



CELEBRATING THE

*Garden of  
Eternal Freedom*



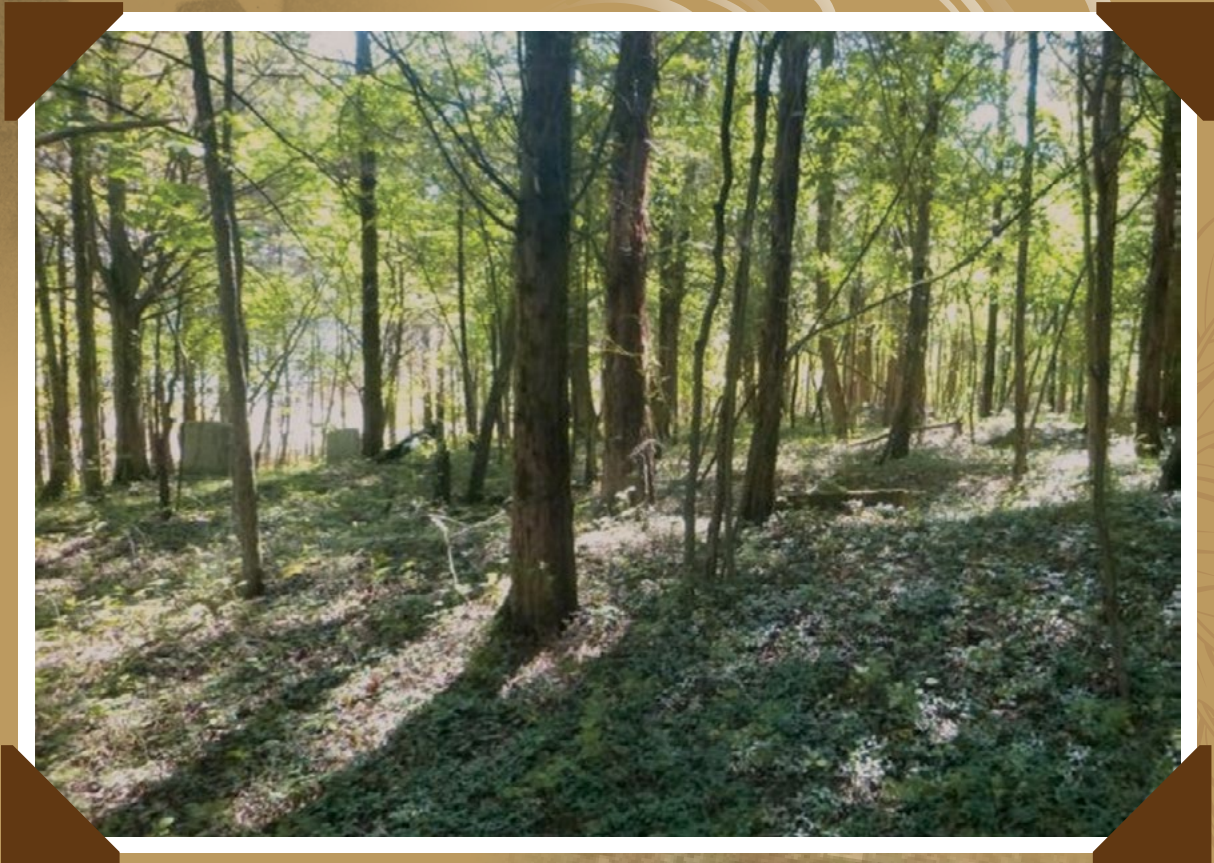
*Commemorative Program*

DATE | TIME



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## TVA'S RELOCATION OF FIVE CEMETERIES FROM TVA GALLATIN FOSSIL PLANT IN GALLATIN, TENNESSEE

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) relocated five historic cemeteries from the Gallatin Fossil Plant reservation (GAF) to a new cemetery named "Garden of Eternal Freedom" at Crestview Memory Gardens in Gallatin, Tennessee.

### BACKGROUND OF THE GALLATIN FOSSIL PLANT

TVA began planning for the construction of the GAF (originally called Gallatin Steam Plant) in the early 1950s to meet the growing demand for power due to World War II, the Korean War, and TVA's rural electrification program. In 1952, TVA bought 1,950 acres of land on Odom's Bend in Sumner County, which was mostly rural with open fields, pastures, and woods. As part of the construction of GAF, TVA removed farmhouses and outbuildings, but left in place several small family cemeteries. Some of the graves date back more than 200 years. However, most of the graves were marked by a simple field stone or not at all, leaving us no certain clues to the identities, birth dates, and death dates of the deceased.

### CEMETERY RELOCATION PROJECT

The GAF burns coal to provide energy to more than 300,000 homes and businesses throughout Middle Tennessee. Coal ash is the by-product of burning coal that is stored and managed. A project to safely relocate more than 50 years of coal ash around GAF to an expanded, 100-acre state-of-the-art lined landfill on site offered an opportunity to preserve five historic cemeteries: Bailey, Cemetery #4, Franklin, McCrary, and Odom's Bend.

Construction of the expanded landfill required the removal of the cemeteries and TVA felt strongly that the cemeteries deserved respectful treatment and preservation. Also, because they are historic, these cemeteries could qualify as "historic properties" and be protected by the National Historic Preservation Act. As a result, TVA and the State of Tennessee signed an agreement to address the project's effects on the cemeteries.

