

Black Folk at Green Bottom
From Slavery to Freedom on the Ohio Frontier

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USACE W91237-05-P-0191

Methodology

In order to attempt to answer the Corps' assertion that "the Army doesn't know anything about slavery," the research team assembled by the Principal Investigator developed a plan to study the slave community at Green Bottom. Historians surveyed the most current scholarship on slavery, working from the very general—the origins of the institution in the American hemisphere—to the specific—slavery in the Ohio Valley and at Green Bottom in particular.

Completion of this study on African American life and culture at Green Bottom involved the use of both primary and secondary sources in order to put a "human face" on antebellum slave society and the post-Civil War population of free blacks on the former plantation and beyond. Sources included census data for the years 1820 to 1930, county records, educational websites, archived newspapers, birth, death and marriage records.

The secondary literature on General Albert Gallatin Jenkins and his plantation proved extremely valuable, as did the slave census and vital statistics records, both before and after the Civil War which destroyed the slave labor base of Green Bottom. The rich scholarship on West Virginia in the Civil War provided vital evidence on the end of the African community there. Several conference programs helped bring into focus the current controversies and opportunities provided in reconstituting slave-based agricultural complexes.

Because William Jenkins came from the James River valley to the Ohio in 1825, much valuable research and documentation exists into the type of plantation complex Jenkins built in and around Lynchburg, including extant slave cabins on a farm Jenkins sold as he relocated west. Several plantation museums in the region, including Thomas

Jefferson's Poplar Forest, include portrayals of slave communities, which were instructive.

There are two re-constructed slave cabin communities associated with famous African American educator Booker T. Washington, one in Hardy, Virginia, and one in Malden, West Virginia. Each provided additional documentation of slave cabin architecture common in the era.

The Bob Evans Farm museum in Rio Grande, Ohio, has a complex of extant cabins of free blacks and escaped slaves along the Underground Railroad, the secret pathway to freedom used by runaway slaves. Located in close proximity to Green Bottom across the river, the visit also helped establish the commonality of the cabins likely built to house the workforce of the Jenkins family.

The Freedom Center Underground Railroad Museum in Cincinnati, Ohio, the nation's most comprehensive black history museum, displayed current interpretive practice and state-of-the-art slavery portrayal.

This research plan produced the accompanying Report.

A Note on Interpretation

Before the Civil Rights revolution of the 1960s, it was not uncommon for plantation museums to exclude slavery and the African community altogether, ironic considering they were the overwhelming majority of their original inhabitants. No longer can Southern heritage tourism attractions ignore the centrality of racial slavery in their interpretation of the past.

The massive and rich scholarship emanating from the reinterpretation of the Southern past has addressed the difficult and often contentious issue of the portrayal of slaves and the slave community and is still a common subject of scholarly debate. In general, however, the trend has been to recast the bondsmen from docile chattel to humans with dignity using their creativity, adaptation, and culture to shape the brutal institution. Some measure of the recent debate may be seen in conference panels where plantation managers, heritage tourism experts, and scholars discuss the complex issues associated with slavery portrayal:

"American Servitude: The Southern Experience," held September 16th-17th, 2005, in Richmond, Virginia, sponsored by Maymont Foundation, Virginia Commonwealth University, and the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities

"Interpreting Slavery on Southern Plantations," at the American Association for State and Local History's Annual Meeting, September 24th, 2005, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

"Telling the Tough Stories: a Workshop and Dialogue About Museums, Their Community, and theatrics of Interpreting Slavery," March 3rd-5th, Nashville, Tennessee, hosted by Belle Meade Plantation

The recent opening of the Freedom Center Underground Railroad Museum in Cincinnati, Ohio constitutes the most current interpretation and exhibit sequences and interpretive staff of slavery and the transition to freedom after emancipation. Moreover, the imminent construction of the National African American History Museum of the Smithsonian on the mall in Washington will undoubtedly address the issues.

Two recent publications are instructive in the ongoing analysis of integrating slavery into the mainstream of American heritage tourism:

Michael Gates Moresi, "Presenting Race and Slavery at Historic Sites Research Project," *Heritage Matters* (March 2006), National Park Service

Institute of Museum and Library Services, *African American History & Culture in Museums: Strategic Crossroads and New Opportunities* (July 2004)

Any envisioned slave interpretation at Green Bottom must reflect current scholarship and contemporary practice.

Black Folk at Green Bottom: From Slavery to Freedom on the Ohio River

Before the Civil War nearly a hundred slaves worked the broad Ohio Valley bottom land at Green Bottom, the plantation of the Jenkins family in Cabell County, Virginia. The livestock and produce they grew and shipped downriver from their 5000-acre plantation made the sprawling agricultural complex the most productive commercial farming operation in western Virginia.¹

They were among some four million Americans of African descent enumerated by the census taker in 1860, the year Abraham Lincoln's election provoked South Carolina to secede. Slavery permeated American history, slaves outnumbered Americans of European descent in five states of the "Black Belt," where the staple crops produced by slave labor constituted America's chief exports. This bounty produced a favorable balance of trade with Europe, ignited a textile-based industrial revolution in the northeast, and shaped American politics, society and culture. Slaves could be bought and sold in the nation's capital, where slaveowners dominated the United States government through the implementation of the "Three-Fifths" clause in the constitution, whereby slaveowners counted that ratio of their slaves in apportioning seats in Congress.²

Slavery, or some form of involuntary servitude, seems to have been a social norm throughout human history. Slavery appears throughout the Bible, in classical Greece and Rome which bequeathed us democracy and a republic, in sub-Saharan Africa before European contact. But it was the cultural encounters produced by the European invasion of the Western hemisphere which produced the Africans like those at Green Bottom. Native America did not stand a chance against the guns, germs, and steel of the conquistadors. The genocidal extermination of the American Indians is the worst

catastrophe in human history. Once the principal deposits of gold and silver had been mined and sent to enrich Europe, the invaders looked for other ways to exploit their colonial possessions. They soon found products ultimately more lucrative even than precious metal: staple crops which did not grow in Europe, sugar above all, then rice and tobacco, much later cotton.³

Staple crops were most abundantly grown on large farms using gang labor, a concept pioneered by the English in Ireland, called "plantations." With ready markets, and land vacated by the retreating indigenous people, the Europeans looked for a ready source of labor. The American Indians died in frightful fashion on first contact, the concept of indentured servitude failed to produce a stable labor supply, so the Europeans turned to Africa, where immunities to epidemic made the natives able to withstand the brutal life of the slave. Already African slaves had been forced to work on Atlantic islands, so the system was soon adapted to the Americas.

Sugar plantations in the Caribbean, tobacco culture in the Chesapeake, rice and indigo in the Carolina coastal estuaries sprang up soon after European invasion. West Africa was nearly depopulated by slave traders. The millions of Africans kidnapped, dehumanized, and taken to the Americas by the dreaded "Middle Passage" naval voyage constitute the largest migration in human history, and the resulting Diaspora the largest the world has ever known. More Africans came west across the Atlantic to the New World than Europeans until 1800.

There were Africans toiling on tobacco farms in Virginia before the Pilgrims stepped off the Mayflower at Plymouth Rock. Early American history was dominated by the westward expansion in part driven by plantation agriculture's effect on soil fertility.

Monoculture, the most profitable form of large-scale farming, ruined the productive capacity of the soil, forcing a constant necessity to move west. In the eighteenth century, that pressure led to war with France and their Native American allies, which opened up the rich Ohio and Mississippi Valleys to land-hungry settlers, speculators, and squatters.

