbert L. Satterlee bought the property and transformed it into an estate for summer use by himself and his wife Louisa Morgan, J.P. Morgan's daughter. Soon he made more, though still limited, improvements to the quarter, possibly for an elderly black woman named Aunt Nanny or Annie Williams, born a slave. This observation was first made based on the observation of the building, but there is testimony from Mabel Satterlee Ingalls that Herbert Satterlee "fixed up" this building for an elderly black occupant about 1910. Also Edward Knott's brother Richard reports that his father said the occupant was Aunt Annie Williams, who cared for children in the main house early in this century, before Sotterley was purchased by the Satterlees. An undated memorandum by Ingalls entitled "Aunt Nannie Williams' Cabin" was in the Sotterley files when Mrs. Harman became site administrator in 1969. It states: "Aunt Nannie was living in it when we came to Sotterley in 1910 – she continued to live there till her death several years later. She had been born a slave on Sotterley. There were Persian (Harrison) yellow roses in front of the cabin. The cabin was originally log construction but was covered over with clapboard, I believe, by H. L Satterlee to preserve it and make it more weather tight."

Physical evidence makes it clear that the house was made more livable by installing a wood floor nailed to new sleepers or joists set just above ground. Three first-floor window openings were sawed through the walls, and these were finished with unplaned trim and stock six-light sash, all held in place with wire nails. The circa 1870 partition upstairs was apparently removed at this time.

11. The fireplace in Sotterley's slave cabin.
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

The outside appearance was improved by sheathing the plank walls with vertical boards and battens, but there was no improvement of interior finish beyond further whitewashing on both levels. Planks, upper floor joists, and attic framing were all left exposed, never covered with sheathing or paper. Williams or other residents appear to have continued using an open hearth for cooking and heating.

By 1920s, the house appears to have been vacant and unused.

The final significant change came around the middle of the twentieth century, presumably between 1947, when Mabel Satterlee Ingalls became heir to Sotterley, and 1961, when ownership was transferred to the Sotterley Mansion Foundation. No longer occupied by a tenant, the house was gently nudged back towards its assumed appearance as a slave quarter. Board-and-batten siding was removed from all but the chimney (south) end. Contemporary wood flooring and joists were removed from the downstairs, and a clay floor was brought up nearly to the top of the sills. Presumably it was at this time that an impressive stack of marl and clay mortar were inserted to support the lower end of the stair.[14]

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The interior of Sotterley's existing slave cabin shows the window and staircase that were added after Emancipation. Originally, ladder stairs at opposite corners of the cabin led to the loft for sleeping. The floors were hard-packed clay. Pots and utensils for cooking and eating, ongoing work on clothes, tools for survival, and perhaps a few sticks of furniture made from scraps would have been inside. Grain sacks stuffed with corn husks or feathers would have sufficed for a bed on the ground for most.[15]

This cabin is relatively large at eighteen feet by sixteen feet, but is still typical of slave housing just prior to the Civil War. The chimney appears to be original and would have been superior to many of the wooden chimneys in the homes of poor white people at mid-century. Its hewn and sawn pine plank walls represent a common method of Chesapeake construction for simple agricultural buildings. However, John Michael Vlach, in his study of slave architectures, *Back of the Big House*, notes that this particular cabin is unusually well constructed – a testimony to the African Americans who built it. The frame is entirely hewn and sawn, rather than left partially unworked as in the manner of some cheaper quarters. As was typical, the interstices were daubed with clay and mortar. One notable difference from other such structures, earthfast posts were abutted to the plank walls to prevent them from buckling.

12. The slave cabin during filming of "Prince of Slaves." Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

[14] "The Slave House at Sotterley, near Hollywood, St. Mary's County, Maryland: Architectural Investigations and Recommendations," Jeffrey Bostetter, Edward Chappell, Willie Graham, Mark Wenger. September 27, 1995.
[15] Jeanne K. Pirtle, *Images of America: Sotterley Plantation* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing), 2013

13. View of Sotterley's mansion from the slave cabin.
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

14. View of Sotterley's slave cabin from the mansion.
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

The posts were held in place by pegs. This is the only known example of this method of stabilization. The cabin's partial visibility to the manor house is typical of eighteenth and nineteenth century tidewater plantations. Its proximity indicates that it likely housed slaves who worked in the manor house.[16] Clay and hog's hair, along with other similar materials, were used as chinking between the logs. In summer, the chinking was removed to let in the air. In the fall, it was replaced to keep out the cold wind. [17]

In 1910, a woman named "Aunt" Nannie Williams and at least three of her relatives were still living in this cabin. This fact, along with the cabin's location and distance from the main house, probably saved it from destruction.[18]

Charles Herbert Knott's father left the nearby Greenwell property on Steer Horn Neck Road one night, walking through the woods to Sotterley, to interview for a job with the owners in the first decade of the 1900s. John Cashner, the husband of Elizabeth Briscoe Cashner, hired his father to be Sotterley's caretaker. Speaking in the 1980s, Charles Herbert Knott recalls what his father told him about the remaining slave cabins on the Sotterley and Billingsley properties.

Charles Herbert Knott: "*When my father moved to Sotterley there were seven slave quarters. Well I remember when there was Nanny Williams down there and one on Vista Road but the one on the Vista Road was tore down and a house was built there. One of those was on Doctor Samadi's place there, going into Sotterley Heights, about a quarter mile from the main road going to Sotterley Heights, and there was another one down near Sotterley Point. So, that's one, two, three, four. And that's about all the places that I know that were slave quarters. And the one down on Sotterley Point there was a black woman who lived in there. She made sandwiches and took them over to the shore and people out on the oyster bar would come in and take a bit of the sandwiches."*

Joe McGill, a modern day re-enactor, is the founder of the Slave Dwelling Project, which helps bring attention to the nation's remaining slave homes. As part of the project, he created a documentary of a night he spent sleeping at Sotterley's slave cabin.

Video 2. Joe McGill and Sotterley's original slave cabin at the Slave Dwelling Project.

James Victor Scriber, a resident of Sotterley born on March 17, 1878, worked on the farm much of his life. He was interviewed in 1977, and described what it was like living in one of the old slave cabins on Sotterley Plantation. *"A dirt floor, I'm talking about a solid dirt floor. That's what you walked on, slept on. Oh yes, it'd be colder, but people in them days, you know, you're used to it, pay it no mind much. 'Course they slept right on the floor, what little of the floor they had. There wasn't but one room to the house, you know. Most people didn't have an upper story room. Nothin' in the world but an old bed, just a bed with some straw into it or hay or something to'other.*

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[16] "A Guide to the History of Slavery in Maryland," *The Maryland State Archive and the University of Maryland College Park* (Annapolis: The University of Maryland College Park Press), 2007.

[17] David G. Brown, *Sotterley: Her People and Their Worlds, Three Hundred Years of a Maryland Plantation,* (Baltimore: Chesapeake Book Company), 2010.

[18] David G. Brown, *Sotterley: Her People and Their Worlds, Three Hundred Years of a Maryland Plantation,* (Baltimore: Chesapeake Book Company), 2010.

Q: *You had a cotton tick?*

James Scriber: *Had a tick.*

Q: *…and stuffed that full of straw or corn schucks?*

James Scriber: *That's right. That's the way all of them, all the people the house, had the same thing. I mean all the people had…*

Q: *And you'd pull your beds up next to the fire at night?*

James Scriber: *Yes, at nights.*

Q: *And then during the day?*

James Scriber: *Move 'em out, roll 'em up, move 'em back in the corner, until the next night again.*

Q: *So your beds would not be plank beds?*

James Scriber: *Right, right where, mostly where you slept at, to tell you the truth. Specially didn't have no upstairs, some people had upstairs, you know, like I got in the house here now, where they slept at, you know, children mostly. There'd be mostly children slept at, you know, upstairs.*

Q: *Yes, and downstairs the parents would sleep.*

James Scriber: *That's where the parents mostly'd sleep.*

Q: *Now, would they have a plank bed or…. you were describing before about sleeping up next to the fire, would they just be putting a blanket or these cotton ticks down on the floor, or would there be a bed frame that you would sleep in?*

James Scriber: *No, indeed, nothing, right down there on the floor. Now the older people might've had, you know, some kind of bedstead, you know. But all the children up to around 13 or 14 years old slept right down on the floor. And some of the old people, you know, slept the same way. Wasn't like it is now.*

Sometimes, you know, two families will live in the same house, had to do it because people in those days, you know, were poor. And you couldn't do no better. Well, they didn't have a whole bunch of children, most of them didn't like is now. Some only maybe had one or two, maybe three children, but they never had no whole school of children in those days.

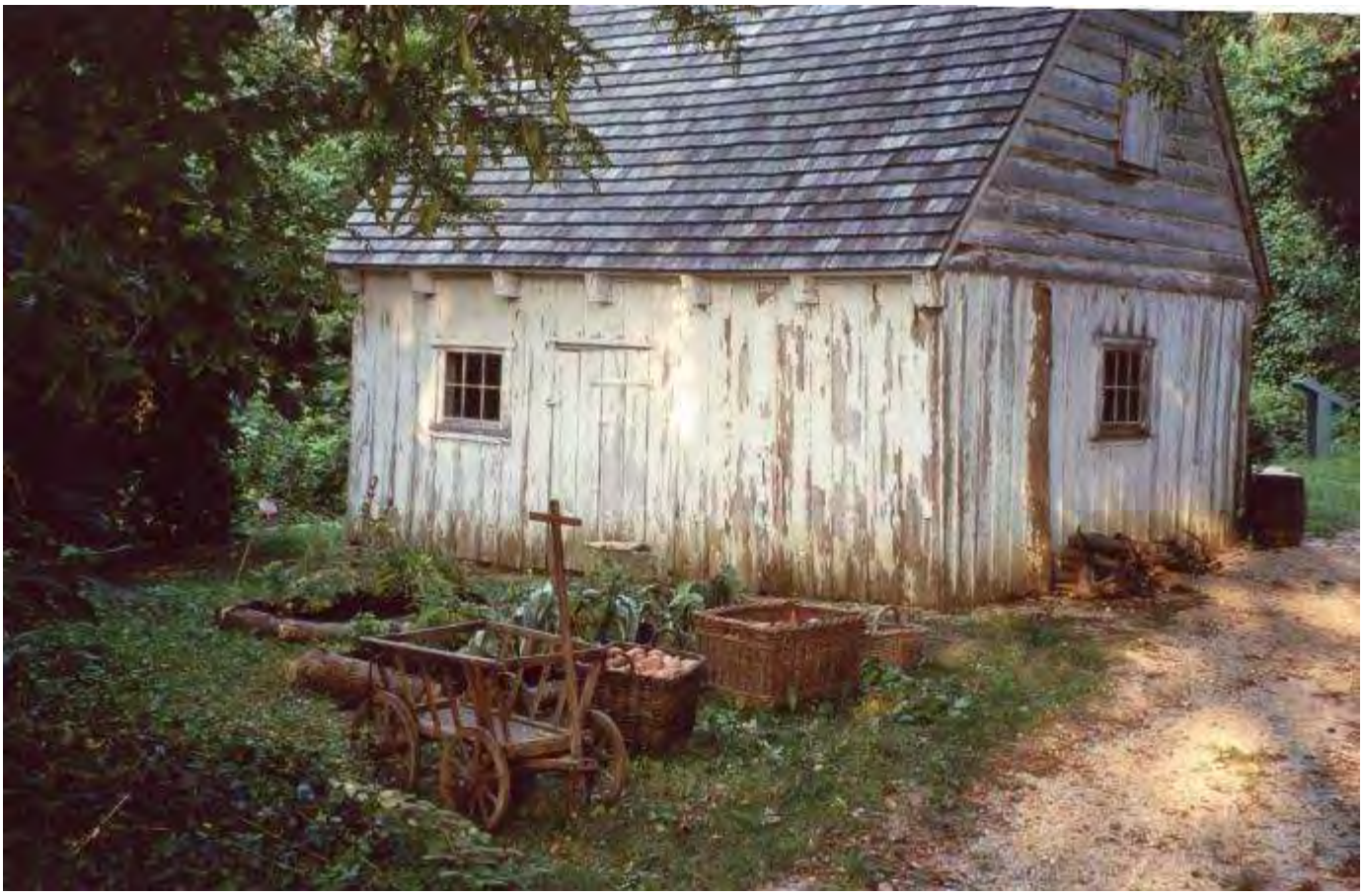
Slavery was a bad time.[19]

* * * * *

Agnes Kane Callum: *"I can touch the slave cabin. "It may even be the one, of the 10 once here, that my grandfather was born in."*[20]

[19] "Interview with Mr. James Scriber, February 5, 1977," *Sotterley Archives*.

[20] "Sotterley Put on Short List of Endangered Historic Sites," The Enterprise, June 19, 1996



15. The slave cabin's east side, during filming of "Prince of Slaves."
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

Slave Graveyards

When one visits Sotterley, the location of the mansion and gardens is readily apparent. The location of the original slave cabin is easily found, though initially out of sight. Hidden from view are unmarked graves. Graves of slaves and tenant farmers are located on Sotterley and on land that used to be part of Sotterley.

16. A painting of what a slave burial may have looked like, by artist Charles Lilly.
Courtesy of the National Park Service

Richard and Herbert Knott, children of the caretaker hired in the early 1900s by Elizabeth Briscoe Cashner, were interviewed by John Horton about a gravesite located on what today is referred to as the Samadi property.

John Horton: *"Mr. Satterlee thought the grave was there."*

Richard Knott: *"They don't know, they don't know. Right across the hill from it, there used to be a burying ground, right across the hill over there."*

Herbert elaborated on that*: "You know where the house is at, to the left hand and the fence line runs off back over to the woods?" (Note: This is the house behind the turkey house.) "It's almost in line with that fence, across the ravine on Dr. Samadi's side. At one time there was a large chestnut tree there, but the chestnut tree that's all rotted and gone now, but I remember when there was cedar crosses there where the slave burying ground was. Do you remember?"*

Richard Knott: *"Yeah, I remember that. But that's right down at the foot of the hill, back there going down to your (Horton's) house—right down at the foot of the hill, right across the ravine."*

Herbert: *"No! It's up further than that."*

Richard: *"It's down—you know where Dr. Samadi?—it's down in the little woods, there.*

Herbert: *"It was up there, in the edge of the woods, almost across from where that fence line goes--"*

Richard: *"Well, that's where the fence line's at, Herbert--"*

Herbert continues to put the burying ground where the chestnut tree stood and Richard continues to place it further down: *"You go down the hill and go across, it's right on that hill there."*

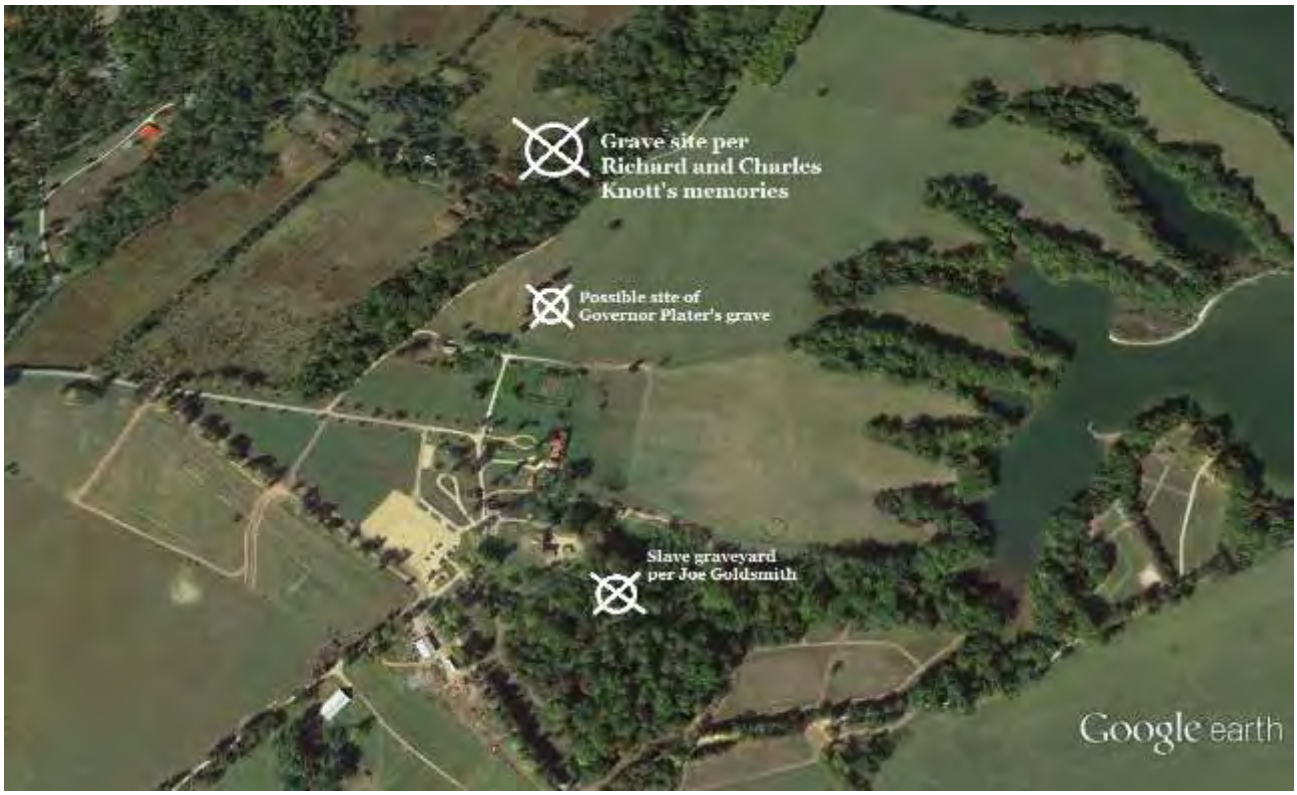
The discussion turned then to a road that crossed the ravine down the hill.

Herbert said: *"You know when you get down to more or less, down there at the bottom, the road turns and go down and the house sitting here, well, right here was an old cart road that--"*

John Horton: "One still can see where a road went through the ravine."

Herbert: "I don't know whether they're still standing there or not but at one time there was, some years back, there was two posts there. I suppose that was probably the gate. It was an old ox cart road and it went on across to that the Hutchins place. And over there—do you remember where that old house used to be down in the bottom of Dr. Samadi's house? Way down to the edge of the woods."

Richard Knott: *The slaves were buried going down to, next to where Uncle James Scriber lived. Down the hill, right across the ravine which is Dr. Samadi's land now. And when I was a boy there used to be crosses there. And that's where all the slaves were buried. Now, right in the back of the sheep barn there was a black baby, so Uncle James Scriber told my brother Herbert. And there is a concrete marker there where a black baby is buried, right behind the sheep barn in the woods.*



17. Three possible grave sites at Sotterley Plantation.
Satellite Image from Google Earth

John Horton: I asked Herbert Knott again about the slave burying ground with the cedar crosses discussed in the first interview. Herbert said that it was, "—on the other side of that ravine, now I don't know whether it's up, whether it's down, but I remember when there was cedar crosses there but they soon (rotted?) off and there was a tremendous large tree there—" I suggested it was a chestnut as he earlier had told me.[21]

* * * * *

Joe Goldsmith is the current grounds maintenance supervisor at Sotterley. After a recent hurricane, he discovered what he believes is a different slave graveyard located in the woods in the general vicinity of the remaining slave cabin. He describes his discovery as follows:

Joe Goldsmith: *You can tell, these locust trees, see these groves of locust? They're little immature locust. That's a tell-tale sign of pasture land or farm land that they just let go and migrate. If you look behind them you can see the mature trees and the river is right here in the distance. Here at Sotterley there's an obvious place for a graveyard that we've come across. It was, I would bet to say, sharecropper level or if it would've been prior to that... The farm I grew up on was owned by the Church, and had a cemetery from the 1600's. Over time parts of the cemetery had grown over. There were wooden crosses before the stone marker thing. And when I was a young boy my dad sent me over there, I remember it was July, to help clear it off; we had a bulldozer on our farm. The fella who had worked at the Church forever; he did the graves and some grounds maintenance. He kind of taught me what to look for when we were cleaning up. Typically the grave yards would never be on a slope higher than the drinking water. He always said that it would contaminate before, when they had shallow wells. If it was on a slope above it they would never put it on there either. They wanted it on a down slope or higher elevation but they would never put it in the water table. I guess contamination would be the issue. The other thing is, in wooded areas you look for flowers that come up just randomly, stone markers, really rough cedar posts that are lying around.*

The flowers are not random by any means. They were left there and reseeded themselves. Left there with a grave, absolutely, from family members visiting and have gone to seed and just have regenerated them year after year. But probably the biggest tell tale sign is what we refer to as bull briers. In wooded areas that's not a really prominent thing. Normally. Anybody knows that if you take a site at your home and you don't mow it, in a year's time it becomes a briar patch. Here at Sotterley because of Hurricane Irene we were cleaning the woods up and I ran into a huge pile of trash and debris right in the middle of the woods. Tires from 1920 when they just started doing pneumatic tires, stuff just piled up, just random farm stuff. Every farm always had a little dump site. It was usually near the gravel pit where they got the gravel for the roads. I got to looking and I said "There was a grave here." It was very obvious but unfortunately some of those burial sites were not maintained and I'm sure that one just grew up over time.

[21] Knott, Richard, and Shawn Knott. Memories of Sotterley. Hollywood: Richard Knott, 2010.

18. An aerial view of Sotterley, showing the slave cabin and its proximity to the possible location of the slave graveyard.
Satellite Image from Google Earth

Samuel Baldwin: *Did you find any other indications or…?*

Joe Goldsmith: *Fence hardware. There was actually a gate back there. The posts are still lying there randomly. And if you look at the outline of the graveyard you can see where the mature trees were and the outline of where it was actually cleared at one time. It is located behind the barn, probably the highest elevation on the property, adjacent to the original gravel pit of the place and right on that knoll you can look over the Patuxent River. I would bet to say with the condition of it when we were removing the trees that were blown down and blocking our trail system the graves were kind of random. Or the supposed graves were random, there were indentations throughout it.*

Samuel Baldwin: *You were mentioning the indentations of the dirt. What does that tell you? Why is it significant?*

Joe Goldsmith: *You know as I was taught, and I never forgot, the fella at St. Ignatius Church told me: "You know when you're digging a grave that 90% of the time you throw your dirt to the left because people are predominantly right handed." When you dig a grave the strata of dirt gets flipped over. So the top of your soil gets flipped on the bottom and the spoiled dirt ends up on top, that never goes back together consistently like you're flipping the ground around it. Just look for the outline once you get the top soil off of it and it's there just as plain as day. From my understanding from the English typical Catholic burial, you know everything in the right direction, everything six foot deep. And up there in the woods it's very random. You can tell it's very random which isn't like a typical English cemetery.*

Samuel Baldwin: *What would it take to further verify the existence of this as a burial site for the slaves?*

Joe Goldsmith: *Well, we've had several people look at it. Jeanne Pirtle actually found an interview, Jeanne being our educational director, about somebody's grandmother from one of*

the descendants of the slaves talking about going across the ravine from the slave cabin up to the cemetery.

Samuel Baldwin: *So the ravine we're talking about is the rolling road?*

Joe Goldsmith: *Right. There's an actual fence line that takes you, if you follow it, from the slave cabin right to the site. So it would make perfect sense that they would follow the fence line right to it.*

Samuel Baldwin: *What about that fence?*

Joe Goldsmith: *The fence line would've been maintained from both sides of it. For just general maintenance and inspection of the fence, that would've been a natural path to take you to that area. The other thing is farm land. Tillable farm land is such a valuable thing that places that weren't used for pasture or anything like that were always selected for grave yards*. *Unfortunately to the slave side of it, it was probably not by any means even talked about. The only people who probably took care of it were the caretakers from generations past. I think it's unfortunate that that kind of stuff gets lost. If you have the ability to bring it back and talk about it it's something well worth to do.*

I was saying that I've seen some research that they talked about on the slave burial that the water was a very significant part of it. It relates to the River Jordan and that they would typically place them in a place where they could see water if possible. This site in the woods is one the highest elevations and you can see Sotterley Creek and the Patuxent River from the site.

Samuel Baldwin: *So now we're talking about the location of the burial site.*

Joe Goldsmith: *Right. And you can tell the elevation here is the highest point of this property. That's a wild cherry tree. That cherry tree is probably a hundred years old. Everything in here was just like this. These bull briers. These locust posts were saw cut by hand and they're scattered out around this land.*

Samuel Baldwin: *Now what were you pointing to?*

Joe Goldsmith: *The locust post, it would've been used as a fence post. In there is a wire fence that takes you to the slave cabins.*

Samuel Baldwin: *In that collection of bull briers?*

Joe Goldsmith: *Right. This has since been cleaned up. These two stalks right here, I left them here on purpose. There are two one-hundred feet perfectly matched cedar trees. One there, one there and this was the entrance to it. There's the river. It goes right down and if you look at the mature trees it takes you right back up where it was. The road came right through here and it took you right to the barn and it's on the back side of that fence. We found an old gate right on that end there. But I would say this one is the oldest one on site.*

Samuel Baldwin: *Grave site?*

Joe Goldsmith: *Right. Flowers come up here around the perimeter in the early, early spring.*

Samuel Baldwin: *These are flowers that are not random?*

Joe Goldsmith: *No, they would've been brought up to the site and planted long ago. But you can obviously see the mature tree line which is on the slope. And this was exactly like this; it was nothing but a solid pile of bull briers. Look at that stump there, it was cut with a handsaw years and years and years ago.*

Samuel Baldwin: *Why is that significant though?*

Joe Goldsmith: *It would've been prior to a chainsaw. You take a log that's been cut with a two man saw it's totally different, the curve is totally different than one that has been cut with a chainsaw. If it was a cedar log or locust log they knew that it would be there forever. The other thing is they probably would never be allowed to use any prominent lumber that could be used for building. They had to use what they had to work with. That's in theory but it would make sense.*

19. The suspected slave graveyard site at Sotterley. Pictured are the stumps of the two cedar trees that are believed to mark the entrance to the graveyard. Both trees were the same age and spaced exactly 10 feet from each other. Courtesy of Joe Goldsmith

Samuel Baldwin: *Are you saying the cedar tree was the marker?*

Joe Goldsmith: *The two matching Cedar trees, which unfortunately blew over, were the dead giveaway. They were perfectly spaced, perfectly matched and then there were random trees sitting here. There was a Holly that was really maintained. There was also a Magnolia. And when the Cedar trees came down they took them all out which was really unfortunate. I just cleared it to clean up*

what we had to clean for the trails, so it wouldn't disturb anything else until we can further research it. If the fence line was from here to the slave cabin it would be a very short little hike.

Samuel Baldwin: *So they would be on a hill looking out to the river.*

Joe Goldsmith: *It would also be using a non-agricultural piece of land. The gravel pit is right here, if you walk over here and that gravel pit is another significant place on this site. Prior to heavy equipment all these roads had to be constructed. So that would've been done with mules, wagons and shovels. This pit down here is the result of probably a hundred years of hand labor which is right here. This is where they came out right here. This would've been the slope out. And they just ran out of gravel. This is the gravel which is perfectly matched with what's on the ground today. But once again in a non-agricultural piece of land.*

20. Gate hardware uncovered by Joe Goldsmith at the location of the suspected slave graveyard. Photo Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

Samuel Baldwin: *But let's get back to that likely slave burial site, it has similarities and differences with Governor Plater's possible site: on a hill and looking at the water. But Governor Plater's being close to the mansion, in the garden*

Joe Goldsmith: *In a maintained space, yes.*

Samuel Baldwin: *And the slave burial being…*

Joe Goldsmith: *In the farthest corner of the property as far as aesthetically being tucked away. It's so obvious. If it was a saw mill site or something you would see reminisces of it. I would bet to say that it was a grave site because of the way that it's laid out. When we cleaned it up you could see the variations in the ground and that's why we backed out of it.*

Samuel Baldwin: *The variations that you were taught to look for?*

Joe Goldsmith: *Right, absolutely it doesn't change from year to year that's for sure. Healthy bull briers like that grow. If we were to go in there right now and take a machine and flip that over you would see the variation in the ground right underneath it. Bull brier will grow on that. That ground is soft and fresh with birds picking on it. This was a significant little piece here at one time. Down here in this bottom gravel pit is a lot of the stone that you see the walls made out of in the mansion. So in here this was probably a work area and it's hard to see right now*

because it's overgrown so bad. But this was probably a cleared work area and someone probably sat under that big Sycamore and had lunch. They did a lot of masonry work that was out of the view of the rest of the operation, just like you would do it today. You wouldn't do something like that in your driveway. Or at least you would try not to anyways.