For two years, TVA has been conducting exhaustive research on the graves, including a search for living descendants with connections to these cemeteries. Throughout the process, we have been guided by the following principles:

- A deep appreciation and respect for the individuals interred in the cemeteries.
- The need to identify all known descendants and to keep them informed throughout the process.
- A desire to provide a respectful, permanent resting place that is accessible to descendants and members of the public for visitation.

- A desire to capture as much of the history of the community as possible and share this with the descendants and historians.
- A removal and re-interment process that is carried out with proper care and respect by qualified professionals.

This research has unveiled details about the lives of these persons who lived in the historic Odom's Bend community, details not recorded in any known documents. TVA is preparing a report that will describe all the studies completed and all the valuable information that has come from the investigation. Our hope is to create an accurate narrative that reveals the untold story of the historic Odom's Bend community.

TVA designed a peaceful resting place for the deceased at Crestview Memory Gardens. This resting place highlights the historic nature of the cemeteries and is accessible for visitation by community members and the general public.

The cemeteries are in nearly the same spatial relationship but are now closer together. Each grave is arranged as it was in its original location and every grave marker or simple field stone has been reunited with its corresponding grave. TVA added flat markers for each grave, a marker noting the name of each cemetery, and an obelisk provides a brief history of the cemeteries.

### HISTORIC ODOM'S BEND CEMETERY REINTERMENT PLANNING COMMITTEE

In May 2022, TVA enlisted the help of local community members who were interested in the cemetery relocation project to form a committee and help with planning for a dedication ceremony at Crestview upon the completion of the project.

The Historic Odom's Bend Cemetery Reinterment Committee chose the name, Garden of Eternal Freedom, for the new cemetery. Committee members also assisted in the historical research, including interviews with some of the surviving members of the historic Odom's Bend community. These interviews have provided fascinating insights that will, along with the grave studies, help us write a historical narrative of this community.

The Committee also planned and prepared the dedication ceremony, advertised the event in local churches, and served as a guiding resource for TVA's ideas about the design of the relocation cemetery. TVA is deeply indebted to the Committee for all their much needed help.





THE OCCASION OVERVIEW OF PROJECT SCRIPTURE PRAYER

COMMEMORATIVE PROGRAM CELEBRATING THE

# "Garden of Eternal Freedom"

PROCESSIONAL - AFRICAN DRUMMERS AND DANCERS

<i>The Occasion</i>	Mr. Kenneth C. Thomson, Jr. Sumner County Historian
<i>Overview of Project</i>	Tennessee Valley Authority Representative Michael Clemmons
<i>Naming of the Garden</i>	Michael R. McDonald, Ph.D. State Representative (Emeritus) 44th District 1995 - 2012.
<i>Scripture</i>	Reggie Baxter - Pastor Franklin Chapel Missionary Baptist Church Gallatin, TN
<i>Prayer/The Lords Prayer</i>	Chris Ford - Associate Pastor First Baptist Church Gallatin, TN
<i>Selection</i>	"Lift Every Voice and Sing" Words: James Weldon Johnson Music: Rosamond Johnson
<i>Words of Welcome and Introduction of Committee</i>	Mrs. Velma Brinkley, Chairperson First Baptist Church Gallatin, TN
<i>Musical Selection(s)</i>	New World Singers Professor James W. Story, Director
<i>Speaker</i>	Rev. Dr. Derrick L. Jackson, Senior Pastor First Baptist Church Gallatin, TN
<i>Benediction</i>	
<i>Processional to the "Garden of Eternal Freedom"</i>	
<i>Closing Prayer</i>	
<i>Dismissal</i>	

## *Lift Every Voice and Sing*

BY JAMES WELDON JOHNSON

Lift every voice and sing  
Till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the listening skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us.  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,  
Let us march on till victory is won.

God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou who hast by Thy might  
Led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,  
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,  
May we forever stand.  
True to our God,  
True to our native land.





## *An Early History of Odom's Bend*

In 1834 Eli Odom, a free Man of Color, who passed for white, purchased 705 acres from the estate of John Allen known as "Allendale". He and his wife Katherine Phagen Odom renamed their farm "Poplar Grove". Soon the entire area was known as Odom's Bend.

In 1861 came a great Civil War which ended four years later. The result was the birth of a new nation and freedom for the enslaved African Americans.

In this same decade the renowned African-American minister and Educational leader, the Rev. Peter Vertrees, arrived in Sumner County where he established multiple communities by organizing churches.

Here he founded the Franklin Chapel Baptist Church with an adjoining school. This became the nucleus of the Odom's Bend Community. Many families anxious to plant their roots came and purchased lots and small acreages. Thomas Isham Hudson and his wife Hannah Moore Hudson made the largest purchase of 37 acres in 1869. On this property was

established a large cemetery used by the entire community. These industrious persons worked independently for the local farmers in the area. It should be noted that this cemetery was not relocated and remains in its original location, as does the church.

