

# Terrell Family of Marion County, Alabama

Information submitted by:

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**STATE OF ALABAMA  
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY**

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January 23, 1998

Mr. David Ben-Abraham

Dear Mr. Ben-Abraham:

Thank you for your recent letter seeking information on Thomas and CataKata Terrell from the holdings of the ADAH. While we do not have any Freedmen's Bureau Savings records, we do have both the "Loyalty Oaths" for 1867-68 and the "Voter Registration Books" that accompany them. Both were filed with the Secretary of State; the former record was microfilmed some years ago.

In both records, Thomas (but not Cata) Terrell is listed. The information is duplicated exactly in both sources: Date = Aug. 8, 1867; Name = Thomas Terrell; Color = colored; In State/County/Precinct = one year [this is standard for all the entries, being the minimum requirement]; County = Marion; Precinct = Pikeville; Electoral District = 32<sup>nd</sup>. The Loyalty Oath book (Marion County, Bk. 1, p. 373) includes a signature line, signed by the "Registrar" attesting to Terrell's "mark."

Neither of these records can be effectively photocopied (the microfilm Voter Registration list is too faint and the Loyalty Oath books too fragile) so I hope this information proves helpful.

Sincerely,

Norwood A. Kerr  
Archival Reference

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ABOVE-Angeline Belk Terrell  
BELOW-Her tombstone

MOTHER

ANGELINE TERRELL

JULY 17, 1848

MAR. 15, 1934

Rest, mother, rest in quiet sleep  
While friends in sorrow  
O'er thee weep.

**TRANSCRIPT of Letter**  
***Written by Bettie (Elizabeth) Green,***  
***daughter of John M. Allman and wife, Rosa***<sup>1</sup>

(Courtesy of the Alabama Department of Archives & History)

"Star Rt.  
Guin, Alabama  
July 16, 1930

Mrs. Marie B. Owen  
Montgomery, Alabama

Dear Mrs. Owen'

I have just returned from an absence of several weeks, and shall try to answer your letter the best I can.

My grandfather, John Dabney Terrell, Jr., was Probate Judge of this, Marion County for 41 Or 42 years. He practiced strict economy in all county and state affairs, as he did in his personal affairs. He owned his office building and furniture – chairs and two tables, which I now have and value them more for that reason than for their money value. He also furnished wood and pine, "lighterd," <sup>2</sup> as some Georgians and South Alabamians call it, for the large stove fireplace.

He was a Union man, and hated Secession from the depth of his soul. He was what was called a "slaveholder" – (I hate the word and its meaning, and am ashamed that my country was guilty of such a deplorable practice of buying and selling human bodies like horses etc.) I venture to say that, although he exchanged his money for them, he would not have sold one of his darkies for any sum.

He had more than twenty of them in the yard here at Pikeville.<sup>3</sup> They had comfortable homes, <sup>4</sup> and he treated them kindly. There was one family of five; father, mother and three children.

Two of the men, "Uncle Charlie" and "Uncle Antny" (Anthony) <sup>5</sup> were, in a well-bred manner, more as confidential friends than as servants. In "time of the War," "Uncle Antny" helped grandpa hide the valuables from the "home guards" (?) and any other vandals that were likely to come around. Grandpa either sold those two land or loaned them money to buy it with.

He was everyone's lawyer, and especially the widows' lawyer and friend. I am made happier and prouder when daughters and grand daughters tell me of his helping

their mothers and grandmothers than when some one speaks of the land and money he had.

One instance was when a few years ago, a woman asked me if I knew "Mr. Jack Terrell." It had been so long since he died that I was greatly surprised at the question. I told her that he was my grandfather. She told me that he had befriended her mother after she was widowed. They were farmers, and while making their crop, her horse had died. She was unable to buy another; she came to see grandpa and he loaned her money to buy another. Two or three years ago, a woman, an absolute stranger, stopped and asked me about the place.<sup>6</sup> This is not unusual, and I thought nothing much of it, but then she asked me something about "Mr. Jack Terrell," (he was called Jack by intimate friends of his age, and "Mr. Terrell" by many. He practiced medicine and was a pretty good doctor, but he would not allow anyone to call him "doctor." He was one of a very few in the county. Even up to the time of his death, there were very few, perhaps not so many as when he practiced.) In my surprise, but with good humor, I asked, "What do you know about him?" I thought they were tourists, she and her husband. She told me who she was, and I knew some of her people. I had known her grandmother and her mother when I was almost a baby. They had moved to Mississippi, and I had not seen and scarcely heard of them all these years. She has an aunt, whom I love, who lives near me. They visit; so my folks were not so much strangers to her as she was to me.

She told me that her grandmother and mother had often spoken of my grandfather. While her grandfathers and uncles were in the war,<sup>7</sup> he would carry his negroes down and have their crops cultivated. I mention these things because they give some idea of how he lived, and of how he was regarded by the people of his time, and is still remembered, although he has been dead about forty-five years.<sup>8</sup> His father, John Dabney Sr., with his family came from Virginia to Georgia and from there to Alabama. They settled on the Buttahatchie River near the Military Ford. He hired teachers, and all who wanted to, went to school. They paid if they wanted to, or could. Grandpa dressed plainly, but was scrupulously neat and clean. He wore home made, home woven blue jean pants as long as he could get them. And he wore home knit wool socks.

I don't know whether this will help you or not, or will be of interest to you.

We have a lot of papers in the capitol at Montgomery along with some other articles belonging to us. I'm very sorry that I don't have anything to help you in the history of Marion County. My niece, Miss Selma Allman,<sup>9</sup> Guin, Alabama, wrote the history of Marion County for a thesis, I think, when she graduated from Marion County High school, but the principal, John B. Clark, would not return it to her.

The first court house in the county was built here.<sup>10</sup> Before the court house was built, I think I've heard, court was held under a large oak tree about two miles south of Hamilton, the present county site, and near the Buttahatchie River. I know that there were two and I think there were three court houses built in 1887.<sup>11</sup> It and the second one were built of wood; the present one of stone quarried on the Buttahatchie River near Hamilton. The first jail is built of native stone, too, as is the new and larger one.

The county site was transferred from here to Hamilton in the early eighties. I do not remember when the court house was moved nor when the court was first held in Hamilton, (I will try to learn that) but the court house was torn down here in 1883.

