

## H O R T O N       -       F O S T E R

### F A C T S       &       H E A R S A Y

"One generation passeth away and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth forever." Ecclesiastes 1:4

The American culture or way of living is based on the family. When we speak of a family, we refer to all of the persons who are related by blood or marriage. This would include not only parents, but also grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins. The family is an entity that is never complete but will produce forever.

The Horton-Foster family should be very proud of their heritage. From a line of slaves and sharecroppers, we have become a strong and radiant generation. We are who we are only by the grace of God. This chronicle was compiled as a result of reflections from different family members and friends. Resources from the Birmingham Tutwilder Research Library, Samford Library of Special Services, Perry County Courthouse, and Perry County Library were also used to compile this material.

Charles Blockson, author of Black Genealogy, pointed out that there are a number of obstacles in researching the black family. Prior to 1870, the black man had no real identity, only a first name. On public record, he was listed under his owner's last name or on the agriculture report. If you do not know the owner, it is almost impossible to go back more than a few generations. Another hurdle is illiteracy. As slaves, most were not educated. They signed their names with an "X". Therefore, they were not

able to leave written clues of their past. Also, over the years many important records with information about our past have been lost or destroyed. Even birth records were not a requirement until after 1915, so the midwives delivered babies and filed birth records at their convenience. Sometimes this, unfortunately, resulted in files being lost or switched.

Some dates and other facts in this document may differ from what you know, but where possible documentation is provided. Blockson noted that genealogy is not about dates as much as it is about finding oneself. It is a puzzle and every piece is significant by itself and takes on added meaning as part of the whole.

## Background

Research indicates that our ancestors are from Virginia, South Carolina and Alabama. I am not certain what parts of Virginia and South Carolina, so I can't give more insight on those areas. However, the majority of the surviving generation that we are familiar with came from Perry County, Marion, Alabama.

since there is an interesting connection between Perry County and South Carolina, let me share a little background information on Perry County.

Perry County was created in December 13, 1819 and named in honor of Commodore Oliver H. Perry, a naval hero of the War of 1812. Perry County is located in the west central part of Alabama. It is bounded on the north by Bibb County, on the south by Dallas County, on the west by Hale County, on the east by Chilton County. The city of Marion was named in honor of General Frances Marion, a native of South Carolina. This, to me, could possibly indicate that our ancestors left the Carolinas with these military people as slaves or probably soldiers.