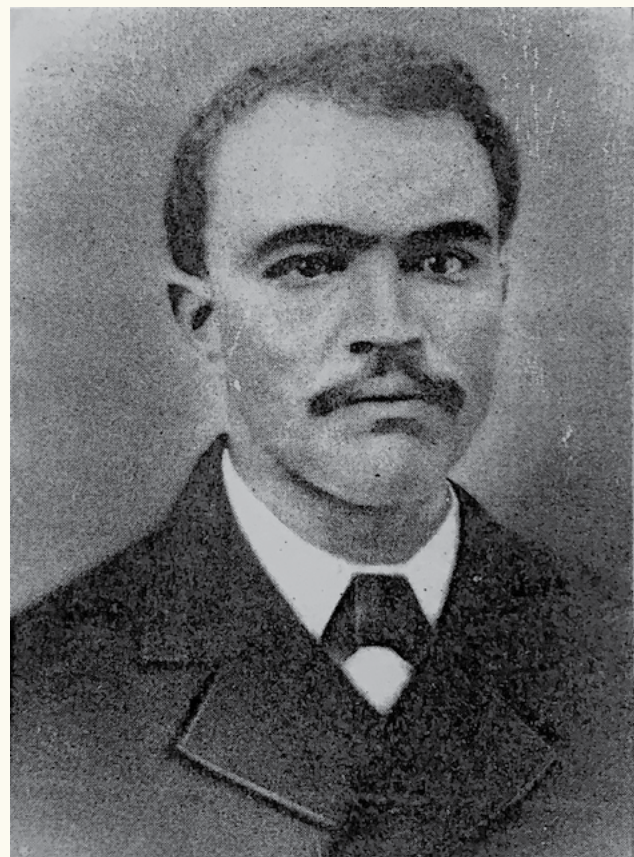
One lady, Amy Holloman, ran what she called a "sleeping house". Harvey Lewis had an unusual 24 people living with him. The founding families' names were: Anderson, Baber, Bullock, Bush, Cantrell, Carswell, Donnell, Dove, Goodall, Gordon, Holloman, Hood, Hudson, Jamison, Lewis, Lindsey, Miles, Odom, Peyton, Saunders, and Washington.

Here many of these families lived out their lives sending their children and grandchildren out to create a better world which we enjoy today. What better Legacy could you ask for?

*Kenneth C Thomson Jr*  
*Historian of Sumner County*  
2022



# The Reverend Peter Vertrees



Reverend Vertrees founded the Odom's Bend community by organizing the Franklin Chapel Baptist Church. Soon after, under his leadership, a public school was erected.

Peter Vertrees was a unique and gifted disciple of God. He was born in 1840 in Edmonson County, Kentucky, to a mulatto father, the Reverend Booker Harding, and a Caucasian mother, Mary Elizabeth Skaggs. He was reared by his paternal grandfather, Jacob Vertrees, the Caucasian father of Booker Harding.

He considered his step-grandmother, Catherine Davis Vertrees, as his mother. She provided him with an eighth-grade education and prepared him for his life's journey by taking him to all services at the Holly Springs Baptist Church. At a young age, he knew he was bound for the ministry.

A great Civil War came in 1861, prompting him to follow his half uncle, Dr. John Luther Vertrees, into the 6th Kentucky Infantry as his body guard, nurse, and cook. When hostilities ceased in 1865, he was mustered out in Dalton, Georgia, then came directly to Gallatin, Tennessee, to live with his father's half-brother, Judge James Cunningham Vertrees.

The judge's son, John J., tutored him, completing his secondary education. He then matriculated at Roger Williams University, preparing him for a 60-year ministerial career.

In 1866, he organized the first of seven churches, Durham's Chapel at Bethpage. The others were: Village Green, Peach Valley, William's Chapel, and Franklin Chapel. These churches he simultaneously pastored. He also organized the Sylvan Street Church in Nashville and the New Corinthian Church in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Additionally, he laid the educational foundation for the African Americans in Sumner County. He also was the principal of the South Gallatin Public School, as well as being one of the teachers.

By 1875, he had become the second pastor of the First Baptist Church on Winchester Street and, that year, organized the East Fork Missionary Baptist Association, still active today (2022).

To assist in caring for the needs of his congregations, in 1899, he established a chapter of the Sons and Daughters of Charity in each church to fund medical and burial needs.

He married first in 1872 Amanda Love Dowell who lived a brief six months. In 1880, he married Sarah Head by whom he had William and Ernest. In 1901, he married Diora Wyley by whom he had five children: Russell, Elverlina, Bertha Mae, Lillie, and Peter.

In 1921, he received a pension for his services in the Civil War. He died in 1926, leaving behind an enduring legacy perpetuated today by the lives of those he touched.

He was honored with two services. Gallatin closed all businesses, and a community service was held in the auditorium of the Central High School. The next day, a service was held at his church.

What an appropriate ending for a life well lived.

*By Kenneth C. Thomson, Jr.  
Historian of Sumner County  
July, 2022*



## Franklin Chapel Baptist Church Notes

These notes were written by Mrs. Josephine Stewart, a longstanding member of Franklin Chapel Baptist Church from 1936 until her death. These notes were recently found in the church by the current pastor, Reverend Reginald Baxter.

Some Known Pastors:

BRO. PETER VERTREES, FOUNDER

BRO. JERRY GARDENER

BRO. JOE ROBIN HUDDLESTON

BRO. ANTHONY ROBB

BRO. A. E. PATTON

BRO. HUBERT SCOTT

BRO. ELMORE PATTERSON

BRO. REGINALD BAXTER

Uncle Gable Wiley gave the land for the Franklin Chapel Baptist Church to be built on. He was Miss Maty Dotson's great-grandfather on her mother's side of the family.

## Church Timeline

→ Josephine professed religion at the Revival and was baptized on the 4th of October 1936. Bro. Jerry Gardner did the baptism and I joined the Franklin Chapel Baptist Church. The late Bro. Jimmy Head and his son, Bro. William Head were deacons. Bro. Jerry Gardner was the pastor at the time.

1936

→ Bro. Hubert E. Scott came to Franklin Chapel to begin pastoring the 3rd Sunday in December, 1959. He has been with us 20 years today, December 16, 1979.