One more thing I remember, a part of Marion County was cut off to help form Lamar County, but I don't know when that was.<sup>12</sup> I guess you know as much or more about that than I do, since it may have put you out of Marion into Lamar.

My grandfather was as industrious out of his office as in it, and devoted the early morning and late afternoon hours to gardening in the spring and fall, too. He always had a good garden and sweet potato patch. He was somewhat an experimenter with seeds and trees. He was a great lover of trees, springs and stones. We use the door steps that he cut of solid rock, and we have a part of a large stone slab that he cut out and used at the well to set the wet well bucket on to keep it from rotting the well top. He also used it as a block for cutting watermelons on.

This is rather incoherent, as I have not taken time to rearrange it, and have written as memory dictated.

I hope it will be of use and interest to you.

Sincerely yours,  
Mrs. Bettie Green"

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PT<sup>1</sup> TP At the time of her writing these memoirs, Mrs. Bettie Green was aged sixty-two years, for she was born in 1868, shortly after the emancipation of all enslaved persons. She was married to William Francis Green, Marion County, Alabama.

PT<sup>2</sup> TP The American South's way of saying lightwood.

PT<sup>3</sup> TP In the 1860 Slave Census Schedule for Marion County, John D. Terrell, Jr. is shown as being the owner of fifteen enslaved persons.

PT<sup>4</sup> TP The 1860 Slave Census Schedule lists John D. Terrell, Jr. as owning three slave houses.

PT<sup>5</sup> TP These two men were probably well aged in years when Mrs. Bettie Green (then Bettie Allman) was in her teens.

PT<sup>6</sup> TP "The place," referring to Pikeville.

PT<sup>7</sup> TP i.e., the American Civil War (1861-1865)

PT<sup>8</sup> TP John D. Terrell, Jr. died on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November, 1885 and is buried in the "Terrell Cemetery," in Section one, of Township thirteen, in Range thirteen (Marion County).

PT<sup>9</sup> TP John M. Allman, Jr.'s daughter.

PT<sup>10</sup> TP Meaning, in Pikeville. The court house was once burnt in 1866.

PT<sup>11</sup> TP Meaning to say, the first court house at Hamilton, whose construction began about 1875. The earliest extant probate records for Marion County begin in the 1880's.

PT<sup>12</sup> TP Lamar County was a name given to Sanford County in 1877. Sanford County (formerly called Jones County) was formed from Marion County in 1867-1868.







ABOVE-COURTHOUSE IN HAMILTON, ALABAMA

102  
A List of Taxable property owned by Edward  
J. Terrell, Land, nine hundred and twenty acres  
Value at 4000<sup>00</sup> Dollars, negroes, Harriett  
Gabriel, Sam, Abigail, & Jacob, all under 10  
Years, Kelly, Sophrona, Clarissa, Mary, Maudie  
& Sam, between 10 & 20 Years, Selma between  
20 & 30 Years, Charles, & Jane, between 30 & 40  
Years - and Lata between 40 & 50 Years, one  
clock, 300<sup>00</sup> many land & other intent -

E. J. Terrell

List of Taxable Property  
Contained in folder dated 1860.<sup>1</sup>  
And written ca. 1853.

A List of Taxable property rendered by Edward G. Terrell.<sup>2</sup> Land, nine-hundred and twenty acres Value at 4000\$ - dollars<sup>3</sup>, Negroes, Harriett<sup>4</sup>, Gabriel<sup>5</sup>, Sam<sup>6</sup>, Abigail<sup>7</sup>, and Jacob<sup>8</sup>, all under 10 years, Nelly<sup>9</sup>, Sophrona<sup>10</sup>, Clarisa<sup>10</sup>, Henry<sup>11</sup>, Manda<sup>7</sup> & Tom<sup>12</sup>, between 10 & 20 years, Leta<sup>7</sup> between 20 & 30 years, Charles<sup>13</sup> & Jane<sup>14</sup> between 30 & 40 years and Cata<sup>15</sup> between 40 & 50 years, one clock 300\$ many land (sic) at illegal interests.

C.A.<sup>16</sup>

A List of Taxable property rendered by Edward  
G. Terrell. Land, nine hundred and twenty acres  
Value at 4000\$ - dollars, negroes, Harriett,  
Gabriel, Sam, Abigail & Jacob, all under 10  
years, Nelly, Sophrona, Clarissa, Henry, Manda  
& Tom, between 10 & 20 years, Leta between  
20 & 30 years, Charles & Jane, between 30 & 40  
years - and Cata between 40 & 50 years, one  
clock, 300\$ many land at illegal interest -  
C.A.

(THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENT LOOKED LIKE THIS)

# *History of the Thomas Terrell Family*

*Written by David Ben-Abraham*

*As we, the heirs and descendants of Thomas Terrell, come together in this place to commemorate our ancient heritage, and to preserve the same unto our children and their children yet to be born, let us never forget that we are the progeny, the proud sons and daughters of Thomas, called Tom, who was born in the one-thousand eight-hundred and thirty-fifth year of our Common Era (1835 C.E.) in the southern American State of Alabama, to parents who were at that time enslaved by Divine Providence. Yet, do not dare entertain that vain thought or notion as some would have you believe, that those poor captives imported as slaves into the Americas were all men of ignoble birth, or a mere nation of abject slaves. This was not the case, any more so than it was with the men of Europe who came to this continent, men who comprised a multitude of nations - some English, some Scotts, others Irish or French or Germans, to name only a few, whose unlucky lot it was for some to work as indentured servants when they came to America. Ancient bloodlines are not diminished or impaired by any bad measure of fate which befalls a person.*

*It is a pervasive thought among many in our country today that all black Americans are derived from a single stock or nation of Africans. Yet this, my friends, is not the case. For the breeds of men who once haunted the shores of Africa, and those countries adjoining thereto, belonged to no fewer than forty nations — each with its own distinct culture or language, tribal origins and territorial domain - a multitude of nations stretching from Senegal in the north to Angola in the south. To name only a few, we might mention here the Eboe of Nigeria, or the Ashanti and the Fanteen, both of the Gold Coast or now present-day Ghana, who were driven into captivity. We might mention the Hal - Pu'alaren (also called Peul or Fulani), a people of the former kingdom of Futa in present-day Senegal who were taken captive by the Mandingo and by the Bambara, and later sold to the British. And we might mention the Mandingos themselves who were taken into captivity - who formerly inhabited the countries about Senegal and Gambia, Guinea and Mali, as well as the Ivory Coast. A portion of these peoples were taken captive into America, and were dispersed among the isles by those ships transporting them thither. These later became one nation.*

