

Glimpses into the Life and Family of Adeline Crump

Born into Slavery in Chatham County, NC

by Beverly Wiggins, July 2011

Upon reading the slave narratives of Chatham County slaves found in the Library of Congress digital archives¹, I wondered if the clues found in the narratives might facilitate additional research about the family ties and family histories of the individuals who were interviewed. Admittedly, the brief narratives did not focus on family ties and it was unclear whether the kinds of information they contained would be useful. However, I was aware that few sources of information are available to African Americans researching ancestors from that period, so I thought it worth experimenting to see whether a search of other records might produce additional information about the interviewees.

Not wanting to choose a narrative based on the information it contained, I decided to conduct my experiment on the first narrative in the list of slave narratives from Chatham County, NC²—that of Adeline Crump. [Adeline Crump's 585-word narrative](#) contains the following information that I thought might be of some use in trying to find additional information about her and her family.

- Adeline says she is 73 years old [at the time of the interview, which was 1936-38], so her birth date would be ~1863-1865
- Husband's name: James Crump
- Mother's name: Marie Cotton
- Mother's master: Rich Faucett
- Father's name : Cotton [no first name given]
- Father's master: Wright Cotton
- Parents could not read and write. Adeline cannot read and write.
- Master Rich Faucett did not have an overseer; used slaves as foremen.
- Adeline's mother lived at edge of master's yard.
- Stayed on plantation after surrender. Master let all slaves stay on plantation after surrender.
- Built log houses after the war.
- Master's plantation was about 6 miles from Merry Oaks.
- Adeline's family moved to Merry Oaks when she was 14.
- Adeline married at 17.
- Mother had 21 children; had twins 5 times.
- Adeline was a twin. Her sister Emeline died about 30 years ago [~1907] and left 11 children.
- Adeline has lived in NC all her life. Moved to Raleigh "a long time ago."
- Adeline has 4 children.
- Husband died 17 years ago [~1920], "here" [interview was conducted in Raleigh].
- Adeline worked after her husband died, doing washing and ironing for white folks. She has been unable to work for about 4 years at time of interview.
- Address given at time of interview: 526 Cannon St., Raleigh, NC.

The Family of Adeline Cotton and James Crump

I began my research by looking for any information I could find on Adeline and James. I found them first in the 1880 census, Cape Fear Township, of Chatham County. James was 22, a laborer; Adeline was 19, keeping house; and they had two children, Charles T., age 3, and Anna B., age 6 months.

In the 1900 census, Adeline, age 39, and James, age 41, are still in Cape Fear Township, living with children, Charles T. Crump, 22, railroad laborer; Annie B., 19, cook; Eva, 16, no occupation; and James R., 15, railroad laborer. Also living in the household are two nieces and a nephew: Mariah Crump, 10; Annie Crump, 9; and William Crump, 7. According to this census, Adeline has had four children and four are still living. All of the children are single, but daughter Annie B. has had two children, one of whom is still living. Nieces Annie and Mariah attended school for 9 months. The census shows that the family is renting.

By 1910, the census shows Adeline's family in Ward 4, Raleigh, Wake County. The address is 803 S. West St. and the family owns their home. James, 53, is a farm laborer. Adeline, 49, has no occupation listed. Daughter Annie B., 30, is a cook; as is Eva, 24. Son Robert [listed in 1900 as James R.] is a laborer. Also in the household are grandsons John, 10 and Robert, 1; granddaughter Lillian, 5; and nephew William, 15. Son Charles T., age 32, lives next door at 805 S. West St. with wife Blanche. Charles owns his home and works as a brakeman for the railroad. Blanche, 26, is a laundress.

In 1920, Adeline, 58, is listed as the head of the family, which is living at 408 Cannon St. in Raleigh. James, 62, is listed as her husband. Neither Adeline nor James is working. Also in the household are Annie, 38, single, working as a cook, and grandchildren Lillian, 13; James R., 10; and Addie M., ^{3⁹/₁₂}. A few households away, at 805 S. West St., Charlie Crump, 42, working as a porter on the railroad, lives with wife Blanche, 33. Next door to Charlie and Blanche, at 803 S. West St., live Robert Crump, 32, also a railroad porter; wife Hattie, 37; and son James, age 4.

In 1930, Adeline, 65, widowed, working as a laundress, lives with granddaughter Addie M., 14, at 528 Cannon St. Nearby, at 805 S. West St., lives Adeline's son Charles T., age 50, brakeman on the railroad, with wife Blanche, 40. Next door to Charles and Blanche, at 803 S. West St., are Adeline's son Robert Crump, 45, brakeman on the railroad; his wife Hattie, 46; their son James, 14; and Robert's nephew, Lancaster Crump, whose age is difficult to read but appears to be 49.