Samuel Baldwin: *So in the woods, behind the barn.*

Joe Goldsmith: *Mhm. There's also a marker back here. It's right there. The marker right here, see how the top is broken off of it? The top was a piece of nail that they had something wooden on. I think it's a boundary marker. It was well enough for them to pour that concrete around it which would've been Civil War time. So it had to be significant at that point in time to do that because this is in the middle of nowhere. Again, we have this involved road system around here. But when you're farming and trying to get work done you're not going to take your horse and carriage and go two miles out of the way. You're going to use the shortest route in and out. And this takes you right across the property.*

The thing that is so sad about that burial site is that through the process of time it just didn't get maintained or it was one of those things that they just stopped talking about and turned their head to just let it grow up. But we should probably put it back up as a memorial for all those people because they would've been a part of this place just as much as you and I.

Having left the wooded burial site, the interview continued.

Samuel Baldwin: *So now we're in your work garage, and what are you showing me?*

Joe Goldsmith: *I'm not sure, it's probably some kind of blacksmith made shackle, probably too big for a human I guess. But it came out of the area that we assumed was the slave grave yard.*

Samuel Baldwin: *Why do you think that it's too big for a human?*

Joe Goldsmith: *Not having researched it I'm not sure, but I do know that it was made from a blacksmith.*

Samuel Baldwin: *But that is about the diameter of a leg.*

Joe Goldsmith: *It could be. This came out of there and is a blacksmith made pin.*

Samuel Baldwin: *Like to open a door or gate?*

Joe Goldsmith: *Yeah and look at that, look at how they did that. The sabot before the lag bolt thing how they made that to stick in the tree. That would've been the latch for the gate. See that's a pretty significant piece of work there. You'd have to weigh that out to be there and again you can tell almost the same man made it if you look at the work.*

Samuel Baldwin: *I wanted to follow up on that. You're saying that this wasn't just randomly dumped?*

Joe Goldsmith: *Right. It wasn't randomly dumped, it was also found between two trees where the gate has obviously rotted.*

Samuel Baldwin: *So you not only have the two trees but you have that gate hardware?*

Joe Goldsmith: *Right. The other thing that's significant about that is out here was a tree that came off the hill we sawed it up for lumber because we use a lot of lumber from the site. We sawed it up here to redo the building. In the heart of this 36 inch tree we hit one of these shackles with a lag bolt like you would chain something to it, in the middle of that tree. So the tree had grown out around it about a foot. When we were sawing it we hit it with the saw.*

Samuel Baldwin: *And what would you have normally chained to a tree?*

Joe Goldsmith: *Could've been an animal could've been a person, but it did come off that hillside. It seems like most times they would just tie that to a tree so that's a big deal to put something like that there. Metal was a huge thing back then, you had to make that. So I don't know about all that.*

AMY DAVIS/SUN STAFF

Trustee: *Agnes Callum stands in front of Sotterley Plantation's remaining slave quarters, which she works to preserve.*

A Sense of Ownership

Mrs. Callum believes many of her relatives are buried on Sotterley, too, perhaps not far from the slave cabin. When she was a girl, she listened while her grandfather told her father eerie tales.

"Now," she says, retelling her grandfather's story, "there's a graveyard right on Sotterley, and it is said two of my grandfather's sisters, Temperance and Mathilda, were buried there. They died in the 1870s, of tuberculosis.

"Mathilda knew she was dying and she told… my grandfather that she would come back to visit him. She said, 'I love you so much I'll come back to see you. I will only come on clear nights when the moon is shining bright'. She said, 'You watch for me, I'll be back.'

"He said all his life he looked for his sister. He never did see her."[22]

"Religious Participation as an Expression of Freedom"
St. Mary's College of Maryland Research Paper, Authored by Michael P. Moore

Because of Dr. Briscoe's involvement with St. Andrew's Parish Church, many of his slaves attended services there before Emancipation. While at the church, the blacks were forced to sit either on the floor or on the balcony above the rest of the parishioners. In addition to their attendance at St. Andrew's, the pre-Emancipation burial records for all of the Briscoes' slaves are in St. Andrew's register. This table shows a list of slaves who were buried under the auspices of St. Andrew's Parish Church.

Burials of Slaves and Former Slaves of the Sotterley Plantation
Pre-Emancipation

Name	Date of Death	Age at Death	Cemetery
?	September 21, 1856		St. Andrew's
(Child)	1849		St. Andrew's
(Child)	1854	4 years	Sotterley
(Child)	April 15, 1855		Sotterley
(Child)	April 15, 1855		Sotterley
(Child)	April 15, 1855		Sotterley
(Infant)	April 17, 1847		St. Andrew's
(Infant)	April 15, 1847		St. Paul's
(Infant)	December 5, 1847		Sotterley
(Infant)	December 5, 1847		Sotterley
Denison	November 23, 1859		Sotterley
Francis	September 3, 1848		Sotterley
Josiah	December, 1860		St. Andrew's
Lucinda	February, 1860	19 years	Christ Episcopal
Leory Dixon Millard	August 9, 1862	4 mo. 19 days	Sotterley
Caroline Turner	1864		Sotterley
Mary Lucinda Upton	1864	25 years	Sotterley

Table compiled from *Slave Statistics of St. Mary's County, Maryland*; Agnes Kane Callum, comp., and *Burials from Tombstones, Grave markers, and Church Registers of St. Mary's County, Maryland (1634-1994)*, Janet et al., comp.

The listing of Sotterley as a cemetery is due to the fact that rather than burying the slaves at St. Andrew's proper, it was simply easier for Dr. Briscoe to bury his former slaves at the plantation. Even after Emancipation, many former slaves of Sotterley were buried on the plantation. This is due to the fact that some former slaves remained at the site as laborers and wished to be buried with their relatives as evidenced by the fact that the slave cabin which is still standing today was permanently occupied as late as 1920.

[22] The Baltimore Sun, "A Sense of Ownership Pain and Pride," By Carl Schoettler, January 22, 1996

Burials of Former Slaves of the Sotterley Plantation

Name	Date of Death	Age at Death	Cemetery
Henriette Barnes	June 6, 1879	70 years	St. Andrew's
Leander Edwards	May 30, 1891	81 years	St. Andrew's
Pricilla Edwards	February 13, 1874		St. Andrew's
Nace Hawkins	May 1, 1870	75 years	Christ Episcopal
Susan Adelaide Kane	August, 1870	2 years	St. Andrew's
Roseanna Rustin	1880	77 years	Sotterley
Hamilton Stewart	April 18, 1896	80 years	Christ Episcopal
Mary Lucinda Upton	1871		Sotterley

Table compiled from *Slaves Statistics of St. Mary's County, Maryland*, Agnes Kane Callum, comp., and *Burials from Tombstones, Grave Markers, and Church Registers of St. Mary's County, Maryland (1634-1994)*, Janet Tice, et al., comp.

Jesuit missionaries could perform funeral services but probably could not transport the bodies for burial. As a result, cemeteries to be used would have to be accessible and relatively inexpensive. Therefore, the burial sites of the former slaves listed in the above table could simply be based upon convenience rather than religious beliefs.[23]

[23] "Religious Participation as Expression of Freedom," Michael Moore, St. Mary's College of Maryland, *Sotterley Archives,* 1997.

Oral Histories Collected by the Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions and the St. Mary's College of Maryland Slackwater Project

An extensive collection of oral histories have been collected in St. Mary's County over the years. These collections are archived at St. Mary's College of Maryland. A selection of those oral histories are presented now to further illustrate the lives and conditions of the enslaved population.

Note: These oral histories do not specifically relate to Sotterley Plantation unless otherwise mentioned.

* * * * *

Sarah Evelyn Hewlett was born in Dameron, Maryland in 1923. Her grandfather was Thomas Gant and her grandmother was Sarah Ann Gough. She was interviewed in the summer of 1987: *My grandmother, Sarah Gant, was a good person, really. She had been a slave in Calvert County. She couldn't read or write. She went to school one month in her life. She had a good sense of values, really, for no more schooling than she had.*

She used to always make her, sign her, signature had to have an X, and somebody else had to sign her name. But other than that, she worked hard all her life. And she worked in the fields. You know, being a slave, she always tried to make more of whatever we were cooking. If she caught your back turned, she would fill the pot up full of water, make it go farther, I imagine - that's what they did back then, because all the slaves were underfed anyway. And many a time we would say how they used to, at night, kill a hog or something, a pig or whatever. And they had to eat it all up that night, because they were really hungry, you know, and they would take the bones and whatever they had and they would bury it, so nobody would find it.

And she would also tell us how they used to put the slaves up on the blocks, and they used to bid on 'em, they used to open their mouths and look at their teeth and see how strong they were - you know. They would have 'em on this platform and they would make 'em turn around you know, and they didn't have something ... something where they tied around their waist. They were naked from here [indicated neck] to their waist, and whatever they had hardly attired 'em - it wasn't underwear, it was some piece of cloth, and it was some way they draped it like, you know, and tucked it in like they was - something to hide their privates, and that was it. And then they were barefooted and everything. All of them were barefooted, and they didn't wear any shoes until the winter when it got so cold and they would wear shoes, but other than that they didn't wear shoes. They went barefoot.

We used to sit down beside her, and she used to tell us these things. She used to say how some of the slaves would try to run away, and when they catch 'em, they used to hang 'em up by their wrists and had a whip that they used to beat them with. She said they'd beat them until the blood run out of their backs. Then they would throw salt up and down their backs, and cut them down.

She said she had a good master because she said that he never beat them or anything. She'd say how the people was hungry, and they didn't feed them but a certain amount. Whatever was left over - the chicken feet, heads - they had to eat. That's why my grandmother used to water down everything when I used to cook. She'd catch your back turned [and] she'd

fill it up full of water. You couldn't even see what you were cooking. She said, "That's to make more." That's what they was raised off of - hogs feet. Just in later years they started eating the chitlins and stuff like that, because the white people didn't eat that. But the black people ate everything in the hog: the feet, the chitlins, and things like that.

Audio 1. Sarah Evelyn Hewlett on the physical punishment of enslaved people:

Sarah Evelyn Hewlett*: She remembered all of this, because she used to tell us about it. And some of them, they used to work them so hard, you know, and they never would give them the decent meals like they should have to do that type of work. And they worked hard all their life. Now, she was big enough to help in the kitchen. She used to wash the dishes, set the table, help with some of the cooking, make the beds, and they had something that they used to beat the rugs out with, and she used to tell us all about that.*

Andrea Hammer: *When she told you these stories, do you remember how you felt at the time?*

Sarah Evelyn Hewlett: *Bitter. I felt real bitter towards the white people, really. And it was just these later years that I found out it wasn't their fault, it was their fore parents' fault. But a lot of 'em raised their kids up to hate the blacks anyway. Because it was in 'em to start with. But, anyway, she told me that her master never beat them or anything, was very good to them. So that made me feel better, you know, to know that some of my 'fore parents wasn't mistreated like a lot of 'em was. Because I guess I'd been dead if I was living back there in that time, because I would have killed somebody, else somebody'd a had to kill me. I wouldn't have lived to tell the tale, I know. But it's very frustrating, really. It makes you bitter - if you want to take that attitude, but I don't, 'cause I feel like this: that we are all human beings, and one day we're all going to die and leave here, and whatever's in store for you, you'll get it. But, she had a rough life, and they didn't send them to school like they were supposed to go, and they kept them dumb like that. But for going to school one month, she had good values.*

Andrea Hammer: *When did she first come to him? [Her slaveowner in St. Mary's County]*

> *She said that they didn't know anything but work. They worked from sunup to sundown, unless it started raining a lot. And then my grandmother was saying some of them used to say - they were joking and they were saying - "More rain, more rest." One time the master heard 'em talking, and he couldn't understand exactly what they were saying, and then he said, "What did you say?" And he [the slave] said, "More rain for master's crops." He was scared to say, "More rain, more rest."*

Sarah Evelyn Hewlett: *She might have been nearly fourteen. He bought her from another one of her masters, because she was telling us how mean that one was to their people, you know. So she never mentioned his name, and I don't know the name of the one she said was the good one.*

Andrea Hammer: *Would it be GOUGH?*

Sarah Evelyn Hewlett: *They usually take their name after their masters, so it could have been Gough. This must have been the man that was the good master. Because she used to often talk about him, about how good he was to them, you know. He never beat them or nothing like that, but she would describe about how they used to beat them terrible. And if they figured that they weren't working hard enough, they'd beat them, and they would hang 'em up by their wrist and draw 'em up, you know, and they'd whip 'em with a regular buggy whip, a regular whip, until they cut the blood out of 'em.*

They used to make, my grandma used to say, potato soup. It was potatoes, you know. You cut 'em up and dice 'em up like you make potato salad or something, and put onions in it and then season it with meat - a strip of lean or a strip of fat. They had a great, big, huge iron pot and they had a big ladle that they dipped it out, so they would feed the people that was working in the fields. Naturally, there was a lot of beans and potatoes. Very rarely they got any choice meat - they never got any choice meat. It was just the feet, or the hog's heads, shin bones, or chicken heads and chicken feet - stuff like that. They had to eat that.

She said that they didn't know anything but work. They worked from sunup to sundown, unless it started raining a lot. And then my grandmother was saying some of them used to say - they were joking and they were saying - "More rain, more rest." One time the master heard 'em talking, and he couldn't understand exactly what they were saying, and then he said, "What did you say?" And he [the slave] said, "More rain for master's crops." He was scared to say, "More rain, more rest." So, I mean, they really had it rough back there.

My grandmother went to school one month in her life, but you couldn't out-count her. She was smart because she could remember, when we read that Bible ... you better not leave anything out. We thought we were going to get out early. No we don't. She call us, "You done left out something. Daughter, didn't you leave out something? Honey, didn't you leave something out of the Bible? I can recall such and such a thing ..." And she could memorize things, and you couldn't be her accountant. She could count.

My grandmother used to like the song "Go down Moses." [Sings] "Go down Moses / way down in Egypt land. / Tell my Pharaoh: / Let my people go." She would sing that, and she used to sing "We are climbing Jacob's ladder." She used to sing that. And she used to sing this song: "Jesus keep me near the cross." I can't remember all of the words. But it was beautiful. And she could really sing. In the fields that's what they used to do all the time: work and sing. And some of the songs relate to them, you know. Especially the one I was singing, "Go down Moses and let my people go," 'cause they were slaves, and most of 'em related to that. And there was one special one they used to sing. It was beautiful. I can't even remember it now. Oh – "Just a close to walk with thee." She used to sing that. I notice how they were singing it in the Catholic church now.

My grandmother used to know all of the words, and we used to try to get her to sing it out, but she used to always be humming. Wherever she'd be doing her work, she always would be humming or singing, you know, because by being a slave, you know, all of the slaves when they worked from sun up to sun set ... They were in the fields. And all of them would sing, and I think the song really helped them with their work, taking their minds off how hard they were working and everything, so they would always sing in the field.

"I will cling to that old rugged cross / And someday He may exchange it for a crown / On a hill, far away, stood an old rugged cross / And turned ... I will cling to that old rugged cross

/ And someday at last I'll lay down / I will cling to the old rugged cross / and exchange it someday for a crown."[24]

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Nanny Theresa Young was born in Leonardtown in 1921, the youngest of 19 children. She was interviewed in March of 2003. "*I can remember my grandmother telling me about her childhood. She was a slave on Blackistone Plantation right where St. Mary's Academy is today [Editor's Note: the current location College of Southern Maryland, Leonardtown Campus]. That was where she was born and that's where she lived as a child until slavery was over. And when slavery was over, she was just a young woman. And, she had brothers and her mother's name was Clara. Her mistress was from Charles County. She was a Plater from Charles County. She married one of the Blackstone's, and that was her master, the big master. And, she was a child during slavery on the plantation.*

But you know, it was rough because she said her mother had to leave her in the morning' to tend the cows. She had to carry the cows to the meadow and when she left the meadow, then she went to the field to work and she never came back until after she had finished in the field and after the cows were brought back from the meadow and milked, and she carried the milk to the house. But, they had one lady to mind the children that were left in the slave quarters while their parents, you know, did their work on the plantation. But, she was seeming to be a happy child and she was not a bitter woman after she got grown. She was a gentle, kind person and she never bore no grudges or no hard feelings. That was my grandmother.

My grandmother never learned to read or write, and she couldn't read or write, but she always wanted her children to go to school and to better themselves. To get as much education as they could afford in that day.

She slept in the slave quarters and she said it was a one-room shack and it had dirt floors. They had to gather straw or leaves out of the woods and stuff it in the bags. That's what they slept on at night. I mean, we all know how terrible slavery was. And she said, like knives and forks, there weren't any. You used your fingers or sometimes she said you'd get used oyster shells and you'd scrub them real clean and white, and that's what you used. And, we all know that. I mean, we can see in movies where things were enhanced, but it wasn't enhanced for her because that's the way it was in that day. We all know. We've all had stories about slavery, and we know it wasn't glorious or glamorous at all, we all know that.

But, I feel in my heart that was the way it was. But being a God fearing person, I have learned: You don't hold animosity. We're all, I say, created in God's image and no animosity is to be held. That's what you went through, and God brought you through that. And to me, and even to my grandmother because she, like I told you, she was a very kind, gentle lady and there was no animosity. And, she did want the best for her children, and they all went to school.

My grandmother never knew her father because they were moved from different plantations. She never met him–her father. She never had a father figure in her life. All she remembered was her mother and the lady that watched the children in the slave quarters. She never remembered her father. And, she might have known who he was. And then, you know

[24] Sarah Evelyn Hewlett. *St. Mary's College Slackwater Oral History Project.* Interviewed by Andrea Hammer. August 28, 1986.

one thing? In that day, it's some things old people wouldn't tell you and they didn't discuss it with you. Only certain things they wanted you to know. And to me, it was things that were encouraging or uplifting. Some things they didn't want you to know, or I guess I won't say it wasn't important, but they just never let you know about certain things and they would let you know: A child is supposed to be in a child's place. And, certain things they just did not discuss with you. And, she never mentioned her father but only her mother and she never said anything about who her father was. But although she had brothers–two brothers, she never said anything about her father.

Stuffed hams were created back in slave time. It was the women and the men on them plantations were given certain parts of the hogs that they could keep for themselves. And, they used to take the jaw and stuff it with the vegetables and spices. And, they would tie it and boil it and cook it. And, some of their slave masters taste it and thought, "Well, it's good! But if we use the good part of the ham, it would be better." And, that is how in St. Mary's County, right here in Leonardtown, Mr. Aloysius King's mother and them people were the first people that started stuffing ham. Slaves stuffed the jaw. But stuffing the hams was started right here by Mr. Aloysius King's mother and father, and the black people stuffed them. But, they gave them the best part of the ham in order to make it a better tasting piece of meat. And, it was started right here in Leonardtown, stuffed ham, right here. And, it was good and it still is! [25]

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Charles Briscoe was interviewed in March, 2001. "*Slave ships. They were bringing them from Africa down in St. Mary's County. Well, over the years we all had heard about it now. Over the years. But a lot of information is right down here in a place called Sotterley. The whole history is down there now. My ancestors were here in the days of slavery, but, just like I said, I can't go back no further than my grandparents. That's as far as I can go back. They were the Briscoes. And that name, Briscoe, came from St. Mary's County. Came from off a plantation there in St. Mary's County. Sotterley. That was it. Sotterley. It was a large farm. Tobacco and corn farm, because cotton didn't grow here. It was further south cotton grew.*

Q: *Do you know what your people did on that plantation?*

Charles Briscoe: *Well, they worked. Tobacco workers. Yeah. Lot of tobacco. See Maryland tobacco was the best tobacco they had to ship over into England, because it was air cured. North Carolina raised more tobacco, but their tobacco wouldn't stand up, because it was cured by flue, by heat, and it would crumble up and come to dust. Maryland tobacco was packed in hogsheads, big large hogsheads, and so they worked on their tobacco.*

Q: *And these would have been your grandparents?*

Charles Briscoe: *Great-grands.*

Q: *Where do you suppose your great-grands were born?*

Charles Briscoe: *Oh, some of them was born in Africa. Some of them were. Yeah, in Ghana. That's where most of them came from. This is what I was told. I have a cousin is a genealogist, and she's got the history. She's the one really knows all about that, because she went all the way back to Africa where they originally came from.*

[25] Nanny Theresa Young, *Unified Committee for Afro-American Contribution.* Bob Lewis, November 2, 2003.

Q: *Did your grandparents ever talk about the people who came before them?*

Charles Briscoe: *No, I never heard of them talking about it. No. They just mention that the great-grands was slaves. That's all they mentioned. As we was kids we didn't pay too much attention to what they were saying. I wish I had now.*[26]

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Josephine Biscoe Holley was born in 1913 to John Henry Biscoe and Annie Loker Biscoe. She was interviewed in 1991. "*My aunt Rachael came back to this area. She worked with us on the farms and helping in tobacco and the corn fields. She said she walked a many miles to get back. Back home, she would call it and it was St. Mary's County. She walked a many mile. She said she walked night and day. And she said how she did all her walking from the South up here. Because if they had seen her coming up here and she hadn't ducked in the woods, they'd picked her up and put her right in the wagon. Because that's how they hauled those people in those days, in the wagons.*

Q: *So she was an escaped slave?*

Josephine Biscoe Holley: *Yes, she got away from them. And I can't tell you too much about that because she would tell us a little bit and then she didn't tell us too much. She would say, 'Now children, you know I have had to do this and I had to do that. Say, 'You all got candy handed to you everyday. But I wouldn't ever want to see any of you ... any of my people go back to what I came out of.' She said, 'I walked and hid a many night.' She said, 'And that's how I slept, at night. When I hid in the woods or somewhere.' She said, 'And they hunt me and hunt for me and hunt for me.' She said, 'And hunt for my brothers and some of my brothers they chained them and they couldn't get away from the farm. They chained them down.'*

My grandmother was from the free slave family. She took care of the white children. She would sit on the floor and play games with them. And her older sisters and brothers were sold to the South. She was determined she was going to find her brother and sisters, so she just rambled around and, and found them. She found that some of her brothers that were sold into slavery in the South didn't make it back cause they had started a family, but one brother came back.[27]

Audio 2. Josephine Biscoe Holley discussing her grandmother's attempts to locate her family members:

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Agnes Kane Callum: *Frank Kane got to be Dr. Briscoe's chauffer or coachman as they were called in that day. And he was very close to Dr. Briscoe. 'Course they would have*

[26] Charles B. Briscoe and Mary Louise Webb, *St. Mary's College Slackwater Oral History Project,* By Carrie Kline, December 7, 2001.

[27] Josephine Biscoe Holley. *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.

conversations as they went about making house calls. Frank Kane got married in the parlor over there in the mansion. And I got those records from the courthouse in Leonardtown. And it was a big social affair because whites and blacks were invited to the wedding. And they served the slaves sweetened water—that's cold water with sugar—and sweetbread—that's a cake with sugar it in. And that was Frank's second marriage, Frank had married a lady on the plantation, Evelina Steward.

Now Frank, who I mentioned was the doctor's coachman, he was trustworthy. Because the doctor would send him to Baltimore to pick up a load of bibles for the church, St. Andrew's Church, and I asked his daughter, "Why didn't he keep on going? He was in Baltimore, why didn't he go to Philadelphia or one of the Underground Railroad states?" She said because he didn't want to leave his family. He wouldn't think of leaving his family. So he was really trustworthy, the doctor would send him anywhere, Frank would always come back. And Frank was one of the ones that stayed on the plantation, you know, for the 15 years after the war. [28]

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Frank's daughter, Julia Kane Jordan, recalled that her father liked to talk about his life at Sotterley and of his relationship with Doctor Briscoe. When Frank was about twelve, he and his family received orders to dress presentably and come to the front of the "big house," where they were never permitted to either walk or stand.[29] He and his brothers and sisters stood in line as Doctor Briscoe and his company walked around them several times, inspecting them. Alice Elsa felt that the doctor was presenting them to a slave buyer. The doctor said nothing and finally dismissed them. Frank said everyone was quiet but Alice Elsa, who had began to weep for her children. Back in their cabin, the family speculated about being sold. In the years before the Civil War, many slaves from the Chesapeake region were sold to work in southern cotton fields, but the Kanes did not suffer that fate. Later that week while driving the doctor's carriage, Frank reportedly told the doctor that he "dared not inquire… if he intended to sell the Kanes, but if he had a master whom he served faithfully and the master made plans to sell him, then he would never serve that master again." Dr. Briscoe must have been surprised to hear such bluntness from someone so young, for he reportedly listened but did not reply.[30]

Agnes Kane Callum: *The way I can see it is that they knew that they were being watched and maybe someday they hoped to be in the situation like the people up on the hill – who knows what was going on in their minds? And since they couldn't read or write, it was against the law for blacks to learn to read or write. They didn't leave a record. The few things that my parents told me, I think they were very brave, because they would sit around the fire place at night before they go to bed and they would tell their children what happened to them in their lifetime. Now if their child didn't survive to tell me or the generation after that, then all that's lost. So I still think their survival was most important.*

Now, just this one cabin remains- a cold, gray remnant of a past that evoked anger and shame, pride and dignity.

[28] Agnes Kane Callum, *Sotterley Oral History Project,* By Meredith Taylor, April 21, 2008.
[29] Kane-Butler Genealogy: History of a Black Family, Agnes Kane Callum
[30] David G. Brown, *Sotterley: Her People and Their Worlds, Three Hundred Years of a Maryland Plantation*, (Baltimore: Chesapeake Book Company), 2010.

Mrs. Callum says two cultures existed side by side at Sotterley. And the black was invisible to the white.

"My focus is on the blacks," she says. "I think they were very brave people. To live in that slave cabin, you had to have something going for you."

She gets furious whenever a docent or tour guide suggests blacks were happy on the plantation.

"I think that it is totally, totally, totally wrong to even suggest that somebody would be happy in that hovel," she says, "when less than- how many yards away?- there's a beautiful mansion where you have to shine the silver and you have to dust and everything. They had something to compare it to. They were not stupid." [31]

Video 3. Agnes Kane Callum interviewed by ABC 7 at Sotterley Plantation.

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Agnes Kane Callum: *I think they deserve to be remembered and all accolades bestowed upon them as possible. Because those people who were slaves, as they survived the system that was really cruel- for example no shoes during the winter, a shirt at Christmastime. If they didn't have the sense or the ingenuity to make a pair of shoes out of twigs or branches or what have you- I think they should be remembered. I think he should be honored, just that he survived- he survived the system, this was a cruel system. And my people that are living today, they are proud. They are proud of our ancestors and of course of the things that they did.*

What do I think is the most important? That some of them survived the system, that's all I can say. They had to be strong physically because as I told you a lot of my people, and I'm sure a lot of slaves, died of consumption. Some of them died of measles. Measles was another hazardous disease, and they were strong enough physically to overcome this. And then to thrive within the system they knew when to say certain things, what to say, because in some parts of Maryland people were being lynched. And my people survived the system because they knew when to act and when not to act. And so that – in that way they passed their genes on down and here I am today, and my children, and my grandchildren. So I think it's important that they survived the system, the system of slavery.[32]

* * * * *

Sylvester Barnes was born in Scotland, Maryland in 1921. He was interviewed in February, 2002. "*Singing and praising the Lord, every Sunday they would sing."*

Q: *What did the old people sing?*

Sylvester Barnes: *Spirituals. Just sung spirituals.*

Q: *How far back do these songs go?*

[31] "A Sense of Ownership Pain and Pride" From The Baltimore Sun. By Carl Schoettler. January 22, 1996

[32] Agnes Kane Callum. *Sotterley Oral History Project*. By Meredith Taylor. April 21, 2008.