*Our great ancestor Tom was one of the descendants of these peoples, whose lot it was to be born unto the slaveholder, John Dabney Terrell, Sr., a man of English descent born in the colony of Virginia. John Dabney Terrell, Sr., came with his family from Franklin County Georgia and settled in Marion County Alabama in circa 1814, becoming one of the principal persons of Alabama, and a signatory to Alabama's first Constitution. John D. Terrell, Sr., died in 1850, whereupon his slave property fell unto his wife, Lydia. At her death in 1853, Tom came under the possession of their son, Edward Garland Terrell.*

*Thomas' father, whose name we do not know for certain, was born in Virginia. Whether he, too was owned by the Terrell's or by some other slaveholder in Marion County, cannot now be determined. However, a rare document or manuscript contained at the Alabama State Archives in Montgomery lists by name and age bracket all slaves owned by Edward G. Terrell in the year circa 1853 C.E., the same year in which he inherited his slave property from his deceased mother, Lydia. The document, entitled "A List of Taxable Property Rendered by Edward G. Terrell," shows Tom, who was aged eighteen at that time, listed in the 10 to 20 year-old age bracket. We note in that same document that the only black male who was of an age fit to have been Tom's father was a man named "Cata. " He is listed there under the 40 to 50 year age-bracket. This still does not prove that Cata was Tom's father, but both served and worked under the auspices of Edward G. Terrell, or "Marse Garland, " as he would have been called by them.*

*The name "Cata" is our clue in determining his family's origins. For Cata (also more commonly spelled "Keita " and pronounced Kay-ta) is a black African name from the nation who call themselves Mandingos, a nation claiming to trace their ancestral origins to the former Mali empire. Indeed, the word Mandingo literally means the "people of Mali. " The name "Mali, " however, means "capital" or "seat of government" (in the Soninke tongue), which was actually a large town made of thatched huts of daubed mud and bricks not readily identifiable today, though described in ancient works. (See: Mohammed Ibn-Battuta "Travels in Black Africa. ") The name "Keita" has now come to signify one who is descended from the dynasty of kings who went by that name and who once ruled those regions about Mali. It is a surname still used today in parts of Senegal and Mali. We find the name used in Mali as early as the 13<sup>th</sup> Century (ca. 1240 C.E.), when a certain king of Mali named Sundiata Keita (alias "Mari-Djata "), whose people embraced Islam during the latter part of that Century and early 14<sup>th</sup> Century, began to spread his dominion from Timbuktu in the east, to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean in the west. He and his successors maintained a vast standing army of horsemen, slaves and attendants, while each king bore the title of "Mansa," meaning "Sultan."*

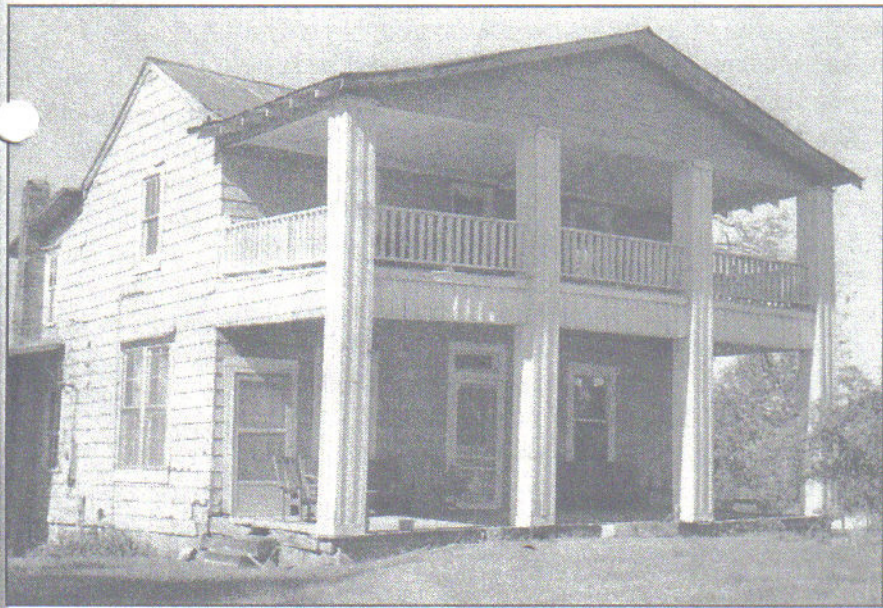
*That our Cata would have preserved this name by using it as his own personal name is striking. We find this practice also used by Alex Haley's maternal ancestor, Toby, who called himself Kinte (Kin-tay), which too is a Mandingo surname, and not at all a personal name. This, no doubt, was done to preserve a sense of his identity in a country where names were lost or Anglicized.*

*Tom may or may not have been the son of Cata. At any rate, Tom lived to see the emancipation of "his people," and later signed the standard Oath of Allegiance to the United States Government with an "X" mark — as was common among those freedmen who could not read or write. Tom fathered a son outside of wedlock, calling him William or "Bill, " and this same William went by his mother's surname, "Clark." Tom, after the War between the States, took on the surname of his former Master and slaveholder, who was Edward G. Terrell, as*

*we stated. (For up until that time, no slave went by the surname of his Master. If the Master, for instance, was named Jack Terrell and his slave named Tom, one would say "Jack's Tom" rather than Tom Terrell. Likewise, young white children addressed all older slaves by the affectionate name of "Uncle." This was the etiquette of the times.) Hence, the Terrell Family as we have come to be called since that time.*

*Our ancestor, Tom, married Angeline Belk, by whom he begat Henry Moses Terrell and other sons and a daughter. The one anecdote which has come down to us about Tom was that he played the fiddle, whereof we have heard that he was one of the best in the county. When he had lived sixty-five years, he died on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of the month of May, in the year 1900 of our Common Era, and was buried on the Buttahatchie River Road as one goes down from Hamilton towards Sulligent. His son, Henry Moses, became a preacher, and worked as a farmer and carpenter. He begat Owens Terrell, and other sons and daughters. Owens married Phoebe Thornton of Eldridge, Alabama, and from this union were born five sons and five daughters - viz., Owens Jr., Samuel, Arthur, Wiley, Moses, Gwen, Lena, Faye Francine and Deborah Ann. These in turn each married and brought forth children of their own.*