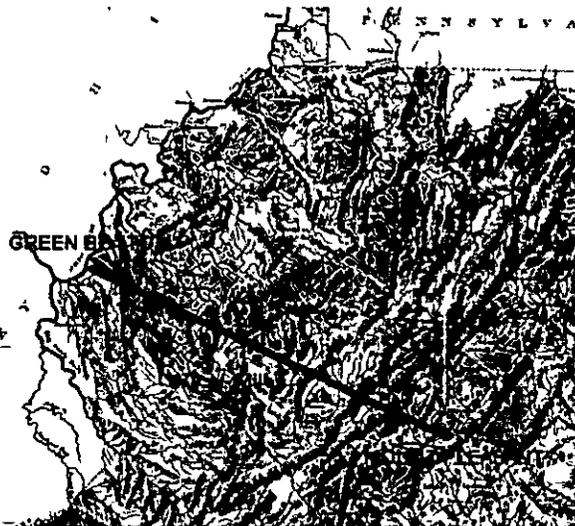
William Jenkins was born in 1777 in the tidewater region of Virginia. A veteran of the War of 1812, he built a profitable business based on trade from the Shenandoah Valley down the James River to the Atlantic. His extensive farm home at Glasgow, Mount Pleasant/Buffalo Forge, which he sold to William Weaver, still stands along with



Present day Buffalo Forge manor house

several of the cabins of the slaves who worked his lands. In 1826, Jenkins sold his 334 acres in Rockbridge County and moved his plantation community hundred and seventy miles west, purchasing 4395 acres of prime bottom land along a seven-mile strip of the eastern bank of the Ohio. There, Jenkins raised three sons, including his youngest Albert Gallatin Jenkins (1830-1864), who was elected to the United States House of Representatives, and served as a Confederate Brigadier-General, one of only five to come from the supposedly

several of the cabins of the slaves who worked his lands. In 1826, Jenkins sold his 334 acres in Rockbridge County and moved his plantation community hundred and seventy miles west, purchasing 4395 acres of prime bottom land



pro-Union portions of western Virginia which became West Virginia in 1863 during the Civil War.⁴

Green Bottom was the most productive farm in the region, valued at \$80,000 in 1850, owing to the work of its slave community, which grew hogs and cattle, planted and harvested wheat, oats, and corn, loading them at landings into steamboats upriver to Pittsburgh or down to Cincinnati. Jenkins rented out his skilled workers for hire at neighboring farms and nearby market towns. The 1850 Census agricultural schedule listed 29 horses, 2 dairy cows, 12 oxen, 173 other cattle, nine sheep and 600 swine. The value of the livestock was nearly \$7000, and during the year 1858-1859 the huge and diverse operation produced 900 bushels of wheat, 40,000 bushels of corn, 200 pounds of wool, 500 pounds of butter, and sixteen tons of hay. The productivity of Green Bottom is noteworthy, as slave labor was not usually employed in diversified agriculture and livestock raising.⁵

Jenkins built a large and stately two-story home called the Homestead, patterned



on the James River homes from where he had emigrated. He educated his three sons at nearby Barboursville Academy and then on to professional training, one a physician, while Albert Gallatin Jenkins went north to Harvard Law School. The massive plantation complex was economic

and social centerpiece of the region. Difficult to substantiate family tradition holds that Henry Clay, James Buchanan, and Abraham Lincoln may have visited the site, and

whether substantiated or not, the tales indicate the significance of the Jenkins plantation. A. G. Jenkins returned to manage Green Bottom, enter politics, and raise a regiment of Confederate Cavalry. William Jenkins died in 1859, just as the war which would destroy his plantation culture began to appear on the horizon.⁶

Most slaves in America worked on large plantations, which worked as economies of scale. The closing of the Transatlantic slave trade by Congress in 1808 and the defeat of the Native Americans in the Southeast during the War of 1812 which opened up vast productive land, created the slave community. Simple self-interest of the planter dictated that slaves be allowed to reproduce, so most slave owners built slave quarters, distinctive communities located close to the main plantation residence, but with enough privacy that the slaves could maintain the family structures which sustained the communities through the long centuries of bondage.⁷

There is no above-grade architectural fabric remaining from the slave community at Green Bottom. Future archaeological investigation may expose remaining sub-grade evidence. This evidence may suggest the location and form of structures; until this data is available any description of the slave community at Green Bottom is necessarily dependent on the study of extant patterns from comparable domestic groupings.⁸

Review of the development patterns of Green Bottom's contemporary and predecessor plantation establishments suggests that development of such facilities followed historical and practical patterns. Green Bottom likely followed a development pattern that extended back in time through Colonial-era James River settlement to medieval social stratification based on a bargain of servitude and protection.

Lord, or master, commanded his domain from a prominent position. With the power of choice, the lord, or master, selected his prominent position on the land and the positions of all other occupants became subservient. At Green Bottom, Captain William Jenkins



Green Hill Plantation, Campbell County, VA. One of the more complete plantation groupings in existence.

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selected a position that was practically removed from the flood plain of the Ohio River, but proximate enough to it for its convenient use as the artery for the transportation of the products of his domain and for visitations to and from the external world.⁹

The Green Bottom slave community was segregated between a small cadre of servants to support the needs of the master's family and the bulk of the population that was devoted to extracting wealth from the land through the growth of crops and livestock. The family support staff was charged with tending to the household needs of Captain Jenkins and his family. These servants out of necessity were quartered in close proximity to Jenkins' residence and adjacent to the facilities that they required to perform their tasks. Most such domestic precincts would include a free-standing kitchen, a dairy, an ice house, and perhaps other facilities to accommodate food stock such as fowl and swine for the master's table.

In a linear organizational pattern descending in importance, the kitchen would have been at the rear and subservient to the main dwelling. The slave dwellings would

have been located beyond the kitchen, but convenient enough to it to facilitate its use by the house servants. The raw materials for the kitchen and dairy in the form of garden vegetables and fowl, swine and dairy cattle containment would have been located beyond the dwellings for the house servants. The particular organization of the components of the domestic precinct would have been dependent on the physical circumstances of the immediate area, such as topography and the convenience of potable water sources.

The extent of the domestic accommodations required for the house servants would generally have been proportionate to the requirements of the master's household. While Captain Jenkins' domestic precinct was quite substantial and remarkable for the upper Ohio Valley at the time of its construction, it is rather typical in extent to the slave-operated farms to the east and south in Virginia and Kentucky. In such circumstances one-to-two slave dwellings were usually located adjacent to, or near the plantation kitchen. These dwellings would likely have accommodated a cook, several helpers and several house servants. The staff could have been composed of one to two families, or one extended family. Their dwellings were situated to facilitate the workings of the master's household, but would not have been visually intrusive thereon.¹⁰



Westend Plantation Slave Quarters, Louisa County, VA. A higher quality accommodation adjacent to the owner's dwelling. Note corbelled brick cornice.

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Most extant slave quarters are those that were constructed for house servants.

With proximity to the master's dwelling, they were constructed of more substantial materials and for occupants for whom the master may have had somewhat more extensive and intimate contact, and therefore affinity.

Evidence from remaining slave quarters

reveals that they were usually constructed on stone pier, or stone perimeter foundations, of wood-framed walls covered with gable roofs of wood shakes. On more established plantations the exterior wall material was occasionally brick, but more commonly white-washed stucco or wood siding. Rarely, a porch enhanced the entry, thus extending the fair-weather living area.

Entry was through one, or two doors in the façade closest to the kitchen or other adjacent support buildings and the interior was generally divided into two rooms – a common room and a sleeping room for the more



Stuccoed Slave Quarters at rear of Main Dwelling Mount Pleasant/Bufalo Forge. Rockbridge County, VA. Sold by William Jenkins to William Weaver 1826.

senior family members. There was at least one fireplace in a gable end. Fenestration was very simple and sufficient for ventilation, but more primitive examples substituted batten panels for glass window panes.

Flooring and walls were generally rough-sawn lumber. The attic stories were utilized as sleeping areas for the junior family members. Access to the garret area was by means of a steep, winding, corner staircase or a homemade ladder. Given the extent of the Jenkins family, the slave quarters would likely have been composed of one-to-two such structures between the kitchen building and other service buildings and the gardens and animal keeps.¹¹



Booker T. Washington Birthplace. Hardy, VA Recreated Slave Cabin with batten window and exterior ladder to sleeping garret.

The bulk of the slave population at Green Bottom and at other, similar plantations would have been quartered in close proximity to the agricultural production in which they would have been engaged and on which the master depended economically. The limited evidence from other plantations suggests that quarters were arrayed in regular "town"-like patterns that would have included structures for storage and repair of agricultural

Since the “field” communities were more removed from the master’s dwelling these quarters would have been less substantially constructed, but likely to have been configured similarly to those quartering the house servants. Instead of masonry foundations, these dwellings would have been constructed of log, or wood, laid on earth with hardened earth floors. Many times a root cellar would be dug in the earth floor by the occupants to store precious items.

While masonry chimneys provide evidence of the existence of primitive structures across the landscape, many structures housing slaves were heated with chimneys of mud-coated wood that eventually succumbed to the ravages of fire and time.



Field Slave Dwelling with Wooden Chimney, Pitts' Folly, Perry County, AL

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The extent of the quarters required to house the Green Bottom slave community can be estimated based on slave inventories and volume of the property’s agricultural production. The location(s) of slave quarters may be determined from archaeological evidence, especially near the remaining Green Bottom dwelling. However, the location of the “town” may only be able to be predicted from the likely locations of agricultural and other economic uses of the land and the prevailing topography of the time. There would likely have been slave and overseer facilities at Green Bottom prior to Jenkins’ ownership, but the Jenkins’ slave community lasted a mere 40 years, or around two generations. This limited span would

not have allowed the development of slave facilities comparable to those in eastern and southern Virginia that had been in place for a century, or more.¹³

The following photographs are of remaining quarters for house servants at Mount Pleasant, Rockbridge County, Virginia. Captain William Jenkins sold this property to William Weaver in 1826 after the purchase of Green Bottom. Weaver renamed the property Buffalo Forge after the iron forge that he established along Buffalo Creek near its confluence with the Maury River. The quarters were probably constructed by Weaver, but would be roughly contemporary with those constructed by Jenkins at Green Bottom. The quarters have been altered over the years, but with their masonry construction, wood plank flooring and glass windows, they represent the higher level of accommodations for domestic servants.