Raleigh city directory listings for Adeline's family provide some additional information about them. There are 13 Crumps listed in the 1938 Raleigh city directory, including Adeline, no occupation listed, 527 Cannon; Ada M., domestic, also at 527 S. Cannon; Charles T., wife Mollie, brakeman N-SRR Co., 805 S. West; J. Robert, wife Hattie, brakeman N-SRR Co., 803 S. West; James P. (son of J. Robert and Hattie), 803 S. West. Ada M.'s relationship to the Crumps is not entirely clear. Her death certificate lists Rufus Crump as father and mother unknown. She was born 4 Mar 1916 and died 4 Feb 1962. This birth date is consistent with the Addie M., age 14, listed as granddaughter, who is living with Adeline in the 1930 census. Usual occupation was listed as elevator operator and Charles T. Crump was the informant on her death certificate.

The 1949 Raleigh directory lists Annie M. at the 527 Cannon address, elevator operator. Adeline's daughter Eva, not found in some of the censuses, is listed at the 527 Cannon address, occupation maid. Charles T. is at his long-time address with wife Mollie and occupation is listed as janitor of Flue-Cured

Tobacco Corp. Mollie also has a separate listing indicating that she is an employee at Oak City Laundry. Robert J. [James Robert] and Hattie are listed at their S. West St. address with no occupations.

A WWI draft registration card for Adeline's son Charles T. lists his full name as Charles Thomas Crump, born 18 Sep 1877, occupation RR porter for Norfolk Southern RR. His nearest relative is listed as Blanche Crump, wife. He is described as tall, medium build, with brown eyes and black hair.

I found death certificates for Adeline and James as well as for all four of their children, and some of the children's spouses. These certificates, of course, provided birth and death dates and locations, but also parents' names for Charles T. and James Robert's spouses. Charles' first wife, Blanche, was Blanche Powell, whose parents were Phil Powell and Hattie Gee. Blanche died on 12 July 1936. Charles' second wife, Mollie Worth, was born to Joe Worth and Mary Jane Wall. Mollie had worked as a nurse's aid at a mental hospital. She died 24 Jan 1965 and according to her death certificate was buried in Wall's Chapel Church in Richmond County. Charles died before Mollie, on 19 Apr 1962. His age at death is given as 85.

Eva died on 10 Feb 1958, and her brother Charles served as informant. James R. died on 24 Mar 1954. He was widowed at the time, his wife Hattie having died on 25 Jan 1954.

According to their death certificates, Adeline was buried in Haywood and James in Moncure. Charles Thomas, Blanche, James Robert, Hattie, and Eva are all buried in Mt. Hope cemetery in Raleigh. The cemetery records do not show their names, so they probably do not have inscribed stones. I don't know whether any records exist that might show the locations of their graves.

When Adeline died on 30 Jan 1947, she was living at 527 W. Cannon St. On her death certificate her date of birth is listed as 11 Oct 1861—a date that agrees with most of the census information. Her mother's name is not known by the informant, William Neal, of the same address as Adeline, but her father's name is given as Dock Cotton—a fact not revealed in her narrative, but corroborated by census records.

Adeline's Parents--Dock and Maria/Mariah Cotton--and Siblings

On page 23 of the 1870 census for Cape Fear Township, the family of Richardson Faucett, Adeline's former owner, is listed. On page 36 is found the family of Cyrus Cotton, age 60, and Maria Cotton, age 58, and their four daughters: Betty, 16; Emeline, 13; Vincey, 11; and Hester, 9. Cyrus is a farm laborer. I believe that this is probably Adeline's family, although Adeline is not listed and I have not found her listed elsewhere.

In 1880, listed near the same neighbors as was the above family in Cape Fear Township, are Dock Cotton, 57; Mariah Cotton, 53; Hester Cotton, 16; and Laudelia, 5. You will note, I suspect, that if these are the same family, the parents have grown younger over the decade, and Hester has aged only 7 years. Ages in census records often show this kind of discrepancy, and it can be expected that former slaves, particularly, might not know their ages. I found the discrepancies in the ages of the Cotton family of less concern after finding similar inconsistencies in the ages of the family of Richardson Faucett, Mariah's master. No one in that family grew younger, but several aged only 3 or 4 years between the 1860 and 1870 censuses.

In 1900, Doc Cotton, 80 and widowed, is living in Cape Fear Township with four grandchildren: Lurila, 27, single, but mother of four living children: Annie, 8; Harvey, 6; and Murphy, 9mo. Perhaps Lurila in this census and Laudelia in the 1880 census are the same person—actually Doc's daughter rather than granddaughter.

These census findings suggest the identities of some of Adeline's 21 siblings: Betty, Emeline, Vincey, Hester, and Laudelia/Lurila. I also found a death certificate for Mary Cotton Lasiter that identified her parents as Dock and Mariah Cotton. A death certificate for William Neal, who was the informant on Adeline's death certificate, identifies his parents as Etha Neal and Emmaline Cotton—the twin sister Adeline identified in her narrative. At the time of his death on 5 Feb 1953 William Neal was living at 706 S. West St.—just a few houses away from Adeline's sons Charles T. and Robert. A search for other Neals whose death certificates listed Emeline Cotton as mother produced one for Ida Neal Cole, born about 1881. Her parents are listed as Epherim Neal and Emelyn Cuttoen, both of Chatham County. Ida was living in Durham at the time of her death on 1 Aug 1924.

