

INFORMATION OF THE WALLACE FAMILY by Arlene W. Gordon

Excerpts from an article on Isaiah Wallace by Margaret Jeffries, Culpeper, VA

(Isaiah Wallace was the son of Annie and Charles Wallace)

Charles Wallace's grandfather was Strother Wallace and he and wife (no name) were slaves of Colonel Strother Wallace. During the war between the states, the name was spelled Wallis. After the war, Strother went to live in Rappahannock County and lived there until his death.

Charles Wallace was the slave of Dr. James Kemper until the war made him free. After he was freed, he took up residence in Woodville, VA where he bought a home and he lived there until his death. He served as clerk at Shiloh Baptist church in Woodville.

He married Annie in 1873. Annie was also born into slavery and she was the property of Mrs. Polly Brown from Eggsbornsville, VA. She was one of ten children born to Malinda Perry on the property of Mrs. Brown.

Charles and Annie had 13 children. Annie was taught to sew, weave, and knit. She took the socks and clothes that Mrs. Brown made to sell to the soldiers.

Charles took all the work he could and when anybody had butchering to do they called him. He would be given the liver, chitterlings and the tripe for food for his family.

It is difficult to figure when the spelling of the name Wallace was changed because the name Charles took after the war between the states was Wallace. Before that it was spelled Wallis.

Annie did not know how old she was. She said nobody paid attention to how old slaves were in those days. However, her son, using her marriage certificate as a starting point, calculated that she was eighty-eight at the time Margaret Jeffries interviewed her.

Annie said that her mother Malinda Perry did not have a father but her son elucidated that her father was Mr. Fields, a white man of the neighborhood but she was ashamed to say so. Margaret Jeffries commented that "It was evident considering that her features were of white blood., i.e., blue eyes and dark skin and the appearance of a dark white woman or an Indian." In fact, Annie told Margaret that her mother was part Indian.

Malinda's slave owner, Ms. Polly died right after the surrender. Annie said that she was so hurt that all the Negroes were going to be free. She died hollering "Yankee." According to Annie "she was so mad that she just died."

After the war was over Malinda Perry and her children stayed on at Ms. Polly's place until it was rented. They thought they had to move but the tenant let them stay on for another year or so. Then the place was sold and they had to move.

Annie never had any education. She could not read or write. She says "they didn't want us to learn nothin'. The only thing we had to learn was how to work. She said she learned to knot on broom sedge straws.

Charles and Annie did not have their own home at first but after about a year or so, they bought the old store building where all 13 of her children were born and raised.

She saw to it that all her children went to school as much as they could. The school was rather far away and they had to walk but she made them go as often as possible.

Charles became very ill. For the last four or five years of his life, he could not do any work but just had to sit around getting weaker and weaker. "He had misery in his legs. His legs became swollen and he couldn't walk", said Annie.

Even before Charles' death, Annie had a difficult time finding clothing for her children and keeping them fed. She make their shoes from the tops of old boots, cutting the soles out of the legs and using cloth for the tops.

She taught all of the children to work and help her all they could. Each one was sent out to work as soon as they were old enough and if someone would hire

them. The ones remaining at home gathered wool which she carded, spun and wove into clothes. Annie picked blackberries and cherries in season for the white neighbors and she gathered chestnuts and cracked walnuts for the market.

Annie belonged to the Baptist church. She first joined at Eggsbornville where her mistress Mrs. Polly lived and attended worship. It was the custom before the war for negroes to join their masters church. After the war, Annie joined the Negro church. Although she never got a chance to go to church much after the children were born. She said that “she was always so busy and most times didn’t have clothes to wear.”

Yes, Annie was born into slavery, she saw a system abolished and faced the problem of making her own living. At her death, though confined to bed and unable to walk, she lived in comfort as far as material things were concerned. She ended her days with her daughter waiting on her and her other children coming by to see her bringing delicacies and love – far different from the circumstances to which she was born.