***Happy Family Reunion!***



TRACY ESTES/STAFF

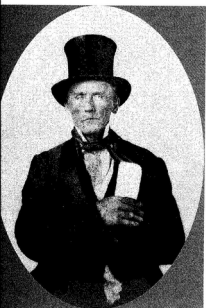
The historic John Dehner Towell home is the Pilgrimage



Above: Home of John Terrell Jr. Pikeville



# **Jasper Clark Family**



*Above photo of John Dabney Terrell Jr.*

## To the Bank Commissioner

Gent, For a few remarks, I ask your indulgence (sic) relevant (sic) to the pending suit on Fi Fa<sup>1</sup> by Terrell, please turn to Clay's digest pa. (page) 208, sect. 28. The certificate of Blount shows, that B has did issue by all the defendants on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August '33 (1833). A few days after the rendition (?) of this Judgment another B is certainly could have issued without this s'd (said) is to revive, and if so, is not this good ground for Terrell to consult the bank, the last sentence (sic) in Sec. 28 speaks of ten years, unless an execution shall be issued on any such Judgment or decree, for the space of ten years. 29<sup>th</sup> Sec. Gives power to revive by s'd is.

John D. Terrell's Taxable Negroes 1848 Charles, Cato, Tom, Henry, over 10-

(This note to the Bank Commissioner was found on aged, yellow paper in the John D. Terrell papers at the Alabama State Archives in Montgomery. The note, written in year 1848 C.E., was partially torn off at the bottom, which perhaps contained the names of other enslaved persons owned by John D. Terrell Sr. of Marion County, Alabama. The names of the Taxable Negroes appended to this note seems to suggest that they could have been sold, if necessary, as settlement for a debt incurred by John D. Terrell Sr.)

<sup>1</sup> Fi Fa by distilling *fi fa* (faive), a writ used in legal action that requires an execution of judgment, usually in place of debts. *Fi fa* was often where the sheriff is commanded that he cause to be made out of the goods and chattels of the defendant, the sum for which judgment was given. The sheriff was further empowered to sell as much of a debtor's property as is shown, as was necessary to satisfy a judgment claim, according to the verdict rendered by the Court. In the above suit, both John D. Terrell (defendant) and the aggrieved plaintiff (the creditor who filed suit), had simultaneously read one another for the satisfaction of outstanding debts owed to the other.



Mr Robert Clark 6<sup>th</sup> October 1848

about the taxes for my ~~mulatto~~ girl  
Clarissa with you we have had no chat  
~~viewing~~ viewing her as my property all the  
time. I have paid her lawful taxes —  
since 1809 when I bought her,



## **TRANSCRIPT of John D. Terrell, Sr.'s Last Will**

**Courtesy of the Alabama Department of Archives &  
History**

"The State of Alabama Marion County It was the pleasure of the Almighty to bring me into existence, and His goodness- (after a life of many years, Tossed, on all the cross currents – shoals – and troubles of life) has given me some property – I must soon lay down life in that place where all mortals sleep and to do, on the eve of life, what a father should, justice to his wife and children, I make this- before God, as my last will and testament.

I owe but little in this world, when that is paid, It is my wish, that my wife Lydia B. Terrell, Have and enjoy, in her own right, so long as she lives, or remains a widow, the quarter section on which I now live, or in lieu thereof, three hundred and twenty acres of land, where she may choose, among all our Red River lands, and in this event, removed to it, and it improved, to her satisfaction at the expense of my estate, This land, with all the rest of my personal property, I give to her, during her natural life or widowhood.

At her death or marriage, all my property real and personal, shall be equally divided among my children as here directed, That is, according to the honest Judgment, of my three sons, Edward G. Terrell, James Terrell and John D. Terrell, Jr. or a majority of them, that shall rule, my daughter Elizabeth Smith <sup>1</sup> will have nothing but five dollars, and whereas my son William H. Terrell is the twin brother of the said Eliza, I do here in her case, associate the said William with his brothers aforesaid ultimately to determine Eliza's case. She is lazy and extravagant. She is careless of her children. Now if she reclaims to the fair duty of a mother, then I put it in the judgment and discretion of my said four sons to apportion to her, or her posterity, at their discretion,

an equal share with my other children, but she must reclaim and be an industrious frugal woman before she can have any part of my property but five dollars. That part of my estate, falling to Alpha, Bochim, Ann and Sarah, and to Eliza if any, is here vested to their use during life, at their death, or choice before death, It shall go to the children of their bodies. On the above principle, I give to Sarah, the largest negroe mulatto girl at Garlands <sup>2</sup> had of Bluford <sup>3</sup> should her name I forget. This is my cool and deliberate act, tis my solemn last will and testament, so I declare and pronounce it. All men Know my hand write, this document shows if I am in sound mind. I ask all legal authorities to accept and order it to record, with as high authenticity as if proven by forty men.

Witness my hand and Seal on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of March 1841.

J.D. Terrell

(seal)

My will, my last will and testament, 14<sup>th</sup> March 1841

J.D. Terrell

7<sup>th</sup> January 1842.

I appoint Edward G. Terrell, James Terrell and John D. Terrell Jr. my Executors, to act without Security

Witness my hand & seal and year as above.

J.D. Terrell

### My Will

My last will

14<sup>th</sup> March 1841

J.D. Terrell"

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PT<sup>1</sup> TP She was born in Georgia in 1800, and later married a Smith. She and her husband lived in Mississippi, before returning home with her three daughters.

PT<sup>2</sup> TP The reference here is to John's eldest son, Edward Garland Terrell. Apparently, slave property belonging to John were loaned out to his son, Edward.

PT<sup>3</sup> TP John should have rather written here, "had of Bradford," for according to legal deeds of conveyance written on December 6, 1839, John had purchased several Negroe slaves from a certain Jacob T. Bradford of Talladega County, Ala., two of whom were described as mulatto females.