1959

→ The new stone was installed in the church December 8, 1979. Bro. William Buck was the church treasurer.

1979



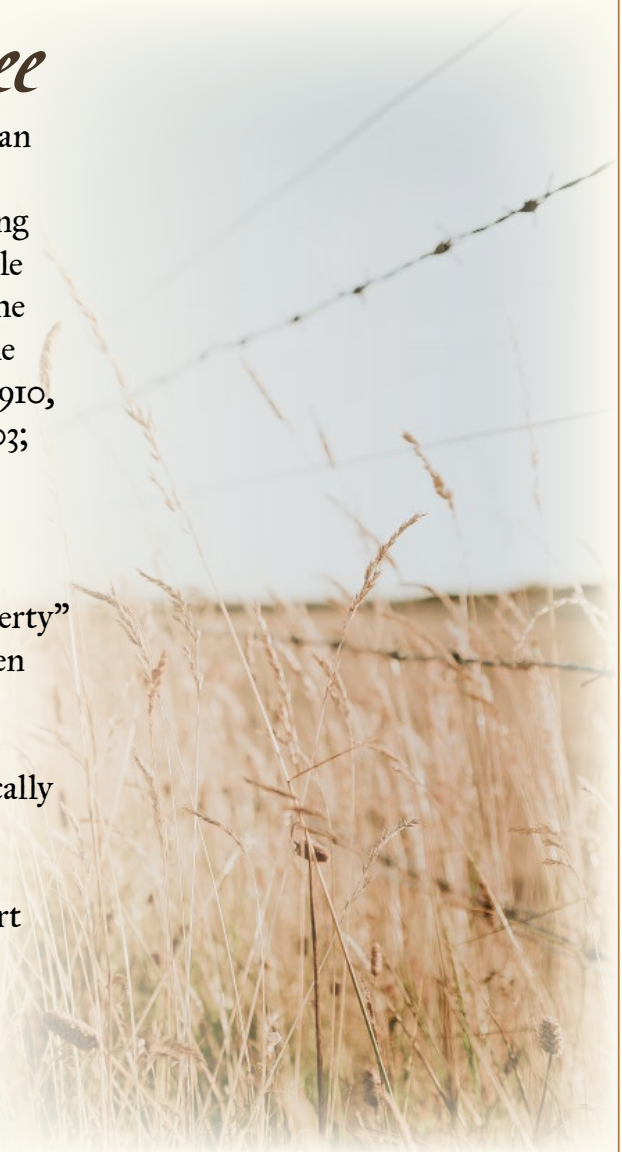
**CEMETERIES LOCATED ON TVA'S GALLATIN FOSSIL PLANT PROPERTY:  
ASSOCIATED NAMES**

CEMETERY	NAME	BORN	DIED	CEMETERY	NAME	BORN	DIED
McCrary/ McCreary	Robert "Robin" McCrary		1905	Odom Bend, or Hudson	Henry Edward Hudson	1923	1923
	Mary Massey McCrary		1914		Emma Hudson	1882	1946
	Franklin	Rooney (?) Franklin				Joseph Hudson	1847
Unknown No. 4	(All Unknown)				Albert Hutson (Hudson)	1850	1918
Odom Bend, or Hudson	Mary Abston	1851	1927		Florance Hewston	1920	1920
	Mary Abston	1866	1930		Swail Jones	1855	1945
	Mattie C. Abston	1928	1953		Marguerite Morrow	1878	1947
	Dora Baber	1853	1933		Mand Odum (Odom)	1913	1916
	Susie Bailey	1863	1920		Robert Odom	1888	1953
	Robert Bailey	1870	1938		Lucy Parker	1820	1914
	Emmer Brown	1922	1923		Rebecca Parker	1864	1916
	Bobbie Dazy Bullock	1839	1915		William Robert Payne	1867	1953
	Earl Bullock	1915	1932		Lavenia Payne	1872	1933
	Simon Bullock	1911	1918		Martha Polite	1849	1919
	Mitchell Bullock	1869	1934		Mary Polite	1913	1923
	Annie Bush	1922	1923		Ben Polite	1893	1945
	Emmer Brown	1922	1923		Mary E. Rains	1899	1901
	Ambrose B. Cleavlon	1913	1914		Nancy E. Rogan	1902	1931
	Kate Bell Douglass	1913	1914		Emma Sanders	1863	1922
	Wiley Douglas	1915	1932		Clarriah Sanders	1897	1914
	Emma Harris	1880	1917	Louler Smith	1874	1919	
	William Henry Harris	1902	1917	Bill Williams	1839	1924	
	John B. Harris	1912	1931	R. Bailey ("Single grave")	Robert Bailey		ca. 1920
	Oscar Harris	1903	1949				

## Odams Bend, Tennessee

The economic, political, and social conditions for African Americans in the South were terrible between 1900 and 1950. In the Upper South – including Tennessee- aspiring Black farmers found the process of land ownership a little easier than their counterparts in the deeper South. At the close of the Civil War, Black Americans owned very little farmland but began acquiring it at a rapid pace, and by 1910, Black farmers owned almost 20 million acres (Hurt 2003; Schwening 1989).

African American leaders also espoused the importance of owning land. African Americans were aware of the significance of ownership having been considered "property" themselves. Home was where parents taught and children learned cultural values like hard work, cooperation, and sharing. Domesticity was encouraged even as men were envisioned as the head of the household, both economically and spiritually. For many African Americans, however; housing was meager, wages were low, and educational opportunities were limited for rural Black children (Hurt 2003). Within rural communities, like Odams Bend, prospects for the promotion of cultural values, self-discovery, and community connections led to a diverse population with a profound identity.