Sylvester Barnes: *Oh, Lord some of these songs go on back during the days of slavery. So lots of these songs were during slavery time. And those people used to sing and praise the Lord for their deliverance. They did that day in and day out while working the fields and so forth, you know. Sing all day. That's what kept them going I imagine. Slavery was pretty tough times, man standing over you with his whip all day long. Wanting you to dig in the dirt, and the mud, and everything else. Planting the crops, harvest the crops, sun up to sun down. Four hundred years is a long time.*

My people were in bondage for four hundred years, black folks. Yes indeedy, they would sing, sing whenever they could. Lot of times they'd sing so much their masters tell them to stop singing. Yeah, but anyway they managed to weather the storm, most of them. So many of them died.[33]

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Charles Briscoe: *The songs they sung were a message back in slavery to get to each community, and they done it through songs. If there was going to be a meeting, or there was going to something somewhere else they would do it with a song.*

Mary Louise Webb's grandmother came from the Parran plantation in Calvert County. She was interviewed in 2001 with Charles Briscoe. *I think Charles is saying that instead of yelling over there to someone that was there, they'd sing the song so the people would get the message. What is going on. Because they done that in communication, that's the way they communicated to one another, by singing.*

Charles Briscoe: *Well, a lot of the times the people made quilts to send a message from one neighborhood to the next what was going on around in the neighborhood back in the slavery, what it was. Like, they heard something was going to happen on another farm, and not to get the message wrong they would do it by making quilts and different things and sending them. And so, they would know what was going to happen the next day or next month or whatever.*

Q: *What kind of a message might they send?*

Charles Briscoe: *Well, maybe this plantation was going to be sold, or maybe they going to transfer people from here over to the next place. And see, they do that so the master couldn't understand what they were saying, yeah, and so they would send a message that way. And the things they did, that--. Same way in songs, they did it.* [34]

Audio 3. Charles Briscoe on how enslaved people used quilts to send messages back and forth:

[33] Sylvester Barnes. St. Mary's College Archives Slackwater Oral History Collect. By Carrie Kline. February 5, 2002.
[34] Charles B. Briscoe and Mary Louise Webb, *St. Mary's College Archives, UCAC Collection,* By Carrie Kline, December 7, 2001.

Emancipation

The Cane's sojourn at Sotterley lasted for thirty years. Hilry and his family remained on Sotterley during the Civil War. Maryland adopted a new constitution that freed her slaves on November 1, 1864, and the Canes lingered on at Sotterley. They remained with Dr. Briscoe until about 1879, when they moved from the plantation to establish a home of their own. Hilry and his wife, Elsa, died between 1885 and 1889.[35]

Even years later, slave owners who had lost their property and their labor force had not given up hope of being compensated by the federal government for their losses. To receive such compensation, slave owners in Maryland recorded all slaves they still owned on November 1, 1864. This record, known as the Slave Statistics, contains these lists submitted in 1869. Hilry Cane was owned by Chapman Billingsley but lived with the rest of his family at Sotterley, owned by Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe. Slave owners in Maryland did not receive compensation for emancipated slaves.[36]

After the war, when Frank Kane informed Doctor Briscoe of his plan to marry, the doctor offered to host the wedding in the mansion. On February 22, 1868, Frank Kane married Evelina Stewart. The bride, also a former slave, had been owned by Chapman Billingsley. Rev. Reginald H. Murphy, the pastor at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, performed the service, which meant that the marriage was consecrated by the church and recognized by the state, in contrast to the slave weddings of the past that were only unofficially blessed by itinerant preachers. The wedding was one instance of social change at Sotterley, but since it is the only such wedding known to have taken place there, it probably was a reflection of Doctor Briscoe's special fondness for Frank Kane. By 1874, Frank and Evelina had four children born at Sotterley. Evelina died in 1876 and may have been buried in a former slave graveyard located "not far from the slave quarter and near a stream."[37]

Agnes Kane Callum: *Many of the slave owners, instead of investing their money in real estate or whatever, they invested in slaves. So when the war was over they weren't compensated. Some of them went bankrupt, some of them were so angry that they lost all their money and their slaves. Cause the slaves got on the road and they were going along just looking for their relatives. My grandfather who was born a slave here, he was a baby but nevertheless he was born a slave. He left between 18 and 20 years old. But he didn't go to the city; he stayed here in St. Mary's County. And he married a lady when he was 20 years old named Sarah Somerville, but she didn't live but 10 months - she too had consumption. And that made him come to Baltimore. He came to Baltimore and lived with some people in South Baltimore, some St. Mary's County people who had been in Baltimore a couple of years – they worked at James Lumber Company. And most all the men that came up from St. Mary's County got a job at James Lumber Company. And in that house was a lady from Hermansville. And he married that lady and that was my grandmother, Delia Curtis, married Henry Kane. And it's on the roll at St. Francis Church in Baltimore in 1888.*

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[35] David G. Brown, *Sotterley: Her People and Their Worlds, Three Hundred Years of a Maryland Plantation*, (Baltimore: Chesapeake Book Company), 2010.

[36] Jeanne Pirttle, *Images of America*, Sotterley Plantation

[37] David G. Brown, *Sotterley: Her People and Their Worlds, Three Hundred Years of a Maryland Plantation*, (Baltimore: Chesapeake Book Company), 2010.

The youngest of Hilry's children, Sam Kane, was born at Sotterley in 1874. Around 1879, Hilry and Elsa left Sotterley for a new home nearby in Hollywood. Kane descendants believe that Hilry had remained at Sotterley partly out of loyalty to Doctor Briscoe and partly because it took years to save the money needed to buy a home.

Ogden Thomas was interviewed in 1991.: "*One story that will always stick by me is when my mother used to tell about her grandmother, when they were freed from slavery and how those people in that time, you know, didn't own land and property nowhere. But she said she reminded them about how they left from their slave masters and wandered up through this area. That's how most blacks owned all of this area [a farm situated on Route 235 just north of the present-day Patuxent River Naval Air Station]. And my family, the Thomases, own half of it here. And she used to tell this at different times and cry. And I was small and I felt bad because Mama was crying more than I did ... the thought of slavery. But I heard her many times."*[38]

21. Sam Kane with his wife, Laura B. Kane, in front of their home in California, MD. A gift to John Hanson Briscoe from Gwen Bankins.

Merideth Taylor is a professor at St.Mary's College of Maryland, a contributor to UCAC, and a member of the board of trustees at Sotterley. She was interviewed in 2015. "*Unlike the south, after the war, Maryland didn't have the support from the federal government that came with reconstruction. So people were economically destroyed. The whites tried to emulate slavery in basically any way they could. There was an Orphan's Court and they would take kids away and basically they gave them to farmers as workers. They made policies to force them into labor because there was just too big of a loss. The former slaves ended up moving to Baltimore and other urban areas because opportunities were so limited."*

* * * * *

Agnes Callum: *Now the Kanes were still on this plantation after the Civil War. But when Dr. Briscoe died they went down the road to California and they built a house, almost an exact replica, of the mansion.*

Meredith Taylor: *Do you have any thoughts about why they stayed on after the emancipation?*

[38] "Joan Elaine Groves." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.

Agnes Callum: *Well they didn't have anywhere to go. HIlry and Elsa and some of their children stayed on Sotterley after the Civil War. They worked in exchange for food and clothing, that's one reason. And where they got the money to build this house in California, I don't know. But Hilry and his wife, they stayed here. But some of their children went to Washington and did pretty good. Now some of the children were really fair. And this one named William, who was on the Slave Statistic list, he disappeared off the list. But he was working in Washington passing for white. Now two of them did that, and I finally caught up with them in the census.*[39]

22. Alfred Edwards, a former slave who remained at Sotterley into the early 1900s. Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

[39] Agnes Kane Callum, *Sotterley Oral History Project,* By Meredith Taylor, April 21, 2008.

23. Emancipation rolls showing the names of the enslaved at Sotterley freed when Maryland adopted its new state constitution in 1864.
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

OWNER Dr. Walter H. Briscoe

DATE April 16, 1869

Name		Sex	Age	Emancipated by State of Maryland	Remarks
Andrew	Brown	M	6	Nov. 1, 1864	
Edgar	Guyther	M	28	" " "	
Frank	Guyther	M	2	" " "	
Hilry	Cane	M	1	" " "	
Alex	Plowden	M	2	" " "	(325)
Francis	Millard	M	6	" " "	
Margaret	Brown	F	3	" " "	
Rebecca	Wilson	F	1	" " "	
Catherine	Barber	F	21	" " "	
Mary A.	Barber	F	2	" " "	No of Slaves #53
Jeff	Johnson	M	1	" " "	
				Col. Chapman Billingsley-Owner	
				April 16, 1869	
Harris	Rustin	M	15	Nov. 1, 1864	
Frank	Medley	M	11	" " "	
McKelvey	Rustin	M	16		E-Oct. 1, 1863
Harrison	Rustin	M	20	" " "	
Baley	Rustin	M	30		E-Dec. 15, 1863
Mortimer	Rustin	M	28		E-Mar. 10, 1864
Charlotte	Ann Rustin	F	20	Nov. 1, 1864	
Mary	Medley	F	36	" " "	
Mollie	Medley	F	15	" " "	
Grace	Medley	F	14	" " "	
Alex	Medley	M	12	" " "	
Edgar	Medley	M	10	" " "	
George	Medley	M	8	" " "	
Lewis	Medley	M	6	" " "	
Matilda	Medley	F	4	" " "	
Infant	Medley	F	4mo	" " "	
Jeff	Johnson	M	20	" " "	
Alfred	Lyles	M	24		E-Dec. 15, 1863
Lee	Edwards	M	36		
Hilry	Cane	M	46	" " "	
Thomas	Plowden	M	57	" " "	
Infant	Upton	F	6m	" " "	
Martha	Steward	F	18	" " "	
Eva	Steward	F	16	" " "	
Mimie	Steward	F	14	" " "	
Jane	Plowden	F	50	" " "	(326)
Charity	Lyles	F	52	" " "	
Eliza	Plater	F	54	" " "	
Rose Anna	Rustin	F	54	" " "	
Nace	Hawkins	F	68	" " "	
Henry	Bush	M	17		E-Nov. 1, 1864
Chap	Turner	M	10		E-Nov. 1, 1864
Infant	Turner	M	18mo	" " "	No of Slaves #33

OWNER Dr. Walter H. Briscoe

DATE April 16, 1869

Name Of Slave		Sex	Age	Emancipated by State of Maryland	Remarks
Harris	Edwards	M	15	Nov. 1, 1864	
George	Cane	M	20	" " "	
Frank	Cane	M	17	" " "	
Alfred	Edwards	M	17	" " "	
Thomas	Millard	M	17	" " "	
Horace	Millard	M	12	" " "	
Samuel	Edwards	M	17	" " "	
Charles	Medley	M	2	" " "	
George W.	Biscoe	M	26	" " "	
Dick	Brown	M	33	" " "	
Robert	Plater	M	37	" " "	
James	Millard	M	48	" " "	
Hamilton	Steward	M	49	" " "	
Alex	Medley	M	52	" " "	
Leanda	Edwards	M	52	" " "	
William	Barnes	M	52	" " "	
Temperance	Cane	F	18	" " "	
Matilda	Cane	F	22	" " "	
Alice	Cane	F	16	" " "	
Eliza	Cane	F	14	" " "	
Sarah	Cane	F	12	" " "	
Charlotte Ann	Biscoe	F	14	" " "	
Mary	Edward	F	21	" " "	
Marie	Millard	F	23	" " "	
Mary Jane	Wilson	F	13	" " "	
Henny	Cane	F	20	" " "	
Ann Delia	Barnes	F	21	" " "	
Georgeann	Barnes	F	19	" " "	
Cecelia	Edwards	F	19	" " "	
Susan	Guyther	F	22	" " "	
Ellen	Cane	F	24	" " "	
Rebecca	Brown	F	24	" " "	(324,325)
Martha Ann	Wilson	F	28	" " "	
Nellie	Plowden	F	29	" " "	
Alice	Cane	F	31	" " "	
Henrietta	Hall	F	27		L-Feb. 28, 1863
Presella	Edwards	F	38	" " "	
Eliza	Mason	F	38	" " "	
Mary Ann	Millard	F	47	" " "	
Louise	Mason	F	52	" " "	
Henrietta	Barnes	F	58	" " "	
Cecelia	Plowden?	F	52	" " "	

Ref: SLAVE STATISTICS OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY, MARYLAND, 1867
Compiled by Agnes Kane Callum

1870 CENSUS

Community Hollywood County St. Mary's State Maryland

Operator John H. Leach Date Census Taken June 20, 1870 Enumerator District 6th. Elec. Di

Supervisor District #

Written Page No.	Printed Page No.	Dwelling No.	Family No.	Name of every person whose place of abode on 1 June 1870 was in this family	Description: Age	Description: Sex	Description: Color	Profession, Occupation, or Trade	Value of: Real Estate Owned	Value of: Personal Estate Owned	Place of Birth
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		109	109	KANE, Hillery	55	M	B	Farm Laborer			Md.
				KANE, Elsay	39	F	B	Keeping House			Md.
				KANE, Tempy	18	F	B	At Home			Md.
				KANE, Alice	15	F	B	At Home			Md.
				KANE, Eliza	9	F	B	At Home			Md.
				KANE, Sarah	7	F	B	At Home			Md.
				KANE, Hillery	6	M	B	At Home			Md.
				KANE, Henry	5	M	B	At Home			Md.
				KANE, Mary	3	F	B	At Home			Md.
				KANE, John	1	M	B	At Home			Md.

"African American Kinship as a Means of Survival"
St. Mary's College of Maryland Research Paper, Authored by Belinda Capuano, 1997

An unidentified ex-slave had these words to explain the hope that emancipation brought:

"We knowed it was on us, but we didn't know what was going to come with it. We thought we was going to get rich like the white folks. We thought we was going to be richer than white folks, 'cause we was stronger and knowed how to work, and the whites didn't, and they didn't have us to work for them anymore. But it didn't turn out that way. We soon found out that freedom could make folks proud, but it didn't make em' rich."

It was difficult for families to find work, so many freed families remained on the land and became tenant farmers. A contract was usually filled out which was meant to protect the tenants from abuse. Landowners were required to supply housing, food, fuel, and medical attention when needed. These things were up to the discretion of the landowner, and since times were hard the freedmen most likely received old slave quarters as housing.

Much did not change for the slave following emancipation. They were still poorly educated, did not have political support, so economic opportunities were limited. The houses they lived in before emancipation became the houses they lived in after freedom. The slave cabin of 1850 became the tenant house of 1870. In Southern Maryland, changes occurred slowly. It wasn't until 1890 that framed houses started to appear along with plank floors and paned windows. The freedmen collected scraps of cloth and braided them together to make a rug which gave the room a more pleasing look and also provided warmth.[40]

* * * * *

The black population of St. Mary's County declined from 8,256 in 1900 to 4,724 in 1940. Many joined the great migration of southern blacks to northern cities, with most from St. Mary's County moving to Baltimore. Agnes Kane Callum's father, Philip Moton Kane, moved there in 1917, married Priscilla Gough, and stayed to find work in the city. Many others in the extended Kane family also moved to Baltimore and Washington in this period.

During Sotterley's Cashner years, seven or eight former slave cabins remained on the land owned earlier by the Briscoes and the Billingsleys. Several were still being used as homes by black families, including those of James Scriber, Ned Lyles, Alfred Edwards, Walter Barber, and others. In 1910, "Aunt" Nannie Williams was living in the slave cabin on the rolling road with her son and two grandchildren. This cabin then included windows, a staircase and other improvements made after emancipation, but the fact that these crude buildings, even with some improvements, were still being used as homes was a sign of the county's poverty.[41]

Agnes Kane Callum: *But why they stayed on other than for the exchange of food and clothing… And they continued to live in the slave cabins down the road.*

Now they did have a lot of ingenuity. For example when they built – that wasn't a slave cabin, that was supposed to be a house. Then they did the same thing that the slaves did. At

[40] "African-American Kinship as a Means of Survival," Belinda Capuano, St. Mary's College of Maryland, *Sotterley Archives*.
[41] David G. Brown, *Sotterley: Her People and Their Worlds, Three Hundred Years of a Maryland Plantation*, (Baltimore: Chesapeake Book Company), 2010.

hog-killing time they would take an oyster shell and scrape the hog's skin to get the bristles, they'd get mud from the creek and mix it in with this bristles and they would chink all the holes where the air would come in during the winter and what have you. And my father said that mud would get hard as cement but eventually it would fall out and then you'd have to put more in.

And they hardly wore any shoes. And I asked him why. He said because his grandfather used to make the shoes out of some branches from the trees and twigs and what have you. I said, "Well, what about them sleeping? Where did they sleep, all them people?" He said the boys slept upstairs, in the loft and all the children slept upstairs, but the boys slept in the gable end of the slave cabin and the girls slept in the other end. The mother and father slept downstairs, which was only one room, next to the fireplace."[42]

* * * * * *

Tuajuanda C. Jordan is the president of St. Mary's College of Maryland, and the first African-American woman to hold that post. She was interviewed in early 2015. "*President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. This, however, was of little consequence to slaves in free states, of which Maryland was one. Though unpopular, the Maryland state government abolished slavery in the Maryland state Constitution in 1864. It was not ratified, however, until the votes of the Maryland Union soldiers were counted. The important vote effectively ended 165 years of slavery at Sotterley Plantation. That is something to celebrate indeed!"*

Donald Barber: *It wasn't like they just freed everybody and everybody lived happily ever after or something. There was a big hustle after that; everyone had to hustle to make ends meet.*[43]

"Religious Participation as an Expression of Freedom"
St. Mary's College of Maryland Research Paper, authored by Michael P. Moore

After Emancipation, many black couples sought to legitimate what had been long term, monogamous relationships through legal marriage. During the Briscoes' ownership of Sotterley only one identifiably legitimate relationship was formed, despite the fact that more than eighty slaves lived and worked at Sotterley. This attitude combined with an Act passed in 1867 requiring all persons wishing to be married to purchase a marriage license allows a researcher to uncover patterns of marriage. This table lists several marriages involving former slaves of Sotterley.

Marriages of Slaves and Former Slaves of the Sotterley Plantation

Husband	Age	Wife	Age	Date	Church	Minister
Alfred Edwards	38	Alice Kelly	28	March 18, 1882	St. Aloysius	
Leander Edwards	60	Sophia Dunkinson	50	December 31, 1874		Fr. Pacciarini
Lee Edwards		Presella Quantin				
Francis Guither		Louisa Guither		February 2, 1851	St. Andrew's	
Francis Kane	32	Caroline Thomas	18	April 23, 1880		Fr. Neale

[42] Agnes Kane Callum, *Sotterley Oral History Project,* By Meredith Taylor, April 21, 2008.
[43] Donald Barber, *Sotterley Oral History Project.* By Lynn Fitrell. July 12, 2010.

James Henry Kane	23	Sarah Somerville	21	May 9, 1887	St. Igntius	
Charles Medley		Sarah Jarboe		October 25, 1872		Fr. Gubitose

Table compiled from *Black Marriages of St. Mary's County, Maryland, 1800-1900*, Agnes Kane Callum, comp., and *Slave Statistics of St. Mary's County, Maryland*, Agnes Kane Callum, comp[44].

* * * * *

James Scriber: *That's just the way they was turned off in slave time. When they turned off the slave people, you know, when they turned them off, if they was able, to give them a little something to start on, you see. That's the way some were a little more able than the others.*

Q: *Why is it that some were given something by their owners whereas others wouldn't be? Would it depend on…*

James Scriber: *Well, it's just like it is now, that some was liked by somebody more so than some of the others, you know—just like it is now. Poor people in them days never had land. Didn't have no land, just, you know, the big people. That's where the slavery big people. Slavery had to work under them big people, you see, and they had to take just what the slavery people'd give 'em. I mean, what the wealthy people'd give 'em, like a place to stay, to work. The wealthy people, you know, would give them the workin' and they'd give a place to stay at. Oh, that was a bad time.*

When I was born, things were getting better for colored people. I mean, somewhat. Better, you know, than it was way back there. Oh my, nothin', nothin' but dogs, colored people weren't nothing' but dogs. I mean, you know…

24. James Victor Scriber at Sotterely. Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

Years ago, people'd patch a pants or dress or something, you wouldn't know what the first pieces were made of. Keep patchin', keep patchin'. They would patch so much that it looked like a quilt. Sewed too, I've seen some of that myself in my young days. Grass sack pants, made out of a grass sack.

[44] "Religious Participation as an Expression of Freedom," Michael Moore, St. Mary's College of Maryland, *Sotterley Archives*, 1997.

Q: *Oh, I see.*

Scriber: *Then we had pants too that were thin as a grass sack. A grass sack is thin. You know the air would go through it.*[45]

* * * * *

Josephine Biscoe Holley: *Harriet Lee was my grandmother on my mother's side and James Loker was my grandfather on my mother's side. And on my father's side was Maria Barnes and she married Benjamin Biscoe.*

Q: *Okay, before you left in 1933, did you work in the county?*

Josephine Biscoe Holley: *No. There was no work for young people in the county. Hardly any work for older folks. Because the mothers had to go into different kitchens of the white people and cook for them while their husbands were on the farm doing the farm work. It was very hard for our parent which we didn't know. We enjoyed. They didn't let us know what was going on because they didn't want us to know the hardship they were having. Because we were, at that time ... at that time our parent was walking out of slavery [laugh]. And it begin to get better and they kept going, kept working, kept working, until we got where we are today.*

Q: *Since your grandfather was a slave, did they say how life was right after emancipation?*

Josephine Biscoe Holley: *Well, he wasn't a pure slave, you wouldn't say, you'd call him a 'free slave' because they did light work. As growing up they did light work. The heaviest work was when they got married and did farm work and so forth. But they wasn't really from the original slave family. We had a few slaves down here that I remember. Mrs. Sally Gant and Susan Bennett. You see that right often because that was Mr. James Forrest's great-grandmother. And a few others but we mostly had free slaves. Because they had plenty work to do and the white people would keep them on their farms and did sharecropping. You call it sharecropping of today but then they worked for nothing.*[46]

Audio 4. Josephine Biscoe Holley on her grandfather:

[45] "Interview with Mr. James Scriber, February 5, 1977," *Sotterley Archives*.
[46] "Josephine Matilda Holley." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.

Life as a Sharecropper

Even after the Civil War and Emancipation, plantations such as the ones owned by Dr. Briscoe and his brother-in-law, Chapman Billingsley, still operated as farms. There were approximately 10 separate families living on these two farms in the decades after the war. Oral histories give us a glimpse of the life of a sharecropper on Sotterley and around St. Mary's County.

James Victor Scriber was interviewed in 1979. He lived and worked on Sotterley. "*Conditions were terrible but there was a lot of love between the children, and they got along just fine. They had to walk to school every day, approximately 3 miles each way, in rain or snow. They all attended St. John's Catholic Church, which was 6 miles from our home. But God kept us together and we still love each other dearly.*[47]

Sometimes the wood rots, you know, in the house, rain on in. I had snow on my face and eyes many a night. Snowed right in my face and eyes—shifted through there, shifted, you know? Wind blown. Covered up in snow—several nights I remember when I was a little fellow—woke up, I thought there was somebody layin' on me. Snow, layin' on top of the bed, been there all night long. You didn't get cold. It wasn't cold at all. You see, we all had some old grass sack blankets and things over us, you didn't know you had snow until we'd poke our heads from underneath the blankets. Sleep with their heads covered up. Oh, that was a long time ago. Even in my days it was rough. All had to go through the same thing, wasn't just one person. Everyone, you know, had the same pill to take. Everyone in those days. It was a hard time, but they lived. Hard livin', but…"[48]

Philip H. Scriber was born in 1928, and lived on Sotterley. He was interviewed in 1996. *Well, my dad was a sharecropper, see, so we never owned anything. We had adequate food to eat. Living conditions were deplorable as it was with everyone. You did the best you could. But, my dad did the best he could with the amount of kids that we had. It was, it really was 15 of us, but at no time were we all at home. Of course, the older ones, they grew up and had gone on. My older brother and sister grew up, got married and started to make their own families. But, I would say we lived -- our living conditions was about average. It was a step above the lowest in that -- the guy that owned the property, back then, they sort of looked out for certain ones.*

A lot of what we ate, 90% -- 95% of the food we ate was what we grew on the land there. Back there, they used to call it "staples." He would go to the store on Saturdays and buy the necessary things like salt, pepper, sugar, vinegar, coffee, this type of things. But above and beyond that, the other types of food that we ate, we grew it. We made a special effort to grow it. Otherwise, you didn't eat. It wasn't like it is today. There was no way of conserving food like it is today.

Transportation was almost nil. Back then, we didn't have an automobile. Where we went, we walked.

Q: *Do you think the times were better then than they are now?*

[47] "James Victor Scriber – In His Own Words," *Sotterley Archives*.
[48] "Interview with Mr. James Scriber, February 5, 1977," *Sotterley Archives*.

Philip H. Scriber: *By no means. By no means. There was a lot more love then, love and understanding than there is today, and respect. But above and beyond that, forget those old times. Forget them!*

Things began to improve in the latter part of the '30's, 1937, '38, '39. And when I was going to school then, we used to start reading the papers, but back when I was a youngster coming up…

Q: *It had to be word of mouth?*

Philip H. Scriber: *That's it. The only communication you got was if someone went somewhere and they saw so-and-so, then they come back and say, "Well, I saw so-and-so and he said this, and he said that, and he said the other." That's the way word would pass. Back then, depend on where you live; you could probably go a week without seeing any of your neighbors because the houses were so few and far apart. And of course on weekends, the head of the household -- like my dad and all the men heads of households, they used to meet up at the General Store, and this is where they would --Once they purchased their groceries, then if they had any money left, it was to buy themselves a couple beers or a couple of drinks. Then, they would sit down and discuss what they knew about: about farming or whatever the case may be.*

Q: *When you were coming along, what did you like to do the most?*

Philip H. Scriber: *Down the water. Play around the water. Crabbing. Crabbing and fishing. We only lived about 3 minutes from the water. Going in the water and this is where you spent out most of our leisure time during the summer months and when dad didn't have us working in the fields. We used to go down and catch crabs and things. That was pure survival. That's what we did for survival.*

We did the chores and of course, we raised our chickens. We had our own hogs. And every day we got home from school, that'd be the first thing we'd do: prepare for the next days. That is, you would search for the kindling. We busted up the kindling's for to make the firewood the next morning, getting enough wood so that they'd make the firewood, had enough for the next day, and fill the water pails with water and feed the chickens, feed the hogs. Of course, I'm not gonna feed them. My dad and I went out to feed them. That was his thing. Feeding the hogs, that was his thing. If we gave them too much or not enough, that was his thing. He fed his own hogs. Now, sometimes on the weekend when you got a couple too many, the hogs went without. But normally, nobody gonna feed those hogs but him.

Sharecropping means the owner of the property, he supplies you all the tools, seeds, and et cetera, and you furnish the labor, and he gets a percentage of the gross receipts, if you want to use that phrase. In other words, if you plant corn, then he takes a percentage of that for his contribution towards helping you to get to secure the crops. I guess he supplied us with the horses -- whatever we needed to grow these crops, he supplied us with, with tools. And, when my dad sold his tobacco, why he had to share a certain percent with him because he furnished everything, except, I would say, excepting the labor. And the corn and the wheat and et cetera.

I think the percentage on the tobacco was 50 percent, and on the corn, if my memory serves me correctly, it was 33, I mean, he took 33 percent and left him 66 and 2/3rd. And, the wheat, it was somewhere around 50 percent. Now, I mean, these were the three main basic crops. Of course, there were other -- those were the three main crops he took percentages of.

That was his contribution towards, because he owned the land and the horses and what have you that we used on the farm.

My siblings, we furnished all the labor on the farm. Boys and girls. We worked side by side, boys and girls. Before we had tractors, we did everything manually. We plant tobacco, we planted the tobacco by hand and we worked the fields -- we worked them by hand. And, when I said worked them by hand, of course, I mean you had a hoe that you chop the tobacco, you had a hoe that you worked the corn and of course, the wheat, the barley, and the oats, once it was planted, it grew on its own so it didn't require any cultivation in that. But the crops, the crops that required cultivation to keep the grass down, keep it under control, was the tobacco and the corn. Which required an awful lot of man hours keeping it cultivated so that the grass and all wouldn't overtake the crops, see?

Q: *How much tobacco, and corn, and wheat that you did plant?*

Philip H. Scriber: *In my daddy's time, if my memory serves me correctly, he used to average about 4 acres. Let's see, the required amount of time we spent in cultivating that 4 acres by hand, you could do it today with a piece of equipment in a couple of hours, see? But, then, I guess he did it all by hands -- we as kids did it. And, it requires an awful lot of time. And as far as corn, I would say we would probably plant probably about 15 acres. And wheat, probably about the same. To the best of my knowledge, you know, give or take.*

We raised our own hogs. We had our own chickens. And, on the farm we milked our own cows. Of course, it was natural, whole milk we used then. And this is pretty much it. Now, as far as the wheat, we used to take the wheat to the mill for them to grind it and process it into flour. And, of course, we had, back then what they call a big bin where we kept the potatoes in, white potatoes, sweet potatoes, flour was kept in a big, huge barrel. And, we'd grind the corn for corn meal and make cornbread and, of course, make biscuits and what have you, and that's basically it. Those are the types of food that they ate. It wasn't the type of processed food that they have today.

We started working out in the field when we were 7 or 8 years of age. And when we got large enough to pick up, be able to pick up an instrument, a hoe or a what have you, to help out in the fields, we were out there. We had no other choice but to go out there.