The Lord of gloom and sorrow  
It was the pleasure of the Almighty to bring  
me into existence, and his goodness (after  
a life of many years. To feed, on an  
crop currently - shoals - and doubly of life)  
has given me some property -  
I must soon lay down life in that  
place where all mortal things  
do to do, on the eve of life what a  
father should. Justice to his wife and  
children, I make this - before God, as  
my last will and testament,  
I have but little in this world, when that  
is paid. It is my wish, that my wife Lydia  
B Terrell, have and enjoy, in her own right,  
so long as she lives, or remaining a widow,  
the quarter section on which I now live,  
including thereof, three hundred and twenty  
acres of land, where she may choose among  
all our Red River lands, and in this event  
removed to it, and it improved to her satisfaction  
at the expense of my estate, this land, with all the  
rest of my personal property, I give to her,  
during her natural life or widowhood,  
At her death or marriage, all my property  
real and personal; shall be equally divided  
among my children as here directed, that is,  
according to the honest judgment of my three  
sons. Edward G Terrell, James Terrell and  
John D Terrell Jr, or a majority of them,  
that shall rule, my daughter Elizabeth Smith  
will have nothing but five dollars, and whereas  
my son William H Terrell is the twin brother of  
the said Eliza. I do here in her case special.



ultimately to release my daughter, my wife,  
large and amicable, she is careful of her  
children, now if she reclaims to the fair duty  
of a mother, then I put it in the judgment  
and discretion of my said four sons, to  
apportion to her, or her posterity, at their  
discretion, an equal share with my  
other children, but she must reclaim and  
be an industrious, frugal, economical woman,  
who can have any part of my property  
five dollars. That part of my estate, falling to  
Alpha, Boehim, Ann and Sarah, and to  
Eiza if any, is here vested to their use  
during life, at their death, or failed before  
death, it shall go to the children of their  
bodies. On the above principle, I give to  
Sarah, the loveliest negro mulatto girl at  
Blufford, had of Blufford who she has  
forgot. This is my last and deliberate act,  
is my solemn will and testament, so I  
and are and pronounce it, all men  
know my hand writes this document  
thou if I am in sound mind, I ask  
all legal authorities to accept and  
order it to record, with as high authenticity  
as is proven by forty men,  
witness my hand and seal on the 14<sup>th</sup>  
day of March 1841.

(Dorress Deal)

My will, my last will and  
testament, 14<sup>th</sup> March 1841



7<sup>th</sup> January 1842.

I appoint Edward G Terrell, James Terrell  
and John D Terrell &c my Executors. to act without  
Security with my hand & seal day and  
year as above.

J D Terrell

My Will  
My last will  
14<sup>th</sup> March 1841  
J D Terrell

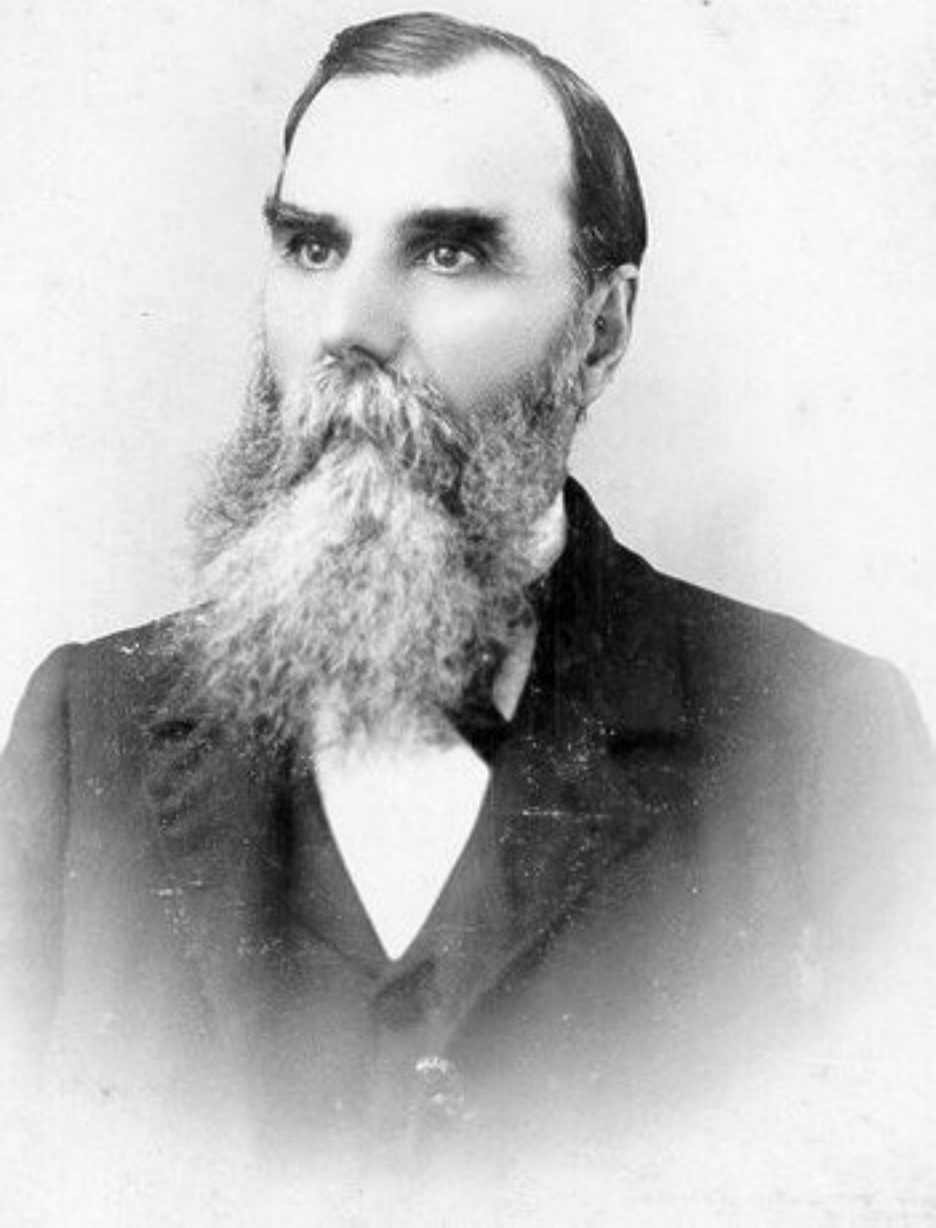
My Will  
My last will  
14<sup>th</sup> March 1841