### Church Timeline

<p>→ Bro. Hubert E. Scott had his Letter of Resignation read August the 2nd, 1981. It was homecoming day. Macedonia Church was present.</p>	<p>→ Bro. Joe Robin Huddleston is now pastoring the Franklin Chapel Baptist Church. Bro. Scott preached again for us on the 25th of March. Bro. Huddleston was ill. 1984</p>	<p>→ Bro. Joe R. Huddleston announced his resignation Sunday, Feb. 10th, 1985. The 4th Sunday in April is the last day for him to pastor.</p> <p>→ The church accepts Bro. Elmore Patterson as the pastor, the last Sunday in May 1985. The date was 5/5/85. We had a meeting the following Thursday night to get changes outlined on May 9, 1985.</p>	<p>→ Bro. Patterson's Installation Day was August the 25th 1985. Peach Valley came to be with us at 2 p.m. The program was to be at 3 o'clock with Rev. Gregory, as we had to carry on a meeting up there the following week.</p> <p>→ Bro. Elmo Patterson announced his resignation Sunday, Dec. 1, 1985. December 8, 1985 is to be his last sermon as pastor.</p>	<p>→ Bro. Huddleston preached for us at the Franklin Chapel Baptist Church again on Dec. the 15th, 1985. He is going to preach for us until we can find a pastor.</p>	<p>→ Bro. Anthony Robb started a Bible class the 24th of June, 1987. The 1st lesson was from First Corinthians, the 1st Chapter. Those present were Bro. Anthony Robb, Bro. Willie J. Bush, Bro. &amp; Sis. James Ray Robb, Sis. Mai Alice Crutcher, and Sis. Josephine Stewart.</p>
1981	1984	1985	1985	1985	1987



## Odoms Bend, Tennessee

- At Odoms Bend, at least 10 families owned land beginning in 1900 and retained that land through 1930. Joseph Hudson, likely born into slavery in 1847, was a farmer that owned and farmed his land free of mortgage for over 20 years. Will Hudson owned property in 1910 through 1920, while Robert Odom owned his farm for over 30 years beginning in 1920. Swail Jones owned a farm in 1920, whereas Emma Sanders and her husband, Sam, farmed on land they owned for 20 years.
- The early twentieth century was a difficult time economically for farmers. An agricultural depression hit after World War I and land prices fell and banks began to fail. This period also saw changes for Odoms Bend farmers as families went from owning to renting and share cropping. Mitchell Bullock owned his small farm in 1920 but by 1930 rented a home; Robert and Susie Bailey owned property in 1910 but were renting by 1920 with Susie working as a laundress and Robert as a laborer; and Will Hudson owned property free of mortgage from 1910 through 1920 but by 1930 was renting and “cropping”.
- Some African Americans never realized landownership. At Odoms Bend, Lucy Sea Parker and her husband Sonny had at least 8 children together and labored on rented property all their lives. Sonny was blind and Lucy was the homemaker and farm wife. Lucy Parker was born a slave in 1820. Her father, Brack Sea was born in Africa. Lucy died at the age of 94.
- Indeed, many of the known burials at Odoms Bend were engaged in farming. Other occupations for some of the women included laundress – Mary J. Abston and Susie Bailey; cook – Dora Baber and Emma Hudson; housemaid – Nancy E. Bush-Rogan, and housekeeper – Mary Ann Abston. While most men were engaged in farming, at least three individuals engaged in other pursuits including Reverend William Robert Payne, a pastor; Oscar Harris, a trucker employed at the Workhouse in Nashville; and Robert Odom, a farmer who also worked at a rock quarry.
- Obtaining an education or going to school was a struggle for African Americans in the early 20th century. An unequal, dual system of education based on race was created. The commitment of the African American community to education was strong, however. Many Black communities sought outside help but also struggled to build and maintain schools that met their needs and reflected their values. The community of Odoms Bend shows this commitment as over 19 children and adults could read and write. Even adults likely born into slavery like Martha Polite, Emma Sanders, Mary J. Abston, Susie Bailey, Dora



EMMA AND SAMUEL PAUL SANDERS



Baber, and Bill Williams were able to read and write.

*Photo (above): Nancy Eliabeth Bush-Rogan with siblings Katie Bell Bush-Brown, Emma Louise Bush-Saunders, Leora Bush, Janie Bush-Winchester, and Susie May Bush-Brown. Mother Annie “Mama Annie” Bush (born Duncan) is also pictured. Nancy Eliabeth Bush-Rogan was interred at the Odoms Bend or Hudson Cemetery.*

### REFERENCES CITED

- Schweninger, Loren  
1989 A Vanishing Breed: Black Farm Owners in the South, 1651-1982. *Agricultural History*, Vol. 63(3):41-60. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3743733>
- R. Douglas Hurt  
2003 *African American Life in the Rural South, 1900-1950*. University of Missouri Press, Columbia, MO.



# TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY GALLATIN FOSSIL PLANT (GAF) REINTERMENT PROJECT

June 22, 2022

Welcome ..... Velma Brinkley  
*Chairperson; GAF Cemetery Reinterment Ceremony Planning Committee*

Scripture and Prayer ..... Rev. James C. Johnson, Jr.  
*Senior Pastor, First United Methodist Church Gallatin, TN*

The Blessing of the Garden

Hymn of Promise ..... UMH #707  
*Natalie Sleeth, Composer*

In the bulb there is a flower;  
In the seed, an apple tree;  
In cocoons, a hidden promise:  
Butterflies will soon be free!  
In the cold and snow of winter  
There's a spring that waits to be,  
Unrevealed until its season,  
Something God alone can see.