Slave quarters varied widely according to the economic system of the region: from African-inspired huts in rice marshes on the Sea Islands, to smart brick servants' quarters in the Chesapeake, dormitory-style clusters on overseer absentee farms. Yet by the nineteenth century, these universal 16 v 18-foot square slave cabin and community had become more or less standard in plantations in the American south and Midwest: Single-family dwellings predominated, although the threatened and vulnerable African American family had to be resourceful and more open to extended family structures than European Americans. Common also was the double-sided "Saddlebag" style with two families sharing a common fireplace and chimney.

years, the slave quarters were adequate, yet blacks lived shorter, unhealthy lives, which indicates the inadequacy of the arrangements. Within the slave community, black Americans fought to retain often forbidden elements of their African culture while establishing a new one of their own. In myriad fashions the slaves adapted and shaped the world around them to help survive and resist the inherent inhumanity of the system, which exploited the sweat of their backs for capital.

Few primary sources exist to detail the lives of the slave community and its white overseers at Green Bottom. Most disturbing is the absence of the 1860 Jenkins' household slave census—the most valuable primary source document for such analysis. Yet there are clues and inferences that may be plausibly made. The story begins with Wilson Cary Nicholas who began developing his operation at Green Bottom by purchasing forced laborers from his neighbors to create an “overseer plantation” in which he invested large sums of money. By 1815, Green Bottom had 18 slaves and was described as being chronically disorganized, undermanned, and at times completely unsupervised due to the frequent absences of overseer David Cobbs. His return to the plantation often signaled problems that resulted in violent punishments being meted out to the slaves.¹⁵

Sometime around 1817 a new overseer, identified as William Gough, assumed control of Green Bottom operations.¹⁶ Reasons for David Cobbs' departure are not known, but he may have moved to Eastern Virginia and continued working for the Nicholas family, as the 1820 Virginia census lists an individual by that name in Buckingham County, where numerous Nicholas family members resided—including Wilson Cary's brother, John Nicholas, and a nephew, Robert Nicholas.¹⁷

A third name in the annals of overseers at Green Bottom was James B. Scott, a native New Yorker who came to Green Bottom via Ohio. Identified as "manager" in the 1850 census, the 37-year-old James, his wife Mary (22 years old) and daughter Eliza V. Scott (2 years of age) lived next door to William Jenkins.¹⁸ Scott apparently met an untimely end after being murdered in 1857 or 1858. Numerous stories abound of his death, said to be either at the hand of abolitionists as he returned from a Barboursville slave sale market, by neighbors because he was making inappropriate advances toward their daughters, or in a fight at a log raising. Scott is buried in a lonesome grave at the top of Barker's Ridge, and his descendants still reside in Cabell County.¹⁹ Following James' death, his widow Mary J. Scott relocated to Washington Township in Preble County, Ohio, where she resided in 1860 with her six children: Eliza (12 years old), Ellen (10 years), Galitan (8 years), Sophia (6 years), Geoffrey (4 years), and Minesta (2 years).²⁰

Another individual who is included in the pantheon of Green Bottom overseers was Richard Richardson, an individual who served in that capacity for Captain William Jenkins in the 1850s.²¹ He is probably R.A. Richardson from Cabell County, one of three signatories who witnessed William Jenkins' will in 1857.²² The 1860 Cabell County census enumerates 30-year-old Richard Richardson, whose occupation was listed as "overseer." A native Virginian, Richardson and his 32-year-old wife Mary resided eight dwellings from Albert G. Jenkins in the area identified as "Greenbottom Post Office." Sharing the home with the Richardsons in 1860 were twelve other individuals, including four minors with a different last name: Francis Linkfield (female) age 12, Riley Linkfield (male) age 10, Ida Linkfield (female) age eight, and Alice Linkfield (female) age six. It is not known whether these youth were children of the Richardsons or had some other

affiliation (perhaps their wards?); at any rate, three of the four young people had moved by 1870, when only 20-year-old Riley Linkfield resided in the area.²³ The eight remaining residents in the Richardson household in 1860 were male "farm laborers" who ranged in age from 16 to 30 years of age.

Residing two houses away was Hooper B. Stevens, a Maryland native who would later tell his children that he, too, served as overseer at Green Bottom during the Civil War. This is unverified and somewhat problematic because the 1860 census lists the 39-year-old Stevens as a carpenter.²⁴ Conversely, the traditional history of Green Bottom, records that Albert G. Jenkins' father-in-law, James Bowlin, ran the plantation during the Civil War. Stevens' assertion may still be true, given the tumultuous and unstable state of affairs that existed at the time, the extent of control asserted by Bowlin, and the date of his arrival at Green Bottom. Whoever ultimately ran things during the war, the 1870 census clearly enumerates the 66-year-old James Bowlin as the resident farmer at Green Bottom.²⁵

It is reasonable to surmise that Richardson, Stevens and other whites who lived in close proximity, but were not related, to the Jenkins family in 1860 were affiliated with the farming operation at Green Bottom. A chronological listing of the adult white males who resided in the Green Bottom Post Office area (arranged by "dwelling house" in order of visitation by the census taker) confirms a non-slave population principally involved in agricultural production:

<u>ADULT MALES & OCCUPATIONS</u>	<u>AGE</u>	<u>PLACE OF BIRTH</u>
Lyman Emerson – farm laborer	38	Ohio
Wm Jenkins – farmer	31	Virginia
AG Jenkins – farmer	28	Virginia
Tobias Wallace – farmer	56	Virginia
Lyman Rardon (sp) – day laborer	23	Virginia

Sylvester Bowen – day laborer	25	Virginia
TJ Jenkins – farmer	33	Virginia
Wm Blano (sp) – farm laborer	40	Ohio
Wm Southers – day laborer	24	Virginia
Wm Bowen	40	Virginia
Richard Richardson – overseer	30	Virginia
Charles Gatewood – farm laborer	30	Virginia
Joseph Canterbury – farm laborer	25	Ohio
Wm Turner – farm laborer	24	Virginia
Allen Close – farm laborer	24	Ohio
Wm Hawthorne – farm laborer	22	Virginia
John Bickel – farm laborer	20	Virginia
Thomas Turner – farm laborer	20	Virginia
John Turner – farm laborer	16	Virginia
Thomas Christy – farm laborer	25	Virginia
Hooper Stevens – carpenter	39	Maryland
David R. Lacy – brick mason	62	Virginia
Abraham Christy – day laborer	24	Virginia
AR Chrislip – minister	34	Virginia

Judging from the range of ages and occupations, Green Bottom by all accounts was a bustling hive of activity that may have masked the ulterior motives of enslaved workers. Problems with runaway slaves began under Cabell's overseership, demonstrating their innate desire for freedom, so close across the Ohio River. The diverse river economy and the frequent contact with free blacks and other workers made the system more fluid along the Ohio. One historian has suggested that slaves on the frontier were more likely to be literate than in the Deep South.²⁶

African Americans who toiled at this western outpost of slave society viewed the Ohio River as a symbolic dividing line between freedom and bondage, and crossing it became the preferred method of escape. Before construction of the modern system of locks and dams, during times of drought, the river could be less than a foot deep in places and many fugitive Virginia slaves made their flight to freedom by simply wading across it. Resisting the instinctive urge to flee must have been a constant distraction for the African Americans who toiled on plantations in Cabell County and elsewhere. Given the

fact that free soil lay a short distance across the Ohio River from Green Bottom, it stands to reason that escaped slaves either fled to Ohio before the Civil War or migrated there as freemen and women after emancipation.