Q: *When your dad worked all those years as a sharecropper and had to do all the work and then turn over 50 percent of the profits or so, what do you think his feelings were about that? Did he ever share those?*

Philip H. Scriber: *No. He didn't share those because he thought as though it was the fair thing to do.*

Because that's the way it was. That was pretty much standard procedure throughout. There was a lot of sharecroppers throughout the county. And, I don't think it wasn't so much that Mr. Satterlee that owned the property wanted that, I think it was much more or less the idea of the overseer. He was trying to show Mr. Satterlee that he was getting something for his efforts and the money that he's putting into the place. But, he didn't really need the money.

25. Phillip H. Scriber at Sotterley.
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

You know, to me, I think it was asinine that, I mean, even though knowing that you, you own the property, I'm going to do all this work and you sitting back, riding around, looking at me work, and then you're going to reap half of the benefits. That's enough to deter anybody from following through on that. And, I think a lot of people did this because they had no other resource but to go that route. And, of course, after the outbreak of the Second World War, a lot of people ventured in other various different things. They didn't go back to farming again, although some of them still continued to do it on a part-time basis. Of course, when they were able to buy tractors and whatever to do the work, then they didn't need all this extra labor, what was referred to as common labor, to do this work. Then they could do it with the tractors and what you have. But, negative. That's my perspective. Negative.

My daddy, he was somewhat reluctant to talk about it. Because it was such a tremendous hardship. And, of course, what always hurt him so bad was the things that he was denied. And he was taught to listen to the white man. He wasn't free to think for himself, to even exercise his thoughts. 'You do as I say,' and that's it. And, of course, as he grew older, in his older days, I used to hear him say many times, "My God, why did I used to listen to those men tell me these things and I would listen to them." And just like getting back to what I was mentioning earlier about how on Sotterley they had the tractor down there. Well, the guy that owned the place, Herbert L. Satterlee, I think it was in '37, they bought a new tobacco planter. Now, by my dad being the only sharecropper, no one else on that place or within five to ten miles grew tobacco, so who did he buy the tobacco planter for? (Voice softens.) For my dad to use, right? But he wouldn't use it. And he'd talk about it, he used to talk about it all the time, "Now, they bought that planter for me and I wouldn't use it." And the reason why he wouldn't use it because his so-called associates that he used to discuss the problems with on the weekends, of course, this was on the weekends, both white and blacks, the problems that they were having on the place, they used to tell him all the time, "Don't use that tobacco planter,

because it will pack your land and make it too hard." You get dumb, stupid, asinine reasons. The reason was being that they didn't have one and they didn't want him to use it. Because, you see, that would escalate him above them, see? (Voice softens.) He wouldn't use it. And, he used to think about it. And so, by them telling him this, he would listen to them and he wouldn't use it. Back then I looked at it from the same perspective, even though I was young, as he did. Because these things have a tendency to rub off on you, not knowing any differently. And, but what irks me is, the same guy you spoke about earlier, Mr. Knott, Herbert Knott, his dad, he was the, what was he called? Overseer. Knowing that the tobacco planter was purchased for my dad, but he never encouraged my dad to use it. It sit there -- a brand new planter sit there. And, so these are the types of things, see, that he should have said, "James", or whatever you want to call him back there. They wouldn't call you "Mr." or "Mrs.," they'd call you "Uncle." Oh, yes. That was your respect from them was 'Aunt' and 'Uncle.' Never 'Mr.' and 'Mrs.' And, if you see a lot of the elderly whites, elderly whites today, when they refer to a black person, it's always Aunt and Uncle and I'm sure you've heard that terminology they used. Aunt and Uncle. That was the reason, that was the term of respect. And, of course, then they used to call my dad "Uncle James." No rationale whatsoever, but that's the terminology that they used, whatever it may be. And, they never encouraged him to use these things. And, of course, the darn thing set there.

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Howard Chase was born in Helen, Maryland, a short distance from Chaptico, in approximately 1909. *My daddy farmed practically all his life. I don't think his daddy was a farmer. More or less the time when his daddy come along, there wasn't too many black people in this county farmed. They had to work by the month or day. You just didn't, from what I can understand, you didn't rent land here. It was kind of hard when my daddy, when I was about ten, eleven years old, to rent land to work. They didn't bother about renting land to most colored people because they didn't have anything to do it with. And you couldn't get no finance. Most time people then, blacks in this county they had to work through the finance of the person that owned the land. They called it the sharecropping-- a third, a fourth. Wasn't too many blacks in this county, to my knowing, in my daddy's time could just go out and borrow money and go in farming. They just wouldn't loan it to you. Maybe somebody had a good heart in their body, would help you along, let you have a horse, or give you a chance, speak a good word for you, let somebody have a horse and a cultivator, but no, it was pretty rough back then.*

Q: *How did your father get a farm?*

Howard Chase: *He never owned it. That's what they call renting people's land. You worked for so much share of what you made. If you was able to have your own machinery and horse power-- there wasn't no tractors-- you would get ... A man owned the land, he give you half the tobacco. He furnished the land and the plant food, fertilizer, that's what they call it, to grow tobacco, and most times they give you half. Get down to the corn, wheat-- some wouldn't let, didn't want you to work any corn. They'd get two-thirds.*

They wanted that land for them to work grain and raise livestock. There's where the money was. There wasn't no money in tobacco. My mother would take my sister and myself-- we were the youngest, we wasn't able enough to be in the field-- she made more clear money out of chickens, turkeys, and her garden than my daddy could make out growing tobacco with four, five grown men.

It was back in the Depression around 1933 or four. Time in the Depression, you know, hear what I'm talking about? We sold, at that time, tobacco was best if you got five or six cents a

pound for tobacco, that was top of the market. Cent and a half, two cents, three cents. And I worked the whole year and all I got was a dollar and a half for my year's work and my board and lodging. And people tell me about there's money in tobacco, ahh-ahh [shakes his head and looks down]. Tobacco is set up for just cheap labor for somebody to make some profit. That's all it is. It's nothing. Tobacco will destroy any group of people that works in it for a living.[49]

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Elfreda Mathis was born in Valley Lee, Maryland in 1945. She was interviewed in 1991. *The more rural you got the less likely it be that you'd have running water. When we lived at my grandmother's house they had a well and we used to go across the road to the spring and we'd bring the water back and forth from across the road. When we got older and we'd go visit they still didn't have running water, they didn't have running water until, you know, I was half grown but they always had the well -- the water was like -- when you're in that environment that's the way things are. They had like an old outhouse in the barn area and the chamber pots inside and the well in the yard and then the spring across the road so if you wanted spring water people would go back and forth across the road with their little buckets and things. My grandparents had a farm so they had, you know, the chickens and the pigs and the vegetables and the apple trees and tobacco and corn and you would go different times of the year and see that growing and the tobacco in the barn and the canning and the meat house and all of that. So I have all of that in my background, even though I wasn't up for it, you know, this farm life, even though I could eat all the food my mom use to--. It was never a pleasure to go out in the hot sun, bend over, pick kale, pull potatoes, the onions, whatever, get the beans, string the beans. We used to have to do all that, you know, because my mother would have us pick the apples and then we'd come home, peel the apples and do all that because my grandmother would give them to us but we had to go get them for our family. So my sister and I had all those little chores and things to do.*[50]

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Grace Harris Smith was born in Hermansville, Maryland, in 1921. She was interviewed in 1991: *The older people, their living room never was heated. They didn't have heated houses like we have now in every room. Your bedrooms was cold and your living rooms was cold. You just had, maybe in the kitchen you had a wood stove or somethin' in the kitchen to keep warm by. Maybe in the settin' room you might 'a had just a wood stove in there. And she didn't have a thing on her Christmas tree but just lollipops. That's what she'd have. And we never got a whole apple for Christmas. It was nine of us so she'd would take one apple… I mean we got plenty to eat now, but it was always… if she had apples she cut them in four parts. Children learned to share. She'd cut it and give all four piece, and our cake was light bread. Loaf bread we call. Loaf bread like, you know, loaf of bread that you get from the store. That was our cake. Because our parents cooked. They baked biscuits, cornbread, corn muffins, and things like that. We didn't get light bread every day. They couldn't afford to buy light bread. They lived on a farm where they had horses, or if they didn't their friends had horses. They would take the meal to the mill and have it ground. If they had flour they'd take that and have it ground. Then they'd bring it back home and that's what they used. And if they had a garden of potatoes, they used what they had. Then maybe we would fry potatoes this morning, mash 'em today for lunch, boil 'em for dinner. You got a plenty. I never remember going hungry, but we*

[49] "Howard Chase." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.
[50] "Elfreda Mathis." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.

didn't have everything we wanted, now. You might eat the same thing three times a day or maybe two days straight, but we still got a plenty. She was a very good provider.

It was pretty good old days, I'll tell you. I don't regret 'em at all. Well I tell you what we first gonna be doing [on Christmas Eve]. I imagine we would be puttin' on a table cloth. We would be sweeping the old wood floor, and some would be washing the, we didn't have 'lectricity, some would be washing the old lamp shades, getting the lamps, lights, ready. Some would be going to the spring and gettin' water. That's in the evening. We didn't have a well. We'd go to a spring. We had a well later on. We'd be just getting everything together. And [if] we had cake, we'd set it out on the table. If we had candy, we'd set it out. If we had cookies, we'd set it out. And our mother would take a water bucket, we didn't have pitchers, she'd take a water bucket, you know what I'm talkin' 'bout, she'd take a round water bucket and put a dipper in it which you'd dip it out. And then we had, I know it wasn't glasses. I guess it, what in the world did we have? But anyway, she'd dip up and give us all lemonade, but we didn't have anything like Kool-Aid, so most the time we used lemonade. Then during the evening someone would come in. They'd all be welcome. And oh, we'd just be jolly. Really, we really was a happy family. We'd be just as jolly, and singin', and skippin', and the kids we playin', and I guess the boys'd be rassslin'- we didn't have anything else to play with and the girls, we'd be upstairs, and put on our clothes, and dress, and creep around upstairs. Sometime we couldn't come down with 'em on 'cause that was our good clothes. Oh it was quite a good evening really.

Back them days it was a lotta, you know, I guess you'd call it integration, you know. We played as much with the white kids when I come along, in my community… we got along just as good as we get along now. This is the truth. I mean, a lot of people didn't believe that. We were just like sisters and brothers. We played together, we borrowed from each other's house. They'd be comin' with a cup for a little bit of sugar, and we'd be going for a little bit of flour. None of us wasn't rich, you know, all country people. There might 'a been a few. You found a rich person over here, a rich person over there, but everybody was poor to a certain degree. And we shared with each other. We did. We had to depend on each other.

And then if some would give one another a little bit of meat, like they kill hogs. My husband said down his home, same thing they had to do. They'd go and some of the white people who were little more well off than we was, they might 'a had a little more flour than we did. They'd give us flour, and maybe we'd do a day's work for it. Or when they kill hogs they'd divide up and give us meat. Now it wasn't as bad as some people say, not when I come along. Really. We shared with each other, and we really did enjoy it. I mean we got along like friends, and now, I see them now and he was standing there, and he was grinning. I said, "Well, how is your mamma?" He says, "She's doing fairly good." And I told my aide on the bus, she's a white lady, I said, "We played together".

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Sylvester Barnes was born in Scotland, Maryland in 1921, and interviewed in 2002: *My daddy worked for a dollar a day. And prior to that his father worked for less than that! His dad, a dollar a day! And when I came along I used to work down here yonder on some of these farms or whatnot. I got a dollar a day and I was raised from a dollar to a dollar and twenty-five a day. A day, yeah. On these farms and so forth around here. Planting and harvesting crops. Corn, wheat, tomatoes, so forth. And another industry around here the black folks used to work in was in these oyster houses. You go out and haul the oysters out of the water and bring them to the oyster house. Oyster houses and you'd shuck them. Black folks would shuck the oysters. I remember them getting as little as fifteen, twenty cents a gallon. They'd shuck one whole big*

gallon of oysters and get fifteen cents for it. That's fifteen cents, twenty-five get you four gallons of oysters to make a dollar. Sometimes it would take you half a day to do that. Some of the people, some of them was a little faster and they'd make a little more. But that was the case. And then they had crab-picking sheds around in the area. You'd harvest crabs and bring them to the house and they'd buy them and have them steamed. And the black folks would pick them, pick the crabs. All that was trying to make a living. And that was done up until oh just a few years ago. I think the [Patuxent River naval] base up here added quite a bit to the various communities around. People began to make a little more money. They could build homes, buy transportation and so forth. And try to live normal. The majority of the black folks around, especially the black folks, I think they're living much better or better than they ever lived before right through here now because of the decent jobs that they have and so forth. The decent pay that they are making. And we are thankful that that has happened.[51]

26. An old aerial photograph of Sotterley Plantation, showing when much of the grounds were still put into agriculture. Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

[51] Sylvester Barnes. St. Mary's College Archives Slackwater Oral History Collect. By Carrie Kline. February 5, 2002.

Segregation in Southern Maryland

In 1915 a reporter from *The Sun* visited the county and wrote: "Less than 100 miles from Baltimore or Washington, it would be hard to find, even in the remote parts of the South, a section where customs and conditions of life have changed so little within the last 50 years. It is a quiet eddy on the far edge of the rushing stream of progress, just touching the swift current but little affected by it."

At that time there were horses tied to hitching posts in the Leonardtown square. Steamboats came up Breton Bay to connect the county seat with the outside world. Small general stores at the crossroads in the county connected its inhabitants to each other.

There were about 16,000 people in the county, 40 per cent of them Negroes whose immediate forebears had been slaves. It was a Southern society where those who stayed "knew their place."[52]

Elmer Brown: *The racial experiences that I can identify at a very young age- Naturally, when I got older, I had oodles of them, but when I was very young, the only ones that I could identify as- I couldn't understand why some people went some places and some people had to go to the other. And then, as we began to travel up and down the road from Washington down here for visits, where we could go for a sandwich and where we could not go, where we could even have gasoline served to us rather than pumping it ourselves which, at that time, was a normal thing to have a gas attendant to come out and pump gas. Check oil. They were always asked, would you like to have your oil checked? They'd take a look at your tires while the gas tank was filing up. Those things, I noticed, did not particularly happen to us. In fact, there was one station that just refused to pump gas for blacks. You had to get out and pump your own gas. So, they weren't very popular naturally, with Afro-Americans.*

TB, which was a bus station, was a transfer between the Greyhound and Trailways going to Virginia from Baltimore/Washington, and was one of the inner hubs. You had to go around back to get your sandwich, and most of the time you got it through a porthole out of the kitchen. I found it amusing that back there you had a long bench that reminds you of a picnic bench, wooden seats on both sides of it, and you could sit there. And if you went to get your ticket exchanged or to purchase in the front, these people were sitting on leather cushions. And at the bar, in booths, and that wasn't necessarily true in the rear.

But, I guess being young, I noticed those things, but they didn't have that great of an effect on me because the joke I always tell was that at the back door when you bought a chicken breast, you got two instead of one because it was done by the cook. The food was served by the cook.

Was there always segregation in the area? Much of the time we segregated ourselves. In the immediate Lexington Park area, I don't remember any signs for whites or for blacks. I really don't when this place became Lexington Park. I think most people felt that they would be discriminated upon if they were to have gone into these places, you see. So they didn't go. In fact, I didn't go into any of those business places to sit down to eat for a long, long, time although I worked around that immediate area.[53]

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[52] "Old and Historic St Marys County Fast Changing to Modern Pace," Baltimore Sun, Earl Arnett, June 27, 1968.
[53] "Elmer Brown." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.

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Philip H. Scriber: *There was only one hospital, St. Mary's Hospital, where everybody went, and the accommodation was limited. No matter what your ailment was, you were put in the same room because they only had, I think, two or three beds in there, and that remained in existence up until the latter part of the '50's before they built a new hospital. Course, they had all the black men together and the black women together. No matter what your ailment was, you were put in the same room, and that could be contagious, too, depending on what disease you had. But, that was all we had.*

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Phyllis Barber Brown was born on Sotterley, and is the sister of Donald Barber: *I think because we lived in the country [on Sotterley], we were kind of protected from a lot of what other African Americans had to endure, simply because of the isolation. Now the only time we would encounter aspects of the segregated society would be when you would go into town. And there were restaurants where you couldn't go in the front door, you had to go to a separate place to place an order and to pick up an order. In the movie theatre, you could not enter through the front door. There was a side door, actually, from an alley that you had to enter the theatre, and you sat in the balcony. School was segregated at the time, but, I look on my education as a very happy time. That was all we knew, so, therefore it was fine. You went to school with your friends and life was good. In church, you were expected to sit in the back and that's what we did. Once again, that was the way things were so you didn't know any other way so it was fine.*

You didn't question it, you just went along. Of course, you know, after you got older you were able to think about it, think through it. But as a child, no, as a child we were happy. Our school was segregated and it did not integrate until '67.[54]

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Donald Barber, Phyllis Barber Brown's brother, was also born on Sotterley. His family lived and worked on the land, and Donald himself is a member of Sotterley's Board of Trustees: *Too young to really understand. What I do remember is that it was like two worlds, you know, the world of the African American people and the world of the people that were of European descent. And you just like left each other alone. I mean here [on Sotterley] it didn't seem like any kind of strife, if there was I wasn't really aware of it. But you just kind of stayed in your own circle and you went to your own social places. You kind of hung around with each other.*

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John Hanson Briscoe: *I mean the restaurants in Leonardtown, the blacks wouldn't go near them. I mean they didn't have a sign "no blacks here" but word of the mouth, traditions.*

[The past owner of what today is The Hole in the Wall] knew that blacks were good customers and he didn't want them sitting in there next to those regulars. Those regulars didn't want them in there sitting next to them at the bar. So he built on that little addition there, it

[54] Phyllis Barber Brown. *Sotterley Oral History Project*. By Patricia Dunlap. March 23, 2009.

was a little, kind of a ragtag thing there and he built that and it was an entrance from the outside and you could go in there if you were black. And they knew what that was. There was a counter there and some tables there and you'd come in, if you were black and they'd say "What do you want?" and they'd say "I want a beer" or whatever.

Q: *Were the bars all the same?*

John Hanson Briscoe: *Absolutely. Particularly around the 7th District.*

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Still suffering the scars of slavery, St. Mary's County was segregated in the 1950s and 1960s. The African American children who lived on the farm were bussed to the Banneker or Phillis Wheatley schools. They all worked together on the farm, but they could not go to school or to local restaurants or movie theaters together. Schools were not fully desegregated in St. Mary's County until 1967.[55]

Philip H. Scriber: *And, of course, they weren't permitted to go to school. That was a no no. They couldn't go to school even if they wanted to. (Voice softens.) And, of course, even after my father grew up, he still couldn't go to school. The State, they just didn't allow the blacks to go to school. And, of course, my dad couldn't read or write. But, I'll tell you what, you couldn't beat him counting money. You couldn't cheat him on counting. That's one thing. I also had a brother-in-law, the guy that married my older sister, he was the same way. He couldn't read or write, but I bet you couldn't cheat him out of money. I don't know why. I guess it was a God given talent that they had.*

27. The Phillis Wheatley school, located on Hollywood Road. Courtesy of the Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions

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James Victor Scriber: *I never attended school because at that time there were no schools for blacks. All of my children were born on Sotterley Plantation, but they did manage to get some type of schooling.* [56]

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Q: *I understand that at least two of Walter's seven children, Ford [Barber] and your father Bernard, attended a school named for poet and former slave Phillis Wheatley.*

[55] Jeanne Pirttle, *Images of America*, Sotterley Plantation

[56] "Interview with Mr. James Scriber, February 5, 1977," *Sotterley Archives*.

Phyllis Barber Brown: *Believe it or not, I went to that school. I was too young to go to school but, I don't know how, somehow, I walked to school with my brothers and sisters, who were older. And I remember what that school looked like inside and the teacher that was there. And that school is still there, it's now a home, though. I had to have been younger than six.*

It was a school for black children. It was a two room school house (pause) all grades were taught there. It had a, I think they call it a pot belly stove? I remember that. I remember the desks.[57]

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Philip H. Scriber: *I wanted to go further in school, but [my father] didn't --None of us that stayed home had a high school education.. He said, "Well, I didn't go to school, so you don't need to go." And the only reason we went, because at the time, they passed a law that everybody had to get a basic education. But had it not been for that -- Now my oldest brothers, he wouldn't let them go to school. The three older ones and my older sister, he didn't let them go to school because they didn't have to go. There was no law compelling them to go. See, they didn't pass the law until until 1922 or '23? That, making it mandatory that you get an education. Everybody get an education. See part of it, especially blacks. Now, whites. There's always been whites going to school and see, as far as he was concerned, you didn't need an education. But he couldn't prevent them from going because the law said you have, they had to get a basic education.*

28. Students at a black elementary school in St. Mary's County, circa 1900.
Courtesy of the St. Mary's County Historical Society

I went to Philis Wheatley Elementary School in Hollywood. The building is standing there. It's the building there today. It's on the road going towards Sotterley. Two-room schoolhouse. Yeah. They taught the 1st to the 7th Grade.

Q: *About how many kids were in that schoolhouse?*

Philip H. Scriber: *At the max, I would say probably about, maybe 30 or 35. Of course, the average class then was from five to seven kids in the class. They had two teachers. One teacher taught the 1st, 2nd and 3rd, and the other taught the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th.*

The way they used to do it, if my memory serves me correctly, is the -- In the morning, the 1st Grades, you'd have the 1st Grade class pertaining to whatever it may be, whatever the subject may be. The 2nd and 3rd Grade classes would sit idle or doing whatever, they were studying whatever the case may be. And then, when she finished them, then she'd move to the 2nd Grade, then she would move to the 3rd Grade. Then in the afternoon, in the afternoon, she would go back the same thing again, but on another subject.

[57] Phyllis Barber Brown. *Sotterley Oral History Project*. By Patricia Dunlap. March 23, 2009.

When you think about then, I didn't realize the significance behind it. But when you think about it, it was a hell of a job. Really and truly, they had a hell of a job! To be able to maintain control over all those kids and make sure that they get the basic reading. Because, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic -- The three R's, and that's basically what they got. It turned out pretty good. And naturally, I walked to school for a total of seven miles. Up there and back. About three and a half miles. Even at 14 and 15 years of age, there was nowhere -- You didn't go nowhere. Where were you going to go? In addition to that, you had to walk, and you could only walk but so far.

I didn't go to school as long as I would have liked to because we had to walk to school. We had an opportunity to a point to go to school. They had made a requirement that blacks should get an education. But, up until, it was the latter part of the twenties, early thirties it wasn't mandatory for the blacks to get an education anyway. That was one of the biggest mistakes. Sometimes it just irritates me when I think about it. But that's yesteryear, so.

But of course, we weren't permitted to go to the same school. And, see back in those, even when I came along, of course the white kids all rode buses to school. We walked to school. And from day one, from my first day of school I started school when I was 6 and that was in 1934 when I was 6 I started school, white kids were riding buses then. They'd got buses then and were riding buses then. And, I never rode a bus to school.

It's about 3 and 1/2 miles either way, both ways that we had to walk to school. And, all the kids in this general area, all the black kids had to walk to this school. And, of course, all the white kids, they rode to school. You accepted it then because you couldn't, what else could you do about it? Nothing.

That was the only school they provided. Later on they had two high schools. One at the southern end of the county and one at the northern end of the county, but it was too far for us to go to. They started offering bus transportation for the black kids in '47, I think it was. In '47 they started offering transportation to black kids.

You know, it was a very strange thing, but segregating existed, but it -- I don't know -- it never seemed to bother me as much then as it was in the later years. After I reached manhood and all and that's when it really affected me. But back then, I don't know, for some strange reason, I guess you didn't realize the impact. You realize, so you didn't pay any attention to it. And when we was going to school, the white kids road the buses, we walked to school. They road past us on the buses; we walked to school. And I guess, we just thought that's the natural thing to do. And later on in life, we realized then the things the way we were treated and all.

[Segregation] is deceiving now, very much so. At once upon a time, I thought it was only for awhile, but it will never leave. It will always exist. People are people, and it'll always exist although not as bad as it was. The way I see it, as long as you keep a person uneducated, like my poor parents and all, you can control them. You keep them under control. No matter what you can control. You cannot educate a man and keep him down no matter I don't give a dang who he is! And, the worst thing you can do is not educate him because it costs you three times as much by not educating. So, you best off to do it, then he can do the things for himself that, without the education, you have to do for him.

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Leroy Thompson, Sr. was born in Valley Lee in 1912, and was interviewed in 1993: *Weren't hardly any blacks in this area, especially male, who had opportunity to go to high school. After grade school they just dropped out. Most did farm work. Everything was done by hand, horse, mules. Very few tractors, and combines were more or less hand operated. You'd cut it down, stack it up, and thrash it, and everybody would come together and help. Everybody in the community would follow the combine as it went from farm to farm. 99% of these farms were white owned, and the labor was black, except for those who ran the combines. Most got around 50 cents an hour, except the guy who fed the thresher got 75 cents an hour.*[58]

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Howard Chase: *You know back in the thirties and forties what the majority of the kids in this county, and a lot of them will own up to it, that's why we doesn't have many educated people in St. Mary's County. Nobody couldn't go to school. Only a few. And that was the ones that had the money that was investing in tobacco making money, not the ones working. Those kids had to stay out of school to help to feed their self. Their daddy couldn't make enough out of tobacco, and their older brothers, to take care of the family, and everybody had to work. Ain't many kids back in the thirties went through seventh grade in this county. How many high schools in this county in the thirties? Have you all run across that? I didn't know of but two. I'm talking about public high schools. Great Mills and Mechanicsville. And they wasn't much bigger than this house. Back then when they was growing tobacco, they claimed that there was so much money out tobacco, the average man worked on a farm, for the farmers, til out of school, sixteen or seventeen years old. Ain't long before the seventh grade great big healthy men. Eight dollars a month sometimes, and your board, from September til April, and fifteen dollars a month from April until September. And some only made fifteen dollars a month year round with families, worked from seven o'clock until cold dark.*[59]

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Nanny Teresa Young: *It was no high school here for black children in that day. If you wanted to go higher, you had to go to the city or you had to --. Some parents sent their children to Charles County and you had to board them in order for them to go in high school because we had no high school.*

That organization, black organization: The men mortgaged their homes and they bought land. Several black people over at Hollywood. They all come together and formed the organization and they mortgaged their homes to buy that land up there where Banneker is. And those men cut lumber off of that land and carried the lumber to the mill and they built the first Banneker, a two-room school: one on that side and one this side and a hall down the middle, and that was the first high school. In order for it to be a certified high school, it had to be given to the Board of Education, and that's when we first had a high school.

And, that was our first high school in St. Mary's and children from all over this county came to Banneker High School from Charlotte Hall, from down Ridge, from all over this County, around 7th District and had buses to bring them children to that two-room high school. And, I can't think of the lady's name. She come from Morgan State, and she was one of our teachers. And, it was just a two-room high school and so many classes in this room. And, we'd take certain subjects, then you'd have a break and those children would come out in the hall and the

[58] "Leroy Thompson, Sr.." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.
[59] "Howard Chase." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.

other children would go in that building for the Math or something like that. And, that was our first high school: those two rooms.

Our first high school was built by those men that belonged to that organization that built that high school. And, it was black men of this county that built that first Banneker High School. And, you know, it stayed that way until the Board of Education built a bigger high school at what is called Jarboesville. They had a high school down for the children down that way.

There was a Margaret Brent High School and a Great Mills High School, but we couldn't go to that. It was segregated. We couldn't go to that, and we didn't go to that. That's why we built Banneker High School.[60]

29. The original Benjamin Banneker school, pictured in 1938.
Courtesy of the Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions.