There's a song in every silence,  
Seeking word and melody;  
There's a dawn in every darkness,  
Bringing hope to you and me.

From the past will come the future;  
What it holds, a mystery,  
Unrevealed until its season,  
Something God alone can see.

In our end is our beginning;  
In our time, infinity;  
In our doubt there is believing;  
In our life, eternity,  
In our death, a resurrection;  
At the last, a victory,  
Unrevealed until its season,  
Something God alone can see.

*Benediction*



*James William  
Sanders and Elizabeth  
Jenkins Sanders*

Born August 16, 1927, James was well blessed and highly favored between four and five years of age when he was adopted by Sam and Frankie Sanders of Odom's Bend.

His father was a farmer and his mother was a housewife. Financially, they were considered more stable than most families of that time period. Sam sold milk to the dairy, grew and sold tobacco, raised and sold hogs, as well as, wheat for grinding into flour. His 86-acre farm provided enough extra space for a large vegetable garden and fruit orchard which produced damson plums, peaches, apples, grapes and strawberries.

James never thought of himself as being poor since they had as much as any other family, black or white and more than most. Their closest neighbor was white and he and Sam behaved more like brothers than neighbors. James saw and experienced a positive relationship between the races as neighbors often rolled up their sleeves

and helped whomever stood in need. His father's motto was, "it is better to give-than to receive".

James attended the one teacher public school near the rock quarry for grades 1-8. He carried the cold lunch his mother had made and walked 1.5 miles to school each day. Some of his teachers were Nannie Polite, Lauretta Young and Ola Mae Bate Roberson. After finishing 8th grade, James had no means of transportation to high school, as the Sumner County Board of Education did not provide transportation for Black students. Determined to provide high school opportunities for James, his parents sought other means. They rented a room in Gallatin for James and paid his room and board in a private home on Smith Street. Another young man living there was George Bentley who eventually became a Captain in the Gallatin Police Department.

After high school, James was off to the U.S. Army in 1946, where he planned to make a career. While stationed in California, he was married to Elizabeth Jenkins in 1954, an elementary school teacher. In 1958, after twelve years of military service, the young couple decided to return to James' hometown as his parents were elderly and needed assistance. He had been stationed in several states in addition to Okinawa, Japan and Korea.

After 68 years of marriage, the Sanders are parents to two children, James Sanders, Jr. and Marsha Sanders Ingram. Elizabeth taught school for 40 years before retirement, and presently, her daughter Marsha has been in education more than 28 years. Granddaughter, McKinley Hill, teaches in a Metro Davidson County charter school. Three generations of the Sanders family have and continue to be a life-changing difference to children.

*Velma Howell Brinkley*



## Oldest Franklin Chapel Male

Willie James Bush was born to Willie Bush and Jamesetta Sweat Bush on January 11, 1933, in Odom's Bend of Sumner County Tennessee. He was the oldest in a sibling group of five children: Willie James and Joe Bush along with sisters Annie Margaret, Beatrice, and Bessie Lee Bush.

On April 11, 1970, Willie was married to the late Annie Mae Adams, a native of Sumner County. He had met her years earlier when he was home on furlough. During the interim, she got married and moved away to Ohio with her husband, who lost his life as a young man. Eventually Willie traveled to Columbus, Ohio and brought his future wife home to Gallatin.

He has fond memories of his grandparent's farm which is now covered by TVA. His grandfather grew tobacco, a garden, and an awesome peach orchid. The children were forbidden from pulling peaches from the trees but were welcome to those on the ground. His father, Willie, was a sharecropper, a plumbing company worker, as well as, a construction company employee. His mother did "day work" in the home of the owner of Crescent Manufacturing Company.

Willie James attended public school very near his home at the rock quarry. Teachers he recalled were Ola Bate, Gideon Dye, Laurretta Young and Sallie Lou Jenkins. One year, when Odom Bend School participated in the Pace Setters Convention, held at Union High School on Winchester Street, with a choir and a soloist. Willie was the soloist and recalls finishing his solo and receiving a standing ovation.

Willie joined Franklin Chapel Baptist Church at age 15. Forty-one years ago (1981), he was ordained a deacon and still serves in that capacity. He was church treasurer for twenty years and currently remains on the Finance Committee.

At 19 years of age, Willie joined the U.S. Air Force and received basic training in Texas. He was stationed in California the longest and enjoyed that base the most. He recalled their role with the chimpanzees that were used to test the forces of gravity, the effects of high-speed movement anticipated in space travel. He disliked time spent in South Dakota because of the extremely cold weather. William was a trained A.P. (Air Police) and enjoyed being named "Airman of the Month", as it meant travel and sightseeing opportunities in California.

He was the first African American hired at the downtown Williams' Farm Supply Store. Being good with math, operating the cash register was very easy for him. He would spend 28 years working for Crescent Manufacturing Company, where he retired at age 62. Since then, he has done some part-time work for H.A.T. and Beech High School.

He recalled a most unusual occurrence in Odom's Bend when he was just a young lad. He and his Father were passing old man Bailey's shack and were told that Mr. Bailey was dead. Willie's father left him outside with very strict orders to remain outside. He watched as his father and the other men dug a grave near the shack. Once the grave was dug, he watched the men exit the shack carrying Mr. Bailey's body wrapped in a white sheet for burial. Poor Mr. Bailey lived, died, and was buried alone...without the benefits of friends, funeral, or casket.

