

Heritage Room of the Madison County Library in Huntsville contains a letter written by Charles Burns to Ranee' Pruitt in the Heritage Room. Burns was born about 90 years ago, so he must have been in his seventies when he wrote the letter in 1993. He had moved to Chicago, where he had inherited the insurance business of his father. His children are there. Rather than explain the interests and thoughts of Charles Burns, the researcher will let his own words speak for him—his letter is presented verbatim below:

[From Charles Burns to Ranee' Pruitt, Heritage Room, Madison County Library]

July 8, 1993

I am writing to you in the hope of enlisting your aid again with the research I have been doing on my family history for the book I am writing.

You have been very helpful to me in what I have been able to accomplish so far, but I still have some gaps in my information that I am hoping you will be able to help me clear up.

Through the work we have already done we have come to the following conclusions:

My great-grandmother, a mulatto woman named Amanda Jacobs Horton had four children: Yancy, Virginia, Celia, and Everett (whom I knew to be my grandfather). These children are listed along with her on an 1870 census report (copy enclosed). Amanda is listed as age 23; the children are ages 8, 6, 4, and 2.

While these children are listed here with the surname Jacobs, (Amanda's maiden name) they went by the surname of Horton as adults, and passed the Horton name on to their children.

It has long been speculated in my family that these four children were fathered by the White slave owner named Horton to whom Amanda belonged.

In searching for information to support this speculation, I found an Appraisal of a George Horton's property taken at the time of his death in 1859 (copy enclosed) that lists among his belongings a girl aged 9. I showed you this when I met with you, and you pointed out that because she was only 9 when George Horton died she could not have borne children for him.

However, I now come to suspect that it was not George Horton, but his son, an Andrew Jackson Horton who fathered Amanda's children. And while I may never be able to prove this as an absolute fact, I would like to research Andrew Jackson Horton as thoroughly as I can.

Andrew J. Horton aged 31 is listed in the same 1870 census in which Amanda aged 23 and her children appear. He is listed as living in a household with whom I identify as his two younger brothers and his sister. His two older brothers, William H. and James appear on the same census report in a different household. I am able to discern this because their names and ages match with information taken from an 1870 census report (also enclosed).

I would like to find whatever else I can on Andrew Jackson Horton, i.e. birth and/or death certificate, property deeds, wills (did he inherit George Horton's property and slaves, and did he deed any property or give his name to Amanda's children) marriage