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Mary Louise Barnes: *I noticed in my early teens that we had to walk to school, and the children pass us by riding the bus going to school, the white children, yeah. No, they went to Great Mills and we went to Jarboesville. Our school sat right on the highway and we could see them [the white children] passing. God, I can't remember now, cause I guess we was so angry all the time, every time, every evening you get on the bus, and that's the first thing he'd tell you, "Go to the back of the bus. You can't sit up here." And it wasn't his bus. He was just a worker out there like everybody else, but he would always tell us that. Ah, I feel sorry for that old man, nowadays, because how cruel he was to us innocent children.*

Once we rode the bus to the base gate then-- when that was our school bus-- we rode to the gate. Then, we would have to get off an walk inside the base and there was always the base buses that took you round every place that you had to go and this guy he would always make us get in the back of the bus. I never could understand that. But, of course, now I know. This bus

[60] "Nanny Theresa Young." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.

driver would always tell us to go to the back of the bus. And he would just sit there and he would look in at the mirror and watch us and plenty of times we wouldn't go because I didn't see why we had to go to the back of the bus. And, we were teenagers and here you had these little children sittin in the front of the bus and then there a lot of times there was plenty of seats, but he would always tell us to go in the back of the bus.[61]

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Guffrie Smith was born in Scotland, Maryland, was the oldest of seventeen children. He was interviewed in 1986. *It was called [Jarboesville], but they were closing [Jarboesville] up and they were going to Carver, which is where they have Carver now. It was an old barracks, military barracks, that they had torn the partitions out, and it was still segregated. But they had elementary and high there. When we started there, we had the elementary on one side, and the high school on the other.*

That was still true [that the books in the black schools were cast-offs from the white schools] in '48 and '49 when we went to Carver. Yes, that was still ... I doubt if we had any newer books, but one of the things, even though the books may have been cast-off or second-hand, there was always a pride there. There was always ... the teachers always emphasized the fact that you cover those books, that they're precious. That, you know, "These may be hand-me-down but you've got to be twice as good. You've got to work hard. It's not how the book ... it's not the outside, it's what's inside that counts." That feeling was always brought forth with the teachers.

Well, I don't think I felt too badly about the books because, as I said, very few things I got new at that time. A lot of the things we got were hand-me-downs so I, you know, if you didn't know anything or you haven't received it, you make do with what you have, and I think that that carries over with me now, today, that there are certain things. I'll do a good job with what I have. And I've had to become more assertive, and more aggressive in that realm, but you know, I really didn't pay it too much attention. I guess that doesn't really hit you until you get an integrated situation, until you really come face-to-face with it. Now we were ... when I was here, back in '64, we started getting, at that time you started getting a few new, you know, books and what not, but you still would get limited, you would still get a lot of cast-offs.[62]

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Marie Smith was born on Cedar Point, now the location of the Patuxent River Naval Air Station, and lived there until she was 12 years old. She was interviewed in 1986 and 1987. *I had three years in nurse training and I really wanted to nurse but there wasn't any hospitals down here, you know, everything was segregated. So that what knocked me out from nursing. You couldn't even go in the front door of a hospital. You had to go around the back and go up a pair of steps, or use the fire escape steps. That was what St. Mary's Hospital was when I came back here. And of course that's all done away with, before they even tore the hospital down. But that's how it was when I first came back. Of course when I went to school, I was going to school in New Jersey, I really didn't know too much about segregation til I got down here. And not when I just got down here, way before that. But really, I'll say when I was a child, I think I was about ten or eleven years old, and I was walking up the road with my sister. I was down the country then on vacation. They used to keep talking about the white school, and*

[61] "Mary Louise Barnes Fleming." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.
[62] "Guffrie Smith, Jr." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.

there was a white school, it was painted white. And that's what I ... [laughs], I was so dumb. They said, 'Well the white school,' and I said, "Well where is the white school?" "It's over there." And I thought they were talking about the paint. I said, it just dawned on me, I said, "Where do you all go to school at?" And they said, "Just down that road there." Well it was white too! [Laughs.] So finally something, something was said that just come to my mind that they're talking about white children going over there, and the black children were down there! Well then, you know, I kind of woke up to things. I used to read a lot of different black papers and things, things that have happened in the South, you know, real South, like Florida and North Carolina and South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, and all that kind of stuff.[63]

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Ogden Thomas: *At that time we only had these one room schools and one teacher had to teach all grades. And children had to go for such distances that you didn't have no chance to start to school real early. I think when I started school I was about eight years old because I had six miles to walk to school; we did twelve miles, six miles to school and six miles back. So that made it right rough trying to get an education and then for the blacks it was a little rougher. Because most boys in the family was needed for their support of the family as soon as they got old enough to work and they missed so much time in school. But, I say fortunately for the little bit that I got and my father did spared me time to go to boarding school, high school, the first high school for blacks in St. Mary's. That was the Cardinal Gibbons Institute. And it was, started in, I think it was in 1916, something like this. And it was then after the war was over that they got back into it again and they completed the school and it was dedicated in 1924. That was when the first students went in.* [64]

30. The Cardinal Gibbons Institute in the 1920s.
Courtesy of the Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions

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Elfreda Mathis: *We went to a segregated school and we'd get the old books, believe me, the old books. It used to hurt my heart, I was standing out in the little play yard and I saw the little maintenance truck pull up with all these beat-up books with "Susie loves Bill" hearts drawn all over them and --. I thought, I didn't want anybody to think we did this because we couldn't*

[63] "Marie Smith." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.
[64] "Joseph Ogden Thomas." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.

even write, if we got caught, or the thought of writing on the top of a desk, we may have gotten our little fingers chopped off, that is what we thought. So kids used to mark under the desk, if you turn a desk upside down you might see anything but you didn't see anything on top of the desk. And we had to clean our own school, you know, we had to dust and mop at the end of the day, they had custodians but there were certain duties that the kids had to do at the end of the day. But I felt I had a very good education, the teachers worked very hard and they exposed us to a lot, they were very dedicated and concerned about us, you know. The older I get the more unusual it seemed, okay, to realize that I had that experience as a little kid in basically a segregated world, it was still a segregated situation but--.

Now you had a black Elks and a white Elks club in St. Mary's County. The county fairs were separate, for a very long time you had a black county fair and a white county fair. It's all together now and, but for a long time it was separate, even down to the parades and everything. All of my grandparents were teachers. My mother's mother and father were teachers and my father's mother and father were teachers, so what else could I be? But anyway, my mother's mother taught her until she was ready for junior high school. She had to move to Washington, D.C. to finish her education because they didn't have any high school for black kids at that time in this area.[65]

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Elizabeth Walker was born in 1943 in Park Hall, Maryland. After attending Carver High School, Walker enrolled at St. Mary's College of Maryland in September 1962. She was the only African American student in her class. Walker went on to become the first African American student to graduate from St. Mary's College. "*It was St. Mary's County, it was Southern Maryland. We had not made the progress that you all—that's been made here now, we had not. There were still outward signs of separation, in the theaters here, in the stores. Public schools were not integrated. I went to an all-black high school, all-black elementary school. My school was all-black, all-black. My elementary school was all black including the teachers and student body etc. At that time there was not a middle school; you went from first grade to six and then seven to twelve. There were two buildings for us at the time. And I don't remember any teachers that were not African American. When I got into twelfth grade, or a little before, I had thought about college, I mean I'd dream about it, think about it, would like to go, heard about it, and said I'd like to go. Had no idea about how, how I would go.*

"Up until 1962 we all in this community, blacks, thought this [St. Mary's College] was a private school. I don't know how the notion was promoted or got started but that's the word that was passed around and passed down, St. Mary's is a private school. So no one ever applied."[66]

[65] "Elfreda Mathis." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.
[66] "Elizabeth Walker." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.

Desegregation in Southern Maryland

Fred Talbert came to St. Mary's County from Arkansas. He grew up in a one room cabin where he, his brother, and his parents slept in the rafters. Talbert attended Alcorn College in Mississippi and then attended basic training for the Army in Louisiana, Florida, and California. He received a medical discharge from the Army in 1944, worked in Arkansas for a year and a half and then received a job at Patuxent River Naval Air Station in the transportation department. Talbert noted that St. Mary's County was more segregated than the Deep South where he grew up. He was interviewed twice, in 1991 and in 1998, long after he first arrived in St. Mary's County. [*When I came] I joined all civic activities. I said that you can't beat a thing by wanting to leave. You can't whip a thing by running away. So I joined everything that I could join. We organized a little civic organization. We used to have our meetings down there to make things better. We worked on public accommodations. Because your theaters and your hospital at that particular time, black people couldn't go in the front door. Black people went around in the emergency department to get admitted to St. Mary's Hospital. Then, when you went to visit somebody, you had to go up the fire escape on the outside.*

I got refused to be served here in St. Mary's County. It was a restaurant right there in Leonardtown, right on the corner there. But it's not running now, it's not anymore a restaurant. We went in there one night 'cause this fellow came in there and told us, "Mr. Bailey said, you all come on in, he was serving anybody that come in regardless of color." And so we had this meeting. Our civic association, and said, "Well let's go up there, you know and ...."

Mr. Bailey told us, "Regardless who come in," he said, "you can tell [blacks not to come]." But within two months, he changed his mind. He opened to us, see. But when we walked in there, wasn't anybody in there but white people. And they all stood up when we walked in there. See this was the time when Martin Luther King was having his sit-ins you know. They thought that's what we was going to do, we was going to sit-in. The sheriff-- guy named Miedzinski was sheriff then-- somebody went and got him, and he came in. And so we were coming out when he came in, and so we just brushed by him.

I didn't really like St. Mary's County when I first come here. But then, after I got started in working to make things better, just like everybody else was working at my home to make things better. Things is lookin' up.[67]

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Philip H. Scriber: *See, down to the store down here where we used to live, there's a old grocery store. That grocery store is still standing there today [on the corner of Sotterley and Forest Landing Road]. That old Bowles Store, that old store on the right. And the guy that owned this store, he would --Now, you speak of a gentleman, he was a fine gentleman. As far as he was concerned, a man is a man and there is no difference in color. And, he had this store there. He had a little bar room on the right. Blacks and whites drank in there together; they socialized together in that store. That was back ever since I could remember. When I was a little snot-nosed boy coming up, they socialized together in that store. I mean, that's the way he was, and he didn't stand for no hanky-panky.*

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[67] "Fred Talbert." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.

Elfreda Mathis: *Having the Naval Air Station there was like -- it extended your life experiences, it introduced you to people you would not have met and these people had experience they shared that you became a part of just by being there, and them sharing those experiences with you, and then whenever we went on the Naval Air Station we always felt very comfortable, you didn't feel like no one wanted you there. Okay. Meanwhile up in the old town was the segregated movie theaters, the lunch counters that you could not go in. In your family unit you felt very comfortable but in the larger world it was kind of a tense feeling, kind of going out and you knew you weren't accepted outside your family unit as a human being, you know, it was something different about it.*[68]

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Richard Portee: *I don't think people paid much attention [to "whites only" signs] because things had changed so much, in fact we moved quite rapidly here in the county without too many problems. I think it was due to a lot of the people moving in from elsewhere and laws were getting changed so rapidly, the Navy was trying to follow the pattern, and people who moved in the area went along with the change.*[69]

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Ogden Thomas: *We've learned, both white and black, that it really is foolish for one person to try to cry down another. I mean, because we all live in here, in the world together. And you got to live with the different people, whether you want to or not. And the best way to get along would be to try to be just and fair to all mankind, cause I tell you the truth, I mean I've had a many person to come back and say how foolish it was for so many things to be done. Yes sir, sometimes, way back, you work on the farm and when they would feed the help, and the help would have to eat out on the porch or something like that. And a black person couldn't eat along with a white person all of these kind of things. Now, still, there was black women in them kitchens of these people, cooking for them. See, so, I mean, this is just ignorance, just foolish to me.*[70]

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Fred Talbert: *It wasn't too long before the public accommodations bill was passed and so it shows how things were. But now it's better. And we're still not out the woods, but things are better. I mean prejudice doesn't have any, I mean there's a lot of black prejudiced people and a lot of white prejudiced people yet. But you see, I can tell this with a little humor in it. I laugh about it because I know what happened to me.*[71]

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George Grymes*: We thought it would be easy to integrate this county. 'Cause all of 'em, almost, see, this here county, Catholic dominated. An' all of the blacks and whites went to the same church, see. I thought it might have been easy to integrate this county. But, we found out it was hard. It really has come a long ways, but I still believe it has still a long*

[68] "Elfreda Mathis." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.
[69] "Richard Portee." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.
[70] "Joseph Ogden Thomas." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.
[71] "Fred Talbert." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.

ways to go. See, I'm the type of person, I don't look at your color; I look at you as a human being, see. An', I'm the type of person that loves people. I don't care what your color is; I just love people.

In 1947, most of the groups we had here was the NAACP. That's what helped us to [pause] integrate the county, NAACP, National Association for Advancement of Colored People. But I would like for them to change that word, "Colored People," to put "A" there, National Association for Advancement of All People, see, 'cause I spoke about that last Saturday when we had a meeting. 'Cause we have helped all people, black and white. And we have been lifted up through their works that they did, see. 'Cause at that time when we belonged to it then, people in this county hate [said loudly] NAACP [pause]. And, they hated that name. Then we had another group, we had, we formed, it was [pause] certain St. Mary's Citizen's Association [pause], see. We formed that too, when we formed that we formed that to help to lift the county up, see. To make it a better place for people to live.

Everybody's a human being. And, I think God made this earth and He wanted us to get along on this earth together. I know He do, 'cause that's why he told us to love one another. I was in the march over in Washington, 1960. We had about two hundred thousand people, and Dr. King spoke, "I have a dream." See, I was in the march. Now that was exciting too, because there's so many people there, all races, all together, sitting together. Everywhere, at one time, we sat in a place, blacks sit here and whites sit here. We were all here together.

Then we had another organization that I belonged to. Whites and blacks working together, human relations, that's what it was. Human relations, we had that. That's how we helped to integrate the county as we did, see. We went around to different places and talked to different establishments. Had a meeting with them and they agreed to do these things which we asked' em to do, see. Only hard one we had was with Penny's in Leonardtown. When I went there another fellow was with me, a white guy. We went in there, went in Leonardtown. Penny's and that's where a guy wanted to hit me with a pool stick. Yeah, and I got where he used to call me "nigger." They didn't allow no "niggers" in there. So we went on out. And, another minister was with me, he was a pastor of the Episcopal church in Town Creek. He was a fine fellow. So, we left the place; then we brought a case against 'em in court. Then after that, he agreed to integrate. It wasn't that I wanted to go to these places. But, it's so that if we want to go get something to eat, we could go in it, see. We wasn't so anxious to go in the place. But, you know, if you want something to eat you go and get it, you didn't have to go around the back and peep through the little peep hole. That's what you had to do. And, they would hand you something down through the peep hole. So, we wanted to go in, sit down to eat if we want. So later on, they came over, then we could go in there. But I ain't never been back there since. See, I've never been back there since. So, that's how we integrated. See, we'd sit down and talk to these people to integrate. Because I always loved people. I ain't care, your color don't make no difference to me. Your color don't. I love human beings. There's some fine white folks and some fine black folks. There some nasty white folks and nasty black folks [laughter]. See, there's always some nasty people in each race. 'Cause I never was prejudice. One thing, black folks don't teach their children to be prejudiced to no one. When that child born into this world that child's mind has a clear slate. See, that came from way down the line, prejudice. And, the word

prejudice means "pre-judged," see. You don't know me, but you pre-judge what I am, what I will be. You can't pre-judge what a person will do, 'cause each person's different.

Everybody's a human being. And, I think God made this earth and He wanted us to get along on this earth together. I know He do, 'cause that's why he told us to love one another. I was in the march over in Washington, 1960. We had about two hundred thousand people, and Dr. King spoke, "I have a dream." See, I was in the march. Now that was exciting too, because there's so many people there, all races, all together, sitting together. Everywhere, at one time, we sat in a place, blacks sit here and whites sit here. We were all here together.[72]

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John Hanson Briscoe: *When I went in the legislature in 1963 we still had public accommodations. You could keep blacks out of your restaurants if you wanted to. You didn't have to serve them. Yeah, public accommodations. And the civil rights bills were being passed in Congress and everything. And Maryland had a bill, the Public Accommodations Bill, that would permit anybody in the state of Maryland to go into any restaurant they wanted, you couldn't discriminate.*

I think it was in the newspapers and people didn't talk too much about it. I had one of the restaurant owners come up to me and said "You're not going to vote for that Public Accommodations Bill are you?" and I said "Sure" and he said "Why is that? You're a good ol' boy from St. Mary's County" I said "Look, these people (blacks), the law is going to pass anyway, but these people want to know that they can come into your restaurant if they want to. Most of 'em probably don't even want to. They probably wouldn't eat your food anyway." I was kidding. But he said "I don't know, we're going to have a lot of problems" and I said "Billy..." Bill, I said "It's going to happen, I wouldn't make any noise about it and they've got their own restaurants, the blacks do and they'll probably stay there." And it just happened. I was in the legislature. By the time I got out of the legislature it has already taken place. And integration into schools really went well I think. [My daughters] Lisa and Jan were in the first integrated class at Chopticon. I think they're the first class of integrated schools. That would've been in the '60s. Everything came then, civil rights, equal accommodations, equal rights for women, yeah it all kind of came together. And Maryland was very progressive.

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Nanny Theresa Young: *When in my young days, my life was spent in Leonardtown, right in the heart of Leonardtown. To this day, I know about segregation. I know all about things that, you know, you went in the back door. I know all about that, but I don't hold it. I look forward to what's better and to better myself, to better things. Make things better for other people. Because you don't hold onto things. You just start out to see if you can help to make it better for those that are coming behind you. But you do impress upon young people that you need to be educated. You need to work hard. You need to try to help to make it better for yourself and better for whoever's coming behind you. And, that's the way my life has always been. And, you do your best, whatever it is.*

And all of this County today, when I look around now, even white or black that I was raised with, there's very few. It's not many more original that I grew up with. As growing up, we know we were separated, but we always looked out. If you had white people that encouraged

[72] "George Grymes." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.

and wanted and helped you in whatever way they could to make things better for all of us because somehow or another, we seemed like we were a community and different people in this community. But to make us a better community, we will try to make it better for each one in that community. That's the way that I was raised and that's the way I see St. Mary's County or Leonardtown all through my life, and I've been here from the day I was born until now. And, it's always, to me, been that way.

Sure, you had people that maybe didn't like you or maybe called you out of your name, but my mother always let me know that I am somebody. And just because you call me that name, I don't have to be that name. I can always rise above that. I can be a better person I can let you know by my actions that I am somebody and that I can be a better person. And, I try to instill in my grandchildren today, "You can do. You can be better because you don't have to be what people call you or what people think you are. You take pride in who you are and living' and being a better person because you can be." And, that's the way I look at my life.

And, I love Leonardtown. I love St. Mary's County. That's all I've ever known. I have been to other places. But hey, this is home and I love home, and I love all the people in this home. We're all one people.[73]

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On the integration of local elementary schools:

Donald Barber: *When I went to Banneker see, we didn't have any books. So the teacher would just write on the blackboard. And then you would learn that way. What happened is they would hand the books down from all the white schools to the black schools after they were done with them, but if you're in elementary school those books are gone. By that time they were just worn out, so there was nothing to hand down. See elementary school there was first and second grade, there was nothing to have, those books were probably raggedy and torn up by that time. So we didn't have any books; teacher would just write on the board and you'd learn from that. But we had very good teachers and I had the same teacher in the first grade and the second grade and then she had taught every one of my older brothers and sisters and so when I entered she had very high expectations. Like I said, [my sister] Phyllis had just graduated and she was valedictorian so it was just like "I know what you can do and that's what you're going to do." So by the time I finished the second grade they had, I guess access to a school run by the Board of Education. Well my teacher had found some books so I had books when I was in the second grade. So I had completed the fourth grade text by the time I had finished the second grade. So I went up to Hollywood School, they gave me third grade textbooks and I was like "Hey, I've finished these things," Yeah, I actually made the teacher very angry, which I didn't anticipate, so I ended up just having to do that work over again. But I had pretty much done it already.*

When I was in elementary school I became friends with Jan Briscoe and her sister Lisa, and we're friends right up until today. Whole family is very nice. They were a very nice family; Judge Briscoe was very nice. They had a Social Studies Seminar, and we would always visit historic sites and sometimes we would go out of state, and we'd get back late. Judge Briscoe and his wife would always pick us up and give me a ride back here to Sotterley, he was real nice.

[73] "Nanny Theresa Young." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.

Audio 5. Donald Barber on attending elementary school:

My mother said they would wait for the white school bus to stop and then they would all get on the back and stand on the back bumper and hold on.

The first year I went to the integrated schools, you didn't have to go, they were, what do you call it, voluntary integration. So, my mother and father had picked for us to go to integrated schools. So I was out there waiting for the bus and the bus for Banneker came along and that's the bus I had gotten on for my entire school history, so they stopped and I was like, "Um, I'm supposed to wait for another bus." And he said "I got a seat for you here" and I said "Yeah, I wish I could get in it, but nope." So they went on. But then, I think it was, it was either when I was in the fourth grade or fifth grade, it must have been fifth grade when they had just the full, you had to go to the nearest school to your home. There was no choice at that point.

You see, when we were in Elementary School, integrating schools, it was not that big a deal, you were already friends with people. I mean I knew Bobby Morgan, from here [on Sotterley]. When we went to school it didn't seem like any big deal, and like the Briscoes, went to church with them at St. John's and then went to school with them after that so you just got to know people from being around here. I'm trying to think if there was anybody else that worked here at Sotterley. Course the Ennels that I said lived in that first house, they worked here[74].

Audio 6. Donald Barber on integrating the elementary schools:

31. Donald Barber's class in elementary school, which also included Jan and Lisa Briscoe, daughters of John Hanson Briscoe. Jane is in the front row, the second child to the right, weaing a bue dress. Lisa is in the second row, the fourth child from the left, wearing a red dress. Courtesy of Janice Briscoe

[74] Donald Barber, *Sotterley Oral History Project.* By Lynn Fitrell. July 12, 2010.

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On the integration of local high schools:

Joan Elaine Groves Briscoe: *We moved in down Lexington Park [from New York City]. I know I went to Jarboesville. I remember that. And then I remember going to Cardinal Gibbons, the black private school. And while I was going there, my mother and father were trying to get things straight in the Court so that we could do something about going to a white school. And so that we could start things where children went to school according to where they lived, not according to where somebody else wanted to send them. And then also the black schools never got all the books and the teaching that the white schools did. We always got last year's book that had been used. We always got the worst of everything that anybody had to give us. And so my father could see that--he could see that the education system was definitely different than the one we had left in New York. And he didn't want us to be stigmatized by that system. So he agreed to meet with the NAACP and their lawyers and whatnot and at least try to get us into an integrated school. So he put in for us to go to Great Mills [High School], my brother and myself, and we waited. You know how it takes awhile for things to come to Court and whatnot and for them to hear the case and all this. And the NAACP attorneys were the ones who did the case for us. And they did a very good job. Next thing I knew is that instead of going back to Cardinal Gibbons, I was just supposed to go to Great Mills. And I'd never been to the school before. Had never seen it or anything like that. But my mom and father got us ready for school, the bus picked us up, and we went to Great Mills. So that's how we got into the school. We went on the regular bus over to Jarboesville and then at Jarboesville the other bus picked us up. We were the only two people on the bus. And it took us over to Great Mills. It was run by the St. Mary's County Board of Education just like all the other buses but we were not allowed to ride the regular bus that all the other Great Mills students were riding to come to school. We went to Jarboesville, which was the black school, and then we transferred from that bus to an empty bus.*

We--my brother and myself--we were the only two that were on the bus and went over to Great Mills. He was in, I think, the ninth grade and I was in the twelfth grade. And see, at that time, nobody was happy about integration. What the white people had wanted to happen was for integration to take place slowly. And what they would do is they would start at kindergarten and start working the way up. So you wouldn't have any black person graduating from a white school for at least twelve years. And in twelve years, by that time, you were finished with it. Your children were grown and they were out of the way. Somebody else's kids could, you know, could deal with it.

But my father and my mother understood that a whole generation of kids were going to be lost like that. And that that was not necessary at all. You know, if you were going to do something you could at least try, you know. And my father knew that we weren't going to bite anybody's head off. So that all they needed to do was just give us a try. So we just went on a trial to do our school lessons and that was it, you know. I had some friends--didn't have a lot.

You never have a lot of friends anyway. But there were maybe two or three kids that were my friends. And they were good friends to me. They were just as sweat as they could be. A lot of them that, you know, their parents were stationed on the Base, and they knew better than all that, you know, stuff they were hearing and whatnot. And so I enjoyed going to school there. And I was very, very grateful and very thankful to all the teachers that were so kind and all the kids that were kind to me, you know. And the ones that weren't, I just--I--to this day, I just

feel sorry for them, you know. I have to believe that now all that's gone. I have to believe that, you know, you grow up. After a while, yeah, you grow up. You're facing everything.

Q: *Do you remember what the first day was actually like?*

Joan Elaine Groves Briscoe: *We were just excited, you know. You see we had gone to school before that was integrated. This was not like this was our first time to go to an integrated school. In New York, you used to go to school with everybody. Nobody ever looked at anybody and thought anything about it - one way or the other. So for that reason--that's the reason I think I wasn't, you know, really upset. 'Cause it really wasn't our first time to do that.*

[My grades were] good, the whole time I was there. My brother's were too. Whatever we, I guess, didn't get in the Banneker, Phillis Wheatley or whatever, it didn't stop us from doing well once we got to Great Mills. It wasn't like that at all. And I think maybe because I attended Cardinal Gibbons and it was a private school, I think the curriculum might have been a little bit better than what I might have gotten, you know, at one of the public schools. So I think that had a lot to do with it too. And I thank the Lord for all the preparations we had so that I wasn't so far behind that we couldn't do well once we transferred over to Great Mills. Yeah. Graduated at the end of that year. I think I was sixteen, almost seventeen. 1959.

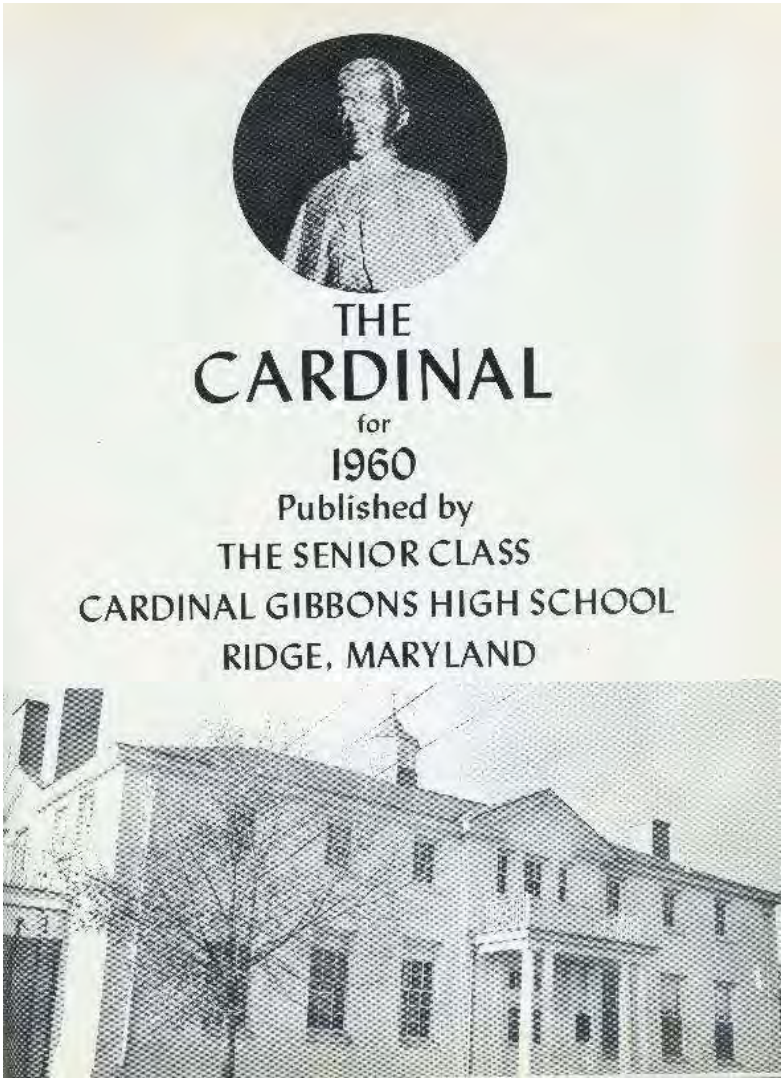
He [my brother] didn't stay there. He stayed there for a while and then he transferred over to Ryken High School. I think my brother suffered a lot of things that I didn't suffer. I really do and I think because he was a man; he was a boy. And I think it was very difficult for him. And plus Ryken had a tremendous curriculum. They were very very good. My brother was always very good in science. And, you know over there at Ryken, they opened up the school for kids to explore the areas that they were good in. They didn't try to hold them back or stop them or anything like that. And they were glad to have him over there. So he didn't have to go back to Cardinal Gibbons, he went on with Ryken. And there wasn't any problem that I remember at all over there. If there was anything going on, I don't remember it. And I think, as far as I can remember, I think he graduated from Ryken.