List of Taxable Property  
Contained in folder dated 1860  
And written ca. 1853  
(Transcript of original List)

**A List of Taxable property rendered by Edward G. Terrell. Land, nine-hundred and twenty acres Value at 4000\$ - dollars, negroes, Harriett, Gabriel, Sam, Abigale, and Jacob, all under 10 years, Nelly, Sophrona, Clarisa, Henry, Manda & Tom, between 10 & 20 years, Leta between 20 & 30 years, Charles & Jane between 30 & 40 years and Cata between 40 & 50 years, one clock 300\$ many loand (sic) at illegal interests.**

**C.A.**



# STATE OF ALABAMA,

No. 4257

County of Marion } PERSONALLY APPEARED before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day  
of August 1867, Thomas J. Smith (Sgt. at Law)

who states that he resides in the Phillips Election Precinct of Marion COUNTY, ALABAMA, and who makes oath as follows:

"I, Thomas J. Smith do solemnly swear  
in the presence of Almighty God, that I am a citizen of the STATE OF ALABAMA; that I have resided in said State for 12 months

next preceding this day, and now reside in the County of Marion in said State; that I am 21 years old; that I have not been disfranchised for participation in any rebellion or civil war against the United States, nor for felony committed against the laws of any State or the United States; that I have never been a member of any State Legislature, nor held any executive or judicial office in any State, and afterwards engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof; that I have never taken an oath as a member of Congress of the United States, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any state Legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, and afterwards engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or given aid and comfort to the enemies thereof; that I will faithfully support the Constitution and obey the laws of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, encourage others so to do. So help me, God."

The said Thomas J. Smith further swears  
that he has not been previously registered under the provisions of "An act supplementary to an act to provide for the more efficient government of the rebel States—passed March 2, 1867—and to facilitate restoration," under this or any other name, in this or any other Election District; and further, that he was born in \_\_\_\_\_  
and naturalized by \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_ day  
of \_\_\_\_\_, 18\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_

Thomas J. Smith

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED before me  
J. B. Anderson  
Register of the 32<sup>d</sup> Registration District.



To the Bank Commissioner  
(Transcript of original letter)

**Gent, For a few remarks, I ask your indulgence (sic) relavent (sic) to the pending suit on Fi Fa <sup>1</sup> by Terrell, please turn to Clay's digest pa. (page) 205, sect. 28. The certificate of Blount shows, that fi fas did issue by all the defendants on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August `33 (1833). A few days after the readdress (?) of this Judgment another fi fa certainly could have issued without this s`d (said) fa to revive, and if so, is not this good ground for Terrell to nonsuit the bank, the last sintance (sic) in Sec. 28 speaks of ten years, unless no execution shall be issued on any such Judgment or decree, for the space of ten years. 29<sup>th</sup> Sec. gives power to revive by s`d fa.**

**John D. Terrell's Taxable Negroes 1848 Charles, Cate, Tom, Henry, over 10-**

(This note to the Bank Commissioner was found on aged, yellow paper in the John D. Terrell papers at the Alabama Department of Archives & History in Montgomery. The note, written in year 1848 C.E., was partially torn off at the bottom, which perhaps contained the names of other enslaved persons owned by John D. Terrell, Sr. of Marion County, Alabama. The names of the Taxable Negroes appended to this note seems to suggest that they could have been sold, if necessary, as settlement for a debt incurred by John D. Terrell, Sr.)

<sup>1</sup> **Fi Fa**, by shortening *fieri facias*, is a term used in legal matters that require an execution of judgment, usually in places of debts. A *Fi Fa* is a writ wherein the sheriff is commanded that he cause to be made out of the goods and chattels of the defendant, the sum for which judgment was given. The sheriff was hereby empowered to sell as much of a debtor's property (e.g., slaves, etc.) as necessary to satisfy a creditor's claim, according to the verdict rendered by the Court. In the above suit, both, John D. Terrell (defendant) and the apparent plaintiff (the creditor who filed suit), had simultaneously sued one another for the settlement of outstanding debts each owed to the other.

**TRANSCRIPT of John Dabney Terrell, Sr.'s Memoirs**  
*(Written to his nephew, John Davis Terrell)*

Courtesy of the Alabama Department of Archives & History

"To-day I sit down to write from chaos. The reminiscences of men and things so long gone must, in some things, be the work of chance.

Sometime in the latter part of the Sixteenth Century, William Terrell must have emigrated from England to America. He settled, lived and died in Hanover County, Virginia, on Pamunka, <sup>1</sup> a small river passing between Richmond and Fredericksburg into the Rappahannock. The Peninsula formed by this stream and the Potomac forms the Northern Neck of Virginia, the Potomac dividing Virginia from Maryland. Having no family register, I cannot know whom he married or whether he came to the then colonies a married or single man.

He was a tall, long, hungry coarse man, with ox-like bones vastly wanting in flesh, black hair and eyes, brows like two conjugal owls, mouth like the poor man's louse, and a nose like an elephant proboscis, one whole foot long. His voice was hard, keen, loud and bursted the very elements with an unearthly sepulchral tone; and when irritated to its top, little mean and crippled devils might well tremble. I have seen old Sam compress his gaunt frame and mock his shivering voice. Was it a misty dark night when that shrill voice struck you, one's flesh would weld to the bones like dried beef or make one feel runish all over. Than him the very house of mourning could not beat him; the shambles of death was (sic) not much power, for his bed was a cowhide on the ground under a mulberry, sheltered by the broad heavens. There and thus he and his wife dug the ground, made tobacco, bought Africans very low and became independent. He was honest and respectable, but his command came to his square and so did others, or all dealings broke; of his daughters, I remember nothing; his sons, of whom I have heard, were James, John, Joel, Timothy. John lived in Granville County, North Carolina, as did Timothy in Chatham, than whom perhaps the whole world never produced a more finished highland devil. He was rich and honest, but drank freely, and all sorts of master devilment filled the measure of his utmost capacity, and his glory. He married a Martin, a kind of folks many of whom were tormented constantly with the blue devils, and many other sorts, and by this blood Tim cast poison into his descendants. Those Tugalve Terrells were his children and old Molly Phil Martin was another, drink, fight, lie, swear, and maybe some stole a little. I think there is as

much in the blood of families for good or evil, as there can possibly be in animals. Has not manners crept through families since Adam, and however mended by commingling with others, the evil germ sometimes pops out in all its primitive glory and so; adversely, from the lowest walks of life, there sometimes springs an intellectual, a great and good giant. Wealth improperly used too often enervates and ultimately destroys the strongest powers, mental inebriation, hypochondriac, which fools never knew how to bring on themselves.