It might be possible to identify more of Adeline's siblings and their families if one researched the other Cotton families living near Dock and Maria in Cape Fear Township. Because my research on Adeline's family is meant only to suggest the possible fruitfulness of such an endeavor, I have not followed every possible lead.

James Crump's Parents--Tom and Sylvia/Sylvie Fausett Crump--and Siblings

The death certificate of James Crump, Adeline's husband, shows that he died on 29 Jan 1920 (shortly after the 1920 census was taken). It gives his birth date as 8 Sep 1858 and identifies his parents as Tom Crump and Sylvie Fausett Crump, from Chatham County. The informant is James' son, Charlie T. Crump. At the time of his death, James was living at 408 W. Cannon St., Raleigh.

Armed with his parents' names, I began the search for James' family of origin. I found Thomas Crump, age 45, and wife Silvia, 42 in New Hope, Chatham County in the 1880 census. Thomas was farming and Silvia was keeping house. Children in the household were Sarah, 18; Lilla, 12; Fannie, 9; William, 8; Stokes, 4; and Robert, 7mo. James was married to Adeline and living in a separate household in 1880.

In the 1900 census, Thomas, 64 and wife Sylvia, 61, are listed in New Hope, Chatham. The census schedule indicates that Sylvia has had 15 children, of which 11 are living, and that she and Thomas have been married for 40 years. Living with them is Irven M. Crump, age 8, grandson, and niece Georgeanna Boon, 17. Both children are in school. I don't find Thomas and Sylvia in later censuses.

I found a death certificate for Norman Crump which indicated that his parents were Tom and Sylvia Crump and that he was born 15 April 1881, and died 1 May 1939. His wife is listed as Mary Sulvia Wilson and he is buried in Haywood.

James' brother Robert, who was 7months old in the 1880 census died 22 Dec 1916 in Greensboro. He was a laborer. The informant was Stokes Crump, his brother. Robert is buried in Merry Oaks.

I found James' brother William in Cape Fear, Chatham, in 1900. He was 26 and living in the household of his wife Octavia's parents, Jerry and Rena Harrington. William's family is found in Cape Fear in the 1910,

1920, and 1930 censuses, with wife listed as Minnie in 1920 and later. The ages for Minnie are so inconsistent that it is impossible to tell if she is Octavia. A number of additional children are identified, and I was able to find census and/or death records for some of them. William Henry Crump's death certificate shows that he died at age 92 on 26 Oct 1963 in Sanford. His parents are listed as Tom and Sylvia Crump; wife, Minnie Crump. He is buried in Rose Hill cemetery in Haywood. Son Howard's death certificate shows his parents as William Henry and Octavia Harrington Crump and his birth date as 1915. Howard was a laborer at the brick plant in Moncure. He died in 1963 and is buried in Liberty Chapel cemetery in Moncure.

James's brother Stokes also showed up in several census records. He and his family were in Buckhorn, Wake Co., in 1920 and 1930. His wife was Viney Murray (parents Zack and Anna). I found death certificates for Stokes, Viney, and some of their children. One child, Harley, died at age 3 from diphtheria. He is buried at New Hill.

Conclusion

I was pleasantly surprised that I was able to find considerable information about Adeline and James Crump and their extended families with no more to begin with than the details I found in her narrative. I'm sure I could have tracked down some additional information about parents and siblings of the wives and husbands who married into Adeline's family, and, if I had been inclined to try, I expect that I could have followed some of her grandchildren, nieces, and nephews to find even more information. I believe that the outcome of this limited experiment suggests that, for those who believe they may be related to one of the ex-slaves whose narratives are included in the Library of Congress Collection, including the twelve who have some connection to Chatham County, the narratives may, indeed, provide unexpected clues that will help them trace their roots.

For anyone wanting [additional details about the Crump or Cotton families](#), I prepared a table that summarizes what I found and where I found it.

Where I Found the Information

All of the information that I located about the Crump and Cotton families for this paper came from Ancestry.com. I used primarily census records and death certificates, but found a few additional sources, such as Raleigh city directories, helpful. Chatham County residents can access Ancestry.com at no charge at any branch of the Chatham County Libraries. In addition, the Chatham Libraries currently have a subscription to a special African-American Heritage Collection which may be accessed at all library branches as well as offsite through the internet. It provides access to a comprehensive mix of resources, records, and tools exclusively devoted to African-American family history research. Contact your library branch for more information.

¹ Links to these narratives are provided and the background of the project described in [Chatham County Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer Project](#), by Beverly and Jim Wiggins, 2011.

² The Library of Congress lists the slave narratives in alphabetical order by first name, and we retained that order in our paper, referenced above.