32. The Cardinal Gibbons senior class of 1960.
Courtesy of the St. Mary's County Historical Society

I don't really dwell on the lows. I really don't. I'm just thankful to God for the highs. I'm glad for having had the experience to integrate a school. I'm glad for having gone to Great Mills. I'm not sorry one bit. I'm glad for every teacher and all of the experiences that we had. I don't regret it at all, I'm not sorry, I'm happy about it. Having heard over the years all the black kids that have gone to Great Mills and the other schools – I'm so happy for them, I really, really am. I'm so grateful to God for giving them a

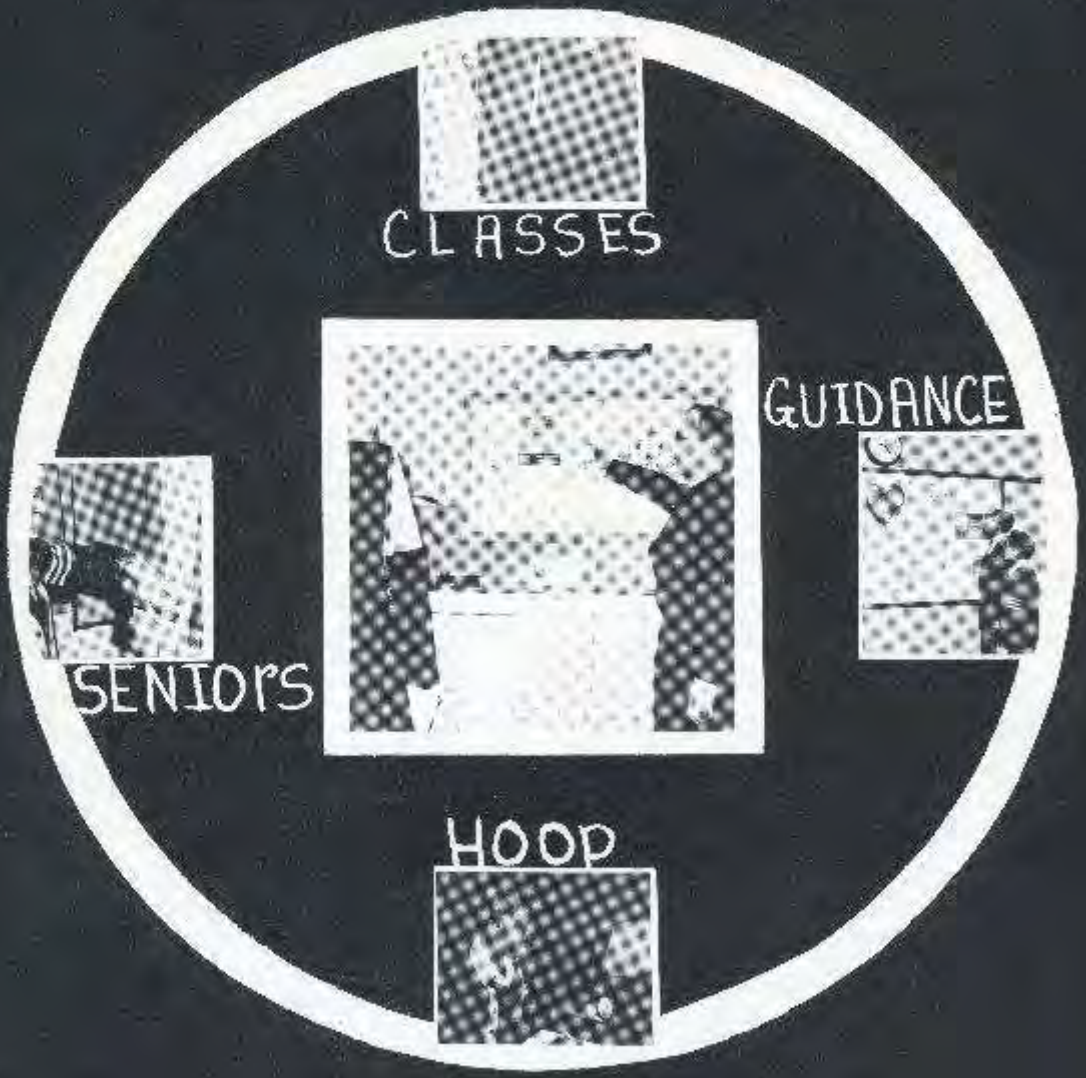
chance to go to an integrated school as opposed to having to go to Cardinal Gibbons and the other black schools. I know that those were the better schools, I know that they, they were supplied better than the black schools. I know that they had good teachers, not that we didn't have good teachers because we had some of the best teachers. But to be able to have the good supplies, the good schools, the good teachers and the kids. To come to an integrated school I know is better for us than to just have to go to a black school and use old textbooks and not have the best of everything to learn from. I don't know what the kids are doing with it now. I hope that they are utilizing it, because it wasn't that way when we were going to school. I hope that they are taking advantage of every opportunity they have to get a good education because that was not our opportunity at that particular time. And so I'm glad for that. I'm really, really, really glad and I'm hoping that the kids are taking advantage of it now.[75]

33. The 1960 yearbook of the Cardinal Gibbons High School in Ridge.
Courtesy of the St. Mary's County Historical Society



[75] "Joan Elaine Groves." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.

Take 200 acres of land in lovely, Southern Maryland and a Colonial Building for your mixing bowl and place therein four score of students and faculty members. Mingle thoroughly with classrooms, textbooks, and lectures. Add basketball games, record hops, skating parties, and junior proms for spice; then stir in the rush of classes, a lack of sleep, tired looks, and preparation for examinations. Shake up for finals and allow to set for a week. For flavor, toss in one Sweetheart's Ball, soft music, and candlelight. Drop in a dash of ambition strongly seasoned with religious training, and a whiff of the future. After sprinkling snow and rain over all, allow to age slowly for four years. Top with a few crushed hopes for maturity, and serve at graduation time.



The four years we have spent at Cardinal Gibbons have been most unforgetable. It has been a time of intense study, prayer, socializing, and accomplishment. Mainly these four years have been a preparation for life in time--and in time-less eternity. These are our treasured memories...

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Joseph Ogden Thomas: *States Attorney Dorsey said; he was speaking to me one day when they was integrating the school and they had a very, very tough time when they integrated school right around here. And so he said, "Ogden, you know, they're fighting a losing battle. The easier they go into this, the more quicker they can accept this, the better it's gonna be for all, because the change is at hand. And it's gonna happen." I always remember him saying that.*[76]

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Leroy Thompson , Sr.: *Thurgood Marshall came into the County to look at some of the schools. NAACP attorney [Clarence Mitchell] from Baltimore County came down. That's when they set the strategy for what procedures to take to start integrating the schools and seeing that teachers got equal pay. Paul Bailey was attorney to the school board at the time and advised Mrs. Dent to help, and cited Banneker. Saw the handwriting on the wall: if they didn't do something, the county would be sued.*[77]

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On the role played by the local Catholic churches:

Tom Waring: *Integration started when the Catholic Church began to integrate their schools; this is before the 60's. The Jesuits said, "We're going to have integration." Before that they had schools for the blacks and schools for the whites. And they did that, and it forced many people into public schools, but the Jesuits made it stick and that was the first inkling of it. And so desegregation through education became a law. The Catholic Church is really, and I'm not a Catholic by any means, but they did a wonderful job in pushing and helping the integration.*

Audio 7. Tom Waring on the Jesuits integrating their schools:

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On the integration of St. Mary's Female Seminary:

Q: *How did people react when you went back to your community? Because you were the only one in an all white institution, St. Mary's College.*

Elizabeth Walker: *Well my family was happy, I mean they were proud. It would have been something that no other family members had ever done. So there had to be some good feelings from them and it was expressed on occasion. Of course my grandparents were even more elated. They came out of an era where separation was very strong, so if I—just to see me make it on through, I'm sure it gave them a feeling of "hey, there is a possibility that change will come."*

[76] "Joseph Ogden Thomas." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.
[77] "Leroy Thompson, Sr.." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.

Once it became knowledge that I was accepted, there was support from people in the community. I was being watched, I was in a fishbowl, a glass bowl. Is she gonna make it? Are they gonna let her stay? Is she gonna be able to academically make it or ask her to leave? Is St. Mary's County gonna have a riot, or have problems like they had in Little Rock or Alabama? Are the National Guard gonna have to come out, or is the military gonna have to come? So, it was a fish bowl. I could walk home. I lived in Park Hall, Maryland, which is -- it's a good walk. But I had walked it. I could walk home if it became necessary.

Q: How does all that make you feel? You were accepted but you found out that people were against it.

Elizabeth Walker: Scary. I don't think I slept one bit the night before I was due to come here. I knew my dad was gonna be bringing me and picking me up every day, and I knew he couldn't follow me around all day -- he had to work, there were others to feed -- and I know he was thinking about dropping me off and 'what's gonna happen when I drop her off and pull that truck off.' And he drove me and on that first day he didn't say much and I didn't say much either, but I knew what he was thinking and I knew that he was scared some. And he was scared for me. I knew I had a "big sister," she was assigned to me; I got a letter about who she was. And the way I found her is she wore the name tag and of course she didn't have a problem finding me, I was the only one on campus. I just was glad I guess that someone was willing to be my big sister here, and that there would be somebody to talk to, at least on occasion. But she was a year ahead of me so I knew she was gonna be gone and she was very busy but at least I had that one contact. Walking the campus and knowing that no one would speak to you, that no one comes up and says anything to you, it's kind of tough. You know, it's lonely, very.

I will say that the exposure I got here was very good. I never would have, I never played field hockey before and no, my, black schools around this area, field hockey? No. Cultural arts activities, concerts, no. So the exposure was great for me. I got to do and see and participate as much as possible in activities that I just never had access to. So it made me want to have more of this. And it also made me realize I had a right to have more of this, and should have had it all along. My school received books that were used from the white high school, books that were already scribbled with names and torn-out pages. I can't recall ever seeing brand-new books brought into my bedroom. It didn't register with me for a while when every year we collected the books and put them in the closet for the next year's students, if you were seventh grade you turn in all your books, and I used to feel, "Why do these books come all with names in them?" They would be boxed but, why'd they come with all these names and who are all these people? And, you know, I guess I was just so happy that we had textbook materials, I didn't pursue where, you know, quite why we were getting used books. Maybe in the back of my mind I knew and I didn't want to know, didn't want to think about it too hard. And I thought, at least I got the books; use 'em. So we used them. So it made me know that I had a right to more and it made me decide that, hey, I'm going to get more. And I'm gonna tell what I know and share what I learned and pass it on.

Q: So there was never a time really where you felt like you didn't really want to be here?

Elizabeth Walker: There was. The afternoon after my books and things were knocked out of my hand, I had to hide in -- well actually one of the teachers pulled me into her room and kept me there until my parents came to get me -- when I got home, my mother detected there was something wrong. And she said, "Do you want to quit? All you have to do is tell us and you don't have to go back there anymore." And I didn't immediately say anything, yes or no, I just kind of, I don't even know where I went to think. But whenever I finished thinking, I came out and told

her, "No, I'm not quitting, I'm going back tomorrow." So I have, that's one night that I came close to thinking of quitting but I didn't; I may have even had some other slight inklings of quitting, but that one night was the most, the strongest, and I figured if I got through that one, the rest of them could really be pushed aside. Besides that, I had opened a door, as they say cracked the ice, and I knew that if other minorities were going to come here, I probably -- I needed to be the one to open that door and see that it stayed open. And like it or not I got picked and, like it or not I said, "Hey, I'm not quitting. The door's open, it got opened by you, you're gonna finish this so somebody else can come behind you." As apparently many folks did.

And it was, it was lonely for me. No one would say anything to me, I would take my books, take out my books and take notes on whatever was being said, the bell rang and I closed my books and got them and I walked out the door and headed to my next class.

Q: You integrated St. Mary's Junior College. Can you tell us why you did it?

Elizabeth Walker: Well, basically I wanted to go to college, and I'd heard about Hampton, at that time Hampton Institute, and out-of-state tuition was off the chain, you know, as far as thousands, it was like ten thousand for me. So Miss Fleming was my French teacher, and I talked to her a lot, and she knew I wanted to go. She knew I had the potential and ability, and I think she's the one who turned my head when she realized the tuition was more than my parents could afford. She was the one who said, "Why don't you go locally?" And I'm like, "Where? There is no college locally that African Americans can go to." And that's when she thought up St. Mary's Seminary Junior College. And I said, "But it's, but it's white." I said, "It's white." She said, "But I think the state would support it. I will find out." I don't know how she found out, but she did. I don't know how she got the application either, but she did and she took it, filled it out. I remember I was sitting there and we got to "recent school"; she left it blank. She left it blank ...

Q: She didn't list Washington Carver.

Elizabeth Walker: She couldn't list the school, you would have known automatically.

Q: And you didn't give a picture either.

Elizabeth Walker: We didn't give a picture. We didn't have that many pictures. You know, the school didn't make a big thing, so I didn't have a picture, and it went through. And the day came. We got an acceptance letter. I remember coming home from school and it was on the table, and nobody had opened it. And I opened it, or my mom opened it -- I think my mama, 'cause I think she called Miss Fleming, called Mr. Lancaster, a few more people, and they opened it. And there was an acceptance letter with a meeting date for Mom, Dad, and any other interested parties like myself, and it was held in the evening.

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Tuajuanda Jordan, current President of St. Mary's College of Maryland: *"I know the first couple of presidents [of St. Mary's College of Maryland] were associated with Sotterley, and they were charged with educating women in the finer things of life. You have these women educating women, and we get to the point where we are in the modern era. You now have a woman whose ancestors were slaves in charge of this institution. It's an incredible historical perspective there.*

Myself being a first generation college graduation coming from Prince George's County, my journey brings me here. Do I have a mission? Yes. Do I think I was placed here for a reason? Yes. The first summer I was here, I was walking on Route 5 coming from the student's

center. All of a sudden a pickup truck pulls up on the street and stops in front of me, and I'm thinking, "What's going on?" Then I see an elderly African American man hobble out of the truck, come over to me, and he said, "You're the new president of St. Mary's College." I said, "Yes, sir, I am." He said, "I just want to shake your hand, because we never thought we'd see one of us in charge of that place." And it goes back to the history of this place[78].

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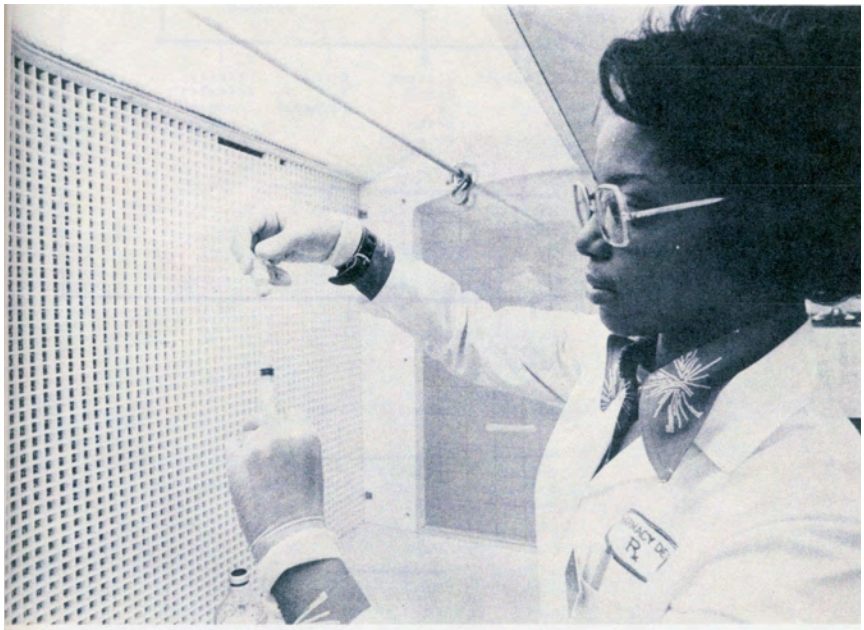
Concerning a descendant of Hilry Kane graduating from medical school:

Martina Callum: *My Grandfather was very proud when I graduated from medical school. I graduated in 1979, May 25th to be exact. My grandfather was born in 1895. His name was Philip Moten Kane. When I graduated from medical school in '79 my grandfather was eighty-four years old. He was present at my graduation ceremony and I can see him as if it were yesterday standing in front of Misner Auditorium at George Washington, with his chest stuck out and his head high in the air and he says, "I never thought I would see the day when one of mine would graduate from the George Washington University School of Medicine." That was a proud moment.*



This photo was taken of Martina Priscilla Callum, R. PH. (Registered Pharmacist) January 1975 at the National Institute of Health, Bethesda, Maryland. Martina Priscilla was a Lt. Junior Grade (Lt. jg.) United States Public Health Service. Position: Pharmacist, age 24. Martina Priscilla is now a Medical Doctor, a graduate of George Washington University School of Medicine, Washington, D.C., May 1979.

[78] "Elizabeth Walker." *St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives, UCAC Collection*.

Family Day

Agnes Kane Callum, the great-grandaughter of Hilry Cane, arranged with the Docent of Sotterley, Mrs. Elizabeth Harman, to take a tour of the home of her ancestors. On Saturday, May 20, 1978, one hundred and three descendants of Hilry Cane came to pay homage to the spirit of their ancestors. Among those who were present were the grandchildren of Hilry: Adelaide Kane Mason, ninety, and Julia Kane Jordan, seventy-eight, the children of Francis Cane (the baby that was sold in 1849 for fifty dollars). There was Isaac Kane, eighty-three, whose father was the last of Hilry's children to be born a slave. Philip Moten Kane, eighty-one, Edith Kane Hickamn, seventy-three, and James Irving Kane, seventy-one, the children of Henry Kane, the first of Hilry's children to be born free. Also present were: Benjamin Kane, Flora Kane Nored, Elsie Kane Pierson, Bertha Kane Johnson, Margaret Kane Johnson, Isabella Kane Barnes and Hillary Edward Kane, all the children of Sam Kane, the youngest of Hilry's eighteen children.[79]

"Preservation: Saving Sotterley"

By the busload, the nieces, great-nephews and cousins-six-times removed of a woman names Agnes Kane Callum rolled past 28 maples marshaled on each side of a rock driveway that led through a black-iron entrance to a very old and particular house.

The family, packed into three 46-passenger chartered buses with 11 more cars of relatives trailing in their exhaust, was making a pilgrimage to Sotterley Plantation in Hollywood, Md., a tidewater estate some 60 miles south of Washington. It was 1978, the first of three Kane gatherings at Sotterley, the only tidewater plantation in the state still accessible to the public.

The Kanes were drawn not only to the stately manor house, where some of Maryland's most distinguished families have lived, but to a humble slave cabin on the edge of the woods, hidden from view. This is where their family had lived. This is what the Kanes had come to see.

"I know a lot of blacks who know this plantation's there said Callum. "They think it's a white people's plantation… but our roots are here too, the Kane roots, and the beautiful thing about this historic place is that for once, the slaves are included in the story."

The Kanes had come from as far away as Delaware and New York to visit Sotterely. But they did not come, as thousands of others have, because the grand house, built between 1710 and 1717, is one of the oldest survivors of the tidewater construction era.

No, "Uncle Pa," as Agnes had called her grandfather, Henry Cane (the name's spelling at the time,) had not lived in the big house that sits high above rolling meadows. Uncle Pa had lived in a dirt-floor cabin at the edge of the meadows.

Recalling what she had felt the first time she saw her grandfather's quarters, Agnes Kane Callum said: "It was absolutely terrible that they had to live there and sleep on that dirt floor and go up the hill to wait on the white people, to polish their silver. I felt really, really hurt, but then I thought they must have been strong people. They had to have character."

[79] Agnes Kane Callum, The Kane's Sojourn at Sotterley

After that first reunion, Agnes Kane Callum brought her family back the next year and the next. Then came two busloads of co-workers from the Baltimore post office where she worked and later, carloads of friends.[80]

"Search Leads Family to Plantation"

An unusual family reunion. 150 men, women and children, all direct descendants of slaves and free blacks from the Butler-Kane family, gathered at the plantation where many of those descendants had lived and worked.

The reunion last weekend was held at Sotterley Mansion, overlooking the Patuxent River in St. Mary's County. It was there, Callum found, that the wife and children of Hillery Kane came in 1848, when the mansion was owned by Dr. Walter Hanson Briscoe.

Hillery Kane lived on the plantation of Col. Chapman Billingsley, whose land was adjacent to Sotterley. Hillery stayed on working for the Briscoes and the Billingsleys for about 15 years after the Emancipation Proclamation, and Philip Moten Kane's father (Agnes Callum's grandfather) was born a free man on the Sotterley Plantation in 1865.

Few of the people who attended the reunion Saturday were aware of their heritage before Callum's note arrived in the mail. People with names such as Neal, Robinson, Lewis, Parker and Barnes were greeting each other, some for the first time. They came from as far away as New York and as close as Washington, D.C.[81]

"As I obtained more and more information, I began writing to those I had found out about. Everybody was willing to help. I asked for photographs, and I got them. The oldest one I received dates back to 1878."

The first reunion, held last year at Sotterley, was attended by about 100 people. Most of them and more came back this year. [82]

Merideth Taylor interviewed Agnes Kane Callum as a part of Sotterley's Oral History Project in April, 2008.

"They never said anything about the slave cabins."

Merideth Taylor: *When was that when you first came here?*

Agnes Callum: *My father showed me how to get in. And we paid two dollars to go on a tour and they never mentioned the slave cabins. And then my father knew about the slave cabins and so in my research I found out that there were 10 slave cabins – this was in 1830, there was 10 slave cabins here. And sometimes I would come down by myself and I would pay my two dollars – they never said anything about the slave cabins.*

[80] "Preservation: Saving Sotterley." Washington Home. By Jackie Spinner June 27, 1996

[81] "Search Leads Family to Plantation" From The Washington Post, By Sue A. Challis May 29, 1979

[82] "Search Leads Family to Plantation," The Washington Post, Sue A. Challis, May 29, 1979

So I brought about 250 people down one Saturday. I had three busloads and 22 cars. That was really nice. And many of them were relatives – first cousins, sometimes the kinship had ran out. But they still wanted to be a part of this … the Sun paper came and the Afro came. And that's where the concentration of people were, was at the slave cabin. They went through the house, the mansion, but the concentration was at the slave cabin, it was so many people. And I felt really proud, I felt really proud that they felt proud that they wanted to belong. And one of my cousins asked me, said "Well, is anything left from what Hillery Kane did? For example, did he weave a basket, is the basket still around?" And I told him I didn't know of anything that was left behind. Or if it was its probably destroyed over the years, cause that's 100 years since Hillery was born and then, you know I took up the torture of looking for my people. So they were really proud of that and that made me feel proud.

34. One of Agnes Kane Callum's Family Day groups.
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

Agnes Kane Callum: *I tell you, when I tell people that I'm going to Sotterley and I explain to them that Sotterley was a slave plantation in St. Mary's County, where I trace my heritage, that's all I tell them – I can get a busload of people in a minute. Although they can't find their relatives, maybe they're not even looking. They seem so interested in mine.*

I'm lucky to be connected to Sotterley. By that I mean who else can trace their lineage to a plantation of this size, and it could be a smaller plantation – no one. At the present time, no one. And from what I read I tried to keep up with St. Mary's County, from what I've read, there have been slave cabins and whatever but no one has been able to connect with them. For example, I connected with Sotterley because I can say, oh there's my grandfather's name, there's my uncle's name, there's my cousin. But no one else down here in St. Mary's County can do the same.[83]

* * * * *

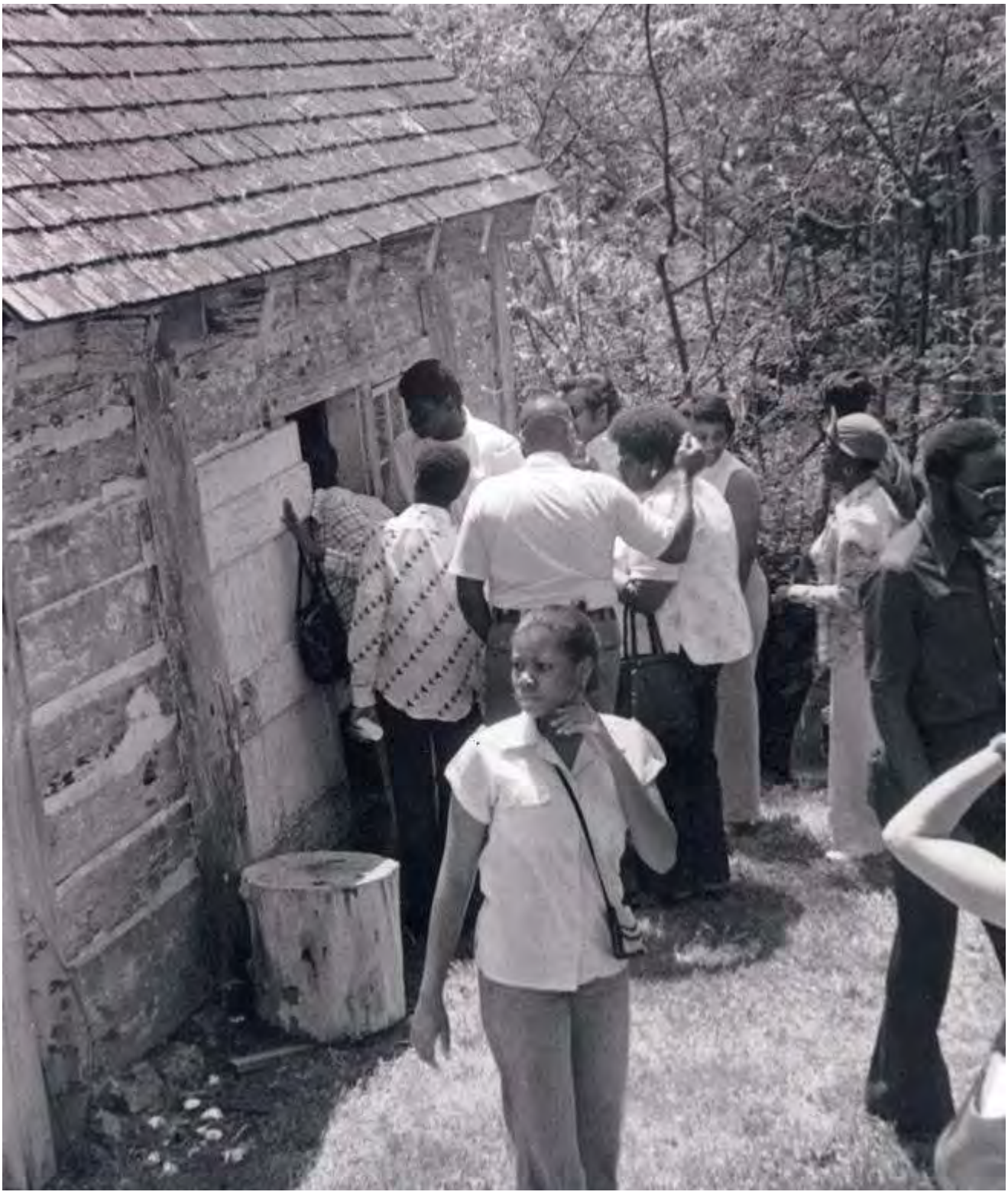
Grace Calhoun Horton was born and raised in Alabama. She met her husband, John Rider Horton at the University of Chicago and they were married for sixty years. While John Horton worked for the Central Intelligence Agency, their family lived in four or five different countries. They later retired to Sotterley Plantation. She was interviewed as part of Sotterley's Oral History Project in 2009. *I certainly know that Mabel Ingalls knew Agnes Kane and Agnes organized the first family reunions at Sotterley. Every year, well perhaps not every year, but the Kanes would come to Sotterley by the bus load and Mabel was very pleased with that. They came and I'm not really sure what the program was. But they either brought lunch or had it catered. But a lot of Kanes came and as a matter of fact, when I became a trustee we were looking at strengthening the board and I suggested Agnes and as a matter of fact I called her to ask her to come to Sotterley and we talked to her. J. Frank Raley and I interviewed her. And she was willing to become a trustee. But Mabel was immensely pleased that the Kanes came to Sotterley. I don't know how many years that continued, but yes, she was very pleased with that*[84]*.*

* * * * *

Martina Callum is Agnes Kane Callum's daughter, and a medical doctor practicing in the Baltimore region. She was interviewed in early 2015. "*They made family trips to Sotterley like over a hundred people, and my mother was forever dragging people to Sotterley. Sotterley Foundation was reaching a point where they had vacancy on the board and Ted Koppel's wife was concerned about the diversity on the board. The board was like, "we don't know who to ask." This one lady was like, "Why don't you ask that lady who keeps bringing a bus load of people around." Once she got on the board she shared how she started because she had learned once you get started to pay attention to the other people all around. So she had started gathering information about the Briscoes."*

[83] Agnes Kane Callum, *Sotterley Oral History Project,* By Meredith Taylor, April 21, 2008.