Joel was the father of Harry, <sup>2</sup> also called Henry Terrell. With whom he <sup>3</sup> inter-married, I have no recollection, unless it was Elizabeth Axford, after whom I think my sister Elizabeth was named. He had sons William, Richmond, Harry and Peter. His daughters known to me were Molly Richardson (Mrs. Willis), Mary, who died young, and Mrs. Edward Garland. I have heard my mother speak in the kindest and most respectful terms of her uncle Edward Garland. I never saw him. William was a man of middle stature, of plain common education and sense, industrious, careful, economical, in his dress remarkably plain, a big mouth and horrible nose. By all I think he was ranked among the best of men in any country. His wife, a Wingfield, was pretty, strong, black, but among the most amicable of her sex. They had no daughters; the sons were Quaker Tom, Joel, Peter, William, David and Richmond. <sup>4</sup> Joel and William died early in life. The little doctor William Terrell, <sup>5</sup> of Hancock [County], Ga., is the only son of Joel. His whole connection died. Honest and respectable men rank with any others. Richmond died when young, as did his sister Mary. Peter was a big fat fellow, a simpleton in all things but money. His head and mouth were capacious, but like the horse leach and the grave never, never, never said enough. His nose was overwhelming. It struck off from its foundations at about thirty-six degrees of any latitude, and like the horn of destruction on Alpion hills, blew a blast like old Nick in the dance of Tam O'Shanter. Although his reputation was fair, there was yet eternally something that a high minded, honorable man would hate. His fence got on fire, and his exertions and turmoil of mind and body to out it killed him in a few hours. His daughter, Fannie, was a fine woman and married Ben Barnham. Joel his eldest son, deserved high regard. With the others I was not acquainted.

My father, Henry Terrell, I think was born in 1732 and died in 1798 or 99. <sup>6</sup> He was born on Pamunka (sic) river in Hanover County, Virginia. He was executor to my grandfathers' Terrell and Dabney's <sup>7</sup> estates. He was perhaps under six feet, rather spare built, chin a little long, fine mouth, nose plenty, but not aquiline, keen, deep blue eyes of the middle size,

very small legs and big feet. I have been told when in the vigor of life, scarcely any man could match him in any of the gymnastic sports. From my earliest knowledge of him he eat (sic) no fat meat or drank spirits until his last sickness. His education was of the common English, wrote a beautiful hand, had much more mind than acquirements, was strictly a confidential and business man, though not of the first order; his kindness of heart would not let him. His mental powers were of a sound grade, and I think as a high-minded honorable man no one stood higher until his second marriage. He was old and from some unhappy fatuity married his overseer's daughter. He became involved and disposed of a good many negroes and much valuable land for a mere song for lands on the frontiers of South Carolina. I have always thought the troubles of his latter days brought on disease with which he lingered near two years; the merest skeleton of his former self. He possessed a very handsome estate and left perhaps one-half to his wife and two younger children, Henry and Patsy.<sup>8</sup> He was among the best of fathers that ever lived. His worst fault I've long very plainly seen was his indulgence to his children and everybody. He lost by one, and injured his children by the other, and that forever-and-venerated shade<sup>9</sup> lies on a little elevated and whitely point near a branch in what is now Pickens County, South Carolina, on Big Estitoe Creek waters<sup>10</sup> of the Savannah, lone, lonely, dear shade, lonely and alone, till the spring time shall wear down all mortality. Then when the long, long night of death is o`er, we two shall meet again, but O G-d, how shall we meet? His destiny is forever fixed, but what, what shall mine be? That broken spirit and contrite heart, generated by the Prince of Peace, and on which he delights to smile and to bless, could those be mine? That, that would do.

I think he must have been more than thirty years old when he married Ann Dabney,<sup>11</sup> of Hanover County, by whom he had Mary, who died young, Joel who died some years since, Polly who died in 1782, nearly grown, Robert Harris who in about 1781 was shot by Joel with an old rusty musket which no one knew was loaded. They were shooting at each other for fun, till it finally fired, and held Robert by the clothes to the desk by which he was standing. Father and Mother were both absent at the time; Edward Garland who died at Tantown, Va., in 1797, John Dabney,<sup>12</sup> Samuel Davis, Elizabeth Axford, George Washington,<sup>13</sup> Ann Dabney and William Higgins.<sup>14</sup> By his last wife<sup>15</sup> he had Henry and Patsy who married James Osborn, and now lives in Decalb, Ga. Henry Terrell had removed from Hanover to Bedford County, Va., some years before the Revolutionary War, where all his first children were born, except Ann and William who were born at Lower Sawratown on Dan River, Rockingham

County, N.C.<sup>16</sup> In March, 1776, just at the beginning of the Revolutionary War, my father went out as captain of a volunteer company raised for three years' service. From some cause unknown to me it seems he remained in this service not quite two years and then went into the commissary department and remained in the service until the reduction of little York.

I have no register of the ages of my brothers and sisters, father or mother. This was kept in Burket's Exposition of the New Testament. This book fell into the possession of the last wife. I was born October 14, 1775.<sup>17</sup> I was married to Lydia Brincoe Warren on the tenth of March, 1795. My oldest Alpha was born March 20, '96. Edward Garland, William Higgins, Elizabeth Axford, James, John Dabney,<sup>18</sup> Bochin (this was the name of a river in Canaan and signifies repentance), Ann Dabney and Sarah Allen.

I cannot close this record without paying a just tribute to John and Nancy Hunter,<sup>19</sup> parents of John at Tuscaloosa. When my mother died and my father by some fatuity united but the ashes of a man with a young girl, this my aunt was a good and perfect mother to us all, and than my uncle John a higher cleaner souled man never lived.