Numerous African American settlements in Ohio, including Federal Creek, Black Fork, Wilgus, Pee Pee, Poke Patch, and Berlin Cross Roads, were populated by former slaves and free people of color that beckoned to the bonded servants seeking refuge in the North.²⁷ Some locations were recognized stations on the Underground Railroad, and several reportedly had a high number of black teachers and farmers following the Civil War.²⁸ The nearest free country for Jenkins' slaves was Lawrence County, Ohio, which served as a magnet for blacks between 1850 and 1870, as illustrated below:²⁹

LAWRENCE COUNTY, OHIO

DATE	TOTAL POP.	BLACK POP.	PCT. OF TOTAL	VA. BORN
1850	15,247	189	>.01	121
1860	23,249	685	2.9	
1870	31,361	1,241	4.0	265

One of the nearest havens for escaped slaves from Cabell County was Burlington, the former county seat of Lawrence County (now unincorporated) that has an especially strong African American heritage. Located across the Ohio River from Huntington, Burlington was laid out on land purchased on behalf of 37 former slaves that had been freed in 1849 by James Twyman, a wealthy plantation owner from Madison County, Virginia. The manumitted slaves settled on a farm provided for them.³⁰ Today, a monument located at the gates of the Burlington 37 Cemetery bears the names of the former slaves buried there. The cemetery is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Also nearby is Macedonia Baptist Church, which was founded by liberated slaves

in 1849 and became the mother of five area churches at Pine Grove, Ironton, and Burlington in Ohio, Huntington, West Virginia, and Catlettsburg, Kentucky. While the likelihood remains high that some former Green Bottom slaves settled in Lawrence County following emancipation, no African Americans living there after the Civil War carried the Jenkins surname.³¹

Escaped slaves from Virginia plantations often made their way to freedom through a network of Underground Railroad stations in Ohio. One destination for area runaways may have been an early network of safe houses in the Marietta-Belpre area just across the Ohio River from Parkersburg. Abolitionist Ephraim Cutler is credited with establishing one of the first Underground Railroad stations at Constitution, Ohio, in 1806.³² Located between Marietta and Belpre, Constitution was named for a section of the Ohio bill of rights written by Cutler that banned slavery. Nearby is the town of Veto, named in honor of Cutler's veto of slavery in Ohio. Area slavery historian James Burke claims that most of the slaves that crossed through that area "had escaped from plantations along the Virginia side of the Ohio River or from the Kanawha Salines [present-day Malden] salt works near Charleston."³³ This would likely include slaves from Green Bottom.

One Underground Railroad conductor, Thomas Ridgeway, had direct ties to the Kanawha Valley. As a barrellmaker who worked at Lewis Ruffner's saltworks at Malden between 1822 and 1825, he took his payment in salt that he sold along the Ohio River to earn money so he could build a farm on the Muskingum River near Marietta where he joined a network of safehouses and is credited with aiding more than 50 escaped slaves.³⁴

At least three intrepid freedom-bound slaves from Green Bottom attempted to reach the promised land on the north side of the Ohio River in 1817 or 1818 after fleeing through Millersport, Ohio [a small flatboat landing across the river from the plantation] with a forged pass.³⁵ Cabell overseers spent considerable time and money to retrieve the escapees, and their efforts resulted in the subsequent return of two bondmen identified only as Joshua and Joe, while the third fugitive, possibly named Moses, remained on the run.³⁶ Harsh retribution followed, as the overseer reportedly employed a slave breaker to discipline Joshua.³⁷ An especially interesting aspect of this tale is the fact that one of the three slaves seems to have written the bogus pass, which indicates that at least some of the Green Bottom slaves could read and write, a practice that was strongly disdained by most owners.³⁸

Someone at Green Bottom—perhaps an enslaved black or sympathetic white—continued to write forged passes for other bondmen who escaped by the same means, a costly breach of conduct that was at least partly responsible for several slaves being shipped to another plantation at Louisa Bend, Kentucky, for “safety” reasons. Deeply in debt at the time, owner Wilson Cary Nicholas apparently shuttled his slaves between plantations in an effort to avoid detection and thus evade paying taxes on them.³⁹

In addition to the prospect that at least some blacks were semi-literate, certain Green Bottom slaves could also “factor” or do simple math as part of their duties. One individual, known as “Old Julius,” could both count and do simple ledgers as part of his duties marking and recording bales being loaded for market at the plantation wharf on the Ohio River. Julius worked alongside a fellow slave named Silas, also but it is not known whether they shared the same mathematical abilities.⁴⁰

Teetering on the verge of financial collapse, Cary Nicholas in 1819 deeded his Green Bottom tract to trustees William Wirt and Robert Gamble for notes endorsed by former Virginia governor William H. Cabell, also of Buckingham County. Nineteen adult slaves conveyed with the transaction—the same ones that Nicholas had “employed on or about the tract” between February and April 1817, as well as their children. To follow is a version of the annotated “memorandum of negroes” conveyed by Nicholas to Cabell, with remarks on “a view of them in the summer of 1819:”

Ben - supposed to be 45 to 50 years old - large and likely
 Moses - very likely - (since run away)
 Jack - about 40 - tolerably likely
 Kit - 35 or 40 - very likely
 Charles - about 22 or 24 - very likely
 John - very likely
 Jim - very large and likely
 Armestead - about 21 - very likely
 Cimon - about 22 - very likely
 Peter - very likely
 Washington - about 14 - very likely
 Bob and Joe - in Albemarle - I have not seen them - they are said to be very likely
 Dolly - a very likely woman
 Isbel - a likely young woman
 Milly - Kit's wife, very likely - about 35 years old
 Dolly - old & of no value
 Phyllis - ditto
 Milly's children – Maria - supposed to be 8 years old
 Nelson - supposed to be 5 or 6
 Lucrecia [?] - supposed to be 4
 Nathan - supposed to be 1½
 Isbel's children - Winney - 5
 Solomon - 2

According to the 1820 census, the number of enslaved blacks at Green Bottom totaled 53 individuals, with 37 employed in agriculture.⁴¹ It is assumed that the remaining 16 hands worked in and about the plantation as domestic or personal servants. Based on the number of slaves, Green Bottom was clearly functioning as a significant agricultural

plantation. To put it into a proper regional context, the slave count in Cabell County equaled 392 individuals—which means Green Bottom held nearly fourteen per cent of all enslaved peoples in the county.⁴² Census data for 1820 enumerated the ages and gender of Green Bottom slaves as follows:

MALES (32 total)

fourteen age 14 years or under
 eight age 15-26 years
 seven age 27-45
 three age 45 or older

FEMALES (21 total)

six age 14 years or under
 eight age 15-26
 four age 27-45
 three age 45 or older

William H. Cabell wrote favorably to his brother regarding the disposition of the slaves in October of 1820, noting them to be “as likely, if not the most likely set of hands for the number that I have ever saw on the same plantation.”⁴³ He also revealed that one of the slaves had recently died, two were in Albemarle County, two were old and infirmed and Moses the runaway had “fled with a note into the wilderness of Ohio.”⁴⁴ This announcement left an effective workforce of only 13 hands at Green Bottom.

In January of 1821 Cabell formally bought the plantation at a public sale in Richmond for \$13,000. Included in the transaction were 18 adult slaves who had been present in the summer of 1819, plus seven children. With the elusive Moses still a runaway and “supposed to be lurking in some part of the State of Ohio,” the human chattel that conveyed with the plantation stood at 25 individuals.⁴⁵ Although the precise fate of the other 28 slaves enumerated at Green Bottom in the 1820 census is not known, it may be surmised that they did not convey with the acquisition. Likewise, when Cabell

placed the property in a deed of trust to secure outside debts less than two months after he acquired it, no mention was made of the slaves. Hence, it must be assumed that they were not considered part of that property transaction.⁴⁶

Green Bottom changed little until 1825, when Cabell's trustees sold the estate to William Jenkins of Rockbridge County. Jenkins was a successful Tidewater businessman who owned 19 slaves between the ages of 14 to 26 prior to his westward migration.⁴⁷ Records of the Cabell County transaction contain no mention of any slaves that conveyed in the deal, but he possibly purchased some of the individuals with the property or in a separate transaction.⁴⁸

The plantation's new owner quickly turned his western holdings into a regional leader in agricultural production. But, ease of access had its drawbacks because runaway slaves continued to use the river as a potential escape route, as evidenced by the fact that Captain Jenkins was sued in 1827 by James Shelton, a local slave catcher and plantation owner from the Huntington area, for not paying him enough for the return of one slave. In 1848, Jenkins had another case of slave stealing before the county court.⁴⁹

Although details are lacking on the division of labor at Green Bottom, it stands to reason that the majority of bondmen and women worked as field hands on the growing enterprise that in 1830 supported a diverse population of 33 enslaved blacks—22 females and 11 males, with 14 children under the age of ten:⁵⁰

MALES (11)

six under 10 years old
one age 24-36 years
two age 36-55 years
two age 55-100 years

FEMALES (22)

eight under 10 years old

four age 10-24 years
 six age 24-36 years
 four age 36-55 years

Green Bottom experienced modest growth in its slave population until 1840 when it reached 37 individuals.⁵¹ Although the aggregate had grown only by three since 1830, a pronounced demographic shift had occurred over the course of the decade as males outnumbered females by a nearly two to one margin. Tax lists for 1840 document a population that included 24 males, five between age 12-16 and 19 over 16 years of age, while the number of females reached 13.⁵² The 1840 census listed about ten household-head age males:

AGE	MALE	FEMALE
0-10	2	8
10-24	4	7
36-55	3	2
66-100	2	8
100+	1	

A general expansion continued until 1850 when 55 enslaved blacks lived and worked at Green Bottom, thus making it the largest agricultural estate in an area that encompassed Cabell, Mason and Wayne counties.⁵³ The number and family structure of the population as extrapolated by rate of increase from the 1850 census indicates that there would perhaps have been ten cabins. From their residential base, Jenkins' slaves engaged in a wide range of duties to keep the plantation operating at peak efficiency; most worked in the fields, tended livestock, raised horses, loaded produce at the docks, filled warehouses or performed blacksmithing duties, while a few tended to the personal and domestic needs of Captain Jenkins, his wife and their four children. According to the 1850 Slave Schedule, 48 of the 55 individuals (87 per cent) were either female slaves or

males under the age of 12, a favorable demographic arrangement for the owners because slaves in those categories were not taxed.⁵⁴

AGE	GENDER	AGE	GENDER	AGE	GENDER
28	F	3	M	40	F
26	M	9/12	M	5	F
9	F	40	F	3	F
7	M	19	F	54	M
5	M	14	F	40	F
5	M	6	F	18	F
3	F	13	F	15	F
1	F	3	M	13	F
3	F	10/12	F	7	F
20	F	55	F	4	F
18	M	25	M	2	F
3	M	16	F	8/12	M
1	M	14	M	40	F
1	M	1	F	65	M
18	M	25	F	55	F
35	F	25	M	6	M
23	F	7	M	3	F
5	M	4	F		
6	F	2	M		

Females under 16 = 19
 Females 16-25 = 6
 Females 26-35 = 2
 Females 36-55 = 6
 Females over 55 = 0
 Females total = 33

Males 12 or under = 15
 Males 16-25 = 4
 Males 26-35 = 1
 Males 36-55 = 1
 Males over 55 = 1
 Males total = 22

While demographic analyses can help answer questions about the slave economy, it does little to put a human face on the impersonal world of involuntary servitude. Since few sources actually list individual slave names, most of the blacks who toiled in bondage are destined to remain anonymous. Some, but not all, masters ascribed their own surname to their slaves as a method of delineation or practicality. Conversely, some liberated slaves chose as free men and women to keep their plantation names, while others did not. Fortunately, Cabell County records chronicle the names of 21 African

Americans who were born or died at Green Bottom between 1853 and 1859.⁵⁵ This important source is the first documented instance of surnames being ascribed to any of the plantation's slaves, and it offers a tangible, if incomplete, identity for those on the list:

GREEN BOTTOM BIRTHS	DATE	MOTHER'S NAME
Georgiana	1853	Delpha or Delphy
Erdline	1853	Martha
Isaac	1854	Marthy
Susan		Emily
Mary Jane		Shald (?)
Shedneck		Harriett
Mark		Julia
Adoline	1859	Adaline
Catherine	1855	
Edwin	1855	
Hezekiah	1855	
Preston	1855	
Adaline Jenkins	1858	Charlotte-slave of AG
Jenkins		
Henry Jenkins	1858	Emily-slave of Wm Jenkins
Margaret Jenkins	1858	Adaline-slave of Wm Jenkins
GREEN BOTTOM DEATHS	DATE	AGE
Reuben	1853	96
Reuben	1854	75
Jermiah Adkins	1859	3-parents Hamilton & Mary

The list of births and deaths includes three slaves born in 1858—Adaline, Henry, and Margaret Jenkins—who obviously carry the surname of their Green Bottom masters, but three-year-old Jermiah Adkins' moniker (who died in 1859) is unknown. Neither the 1850 nor the abbreviated 1860 slave schedule lists any owners named Adkins in Cabell County. In addition, no blacks named Hamilton or Mary Adkins show up in either the 1870 or 1880 Ohio or West Virginia census; thus, it may be surmised that they died, changed their name, or moved to another state following emancipation.⁵⁶

Another example of the personification of individual slaves at Green Bottom is found in the will of Captain William Jenkins, a document in which he bequeathed his

slave Mary and “her issue” to his sister and nearby resident, Eustacia Lacy, with the request that another slave named Jacob be sold to the high bidder among his three sons. The will went on to stipulate that Mary and her offspring should be sold to one of the Jenkins sons upon Eustacia’s death.⁵⁷ Jenkins' will also indicates that there was no church on the plantation, but nearby church records show that several of Jenkins' slaves attended a neighboring Baptist congregation. A last request by a former Jenkins slave to be buried in the plantation cemetery indicates a strong sense of community, as did his choice to retain his master's surname.⁵⁸

Ownership of Green Bottom passed to a new generation following the death of the elder Jenkins in 1859. By that time a dramatic series of events had been set in motion that would culminate in a devastating clash that ended the plantation economy and forever altered the destiny of its human chattel. Within weeks of the war’s start the Jenkins’ plantation was engulfed by the conflict. Invading Union armies crossed into Western Virginia in May of 1861 and reached Green Bottom by July, where soldiers in blue proceeded to liberate the enslaved community there. Following their deliverance, the freemen and women disappeared into anonymity. Where did they go? In all likelihood, most of these invisible Americans crossed the Ohio River and never looked back, possibly making their way to Cincinnati or another safe haven for runaway slaves. Since in Ohio they could still be recaptured and returned as contraband, many individuals may have sought refuge in Canada along the legendary Underground Railroad. Whatever route was chosen by the liberated slaves, one thing is certain—nearly all the African Americans who had lived and worked for the Jenkins’ at Green Bottom prior to the Civil War were gone by war’s end.

Irrefutable census data confirms the fact that nearly all free blacks departed the area by 1870, when Cabell County's African American inhabitants numbered only 91 persons (plus at least one mulatto) out of total population of 6,430—a meager one-and-one-half per cent!⁵⁹ In the Union District—which included the Green Bottom environs—the 1870 enumeration included one household of color among the 165 total households. Residing at the Jenkins' homestead, most likely living in nearby slave quarters, were Anderson Rose, a (35-year-old male who “works on farm”), Mary Lacy (35-year-old domestic servant), George Lacy (15-year-old farm worker), Christine Lacy (12 years old), and John P[age] (3-year-old mulatto).⁶⁰ No definitive kinship link has been established for these individuals, but there is reasonable speculation that Mary Lacy was their mother.

Another important fact about this household is that Lacy was the married name of William Jenkins' sister Eustacia who was wed to David Lacy, a brick mason. In 1870, Eustacia and David resided only four dwellings from the Rose-Lacy household of color.⁶¹ Although no specific research has been undertaken to substantiate the association, it is highly likely that Mary the ex-slave once belonged to the Lacy family.

Jenkins family tradition states that Mary Lacy served as nanny for the Jenkins children until 1873 when she reportedly left after the death of Thomas J. Jenkins because “she could not take anymore deaths.”⁶² Whether or not Mary left for the reason stated is debatable, but her unwavering fidelity to her master-turned-employer is not. Such loyalty was extremely rare, which makes her unique among the African American community at Green Bottom. Also, she is the only ex-slave known to have had her photograph taken and preserved. A copy of the photograph is included in this report.⁶³

Currently, the Rose-Lacy household remains the only group of color for whom a direct genealogical link to Green Bottom's slave society has been positively established. Their postwar connection remained intact in 1880, when 45-year-old Anderson Rose resided on the old Jenkins lands with his 26-year-old wife Christine—in all likelihood the former Christine Lacy, and their children Judge (4 years old) and Servis (3 years old). Thirteen-year-old John Page was still present, as was a new family, 35-year-old George Jenkins, his wife Amanda (35 years old), and their two children, Samuel (5 years) and Anna (3 years). Although none of the residents lived in the Jenkins household *per se*, they resided nearby and their "Jenkins" surname leaves little doubt of a direct affiliation to their former masters.⁶⁴

George Jenkins still resided in the vicinity of Green Bottom in 1900 with his wife Mandy (Amanda), and children Annie, Looney, and William Jenkins.⁶⁵ Listed as a farmer, it is thought that George may have lived in a former slave dwelling near Green Bottom. It is altogether fitting that one of the last permanent residents to be affiliated with the antebellum plantation was an ex-slave who never actually owned the property, but who helped shoulder the burden of its successful operation.