[84] Grace Horton, *Sotterley Oral History Project,* By Lynn Fitrell, April 7, 2009.



35. Kane descendants at Sotterley's slave cabin on one of Agnes Kane Callum's Family Day trips. Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

John Hanson Briscoe and Agnes Kane Callum

John Hanson Briscoe: "*And in Leonardtown where I was born and raised, the only mention of slavery during my entire life with my parents, particularly my father, was there was a tall black gentleman who used to shovel coal in our basement over in Leonardtown, did yard work, milked the cow. A tall lean black man. I heard my mother say one day, I don't know how it came about, that his name was George Kane, either C-A-N-E or K-A-I-N, which ties in to Agnes Callum's people. My mother said "Old George he is a descendant of one of the slaves at Sotterley." That's all I remember. He stayed around, and they hired him. He was there during the war because I know he milked the cow, and we had a cow during the Second World War. I remember the old gentleman, very polite, very quiet. He would do work around the house. But I remember he used to shovel — we had a coal furnace and we had coal piled up outside the window I can see him now, tall lanky black and he would shovel coal down a shoot and it would come down into our furnace. That is the only mention I can ever remember during my entire life, and I was with my parents until their death, of slavery. My mother said George was a descendant of one of the slaves at Sotterley. And with that last name of course, you can look at the list of all the slaves and there were Kanes in there. Of course, as you know, in those days they took on names of their owners. There are lots of black African Americans named Briscoe."*[85]

NDAY, AUGUST 18, 1996

By MICHAEL JANOFSKY

National Report

The New York Times

Descendants of Slave and Master Work to Save a Common Heritage

A Plantation in Maryland Serves as a Symbol of Reconciliation

"This really represents so much of American history," said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, "all that was wrong with the period and what's right now."

As Mrs. Callum, a retired postal employee, walked the quiet grounds of the plantation, she reflected on the historical improbability of their bond. "Very rarely," she said, "do you find a member of a slave family who you can connect with a member of the white family who owned the slaves, not by hearsay, but documents."

When John Hanson Briscoe joined her on the Sotterley Plantation Board of Directors in 1994, Agnes Callum reached the end of a journey lasting almost 150 years.

"I felt so happy," Mrs. Callum said recently, recalling their first board meeting together. "I was thinking, 'We've finally come full circle. "We're equals at last." That made me feel good."

[85] Interview With John Hanson Briscoe, David Brown, February 20, 2008, *Sotterley Oral History Project*, *Sotterley Archives*.

Mr. Briscoe's great-grandfather once owned the plantation; Mrs. Callum's great-grandfather was a slave of a neighbor. Now, as colleagues, they share the common goal of helping raise money to restore the once-majestic plantation, built in 1717, and its slave quarters so future generations can more fully appreciate what servitude meant. [86]

36. John Hanson Briscoe and Agnes Kane Callum, with members of the Kane family. Pictured are (left to right): Top row: Betty Bankins, Hilary Kane, Reggie Gunn, Cliffton Bankins, unknown, Deborah Nored, and unknown. Middle row: Unknown, Calvin Kane, unknown, Marita Bankins, Sahni Bankins, and unknown. Bottom row: James Kane, Tarik Kane, Gwen Bankins, Agnes Kane Callym, Kallid Kane, and John Hanson Briscoe. Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

NBC's The Today Show, Sotterley Segment, 1996

Katie Couric: "Perhaps our best hope of improving race relations in this country lies in the actions of individuals. Well one example can be found in Southern Maryland where two people are working together to preserve a beautiful yet troubling symbol of their mutual history.

"On the banks of the Patuxent River lies a striking legacy of America's past, Sotterley Plantation. Built in 1717, it was once home to some of Maryland's most prominent families. In its heyday it was one of the state's largest tobacco plantations and as many as 53 slaves called

[86] "Descendants of Slave and Master Work to Save a Common Heritage," The New York Times, August 18, 1996

Sotterley home. Today it's one of the only plantations left where the slave quarters are still standing and open to the public."

Richard Moe: *"Here is a very significant property, goes back 300 years, really represents so much of American life, older than the county itself. And it really encompasses all of what America was then, both the good and the bad, the beautiful architecture, but yet the slavery. And that was our history for better or worse."*

Katie Couric: *"Judge John Hanson Briscoe and Agnes Callum know both the better and the worse. They each have deep roots here linked by an ironic bond. He's directly descended from one of Sotterley's owners, she from Sotterley's slaves."*

Agnes Kane Callum: *"We are working for a common cause, we are working for this entire plantation. That it will survive, that hopefully it will be here for many, many, many years to come."*

John Hanson Briscoe: *"This is living history, that slave cabin is living history and it should be preserved."*

37. Agnes Kane Callum, John Hanson Briscoe, and former Maryland Comptroller Louis L. Goldstein. Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

Katie Couric: *"How Ms. Callum discovered her ties to Sotterely is an odyssey that spans several decades. While attending college in her 50's she became passionate about genealogy and traced her family's roots to Sotterley's slaves. Now 71, she routinely brings family members to see the place where their ancestors once lived in captivity."*

Agnes Kane Callum: *"I was so excited, I was just so happy that they were there and that they could see for themselves and touch history. They were so happy to be here and some of them absolutely cried and some of them were so bitter that they wouldn't even get off the bus."*

Katie Couric: *"Eager to learn more about her family history here she eventually tracked down Judge Briscoe."*

Agnes Kane Callum: *"I gave him some papers that I had researched and some copies*

of original documents, and he looked them over and so the next time we met he told me that he learned a lot. That he didn't know all of this went on, he knew about the Briscoe's, but the other element, the other part of the culture, the black culture, he knew nothing."

John Hanson Briscoe: *"It was a shock in the sense that I didn't know these facts and figures existed, but certainty I was not ashamed or embarrassed in any way, and nor did she make me feel like that."*

Agnes Kane Callum: *"And it never dawned on me to be angry and I'm glad he didn't apologize. I think I would have been insulted, apologize for what? When we didn't even know each other."*

Katie Couric: *"In recognition of her research, Ms. Callum was asked to join the Sotterley's board of trustees. It was only then that other members finally felt comfortable enough to address a subject that had long been avoided."*

38. John Hanson Briscoe and Agnes Kane Callum on break together at Sotterley. Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

John Hanson Briscoe: *"Nobody wanted to, for obvious reasons, talk about slavery because it was a wound and it was opening up that which I guess everyone was uncomfortable with, not ashamed of, but uncomfortable with. But she was a catalyst for it."*

Agnes Kane Callum: *"So how could history be complete here and don't talk about the slaves and the work that they did here."*

John Hanson Briscoe: *"My father talked about much of the history of our family here and in other places, but I cannot remember ever the mention of slavery."*

Katie Couric: *"But that all changed when Agnes Callum became involved."*

Agnes Kane Callum: *"The very first time I came to this cabin that was really a depressing day for me because it was so sad and I looked around and did my people absolutely really live in a place like this? And then I had to look at the other side of the coin. But what kind of person survives this system, it must have been a person of not only physical stamina, of good character, dignity, courage, honesty and being proud."*

Katie Couric: *"Today, short of funds for its upkeep, Sotterley is in trouble. On a list of America's 11 most endangered historical sites."*

Richard Moe: *"It's in very precarious condition, the great need here are funds or else this place could be lost."*

Katie Couric: *"So Ms. Callum and Judge Briscoe have devoted themselves to saving their common piece of American heritage."*

Richard Moe: *"One of the great things about it is that descendants of slave holders and descendants of slaves are coming together to save this very unique part of our history, and that's the best of America."*

John Hanson Briscoe: *"We're not trying to sweep it under the rug. We are both working together dove-tailing our interests into one goal and mission that we both have and it's genuine and it's real."*

Agnes Kane Callum: *"100 and some years later we meet together, not as slave and master, but on equal ground and I was proud to do that, yes."*

Katie Couric: "What a neat lady, and we're back in a moment, this is Today on NBC."[87]

Video 4. Agnes Kane Callum and John Hanson Briscoe on NBC Today.

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Nancy Easterling, the current executive director of Sotterley: *Agnes had heard the stories of her lineage. She knew that her ancestry was traced to a plantation, a place of slavery. She just didn't realize that place was Sotterley. When she did her research she started to realize where the place was and made that connection. Her research and her oral histories have been the basis and the fundamental structure of what our "Slavery to Freedom" and other programs were built upon. Different eras of slavery were different. 18th century slavery was not the same as 19th century slavery. And Agnes, most of her family's recollection was close to the time of the Civil War. So our programs are based on the mid to early 1800's era of slavery with "Slavery to Freedom" because the one in the 1700's was even harsher and a different time of slavery before they banned slaves coming over.*

Sam Baldwin: *So let's come back to Agnes Callum. What is her significance to Sotterley? What have been her contributions?*

Nancy Easterling: *The first and one of the biggest besides the research which we are still using and we are still basing so much on, truly when she served on that board with John Hanson Briscoe. It was a turning point and a moment of saving that site. If those two had not been on there together and the story that comes from a descendant of an owner of slaves and a descendant of slaves come together now and understand the importance of telling stories that are difficult and preserving those stories for the future was truly a pivotal moment for that site. I don't know if it would still exist if those two had not gotten the "eyes turned" to that place. The "Save America's Treasures" grants that came from it and the donations that came from it, from*

[87] NBC News, Today Show, October 6, 1996.

getting that notice for the site was profound. Then you add on top of that her research and her work which has helped to craft the stories that we now tell together is an enormous contribution.

Samuel Baldwin: *Tell me about John Hanson Briscoe and his contributions to Sotterley.*

Nancy Easterling: *I mentioned already, he and Agnes together formed a duo. What was so wonderful was when you saw them together there was a real mutual respect that existed between them. I remember when Agnes came one day as a part of our Speaker Series and John Hanson was there. Watching the dynamic between the two of them was remarkable. John Hanson always a gentleman at all times and I think him and Agnes were just truly delightful together. I remember John was telling me about a time they had been together and Agnes reached over and gave him a pat on the hand and they were talking of course about how his family had owned hers and she said: "It's okay John Hanson I love you anyway." She gave him a pat on the hand. It was such a respect because they realized that was in the past. Just as she was willing to acknowledge it, she was also. To be in the position of respect that he had in the community, being willing to come on to the president of the board at a really difficult time in our history when the site was being looked at possibly being sold because they couldn't manage it. To take that on board and that weight of responsibility was huge. And it was something that very few people would've wanted to take truly.*

* * * * *

***CBS's Sunday Morning*, Sotterley Segment, October, 1996**
Live-Mike Off-the-Record Conversation

Agnes Callum: *When I did the research and I found that my people came from Sotterley, and that they were slaves here, then I knew that John Hanson Briscoe was a Speaker of the House for the Maryland General Assembly. So I thought well, I will contact him. And then perhaps he will add to some of the information that I already had. Well, I was never able to speak to him. I called three or four times. And I always spoke to an aide, and told me that he didn't know anything, but wished me well. And then he sent me like a two-sentence letter, yeah. Sorry I can't help you, but happy hunting. And then he signed his name. And I spoke to his father, too, on the phone. And he said he didn't know anything. And I just let it go.*

I thought maybe they had some records on the slaves, their families and what have you. Because many of the whites kept vanity records. They had like a journal, when the slaves were born, their parents, and whatever. But many times that left out the surname. But being familiar with the slaves here at Sotterley, I thought I perhaps could match 'em up or something. But his father said he didn't have any records. And I just let it go. And I did further research. I did other counties looking for my relatives or slave owners or what have you—until he came on the board of Sotterley Foundation. And that's when I met him face to face.

John Briscoe: *That was a great experience. I came on as a member like Agnes. And I just happened to sit – the seat was vacant next to her at the meeting. And we shook hands. I knew of Agnes. I knew of her work, her bringing lots and lots of people here many years ago to see their roots. But I've never met her personally. And the handshake and the smile on her face and the warmth that she extolled has always been there. It was a very comfortable relationship from that very beginning, which could have been an awkward relationship where my great-grandfather was an owner here, and had a number of slaves. And Agnes' people were here under that servitude. And that unfortunate part of our history but I've never felt from that day, that moment that we met to this day that there was ever any feeling that here is the great grandson of a person who participated in slavery. We talked about that history: her people, my people. We came forward in a positive way. We link our ancestry. But to teach lessons, and to preserve this whole story here, not just the slavery that took place here. But the economic, cultural and social history that ties both our families together: both of whom we're very proud of.*

39. John Hanson Briscoe and Agnes Kane Callum preparing for an interview.
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

Terry Smith: *I see. And so it's really amazing, if you think about it. Here were your families interlinked in a way 150 years ago.*

John Briscoe: *I find it interesting that Agnes mentioned the vanity records that some owners of slaves had. And I guess maybe that's another part of my history that I'm proud of, if there's anything, is that my father never spoke of it. He was born here in 1890. He never spoke of it slavery or what his father told him who lived here during that period. Absolutely no records in our family, any branch of that family that reflected documents of any slaves that were owned by my great grandfather. It was never discussed. Our family never discussed the issue. We didn't bring it up and say let's not talk about that. It was just never a subject matter at all. I don't know the reason. I'd like to think that the family saw it as a very unfortunate and a wrong part of history that our family participated in along with others. And while it was legal to do this, it was wrong. They wanted to basically forget it from the standpoint of not digging up and opening wounds of the past. I'm satisfied they didn't have this vanity philosophy, as Agnes talks about to say guess what, our ancestors owned 50, a hundred slaves. Never came up. Never.*
Terry Smith: *When you use that word, 'vanity records,' what do you mean?*

Agnes Callum: *For show. For ostentatious.*

Terry Smith: *Yes, display.*

Terry Smith: *Well, you're sitting here today as a member of the board—*

Agnes Callum: *Yes.*

Terry Smith: *--Of the foundation that owns this place.*

Agnes Callum: *Yes.*

Terry Smith: *Well, we've come full circle here.*

Agnes Callum: *Yes, yes.*

John Briscoe: *She – absolutely. The very property and the grounds and building where her ancestors worked under servitude. She has a one-fifteenth ownership. She is a stockholder. She is a voting member of the foundation. And has a legal title to this property. She has a great deal to say about where it goes and its destiny, its preservation. And has a full equal partnership with everyone on the board.*

Terry Smith: *You find that satisfying.*

Agnes Callum: *I think that's great. I think that's great. Because in my grandfather's day, my great-grandfather, he was not permitted to walk across the front of the lawn. Anything he wanted – not only him , any of the blacks – they had to stay across the line. And here I am today sitting in the spot. And I commemorate his memory, just on this. And then I own one-fifteenth, it's very good. I know he's pleased.*

Terry Smith: *It's just amazing. I mean, I look at you two. And I think about these families, and the long period, and the way it goes back. And the sense of roots is really strong.*

Agnes Callum: *Yes.*

Terry Smith: *I mean this house, this property.*

John Briscoe: *Living history.*

Agnes Callum: *Yes, it is.*

John Briscoe: *It's living history both Agnes and I are certainly direct living history. But you see the slave cabin. That's living history. We don't have to reenact. It's all here.*

Terry Smith: *I mean the story of this house, this property is the story of this country.*

John Briscoe: *That's correct.*

Agnes Callum: *Yes.*

Terry Smith: *It goes from Colonial days—*

Agnes Callum: *That's right.*

Terry Smith: *Before the United States to the modern day from—from slavery to freedom.*

John Briscoe: *Correct.*

Terry Smith: *And the sweep of it is tremendous. Now you described for me before a wedding that took place in that house.*

Agnes Callum: *Yes, yes.*

Terry Smith: *Was this some of your ancestors?*

Agnes Callum: *Yeah, it was.*

Terry Smith: *Who was it again?*

Agnes Callum: *It was a Cane. And his name was Francis. They called him Frank Cane.*

Terry Smith: *And what was he to you.?*

Agnes Callum: *My great-uncle, was a slave. Dr. Briscoe purchased him at five months old for $50. And he grew up to be the coachman for the doctor. They would go all around the county to the patients--.*

Terry Smith: *This is your great-grandfather?*

John Briscoe: *Yes.*

Agnes Callum: *Yeah. And they were really good friends. And so when Frank married—and he married another slave from this plantation. Her last name was Stewart. They had it in the parlor. It was a social affair of St. Mary's County, 'cause they sent out invitations. And the blacks and whites came. All the slaves and all the – the socialites of the county.*

Terry Smith: *What year was this?*

Agnes Callum: *This was right after Civil War. Was around 1870.*

Terry Smith: *But for the blacks and whites to be socializing together—*

Agnes Callum: *Yes. Right.*

Terry Smith: *--in the parlor of a plantation house was pretty rare in those days?*

Agnes Callum: *Yeah, it was rare. That's right.*

Terry Smith: *The other thought that occurs to me talking to you two of you, without getting into your ages are old enough to have lived through a period of tremendous change in race relations in this country, in our time.*

Agnes Callum*: Yes. Uh-huh.*

Terry Smith*: I mean you – you've lived in the years when things have changed dramatically. And I just wonder what thoughts you have about that.*

John Briscoe*: I was in the Legislature in 1963 to 1978. And I was honored and took great pleasure in voting for the first public accommodations law. First civil rights law that Maryland was in the forefront of passing, public accommodation. And the Civil Rights Act which was of course before the General Assembly at the time.*

Terry Smith*: And my guess is that that law that Judge Briscoe worked on, signed changed your life.*

Agnes Callum*: It might not have changed my life—maybe my children's life. Because when I went to school, I went to an all-black school. I passed six white schools going to school. And we walked 23 blocks to school. And I wanted to go in with the whites because I was cold.*

Terry Smith*: Right. (Laughter)*

Agnes Callum*: But that was not permitted. And the opening of jobs—I've worked for the Federal government. I went to college after I was 50. So I know it had tremendous change on my life economically. Now socially it should have benefited my children. Because they went to black and white school in the school together. I have a daughter that's a medical doctor. And I've seen a lot of change, yes. And I think it's for the good. Yes.*

Terry Smith*: That's precisely my point. That you two have lived in a period of probably greater change in race relations in this country than anything your ancestors could have dreamed of.*

Agnes Callum*: That's true.*

Terry Smith*: I mean you've seen it in your lifetime. And yet you sit here, both of you representing what was radically different just 150 years ago.*

John Briscoe*: That's correct.*

Agnes Callum*: That's true. Yeah.*

Terry Smith*: I mean imagine if you were able to tell your great-grandfather about it.*

Agnes Callum*: Oh, I would love that. I'm sure he would be proud, too. Because although they were slaves, they suffered the scourge of slavery in a real quiet place, dignified way. Because they were in a no-win situation. They couldn't start a revolution or whatever. It was no win to it. So they fit right within the system hoping for a better day. And it did come. The Emancipation. The passing of the 13th, 14th, 15th Amendments. Yes.*

Terry Smith*: But imagine if you said to your—if you could talk through time, and you said to your great-grandfather, 'by the 1990's I'll be here as a member of the board that runs this place.'*

John Briscoe*: And an owner.*

Agnes Callum*: Yeah. I don't know if he could comprehend. Yeah.*

Terry Smith*: And I suppose the same would apply to you?*

John Briscoe*: Yes*

Terry Smith*: If you could talk back through time to your great-grandfather and say I'm gonna be sitting here in the 1990's with Anges Callum: a descendant of the people who you owned, who worked for you here, on an equal footing.*

John Briscoe*: I think he would be proud, pleased. And as a man who was an educator, as a doctor, and a decent person in that respect, in all other respects other than of course the ownership of slaves, I think he'd be proud and pleased as I've traced my ancestry since then. My father was always a very ecumenical person who believed—and as I say, he grew up with some of his best friends that he played with were African-Americans. I think he'd be very pleased. And—and proud.*

Terry Smith*: I also get the sense that you two seem to be friends, for one thing.*

> *"I think the most important lesson is the mutual respect that we have for each other. Coming from two different cultures, races. And I love this most of all: that we can get along, and we can talk about the past without any rancor. And we get along very well. I think that's a good lesson. And I think if everybody would take the time just to be cordial to someone of the other race I think we would get along better. It'd be a better place to live."*

Agnes Callum*: Uh-huh.*

Terry Smith*: And that you can help each other. You can help, you can do some things for Judge Briscoe that he can't do.*

John Briscoe*: That's correct. She can make that period of history not as distasteful as some would want its today to forget about it. And if you will hear Agnes talk here and other places about that, and strong people left that – that servitude and came forward to be doctors and engineers and lawyers, and had a tenacity to move on under very difficult conditions and go on with generations of successful people. Bring them to Agnes here today as an equal voice in preserving the very place where this unfortunate part of history took place.*

Terry Smith*: And Judge Briscoe can do some things for you. He already has.*

John Briscoe*: The whole question of slavery, in my opinion, without Agnes, would have been forgotten. She's right. Because it was sort of passive. It was there, but it was never talked about. Never. The Sotterley Foundation under Mrs. Ingalls, the founder, did not develop any program*

to preserve this antique, this treasure of history. And perhaps it was because they were afraid to talk about it was because it was so offensive, and because it brought up wounds of the past. But you see it takes a person like Agnes to do both. You have to bring it up and you have to talk about it. And she has to feel sad sometimes. But you go on from there. You don't dwell—she does not dwell on the unfortunate part of history. She uses that as a lesson to move forward to help future generations.

Agnes Callum*: And the other side of the coin is I don't look at it – maybe I was conditioned before I ever came to see this plantation. Because all of my life I've heard about slavery, from a little girl before I ever went to school, how blacks lived. How cruel they were treated. So when I came and absolutely laid my eyes on a slave cabin, I didn't fall out and faint. I didn't cry. I felt sad.*

I felt that I was conditioned. I already know all of this. What black person does not know this? Maybe whites are not paying attention. It's there. Look, look, look, its there. But they're not paying attention. And I really did this for other blacks. To let them know that your history can be—your ancestry can be researched. It can be found. It is documented. And I – I published out of my own pocket. Nobody gave me anything. SO hopefully that I will spark an interest, or make somebody proud. Because it has to be good people who could live under those conditions and survive. It has to be. Yes. In 1978, I think it was, I brought 255 Canes and descendants of Canes. Three busloads, 11 cars. And we had the whole day here. It was really, really nice. But the concentration was at the slave cabin. Everybody wanted to see the slave cabin. Some were outraged. Some of them said 'I'll never come back again!' At that time they had a bed there. And it was a sheet on the bed. And somebody said 'this sheet is dirty, why did they leave it? We need to clean up here.' They were hurt. And I had the – the gentlemen I told you that got married here in the parlor, his daughter was 92 years old. And she was on the bus. And she swore that her father was never a slave. She said "How can a little baby be a slave?" She said my father was never a slave. But he was, he was. And she refused to get off the bus to even look at anything.

Terry Smith*: Agnes, lemme ask you first: I mean, you two have built a bridge here.*

Agnes Callum*: Yes.*

Terry Smith*: And maybe your children can walk across it. But I wonder what you think the lessons you draw from what you've learned: this place, those quarters, knowing Judge Briscoe, the whole thing?*

Agnes Callum*: I think the most important lesson is the mutual respect that we have for each other. Coming from two different cultures, races. And I love this most of all: that we can get along, and we can talk about the past without any rancor. And we get along very well. I think that's a good lesson. And I think if everybody would take the time just to be cordial to someone of the other race I think we would get along better. It'd be a better place to live.*

Terry Smith*: And I think you have a corollary to that lesson, which is – which you talked about before which is you have to look at history square in the face.*

Agnes Callum*: You must. That's right. That's right. You cannot change it. Even if the slave cabin was pushed aside or burned to the ground, it matters not. It was there. We must look at history square in the face. And confront it. It's part of our history. Other ethnic groups have done*

the same things. And they're not destroying anything. They are building monuments. And I think that slave cabin is a monument, and also this mansion.

Terry Smith*: What do you think Judge Briscoe? I mean you may feel somewhat differently about this.*

John Briscoe*: No, I think Agnes has said it so well. It's the recognizing, not the shortcomings, but the mistakes of the past. And to use those to build upon. And from that you have peace. Peace is peace be with you: meaning Agnes can look at the shortcomings and the parts of my history and ancestry that were hurtful to her ancestors. But to come forward and not to dwell on that and not to carry that as baggage in all of our relationships. That we go forward, we're at peace with each other. And that we can understand each other's culture. And there will never be one hundred percent totally the same. Because we have differences. We have differences. We'll always have some differences. But we can coexist and share and enjoy life as we should. And each have the opportunity to enjoy what the other does. And a lot can be learned from that in a country where many times people don't know how to reach peace, and to recognize that there are shortcomings.*

And psychological problems that one might have with the other. And I think that's a lesson to be learned. And it's not easy to do. It's not an easy thing. But I think if you have some role models out there that show that it can be done, I'd like to think that Agnes and I are—we're not gonna be able to continue our message. But we hope that people will learn from us and it can be done. And that our grandchildren and future generations can learn that we have a very sincere and honest relationship that's not just for show, but it's real.

Terry Smith*: One thing we haven't talked about that we should is the house itself, the state it's in, the job you have now to raise money to recondition it. Tell me a little about – either one of you—tell me a little about what the problems are, what you need to fix'em.*

John Briscoe*: Well, this mansion began in 1717, was added to over the years. But over the years by its use and weather and the fact that it was built with wood that was not treated—we have treated wood these days—very fine oak and locust. But over time termites and mildew and dampness will torture any building structure, as it has the slave cabin, as it has the mansion. And we have discovered in the last five or six years by looking at the outside signs that the structural integrity of the roof, a major portion of the roof of this is in great need of repair, to the point where if something isn't done soon, the ceilings—it's not safe. We cannot have tours go through the second floor of the house, which is a very fascinating part of the history. Because my great-grandfather ran a little school for girls up in one of the rooms there. Had teachers there. But because the structural integrity is a great risk.*

Our architects have given us advice on how we can in stages preserve and keep literally the ceiling from falling in. But we have an estimate to do it right. Approximately $1.2 million it will take to basically restore the roof and the inside of it that—where the beams have been—over the years again have been undermined by termites and other factors.

Terry Smith*: So that's your job now?*

John Briscoe*: Yes.*

Agnes Callum*: Yes, yes.*

Terry Smith*: To raise money?*

John Briscoe*: To raise money for restoration to get the building with heat, air conditioning and ventilation for the long-term future of—and preservation of this building and others and the slave cabin, absolutely.*

Agnes Callum*: Right.*

> *I'd like to think that Agnes and I are—we're not gonna be able to continue our message. But we hope that people will learn from us and it can be done.*

John Briscoe*: And then of course we also are trying to raise endowment fundraising sufficient funds so that the operation, to pay the staff and the upkeep and maintenance is of course like any home.*

Terry Smith*: Agnes, let me ask you, is this gonna work? I mean is Sotterley going to be here?*

Agnes Callum*: Oh, yes, it'll be here. Yeah. Yeah. It will be here. Hopefully we will get the money that we need to carry on and of course we need so much each year, not just one lump sum, each year to keep this up. And I think it'll be around as long as I can, I will help to preserve it. Because history is our future.*

Terry Smith*: That's terrific. Thank you both very much.*[88]

40. Governor Parris Glendening, John Hanson Briscoe, and Agnes Kane Callum. Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

[88] CBS News, CBS Sunday Morning, October, 1996.

Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions

Many of the oral histories used in this chapter came from the Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions' collection housed at the St. Mary's College of Maryland. These oral histories were collected over the years by UCAC and made accessible to the public; to learn more about UCAC, visit its website at http://www.africanamericancontributions.com/.

* * * * *

Q: *United Committee for Afro-American Contributions. Where did you get that idea? Tell us about it. How did it develop into that project?*

Elmer Brown: *At the Minority Alliance's anniversary, five, six years ago [circa 1995 – interview conducted in 2000], I was supposed to be making my President's speech, and I thought of all the people in this county that the rest of us who was standing out there and sitting in the audience was standing on their shoulders. And, much of this County's history that I had heard, I knew and had become involved with. As to why nobody was doing anything about it, and I guess Andrea Hammer the oral historian from St. Mary's College of Maryland brought my attention to it. So many of the people that I knew had done tremendous other work. So, I thought it would be a good idea to just start taking some oral history and put up a stone somewhere or another to say that there's a number of people who had contributed to the growth of St. Mary's. They made a big difference in St. Mary's, and that's how I brought it up.*

So then, I got thinking about organizations. Donald Moore was President of the Jolly Gents, he had 25 guys who were all getting middle to older age who had a wealth of information. The Jolly Gents were probably the wealthiest minority organization that was in the County. I just thought it'd be a natural to get Donald Moore involved which brings in 25 people. And if they get their spouses, we up to 50 people working right away to being in. Reggie who was the Worshipful Master of the Prince Hall at large up here that had 50 people in it, which also had the Eastern Star group to it. So I said, "Well, heck. With two guys, if these two guys get their people involved, we got a hundred people to start with just like that."[89]

* * * * *

Merideth Taylor: *These people are no longer with us anymore and we feel that stories are not always passed down through a family like they used to be. Children are sometimes not interested and a lot of the history gets lost because it's no longer shown in the textbooks. It's sort of a broad variety of experience you need if you want to understand human history. Some people--and particularly related to Sotterley--there are African Americans in this community that feel like that history should be buried. They feel like that slave cabin should be buried because it was just so awful and so horrible. They cannot understand that it can be healing to go back and look at the history. It's very painful for a lot of people to look at that history so they don't want to do it. There are also people who look at the photos that the FSA had taken in the 1940's and the poverty of St. Mary County, and, particularly African Americans, feel it's awful to show those photos. They feel like the photos don't show what they accomplished. When I look at the photos I see the triumph it takes to go from point A to point B. However people can see things from any particular side.*

[89] Elmer Brown. *St. Mary's College Archives, UCAC Collection.* By Mel and Carol Locke-Endy. February 19, 2000.