I will say John Davis Terrell, the son of William Higgins Terrell, the son of Joel Terrell, the son of William Terrell. William H. Terrell was the son of Ann Dabney, the daughter of John Dabney and Ann Harris. John Dabney and Ann Harris had other children: William Dabney who died leaving one son, John Quarles Dabney; John Dabney who had John William and Anderson, his daughters were Elizabeth Ann, Martha, Nancy Hunter and Margaret; Cornelius Dabney who had Polly, John, Celia and Ann, if any more, not remembered; Sallie Dabney, who [married] Waller, (I think) his name was Thomas of Spottsylvania, Va; her sons were Carr, Dabney, Pamphrey and John; her daughters were Agnes who married Smith, Dorotha who married Rouny (Mrs. Spier) and Elizabeth; Mary Dabney who married Thomas Winer, had William, Thomas and John, daughters not remembered except Sarah, who died, and Elizabeth who married her cousin Dabney Waller; Betsey Dabney who married Barnet Brown, her daughters were Francina, Lucy and Sarah. Francina married Jack Rhodes, Lucy married Thomason. Betsey's sons were Reuben and Charles (twins), Asa, Iva and Barnet; Susan Dabney who married Thomas Harris of Albemarle County, Va. Her eldest daughter Ann is all that is remembered. Lucy Dabney who married Thomas McReynolds, she had Polly, Dabney, Dickson, James and Thomas, Ann and Elizabeth; Rebecca Dabney who married Edward Warren, she had Ann, Robert and Sallie Allen; Nancy Dabney who married John Hunter of Campbell County, Va., she had Ann,

Rachael, Maria, Elizabeth Axford, Cynthia and Matilda, John and Caroline. Ann married [a] Hunter; Rachael [a] Fields; Elizabeth [a] Sevier; Maria [a] Hose; Cynthia [an] Eddination; Caroline [a] McBath. In early life it was stated to me that William and Joe Terrell came over from England together. William settled in Hanover County, Va.,<sup>20</sup> Joel went to New York. In 1822, at Washington, I became acquainted with Joe Terrell, member of Congress from that State. He spelt his name Tyrel. My impressions are that there is most likely not any of this name in America but what are related, not up to the fourth generation, and so also of the Dabneys. The Terrells mainly lack nothing in nose, and the Dabney's in dark skins and eyes.<sup>21</sup> Besides in very many instances there are marked family resemblance in form and feature. Tyre and Robert Harris were brothers of Ann Dabney, Sr.; Fannie Crawford mother of William H., was grandmother Dabney's sister. Timothy was grandfather Dabney's<sup>22</sup> brother. His sons were Solomon, James, Micajah, Simon, Moses and Aaron; his daughters Phil, Martin and M. Brooks.

On the genealogy of our family, I have said all that is recollected. I wish it may be of some service to you. Should anything be remembered I will write again. You asked me to say something of myself. Sir, my path has fallen mid all the cross currents of life. I know I have more than common mind. I have business powers, but I started wrong foot foremost, grasped too far. I never could find a hireling to do my business right. The mistakes, the carelessness, the lapses were mine and though my condition is now better, I have in the evening of life the mortification, the severe necessity of looking back. Yes, the embers of a man looking back at the remnants of fortune and himself. The path is cheerless. That Being who takes care of all of us is implored to be our star by night, and our guide by day, to rest this traveler in his last home when his will calls him there, and I offer them some devotion for him who reads this, that he may in the midst of his business, constantly mid all life's cares, remember the causes and the days which are past, learn wisdom from them and additionally that wisdom which carries the soul happy from earth to Heaven. May all this be his. If my brains ever come home I may speak more fully of myself. Let this for the present do. May the angel of peace take care of you.

Always your relative,  
John Dabney Terrell"

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<sup>1</sup>PT The name of this river is actually called the "Pamunkey," named after a tribe of Indians who went by that name. It is situate about two and a half miles from Hanover Court House.

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PT<sup>2</sup> TP This Harry is the father of the author of these Memoirs.

PT<sup>3</sup> TP i.e., Joel, the grandfather of our author.

PT<sup>4</sup> TP Most of these brothers resided in Wilkes County, Georgia.

PT<sup>5</sup> TP From whom Terrell County Georgia takes its name.

PT<sup>6</sup> TP Actually, the year of his death was 1798, as attested by the register of his Last Will in Pendleton District, South-Carolina (now contained with the Wills and Deeds of Anderson County, S.C. The county was divided in 1826 and underwent name changes, called now Pickens County and Anderson County.).

PT<sup>7</sup> TP The sense here is to the estate belonging to Cornelius Dabney.

PT<sup>8</sup> TP This Patsy received the six negroes mentioned in Harry Terrell's Last Will, yet being too young to administer such property, she and her inheritance were both placed under the guardianship of her older brother, John D. Terrell, Sr., the author of these Memoirs. Whether or not Patsy retained title to these six negroes cannot be determined.

PT<sup>9</sup> TP A euphemism for a gravesite, in beloved South Carolina.

PT<sup>10</sup> TP Should be, "Big Eastatoe (Eastitoe Creek)," a place-name given by the Cherokee Indians of that region.

PT<sup>11</sup> TP This Ann Dabney was the daughter of Cornelius Dabney, whose father's Last Will was dated 26 Oct. 1764, and recorded 7 Feb. 1765.

PT<sup>12</sup> TP Our author of these Memoirs.

PT<sup>13</sup> TP He also moved away from South Carolina, and later came to settle in Marion County, Alabama.

PT<sup>14</sup> TP William Higgins was the youngest brother of Jno. D. Terrell, Sr., and was also the father of John Davis Terrell, the young man unto whom these Memoirs were written. They settled in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

PT<sup>15</sup> TP Again, our author reverts back to the narrative of his story, speaking about his father, Harry Terrell.

PT<sup>16</sup> TP It should be noted that William Higgins Terrell who is here mentioned was born May 24, 1784.

PT<sup>17</sup> TP At that time, John's father, Harry, was living in Bedford County, Va.

PT<sup>18</sup> TP The reference here is to John Dabney Terrell, Jr., who was Probate Judge of Marion County for forty years.

PT<sup>19</sup> TP Nancy was the aunt of our author, the sister of our author's mother.

PT<sup>20</sup> TP Formerly known as New Kent County.

PT<sup>21</sup> TP The Dabneys came to the colonies from Nantes, France, where there they were known and called by the surname **d'Aubigne'**

PT<sup>22</sup> TP The sense here is to Cornelius Dabney, grandfather of our author by his mother's side.