The black Jenkins of Green Bottom were still living in 1910, but they had moved from their rural home along the Ohio River to a residence on 14th Street in downtown Huntington.⁶⁶ One final piece of evidence that links George to the plantation comes from a newspaper article that reported his passing at age 72 on February 8, 1917. The story credits George as being the last of Albert Gallatin Jenkins' slaves, and notes that his burial took place on the old Jenkins place "in the plot set aside in the days before the war for the burial of the negroes belonging to the estate."⁶⁷

In reality, George Jenkins was not the last of Green Bottom's former slaves to die. Christina Jenkins (who wed Anderson Rose in 1875) outlived him by nine years.⁶⁸

The passing of George and Christine Jenkins are auspicious events in the history of Green Bottom, but there is a postscript yet to be written. George's wife Amanda James, who had lived at Hannan just north of Green Bottom before the pair married in 1876, still resided in Huntington in 1920. She had at least seven children, among them was Georgiana (Annie or Anna) born in 1876, Looney born in 1881, William born in 1889, and Bert born in 1890. Amanda Jenkins died in 1922 in Huntington at the age of 69. Her son William signed as a witness on her death certificate, which lists the place of burial as "Clover, W.Va." (perhaps the former slave cemetery?)⁶⁹

Of the seven children born to George and Amanda Jenkins, only two were living in 1910—Anna (or Annie) and William. Anna married a hotel porter named Mobile Saunders and they had eight children between 1902 and 1914: Homer, Floyd, Joseph, Clem, Amanda (Mandy), Helen, George, and Jean.⁷⁰ By 1920, Anna and Mobile had divorced. Anna lived the rest of her life in Huntington, where she died on October 2, 1954 at 76 years of age. She is buried in Spring Hill Cemetery in Huntington.⁷¹ Of her surviving offspring, son Floyd Saunders has been identified as the father of at least two children by different women. One is Barbara L. Saunders, born in 1927 and whose mother was Louise B. Braxton; the other is Leanna Saunders Williamson, born either in 1927 or 1930, and whose mother was Fannie Williamson.⁷² In 1922, William Jenkins lived at 736 Sixth Avenue East in Huntington, and he still resided in the city in 1930 according to the census (the last one currently available to the public). No record exists of

William having a spouse or dependents, and no further information has been discovered about him.

It is highly probable that descendants of both the George Jenkins and Mary Lacy families still live in the tri-state area. Additional research should be undertaken to locate and interview descendants of these significant families that are an integral, albeit forgotten, part of the Green Bottom legacy.

Although Green Bottom was reputed to be the largest slave operation in the tri-county area on the eve of the Civil War, the exact number of slaves living there is difficult to ascertain because the incomplete 1860 Cabell County Slave Schedule that lacks an enumeration for Green Bottom.⁷³ Some sources place as many as 80 slaves in bondage on the eve of the Civil War, an estimation apparently based on personal property tax lists that report males over the age of 12.⁷⁴ But, that number appears suspiciously high for several reasons.

First, no sizeable increase in farm equipment was made in the 1850s to indicate any increases in operations. Production after 1850 shifted away from agricultural products in favor of livestock (cattle, horses, oxen) which does not account for a dramatic increase in forced labor.⁷⁵ Second, the hypothetical 80 slaves would represent fully 26 per cent of the 305 slaves in Cabell County in 1860, a figure that is seriously out of proportion for a plantation that averaged slightly over 10 per cent and never topped 14 per cent of the county total in the previous four census enumerations.⁷⁶ Finally, 80 slaves also represents a dramatic 68 per cent increase over the 1850 total at Green Bottom itself, which seems excessive since the aggregate slave total for Cabell County had declined by 84 individuals (22 per cent) between 1850 and 1860:

SLAVES IN CABELL CO.	SLAVES AT GREEN BOTTOM	PCT. TOTAL
1820 -- 392	53	14%
1830 -- 561	33	6%
1840 -- 567	37	7%
1850 -- 389	55	14%
1860 -- 305	80? (estimated)	26%*

Time and the elements have taken a heavy toll on the physical remains at Green Bottom. The entire landscape of the Jenkins plantation has been radically altered since its antebellum prominence. Floods have wreaked havoc with the valley, wetlands now cover most of the good farmland, and the construction of highway and railroad behind the "big house" have rendered the site nearly foreign to its original state. The house originally faced the river to the west; road and automobile turned it completely around. Thus the most likely location of the slave community, behind the main house "Homestead," has been disturbed beyond any meaningful reconstitution. There are various oral traditions and family tales which locate the slave quarters by a cemetery across W.Va. State Route 2, but there is no positive verification. Diligent research by historians indicate the most probable cemetery site (hence a good location for the slave cabins?) to be directly across Route 2 from the homestead, under a large mound of dirt created when the road was widened in the 1960s or '70s. This site was confirmed in an interview with a local man who had hunted the area with his father in the 1950s, and his father had shown him one small cross where the slave cemetery was supposed to be, now under the dirt mound.⁷⁷ Unfortunately, the exact location of the slave quarters at Green Bottom remains a mystery.

When the Civil War broke out and Union troops began trying to suppress the rebellion, as Lincoln saw secession, slavery began to come apart. Long before Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and the subsequent 13th Amendment turned a war for

southern independence into a war for human freedom, slaves ran to Federal lines. On the Peninsula of Virginia Ben Butler took in "contrabands," and Secretary of War Simon Cameron as early as August 1861 indicated that as part of the southern labor force slaves could be confiscated by the rules of war. The slaves needed no such legal niceties, running away in droves in a defiant show of their unbroken character and the indomitable desire for freedom from bondage. Their defection destroyed the myth of the benevolent slave master and his loyal minions, and helped to win the war, both by depriving the South of their labor, and creating fear of rebellion and race war throughout the Confederacy.⁷⁸

Such seems to be the case at Green Bottom, whose last master was Albert Gallatin Jenkins, a fiery and prominent Southern Rights politician both at home in western Virginia, and in Congress. Jenkins served two tumultuous terms in Washington, resigning to lead the Border Rangers, which became Company E, 8th Virginia Cavalry, a unit he armed and equipped, most often utilized in partisan raids and scouting. Jenkins raided deep into Ohio and Pennsylvania, capturing enemy muster rolls, steamboats, and horses. He had no military training whatsoever beyond the habit of command and political prowess often displayed in the Old South. Lee and Stuart, who relegated him to border guard duty after his performance in the Gettysburg campaign, openly questioned his generalship.⁷⁹

Unfortunately for Jenkins and his immediate family but apparently happily to his slave community, the war came early to Green Bottom. In May 1861, realizing the crucial importance of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad to the Union war effort, Lincoln authorized an invasion of northwestern Virginia from across the Ohio. Twenty thousand

blue-coated Federal soldiers poured across the Ohio at Wheeling and Parkersburg, just miles north of Green Bottom. Union forces drove Confederates from the Ohio Valley and along the railroad in a series of short, sharp engagements in the summer and fall of 1861. These campaigns were of enormous significance, securing the region for its statemakers to create West Virginia safely behind Union lines, while Jenkins and other Southern cavalymen tried repeatedly and usually unsuccessfully to break through and cut the railroad throughout the remainder of the war.⁸⁰

Another Federal thrust down the Kanawha River and southward along the Ohio brought the war to Green Bottom. With Jenkins' troops fighting near Charleston, his home was left unprotected, and in July 1861, the Union army camped on the plantation, and "drove off all the stock and nearly everything that was movable," according to a Confederate soldier. They also presumably liberated the slave community at Green Bottom, where freedom came early to the Jenkins' bondsmen. The 2nd Kentucky under the command of Lt.-Col. George W. Neff perhaps targeted the Jenkins homeplace on July 16th because of the prominence of its owner, who had had several sharp clashes with his political opponents in the increasingly rancorous months leading to the war. Moreover, Jenkins' men had seized a steamboat on the Ohio shortly before the Union forces attacked. Mrs. Jenkins angrily and defiantly confronted the Federal officer while the blue soldiers looted the plantation. Family tradition holds tales of loyal slaves defending their masters, common fare of the Lost Cause's central mythology.⁸¹

Other evidence exists to indicate that Green Bottom ceased to exist as a slave-labor-based agricultural complex in the summer of 1861. Jenkin's family immediately fled to safety behind Confederate lines for the remainder of the war carrying, according

to an eyewitness, "all the baggage in wagons." There is no mention of slave property in Jenkins' 1862 will. Jenkins' conduct during the Gettysburg campaign perhaps indicates his anger at the loss of his property, as contemporary accounts specifically single him out as the most aggressive of the Southern officers who rounded up free blacks and runaway slaves to take back to bondage in Virginia. The poor performance of the usually reliable Southern horsemen in the Pennsylvania campaign is often cited as a reason for the repulse of the invasion. Jenkins' decision-making and troop deployments were again questionable at the unhappy denouement of his military career, which occurred in May 1864, when he was mortally wounded at the Battle of Cloyd's Mountain in southwest Virginia, succumbing to his wounds on May 21st.⁸²

His slaves had long before left Green Bottom. Where did they go? Again, solid evidence does not exist, yet just across the Ohio River was a well-designed network of free black homestead communities, like the ones at Mount Pleasant and Rio Grande, and safe houses of the Underground Railroad, the secret network of abolitionists who shuttled escapees to the north. Southern Ohio was the first step toward freedom for runaway slaves before the war, where sympathetic whites and free black farmers welcomed them before the war. Parkersburg to the north was perhaps the principal route across the Ohio into Washington County, which has 16 to 18 documented "stations." That network provided a ready-made avenue for Green Bottom's slaves to follow from slavery to freedom, and might have absorbed them into the existing subculture. Jenkins had problems with runaway slaves escaping to Ohio before the war. Indeed, there is evidence of such a migration, from the obituary of a Jenkins slave descendant in Ohio in 1917.⁸³

