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In This Issue: And There It Was

Call it serendipity, perseverance, or blind luck. Suddenly there it was—the answer, the proof, the explanation of why. You knew the deed to the family farm purchased after they'd moved some two hundred miles into a new state was in the wife's name only. What you didn't know was why. Not until a chance search of some recently digitized newspapers turned up the announcement of the sale of the old farm back in West Virginia by the bank that held the mortgage. Now you know.

One thing for sure, you're not going to find it, if you don't look. And, you're probably not going to find it unless you're open to looking in new places. Our first find is a bible rescued from a soon-to-be razed house. To be sure it was rescued by a relative who probably knew there might be something of interest in the old house, but we've heard of others found in trash piled on the side of the road waiting to be picked up by the local garbage collector, or the bible in the used book store, antique shop, or at a local book sale.

The Allason papers were one of the first collections of business records purchased by the Library of Virginia. The Allason's mercantile business was based in Falmouth, but among the numerous volumes is a day book for a store in Winchester currently being published in the magazine. Following the store closing in 1763 many of these Winchester clients can be found in the ledgers of the Falmouth store.

Some research is more difficult than others; attempting to trace Indians, poor people, and slaves is a difficult task. Researchers who work in these problem areas tend to share serendipitous finds in the hope that they can provide a helping hand. Thus we have the 1840 census find contributed by Tony Burroughs. Obviously living apart from his master, likely working as a blacksmith, wheelwright, or in another manufacturing occupation; he was probably working on a revenue-sharing basis with his master. While this type of relationship was not an unusual practice; it is usual to find a slave listed as a head of household.

Enslaved Head of Household Named on Virginia Census

Tony Burroughs, FUGA*

U.S. census records are some of the most popular records for genealogical research. They are readily accessible online, in libraries, and in archives, and they list names of people in the household along with their ages, sex, marital status, state or country of birth and often their relationship to the head of household and where their parents were born. Unfortunately, that is not the case for people researching enslaved African Americans before the Civil War.

Enslaved people were counted on every federal census schedule that was taken from 1790 to 1860. However, they were not listed by name; they were enumerated with their slave owners. In 1850 and 1860 the U.S. Census Bureau created separate enumeration schedules for free persons and enslaved persons. The age, sex and color (black or mulatto) was listed for each enslaved person under the name of their owner, but not their name. The 1820, 1830, and 1840 censuses listed enslaved people as hash marks in age categories under slaves in the row headed by their owner's name. Until 1850 detailed instructions for taking the census were not given to U.S. marshals. Questions were resolved by referring to and individually interpreting guidelines within the law that established census taking for each census year.¹

There are a few rare exceptions to the practice of omitting the names of the enslaved. At least one enslaved person was named as head of household on the 1840 U.S. Census in Loudoun County, Virginia. Indexed under the surname Slave; the entry reads Shedrick, a slave, with tick marks under slaves for a male fifty-five to one hundred; and a female thirty-six to ninety-five with one individual employed in manufacturing or trade.²

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¹ "Census Instructions," *U.S. Census Bureau* (<https://www.census.gov/history/>).

² 1840 U.S. Census, Loudoun Co. Virginia, Dist. 1, pop. sch., p. 227 (stamped), line 22, Shedrick a Slave; digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>;) NARA microfilm publication M704-32.