*Velma Howell Brinkley*



HUDSON/  
ODOM'S BEND

FRANKLIN

BAILEY

MCCRARY  
CEMETERY

UNKNOWN NO. 4

GARDEN OF ETERNAL FREEDOM  
DEDICATED 2023 BY THE  
TENNESSEE VALLEY  
AUTHORITY AND THE  
HISTORIC ODOM'S BEND  
CEMETERY REINTERMENT  
COMMITTEE:

VELMA HOWELL BRINKLEY  
CHRIS FORD  
JAMES W. STORY, JR.  
KELVIN THOMAS  
KENNETH C. THOMSON, JR.





## Dorothy Robb Staten

Dorothy Robb Staten was born December 3, 1935, to Emmitt Odell Robb and Willie Bell Sweat Robb in J-Town, a community in Sumner County, Tennessee. She was the first of eight children born to this couple. Her siblings are Hannah Robb Rogan, Charles Robb, Sr., Mary Louise Robb Cummings, Emmitt Odell Robb, Jr., Annie Mae Robb, Georgia Robb Foreman and Larry Dean Robb. Dorothy was married to the now deceased Richard Staten, Sr. Her children are James Ray Robb, David Allen Robb, Dorothy Elnora Staten (d), Richard Staten, Jr. (d), Ronald Edward Staten, Tammy Staten, Christopher Abson Staten and twins Kimberly and Kenneth Staten.

Like most children, Dorothy was not conscious of being poor, as every family around her seemingly was in the same boat. She does recall her clothes being made from feed or flour sacks. Her family grew a big garden and one of her snacks was a fresh onion, cornbread and a glass of buttermilk. As she matured, the white homes she worked in gave her clothes, pots and pans often.

Dorothy's father, Emmitt Robb (1913-1974) was the 3rd Robb generation to live in the Cairo Community after emancipation. Her mother, Willie Bell Sweat Robb reportedly was from the J-Town community. According to the book *Generations*, Dorothy's great-grandfather, was one of the first nine black settlers in the Cairo Community after emancipation.

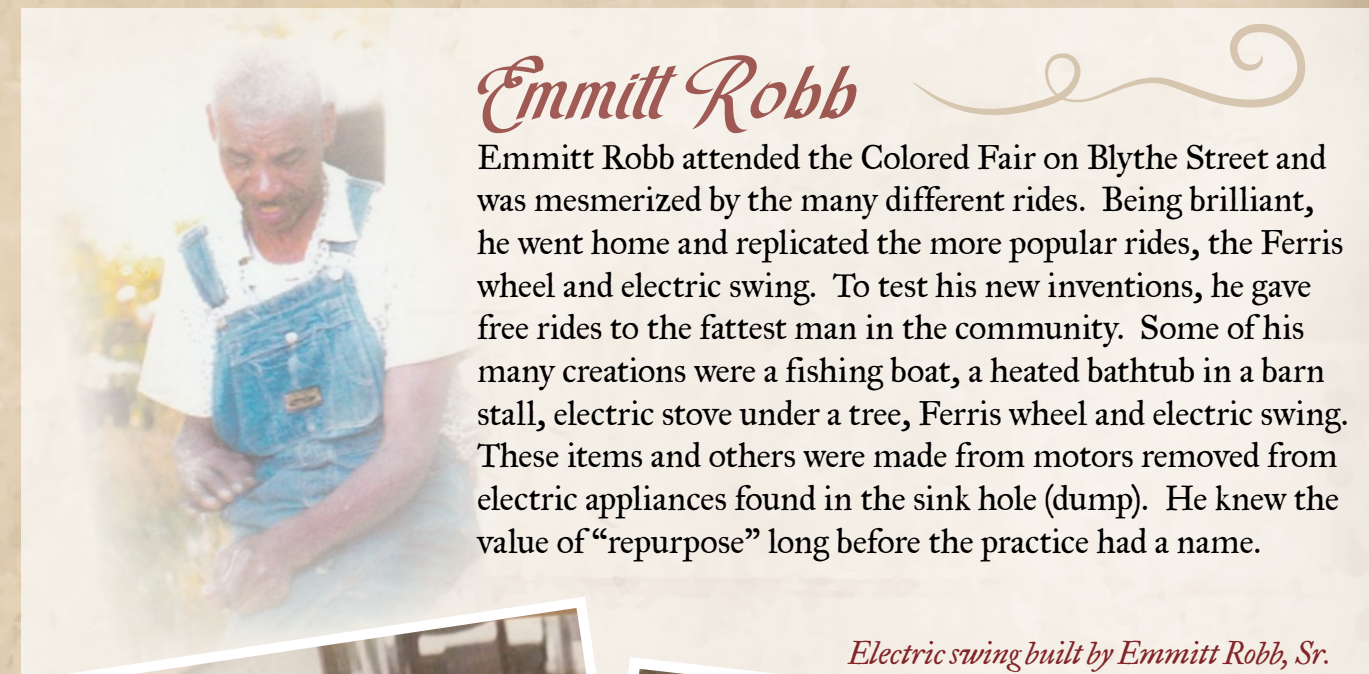
Being the oldest child in a tobacco growing farm family, meant hard work and long days for young Dorothy. Tobacco had long been Tennessee's staple crop; it required intensive care but was readily marketable. At the age of 9 or 10, she started working in the tobacco field alongside her father. Dorothy recalls having performed about every job associated with growing tobacco such as: pulling, setting, chopping, suckering, deworming, cutting, spiking, stripping and hanging. Although she suffered from fear of heights, Dorothy was still required to climb into the barn loft to hang tobacco. This way of life continued until Dorothy's aunt, Mary Owen told her mother to get that girl out of the field, which she did. Dorothy took a house cleaning job for the Sam Sulpher family and was paid .50 weekly.