Most slaves, upon the sudden and unforeseen collapse of the institution which had enslaved them for centuries, made use of the mobility to move about to reunite their scattered families, then, at least in the Deep South, returned to the communities where they and their families had lived. After a frightening period of instability and experimentation during Reconstruction, racist exploitative labor systems appeared which accommodated the emancipation of the slaves and the abolition of the system of slavery, yet permitted the rebuilding of the Southern economy. This most often took the form of sharecropping, wherein former slaves were allocated tenant farms in exchange for a share of the produce at harvest. This system, combined with disfranchisement and legalized discrimination, kept most African Americans on the same lands and occupations they had grown up, but in a different system. Land ownership remained consolidated in the planter class, which dominated Southern society after the war.⁸⁴

The former slaves destroyed the old slave quarters as a symbol of the brutality of slavery, and most often spread out in new cabins around the plantation, which gave them privacy and a sense of place. A schoolhouse and church served as centerpieces of these sharecropper communities, which served as the main form of community for most black Americans until the Great Migration of the Twentieth Century created the urban black communities of the North. This does not seem to have happened at Green Bottom. The family sold off the lands after the war to pay legal fees and court judgements against Jenkins for his wartime depredations. The Cabell County census of 1870 lists only one African American household at Green Bottom. Thus evidence indicates that the slave community at Green Bottom did not reconstitute itself after the war, but disappeared, melding into the Ohio black population. This may have been common for Upper South

Ohio valley plantations, so far removed from the Black Belt Deep South society. The 1870 Ohio census lists 427 African Americans born in West Virginia, with a majority of 245 residing in Meigs County, adjacent northwards across the Ohio River.⁸⁵

The absence of last names for slaves makes it difficult if not impossible genealogically to track African Americans in transition from slavery to freedom. Often but by no means always, did the bondsmen adopt the last name of their final owner. There is an unclaimed medal in the West Virginia state archives for a United States Colored Troops soldier named Thomas J. Jenkins, dated September 7th, 1864, and there is a 1917 obituary for George Jenkins, who identified himself as the last surviving member of the antebellum slave community.⁸⁶ Green Bottom offers a fascinating and tantalizing case study and useful tool of analysis for the study of the Virginia frontier Ohio Valley African American slave community in the transition from slavery to freedom.

Endnotes

¹ Jack L. Dickinson, Jenkins of Greenbottom: A Civil War Saga (Charleston, WV: Pictorial Histories, 1988); much of the best research on the plantation is unpublished, see Karen N. Cartwright Nance, "The Significance of the Jenkins Plantation" (n.p., 1988), and the following reports prepared for the U.S Army Corps of Engineers: O'Bannon, Patrick W., "Archival Research on the History of the Albert Gallatin Jenkins House, Green Bottom, Cabell County, West Virginia," (Prepared for Woolpert, Inc., and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, 2005), Stuart McGehee, "Green Bottom," (Historic Report Prepared for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 2003), Myra A. Hughes and Charles M. Niquette, eds., "A National Register Evaluation of the Jenkins House Site and a Phase One Inventory of Archaeological Sites in the Gallipolis Mitigation Site at Greenbottom, Cabell County, West Virginia (Cultural Resource Analysts, 1989); Myra Hughes and Jonathan P. Kerr, "A National Register Evaluation of Selected Sites in the Gallipolis Mitigation Site at Greenbottom, Cabell County" (Cultural Resource Analysts, 1990).

² The study of slavery has produced some of the most significant scholarship in American history. See Stamp, Kenneth M., The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Antebellum South (New York: Vintage Books, 1956); Eugene D. Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World The Slaves Made (New York: Vintage Books, 1976); Leslie Howard Owens, This Species of Property: Slave Life and Culture in the Old South (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976); John W. Blassingame, W., The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South (New York: Oxford Press, 1979); Ira Berlin, Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Press, 2003).

³ Philip D. Morgan, "Origins of American Slavery," OAH Magazine of History (July 2005). David Brion Davis, Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁴ Charles B. Dew, Bond of Iron: Master and Slave at Buffalo Forge (New York: W.W. Norton, 1994), 47-62; Dickinson, Jenkins of Greenbottom, 11; Nance, "Significance," 12-13; Richard R. Duncan, Lee's Endangered Left: The Civil War in Western Virginia, Spring of 1864 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998), 52.

⁵ Robert A. Sawrey, "Archival Report," In Hughes, Myra A. and Kerr, Jonathan P. "A National Register Evaluation of Selected Sites in the Gallipolis Mitigation Site at Greenbottom, Cabell County" (Cultural Resource Analysts, 1990); Berlin, Generations of Captivity, 113-115, 119, 211-212; Barbara Louise Emmerth, "Slavery in West Virginia in 1860," West Virginia History XXI (1960), 275-77.

⁶ Flora Smith Johnson, "The Civil War Record of Albert Gallatin Jenkins, CSA," West Virginia History VIII (July 1947), 392-404; Government Printing Office, A Biographical Congressional Directory, 1774-1903 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1903); Ezra Warner, Generals in Gray (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959).

⁷ John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 122-147. Stephanie M.H. Camp, Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

⁸ Hughes and Kerr, "A National Register Evaluation of the Jenkins House Site."

⁹ John M Vlach., Behind the Big House: The Landscape of Plantation Architecture (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1993).

¹⁰ Stamp, The Peculiar Institution, Genovese, Roll, Jordan Roll

¹¹ Vlach, Behind the Big House, passim; J.O. Breeden, Advice Among Masters (Greenwood, Conn.: Westport, 1980).

¹² Owens, This Species of Property, 136ff.; Blassingame, The Slave Community, 254-256; Stamp, The Peculiar Institution, 292-295; Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, 126-147.

¹³ Sawrey, "Archival Report;" Hughes and Niquette, "A National Register Evaluation of Selected Sites," ; O'Bannon, "Archival Research;" Vlach, Back of the Big House, passim.

¹⁴ Blassingame, The Slave Community, 254-256. Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll, 524-535; William D. Urdike, "Archaeological Data Recovery of a Historic African-American Slave Component at the Willow Bluff Site (46Ka352) in Kanawha County, West Virginia," (Report prepared for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 2004).

¹⁵ Marilyn Davis-DeEullis, "Slavery on the Margins of the Virginia Frontier: African American Literacy in Western Kanawha and Cabell Counties, 1795-1840," in Michael J. Puglisi, ed., Diversity and Accommodation: Essays on the Cultural Composition of the Virginia Frontier (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 199.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ 1820 U.S. Census for Buckingham County, Virginia.

¹⁸ 1850 U.S. Census for Cabell County, Virginia.

¹⁹ Information from e-mail correspondence between Carrie Eldridge and Billy Joe Peyton, 1/6/2005. Eldridge is a local genealogist who has written and lectured extensively on local African American heritage and the Underground Railroad in West Virginia and Ohio. Eldridge's recollections included a vague reference to a court case between Scott and Jenkins (no date given), surmising the information to be housed in the Lambert Collection at Marshall University Library.

²⁰ 1860 U.S. Census for Preble County, Ohio.

²¹ Nance, "Significance," 9

²² "William Jenkins Will," from Cabell County Wills, Book 2, page 343, reproduced in Dickinson, Jenkins of Greenbottom, 16, 18.

²³ 1860 and 1870 U.S. Census for Cabell County, Virginia, and Cabell County, West Virginia.

²⁴ 1860 U.S. Census for Cabell County, Virginia; Nance, "Significance," 9.

²⁵ 1870 U.S. Census for Cabell County, West Virginia.

²⁶ Manuscript Census Schedules, Cabell County, Virginia, 1820, 1830 1840, 1850. Owens, This Species of Property, passim; Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll, passim. Blassingame, The Slave Community, passim; Nance, "Significance," 6-9.

²⁷ For a detailed regional perspective on slavery and agriculture in the Upper Ohio Valley, see Karen N. Cartwright Nance, "Slavery & Agriculture in the Upper Ohio Valley," a paper presented at the Appalachian Studies Conference on March 17, 2002; also, for information on the Underground Railroad and slavery in Ohio see, "Settlements and Slave Ads," at: www.angelfire.com/oh/chillicothe/Settlements.html

²⁸ Davis-DeEullis, "Slavery," 204.

²⁹ Bigham, Darrel E, On Jordan's Banks: Emancipation and its Aftermath in the Ohio Valley (Lexington, KY: the University Press of Kentucky, 2006), 323.