* * * * *

Sylvester Barnes: *Looks like to me it's getting better all time. Of course by me being the age I am I can see quite a bit of improvement. But now you take the young folks coming on see nothing like that ever pressed their mind. They don't worry about or think about nothing like that because they didn't come through anything in this kind of turmoil, you know.*[90]

* * * * *

George Grymes: *It's up to the young people. See, what has happened. We was living out things that was way before our forefathers and fell on us. Now it's gonna fall on y'all. See, long as one person discriminated against, everybody discriminated against. One, As long as one enslaved, everybody enslaved 'til we clear this thing up. It's up to young folks. And, don't let nobody fool you like there's no one person better than the other. All of us are human beings. All of us are capable of doing the same things, as you're exposed to it. But if you're not exposed to it, you can't [get the same advantage as if you] got to be exposed to it. Everybody's a human being. The Lord didn't make no superior one kind. The Lord created the whole world. The same type of my blood is the same type as yours, works in you.*[91]

[90] Sylvester Barnes. *St. Mary's College Archives Slackwater Oral History Collect.* By Carrie Kline. February 5, 2002.
[91] George Grymes. *St. Mary's College Archives, UCAC Collection.* By Patricia Shelton. April 17, 1991.

Photo Album

41. Filming "Prince of Slaves" at Sotterley Plantation.
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

Inventory of all the Goods & Chattles of Col. George Plater, late of Saint Mary's County deced. Appraised by us the subscribers after being duly qualified in Dollars & Cents, this first day of September Eighteen hundred two vitz.

Homer	70	years old	$0
Young	73	years old	30.0
Cofee	75	years old	....invalid
Brill..blind	75	years old	
Peter	48	years old	$150 150.0
Nelly..sick	40	years old	60 60.0
Nelson	16	years old	260 260.0
Edward	13	" "	220 220.0
Sandy	12	" "	200 200.0
Dennis	6	" "	120 120.0
Lewis	1	" "	40 40.0
Terry	6	" "	100 100.0
Carroline	3	" "	45 45.0
Nancy	46	" "	80 80.0
Durinda	28	" "	180 180.0
Gilbert	22	" "	300 300.0
Martha	3	" "	45 45.0
Harry(a blacksmith)	52	" "	150 150.0
Peggy	56	" "	30 30.0
Henny	19	" "	200 200.0
Prince	3	" "	60 60.0
Lucy	58	" "	30 30.0
Sarah	35	" "	140 140.0
Issac	9	" "	150 150.0
Natt	7	" "	140 140.0
Rachael	5	" "	80 80.0
Tom	3	" "	70 70.0
Jack Limus	47	" "	150 150.0
Sall	40	" "	100 100.0
Limus	20	" "	270 270.0
Levi	15	" "	250 250.0
Daniel	9	" "	150 150.0
Molly	50	" "	60 60.0
Abraham	28	" "	260 260.0
Moses	15	" "	250 250.0
Henry	12	" "	..(sickly)..100 100.0
Chaptico Sall	26	" "	150 150.0
Judy	8	" "	100 100.0
Dick	6	" "	100 100.0
Pegg	4	" "	60 60.0
Hetty	1	" "	40 40.0
Grace	4	" "	100 100.0
Alick	8	" "	150 150.0
Jack Sampson	29	" "	250 250.0
Betty	54	" "	40 40.0
Ben	60	" "	20 20.0
Ned	40	" "	160 160.0
Perry	30	" "	250 250.0
Molly	25	" "	200 200.0

Inventory of George Plater IV
p. 2

Kitty	8	years old	120
Crowly	5	" "	120
John Baptist	2	" "	60
Henry	/2	" "	25
Luke	23	" "	200
Joseph	7	" "	140
Ally	5	" "	80
Harry	50	" "	50
Betsey	7	" "	100
Doll	20	" "	200
Billy	43	" "	150
Ned	16	" "	250
Teresa	20	" "	200
Somerset	17	" "	260
1 Horse	5	years old	100
1 ditto	4	ditto	90
1 Mare	12	ditto	60
1 Horse blind	12	ditto	30
1 ditto	12	ditto	60
1 Mare	13	ditto	15
1 ditto	9	ditto	25
1 ditto	12	ditto	30
1 ditto	10	ditto	40
1 ditto	9	ditto	35
1 ditto	10	ditto	30
1 Horse	16	ditto	30
1 ditto	4	ditto	45
1 ditto	4	ditto	50
1 ditto	5	ditto	25
1 brood mare	12	ditto	60
1 Grey Horse	19	ditto	8
1 Mare	18	ditto	30
1 young colt	"		30
1 Mare	4	ditto	120
1 ditto	4	ditto	100
1 Horse	3	ditto	40
1 ditto	3	ditto	50
1 ditto	2	ditto	60
1 ditto	2	ditto	20
1 old Stud Horse			15
1 Innet			25
1 bay Horse	9	ditto	40
1 do	7	ditto	40
1 Mare	20	ditto	4
1 ditto	13	ditto	10
1 ditto	7	ditto	30
1 ditto	8	ditto	30
1 Colt			4
25 Cows and Calves	@ 12	$	300
9 Cows	@ 10	$	90
10 large Steers	@ 16	$	160

A Transcription of an 1826 Inventory[1]

Excerpt: An Inventory of the Goods, Chattel and Personal Estate of Thomas Barber, late of St. Mary's County, deceased, appraised in dollars and cents.

Negro	Ned	age 40 years	300.00
Negro	Harry	age 28	350.00
Negro	Sam	age 23	450.00
Negro	John	age 19	450.00
Negro	Phil Carpenter		600.00
Negro	Jack	age 22	450.00
Negro	Leander, boy	age 15	325.00
Negro	Bill, boy	age 10	250.00
Negro	Andrew, boy	age 14	275.00
Negro	Milly, woman	age 45	125.00
Negro	Cecilia, woman	age 26	275.00
Negro	Eliza, woman	age 17	300.00
Negro	Matilda, woman	age 33	250.00
Negro	Charity, woman	age 24	275.00
Negro	Sarah and Child	age 22	375.00
Negro	Fanny and child	age 60	10.00
Negro	John, boy child	age 3	75.00
Negro	Phibs, girl child	age 8	150.00
Negro	MaryAnn child	age 8	150.00
Negro	Martha Ann	age 3	50.00
Negro	Emeline child	age 2	50.00
Negro	Julian child	age 8	150.00
1	Bull		20.00
1	white cow		7.00
1	white cow broken horn		7.00
1	black buffalo		7.00
1	red white belly		7.00
4	yearlings first choice		8.50
10	sheep first choice		20.00
10	hogs in pen first choice		60.00
10	shoats first choice		15.00

[1] This inventory was compiled upon the death of Sotterley owner Thomas Barber to settle his estate. Inventories help historians learn about enslaved African Americans, their occupations, their relationship to the master, and their value to the master.

42. Artifacts uncovered by Joe Goldsmith at the site of the abandoned slave graveyard at Sotterley. Courtesy of Joe Goldsmith

SECOND GRADE

FIRST ROW, SEATED, L-R—Patricia Thomas, Elizabeth Robinson, Ronald Cutchember, Brenda Bryan, Eugene Butler, Gloria Carroll, Michael Barnes. SECOND ROW, SEATED, L-R—Doris Fenwick, Constance Briscoe, Pamela Langley, Angela Carroll, Melodie Fenwick, Constance Briscoe, Regina White, Gloria Lawrence, Sandra Cutchember. THIRD ROW, SEATED, L-R—James Cutchember, Cornell Barnes, Harry Thompson, Sister Cleophas, Leroy Briscoe, Chester Barnes, Vernon Dorsey. FOURTH ROW, STANDING, L-R—Joseph Berry, Ray Barnes, Norman Fenwick, Joseph Briscoe, Joseph Herbert, John Carroll, Charles Corbin.

FIRST GRADE

FIRST ROW, L-R—David Young, Joseph Edgston, Kenneth Barnes, James Shade, Allen Butler, Kendall Thompson, James Smith, Maurice Cutchember, Ralph Thomas, Ralph Thomas, Rodger Barnes, Pandora Dyson. SECOND ROW, L-R—Lorraine Lawrence, Pamela Blackwell, Joan Swailes, Gladys Shade, Elaine Barnes, Doris Jordan, Linda Chase, Venessa Chase, Rosemary Briscoe, Linda Hewlett, Betty J. Fenwick, Linda Jordan, Phyllis Maddox, Wanda Hall. THIRD ROW, L-R—Linda Bonds, Xavier Barnes, Charles Corbin, Victor Briscoe, John Young, Lonzo Watts, Sister Cornelia, James Shadbrookes, Edward Clayton, L-R—Joyce Berry, Rosemary Taylor, Sandra Briscoe, Shirley Spicer, Virginia Fenwick, Helena Shade, Geraldine Cross, Connie Briscoe, Gloria Bonds, Mary Lou Cutchember.

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43. Cardinal Gibbons Institute's first and second grades in 1960.
Courtesy of the St. Mary's County Historical Society

44. Pictures of some of Agnes Kane Callum's ancestors that she was able to trace back. All are descended from Hilry and Elsa Kane.
Scanned from Agnes Kane Callum's *The Butler-Kane Genealogy*

Mr. & Mrs. Philip Moten Kane in 1957

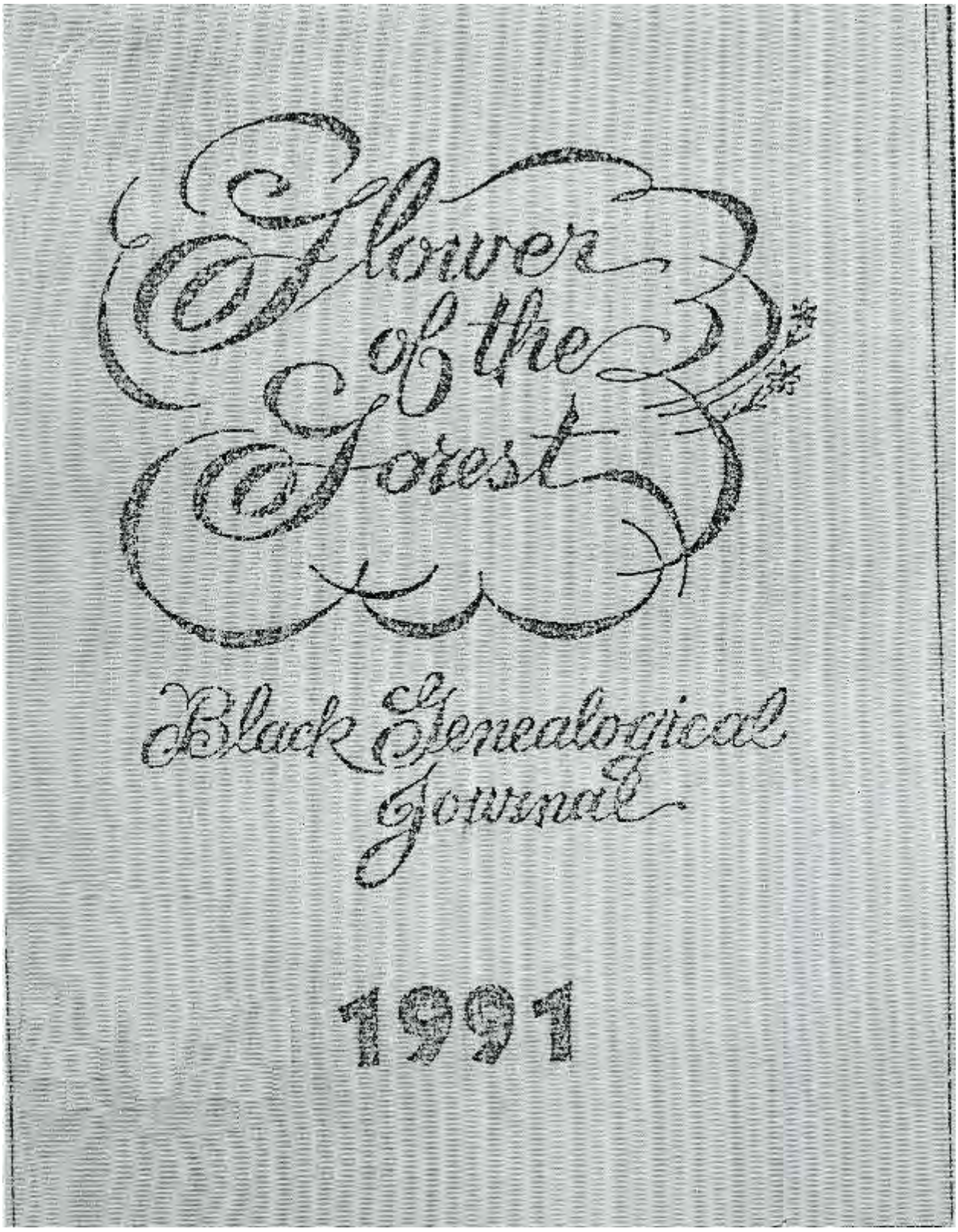
Mr. & Mrs. Philip Moten Kane on
their 50th wedding anniversary
October 24, 1967

Seven of the ten children of Mr. & Mrs. Philip M. Kane. Kneeling James A. Kane. Standing left to right: Howard A. Kane, Philip G. Kane I, Mary C. Kane, Agnes (Kane) Callum, Michael R. Kane and John H. Kane (deceased)

Francis McKey Caine
(1893-1935) and his wife,
Eva.

Henry Kane
(1900-1943)

Mary Priscilla (Gough) Kane
(1897-1975)



45. The cover of Agnes Kane Callum's journal, Flower of the Forest.
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

46. Family Day letters from Agnes Kane Callum to Sotterley Plantation.
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

AGNES CALLUM'S LITERARY GUILD

Founder & Editor of

Flower of the Forest Black Genealogical Journal

822 BONAPARTE AVENUE
BALTIMORE, MD 21218
Telephone, (301)235-6697

June 27, 1989

Sotterly Mansion
P.O.Box 67
Hollywood, Maryland, 20636

Dear Madame,

The KANE FAMILY will be visiting the SOTTERLY Mansion on Saturday, July 29, 1989. It has been several years since our visit there and as always, we are looking forward to an enjoyable and informative visit. This time I will bring one bus of 46 passengers. I will also let you know of the time we will arrive at Sotterly, if this will be of help in facilitating our visit.

As you know, in 1979, I presented Sotterly Manison with a copy of a book that I compiled on the Kane's Sojourn at Sotterly. The Kanes were an integral part of Sotterly during the Briscoe years and they stayed-on the plantation even after the Civil War. The family is aware of the history of the Kane family and their stay at Sotterly and now they are looking forward to visiting the place where their ancestor lived for so many years.

Will you kindly send me information on group rates in admission to Sotterly.

I thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Agnes Kane Callum

Agnes Kane Callum.
Family Historian

AGNES KANE CALLUM
Historian - Genealogist - Researcher
422 Bonnycastle Ave.
Baltimore, Maryland 21213

May 30, 1979

)ear Sotterly Foundation,

On behalf of the Kane Family, I wish to express
y sincere appreciation for the tour and lecture
oncerning the Sotterly Plantation. It was
ducational and informative. We hope to make this
n annual affair, increasing the number of Kane's
hat come to visit Sotterly.

Too, it was a pleasure to meet Mrs. Ingalls.
he is a very warm, friendly person. I hope to
eet her again sometime on one of my visits to
t. Mary's County.

Thank again for everything.

Sincerely,

Agnes Kane Callum

47. Pictures from Agnes Kane Callum's Family Day. Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

Note: Upper Right: Agnes Kane Callum at Herbert L. Satterlee's desk.

48. The next generation: Janice Briscoe, daughter of John Hanson Briscoe, and Martina Callum, daughter of Agnes Kane Callum, together at an event at Sotterley.
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

50. Agnes Kane Callum and David McCullough, American author, historian, and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient.
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

49. Agnes Kane Callum and Dr. Julie King, archeologist and professor at St. Mary's College of Maryland, at Sotterley.
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

Celebration of Life

Homegoing Celebration

In Loving Memory of

Agnes Emma Kane Callum

Sunrise: February 24, 1925 Sunset: July 22, 2015

Obituary

AGNES KANE CALLUM, historian, genealogist and researcher, was an Amazing Grace to her family and others. She was born in Baltimore City, the fifth child of seven, to Phillip Morton Kane and Mary Priscilla Kane nee Gough formerly of St. Mary's County, Maryland.

She married the late Solomon Melvin Callum of James town, South Carolina. She had five children Paul Ambrose Foster, Agnes Helen, Arthur Melvin, Martin James and Martina Priscilla.

She was educated in Baltimore City Public Schools. At age 44 she returned to school and earned her Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from Morgan State University in 1973 and 1976 respectively, while maintaining her full-time job with the United States Postal Service. In 1978 she was designated a Fulbright-Haynes Scholar which led her to study at the University of Ghana at Legon, Accra. In 2008 she received an Honorary Doctorate degree in history from St. Mary's College of St. Mary's County, Maryland.

As an undergraduate she wrote a paper for a Black History class titled "The Acquisition of Land by Free Blacks in St. Mary's County, Maryland." Through her research in the Maryland State archives, she discovered information regarding her family, which was confirmed by her parents. This research enabled her to begin to investigate and document the genealogy of her own family. She traced her family roots to the mid-17th century in St. Mary's County. Flower of the Forest was the name of land her grandparents purchased there. Her paternal grandfather, Henry Kane, was born a slave on the Sotterley Plantation in Hollywood, Md., in 1860. In 1896, he joined St. Francis Xavier Parish. Agnes was an active member of the church for 90 years, her entire life. She became the church's historian.

The Kane family's relationship with Sotterley Plantation was re-established in 1976 because of Agnes' research. The Sotterley Foundation invited Agnes to join the Board of Trustees in 1990. Her work with the board continued after her tenure expired. She was instrumental in obtaining the more than $30,000 needed to restore the original slave cabin. In 2002 the Sotterley Board designated her as the first Trustee Emeritus.

A frequent columnist for *The Catholic Review*, Agnes wrote about Colonial Maryland and the role played by people of African descent. In 1979, Agnes published her first book, *"Kane Butler Genealogy: History of a Black Family."* This was followed by 20 volumes of *"Flower of the Forest,"* a black genealogy journal published annually for 25 years. A tenacious researcher, she produced additional books, including *"7th Regiment USCT of Maryland (United States Colored Troops),"* documenting the names of those colored troops who served in the Civil War, *"Slave Statistics"*, *"Black Marriages of St. Mary's County"* and "Black Marriages of Anne Arundel County Maryland."

In 2006, a complete collection of her work was donated to the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture in Baltimore.

She was a founding member of the local chapter of the Baltimore Afro American Historical Genealogic Society (AAHGS). In 2007 they honored her by renaming it "Agnes Kane Calhun Chapter."

In honor of Black History Month, a program profiling the Kane family was televised February 8, 2010. Historic Sotterley, inc. granted permission for St. Mary's County Government to air the program on County Government Channel 95.

Through sixteen volumes of her historical and genealogical journal *Flower of the Forest*, Agnes Kane Callum produced a scholarly work which is essential in understanding slavery in Maryland and other slave-holding states. Her work with Sotterley plantation has helped to foster relationships between descendants of slaves and slave owners and the larger community.

Agnes' career helped pave the way for future generations of genealogists and scholars interested in African American records. She laid out a framework for how to successfully trace the life of individuals of African descent. Her recognition is forever preserved about Agnes Kane Callum when she was inducted into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame in 2013.

Agnes wore many occupational hats. Early in her working career she was a saleswoman for the now defunct black owned and operated Beauty Queen Company. After Beauty Queen many remember her as their insurance agent for North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company. She then moved onto Rosewood State Hospital. While at Rosewood she successfully completed the Practical Nurse program graduating second in her class. She never practiced but she was licensed. Her next stop was the United States Postal Service. The USPS was her last employed position. She enjoyed the graveyard shift because this allowed her to attend college and later do her research. She was an active member of the National Alliance of Postal Employees. She retired at age 62 from the USPS.

Her activities extended beyond the dusty stacks of libraries and archives into her community. She was an early member of the Eastside Democratic Organization. She worked tirelessly to ensure the election of the first African American city councilman, Robert Douglass, to the then second councilmanic district, where she resided. She created the "Clean-Up for a Better Neighborhood" organization in 1965. She was a strong supporter of black businesses and thus became one of the earliest account holders of the former Advance Savings and Loan Company.

She continued to be a passionate historian of African American history and genealogy until as recent as three weeks before her death. She leaves to cherish her memory three surviving children, Agnes Helen Lightfoot of Palm Coast Florida, Martin James Callum and Martina Priscilla Callum, M.D. of Baltimore. Her sons Paul Ambrose Foster and Arthur Melvin Callum preceded her in death. She was also preceded in death by her parents, seven brothers and three sisters. Her surviving sister Edna Martina Aiden was a major source of comfort to her in her last years. Her surviving son-in-law Ralph Lightfoot of Palm Coast, Florida and daughter-in-law Rhonda Weldon Callum of Baltimore. Three surviving grandchildren, Gregory Martin Callum of Decatur Georgia, Rosalyne Martina Thorogood of Toronto Canada and Kevin Lamar Lightfoot of Palm Coast, Florida. Three great-grandchildren, three sister in-laws and a host of nephews, nieces, grand-nieces, great grand nieces, nephews and a host of family and friends.

WHEN TOMORROW STARTS WITHOUT ME

ABRIDGED VERSION

When tomorrow starts without me,
And I am not there to see,
If the sun should rise and find your eyes
All filled with tears for me;

I wish so much you wouldn't cry
While thinking of the many things,
We didn't get to say.

But when tomorrow starts without me,
Please try to understand,
That an angel came and called my name,
And took me by the hand,

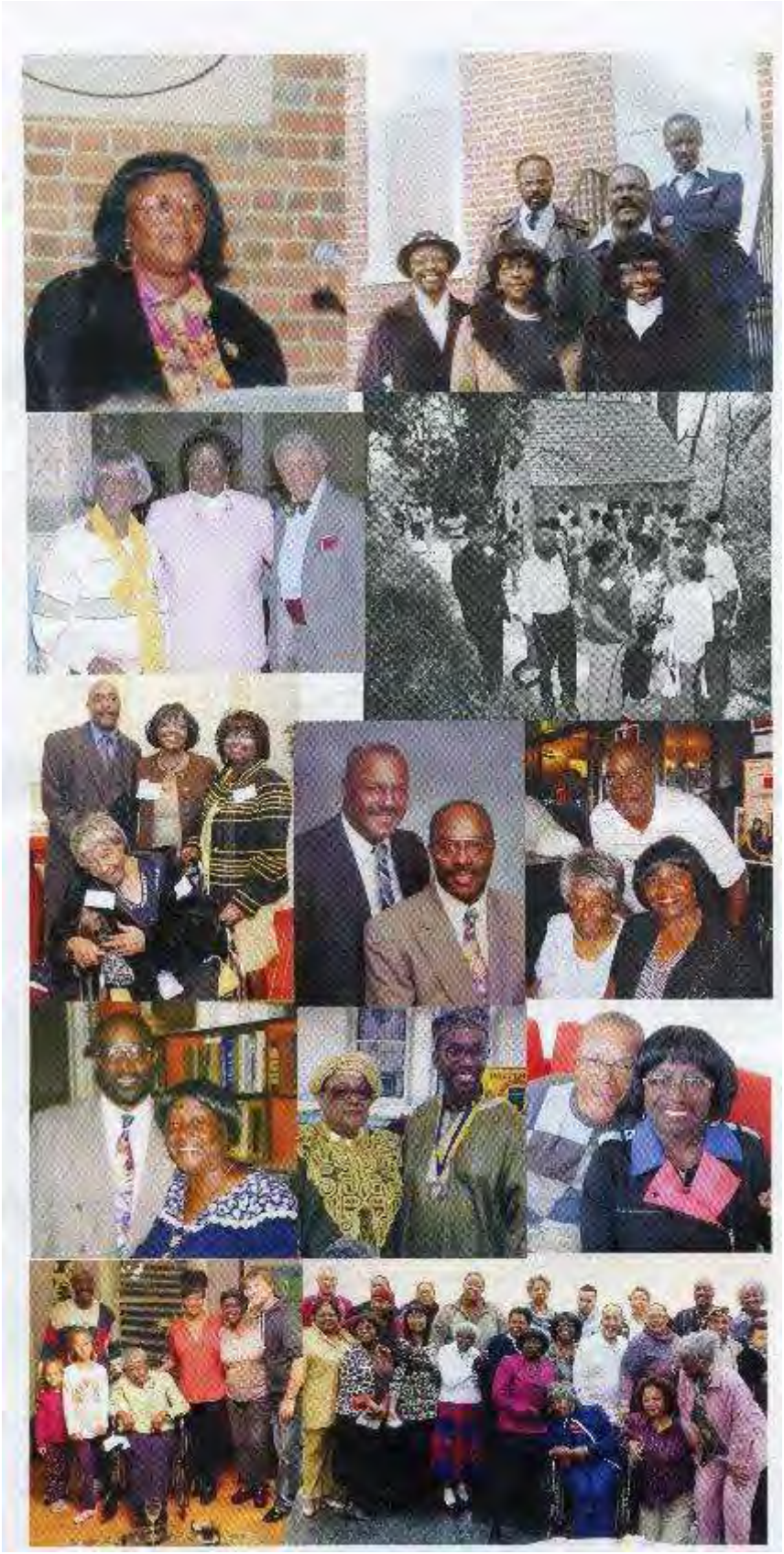
But as I turned to walk away,
A tear fell from my eye
I had so much to live for,
So much left yet to do,
It almost seemed impossible.

And when I thought of worldly things,
I might miss come tomorrow,
I thought of everyone, and when I did,
My heart was filled with sorrow.

But when I walked through heaven's gates,
I felt so much at home.
When God looked down and smiled at me,
He said, "This is eternity,
And all I have promised you."

So when tomorrow starts without me,
Don't think we're far apart,
For every time you think of me,
I'm right here, in your heart.

By David N. Romano



Kane Reunion at Sotterley, March 1978. Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

Staff Photo by Joseph Norris

Descendants of the Kane family once held as slaves at Sotterley Plantation tour the surviving slave quarters in Hollywood. Family Heritage Day was held Saturday to bring attention to restoration efforts.

Sotterley Now Acknowledging Its Past Included Slavery

Courtesy of *The Enterprise*

By Amy Davis — Evening Sun Staff

Historian Agnes Kane Callum peers into the one slave cabin that remains at Sotterley.

Courtesy of *The Baltimore Sun*

John Hanson Briscoe and Agnes Kane Callum. Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

Agnes Kane Callum and Bonnie Briscoe. Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

Sam Kane in 1942

The Kane Family. Courtesy of Historic Sotterley.

Sam Kane

Sam and Laura Blanche (Beal) Kane with his great-niece, Mary Geneva (Kane) Rogers.

The wife and children of Sam Kane (deceased) Kneeling: Bertha (Kane) Johnson, Margaret Elizabeth (Kane) Johnson, Isabella (Kane) Barnes, Vernett (Kane) Hopewell, (deceased). Standing left to right: Oliver Kane, Laura Blanche (Beal) Kane, the widow of Sam Kane, Flora (Kane) Nored, Elsie (Kane) Pierson. Back row left to right: Andrew Kane, Webster Kane (deceased) and Hillery E. Kane. (Photo Courtesy of Margaret Elizabeth (Kane) Johnson.

The Kane Family. Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

Sotterley Slave Cabin. Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

Filming "Prince of Slaves" at Sotterley. Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

Joe Goldsmith at the suspected slave graveyard. Courtesy of Historic Sotterley