The older Robb girls, Dorothy, Mary Louise and Hanna, worked hard 12 months a year. The two older girls were each assigned a cow to milk twice daily in addition to school and other chores. Being one to never dodge responsibility, Dorothy learned early on how to hitch-up a mule for work and even plowed fields. One day her father decided it was time for her to start driving the tractor. He taught her a few things such as how to start and stop the tractor, but he forgot to teach her which side of the road to drive it on. He instructed Dorothy to drive the tractor up the highway about three miles to the new home being built for his family. As she drove up the highway, she met a man whom she knew, waving frantically trying to stop her. The man, Robert James Odom told her she was driving on the wrong side of the highway. In about 50 yards ahead she drove into a sharp curve and there she met a truck in what would have been a head on collision were it not for Robert James Odom.

Dorothy recalls when Odom's Bend had two elementary schools, the lower grades attended in the Methodist Church and the upper elementary grades in Odom's Bend Elementary near the rock quarry. She spent one year at the Methodist Church before being promoted to the school by the rock quarry. Sadly, Dorothy did not graduate high school with her class, as all of her brothers and sisters did. Still determined not to leave an important job unfinished, after retirement she enrolled in Adult Education and earned the GED at 73 years of age. At age 76, her son and grandson bought and taught her to use the computer. Teachers reported to have taught in the community were: Queen Ola Staten, Rev. Will Allen Duncan, Fannie Lou Jenkins, Ola Mae Bate, Gideon Dye, Laretta Young and Nannie Polite.

Dorothy has been a lifelong member of Franklin Chapel Baptist Church. She served 40 plus years as church secretary, is still serving as church treasurer, and served between 15 to 20 years as Missionary Club president. She is treasurer of the Ethel B. Beck Chapter of the Eastern Star, and currently works in hospitality at the Gallatin Senior Citizen Center.

*Velma Howell Brinkley*



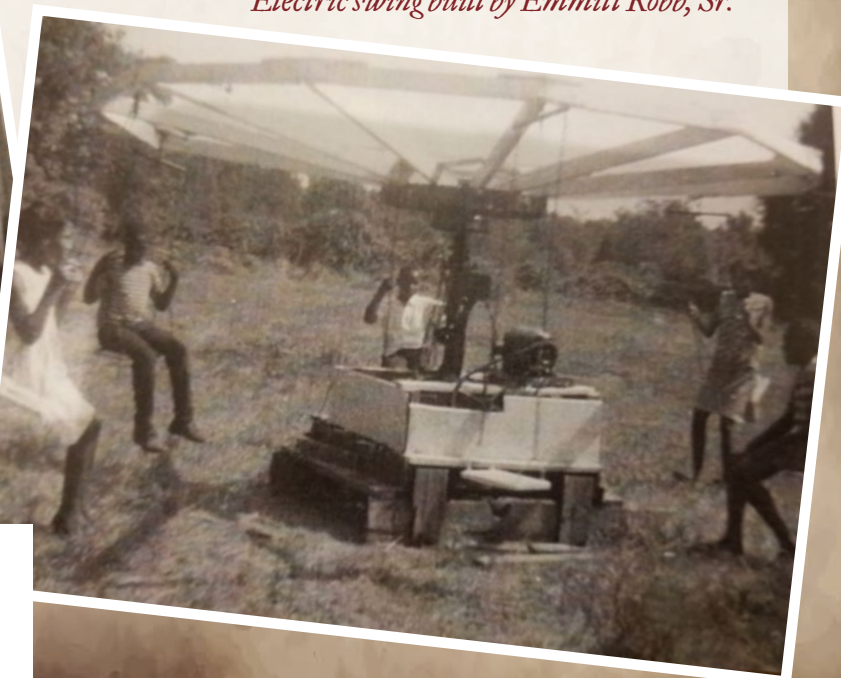
## Emmitt Robb

Emmitt Robb attended the Colored Fair on Blythe Street and was mesmerized by the many different rides. Being brilliant, he went home and replicated the more popular rides, the Ferris wheel and electric swing. To test his new inventions, he gave free rides to the fattest man in the community. Some of his many creations were a fishing boat, a heated bathtub in a barn stall, electric stove under a tree, Ferris wheel and electric swing. These items and others were made from motors removed from electric appliances found in the sink hole (dump). He knew the value of "repurpose" long before the practice had a name.

*Electric swing built by Emmitt Robb, Sr.*



*Ferris wheel built by Emmitt Robb, Sr.*





# Symbolic Remembrances

Sankofa is an African word from the Akan tribe in Ghana. The literal translation of the word and the symbol is "it is not taboo to fetch what is at risk of being left behind." Sankofa is a principle derived from the Akan people of Ghana that one should remember the past to make positive progress in the future. The Akan tribe of Ghanaian Africans is part of the larger Ashanti (or Asante) group of people from West Africa.



*“If a race has no history, it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated.”*

*Carter Godwin Woodson  
Dr. Woodson, known as the father of  
Negro History.*







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