³⁰ In a book titled *The Promised Land*, Earl Pratt, an Ohio lawyer from Ironton, Ohio, documents James Twyman's plantation, the 37 freed slaves, and their subsequent journey to Burlington:
<http://www.lawrencecountyohio.org/371.htm>

³¹ 1870 and 1880 U.S. Census for Lawrence County, Ohio.

³² "Underground Railroad," *Sunday Gazette Mail*, July 31, 2005.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Davis-DeEullis, "Slavery on the Margins," 199-200; O'Bannon, "Archival Research," 9.

³⁶ References cite an escapee named Moses as being somewhere in Ohio. Exact dates and circumstances of his escape are not known at this time, but he may be the same individual who ran away in 1817 or 1818; correspondence between William H. Cabell and Joseph C. Cabell in Cabell Family Papers, Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia in O'Bannon, "Archival Research," 9.

³⁷ Davis-DeEullis, "Slavery on the Margin," 199-200.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, & Nance, *Significance of Jenkins Plantation*, 9.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 198-199.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 200-201 from Wilson Cary Nicholas papers.

⁴¹ 1820 U.S. Census for Cabell County, Virginia.

⁴² Nance, "Significance," 6.

⁴³ O'Bannon, "Archival Research," 8-9.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁶ Cabell County Deed Book, 3:111-119; O'Bannon, "Archival Research," 10.

⁴⁷ 1820 U.S. Census for Rockbridge County, Virginia.

⁴⁸ Nance, "Significance," 6, Dickinson *Jenkins of Greenbottom*, 11-12; Davis-DeEullis, "Slavery on the Margins," 201. Davis-DeEullis mentions that thirty slaves were conveyed to Jenkins upon his purchase of Green Bottom, but she fails to cite the source and no corroboration of that figure has been found.

⁴⁹ Nance, "Significance," 7.

⁵⁰ 1830 U.S. Census for Cabell County, Virginia.

⁵¹ Nance, "Significance," 6.

⁵² 1840 Cabell County Tax Records.

⁵³ 1850 U.S. Census Slave Schedules for Cabell County, Virginia.

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- ⁵⁴ Nance, "Significance," 7.
- ⁵⁵ Cabell County Birth and Death Records, 1853-1859; Nance, "Significance," 11.
- ⁵⁶ 1850 and 1860 U.S. Census Slave Schedules for Cabell County, Virginia.
- ⁵⁷ "Will of William Jenkins," in Dickinson, Jenkins of Greenbottom, 16, 18.
- ⁵⁸ Davis-DeEullis, "Slavery on the Margins," Diversity and Accomodation: Essays on the Cultural Composition of the Virginia Frontier (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997); O'Bannon, "Archival Research;" Nance, "Significance," 10-11; Sawrey, "Archival Study," 211-222; "Aged Slave Dies," Gallipolis Bulletin, February 8th, 1917; Stampp, The Peculiar Institution, 325-382. Some indication of the depth of current research into the slaves' sense of community may be found in Rebecca Griffin, "Courtship Contests and the Meaning of Conflict in the Folklore of Slaves," Journal of Southern History LXXI (November 2005), 769-802. Although none of Jenkins' former slaves appear to have been interviewed, much of the nature of the slave community may be seen in Charles L. Perdue, et alia (eds.) Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1976).
- ⁵⁹ 1870 U.S. Census for Cabell County, West Virginia.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid.
- ⁶¹ Ibid.
- ⁶² From oral interview with Victor Wilson, February 13, 1995, in Nance, "Significance," 10; Memoir of Susan B. Holderby in possession of the Greenbottom Society, Inc.
- ⁶³ Mary Lacy's photograph was originally in the possession of the Jenkins family; from collection of Victor Wilson.
- ⁶⁴ 1880 U.S. Census for Cabell County, West Virginia.
- ⁶⁵ 1900 U.S. Census for Cabell County, West Virginia; 1890 census data does not exist because it was destroyed in a fire at the U.S. Census Office in 1921.
- ⁶⁶ 1910 U.S. Census for Cabell County, West Virginia.
- ⁶⁷ "Aged Slave Dies," Gallipolis Bulletin, February 8, 1917 reprinted from the Huntington Herald-Dispatch.
- ⁶⁸ Genealogical data provided by Stan Bumgardner, former historian with West Virginia Division of Culture and History, from GEDCOM file compiled by Bumgardner on Jenkins slaves.
- ⁶⁹ State Department of Health Certificate of Death for Amanda Jenkins, October 4, 1922, available online from West Virginia Vital Research Records at www.wvculture.org.
- ⁷⁰ Genealogical data provided by Stan Bumgardner.
- ⁷¹ State Department of Health Certificate of Death for Anna Saunders, October 2, 1954, available online from West Virginia Vital Research Records at www.wvculture.org.
- ⁷² Genealogical data provided by Stan Bumgardner.
- ⁷³ No explanation is given for the missing data.

⁷⁴ The 80 slaves figure is repeated in several sources, including Karen N. Cartwright Nance, "Slavery and Agriculture in the Upper Ohio Valley;" Nance, "Significance of Jenkins;" O'Bannon, "Archival Research." A closer analysis of farm production at Green Bottom as compared with other plantations of the same genre would be helpful in determining a more accurate figure.

⁷⁵ O'Bannon, Archival Research," 24.

⁷⁶ 1820-1850 U.S. Census for Cabell County, Virginia.

⁷⁷ Information taken from e-mail correspondence between Billy Joe Peyton and Jack L. Dickinson on September 30, 2005. While researching his book, Jenkins of Greenbottom, Dickinson participated in a door-to-door canvass of local residents in search of information and lore on the whereabouts of the slave cemetery. His investigations revealed four rumored locations, from which the Route 2 site turned out to be the best option.

⁷⁸ Berlin, Ira et alia (eds.) Free At Last: A Documentary History of Slavery, Freedom, and the Civil War (New York: The New Press, 1992), 95ff.; Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, 198-219. Davis, Inhuman Bondage, 297-322; Patricia Givens Johnson, "The United States Army Invades the New River Valley, May 1864," (n.p., 1986), 59-62.

⁷⁹ Roy Bird Cook, "Albert Gallatin Jenkins, A Confederate Portrait," West Virginia Review (May 1934), 225-27; McGehee, "Green Bottom," Appendix A; Jacob Hoke, The Great Invasion (New York: Thomas Yosseloff, 1959); Dickinson, Jenkins of Greenbottom.; Robert R. MacKey, The Uncivil War: Irregular Warfare in the Upper South, 1861-1865 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004).

⁸⁰ Boyd B. Stutler, West Virginia in the Civil War (Charleston, WV: Educational Foundation, 1963); Stan Cohen, The Civil War in West Virginia: A Pictorial History (Missoula, Montana: Gateway, 1976), 15-81. H. E. Matheny, Wood County, West Virginia, in Civil War Times (Parkersburg: Trans-Allegheny Books, 1987), 114; Craig L. Symonds, "Land Operations in Virginia in 1861," in William C. Davis and James I. Robertson, Jr. (eds.), Virginia at War: 1861 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2005), 32-34, 38-40.

⁸¹ "War-Time Reminiscences of James D. Sedinger, Company E, 8th Virginia Cavalry (Border Rangers)," West Virginia History LI (1992), 55-78; Nance, "Significance," 30; Dickinson, Jenkins, 41-46; Thomas L. Speed, The Union Regiments of Kentucky (Louisville, KY: The Union Soldiers and Sailors Monument Association, 1897); Theodore F. Lang, Loyal West Virginia 1861-1865 (Baltimore, MD.: The Deutch Publishing Company, 1895), 20-43; Matheny, Wood County, 68; Joe Geiger, Jr., "The Tragic Fate of Guyandotte," West Virginia History XLIV (1995), 28-41.

⁸² "Civil War Reminiscences;" O'Bannon, "Archival Study;" James F. Epperson, "Lee's Slave-Makers," Civil War Times (August 2002), 44-51; Hoke, The Great Invasion; Duncan, Lee's Endangered Left, 53-62; Johnson, "The United States Army Invades," 23-28; Nance, "Significance," 35.

⁸³ "Aged Slave Dies," Gallipolis Bulletin, February 8th, 1917; Wilbur Henry Siebert, Mysteries of Ohio's Underground Railroad (Columbus, OH.: Long's College Book Co., 1951); Nikki Taylor, Frontiers of Freedom: Cincinnati's Black Community 1802-1868 (Ohio University Press, 2005); David W. Blight (ed.) Passages to Freedom: the Underground Railroad in History and Memory (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2004); Rick Steelhammer, "The Underground Railroad," Charleston Gazette, July 31, 2005; Nance, "Significance," 7.

⁸⁴ Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom.

⁸⁵ Census Schedules, Cabell County, West Virginia 1870, Ohio 1870.

⁸⁶ Matheny, Wood County, 102.

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