

BOONE'S LICK HERITAGE QUARTERLY



'Slave Born Sarah Humphries Died Empress Free'

REMARKABLE AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN OF THE BOONESLICK

VOL. 19 No. 1 — SPRING 2020

BOONSLICK HISTORICAL SOCIETY PERIODICAL

Remarkable African-American Women of the Boonslick

AN EMAIL LAST JULY FROM RETIRED CANADIAN UNIVERSITY professor Kenneth Westhues, born and raised in Glasgow, Missouri, stimulated my continuing interest in Boonslick African-American community history dating from the 1800s. Attached to the email was an interview Westhues had conducted in 1965 with a 94-year-old black woman, Amada Buttner, a resident of Glasgow,

In an introduction to the interview, Westhues had written: "I was 21, a college student eager to learn about the history of my hometown, looking for wisdom from one of its oldest citizens. The occasion left a lasting impression. Countless times I have quoted a sentence Mrs. Buttner spoke: 'God don't love ugly.' I understood she was referring to behavior, not looks."

Westhues thought the interview might be an interesting article for *Boone's Lick Heritage Quarterly*. Reading it left me with a sense of a wise elder of the community whose presence and voice surely made a positive difference in many lives over several generations. It was a refreshing revelation of human dignity, personal integrity and, in Amanda Buttner's case, Christian-centered values, and just plain good sense manifested by the wisdom that comes through the trials and tribulations of a life stretching over nearly ten decades.

The Buttner interview reminded me of two other remarkable black women who were residents of the Boonslick region—Marjorie Casson and Fannie Marie Tolson. Both had a major presence in the twentieth century, Casson as an educator and as a pastor in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) churches, Tolson as an educator. Both were trailblazers in a white-dominated Boonslick society that still had residual cultural underpinnings from its pre-Civil War southern plantation economy created by nineteenth-century migrants from the Upland South.

Casson was the first black woman to attend Central College in Fayette (now Central Methodist University). Tolson, after many years as a teacher and principal in black schools, became the first black educator, in 1966, to begin teaching in the integrated (1955) public school system in Howard County. This was 12 years after

the landmark "Brown v. Board of Education" decision by the U.S. Supreme Court (1954) ruled that U.S. state laws establishing racial segregation in public schools were unconstitutional, even if the segregated schools were otherwise equal in quality.

Numerous other black women in the Boonslick have played key roles in the region's educational, social, civic, political and church-related institutions over the past two centuries, as well as being influential matriarchs – moral and spiritual forces – of their extended families and communities.

Many black women have had a powerful presence on the black community and American society, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Prominent among them would be Ida B. Wells, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Mary McLeod Bethune, and writers Toni Morrison and Zora Neale Hurston, and the mathematician Katherine Johnson, who began working at the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics in 1953. Originally classified as "sub-professional," she broke both the color and gender barriers of the space agency. She was a genius at mathematics. Using a slide rule or mechanical calculator in complex calculations to check the work of her superiors – white, male engineers – she went on to develop equations that helped the NACA and its successor, NASA, send astronauts into orbit and, later, to the moon. She was later awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by Barack Obama in 2015.

In 2016, a new 40,000-square-foot building was named the "Katherine G. Johnson Computational Research Facility" and formally dedicated at the agency's Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia. She died in Hampton Feb. 24 at 101.

The highly acclaimed film about Johnson's life, *Hidden Figures*, released in December 2016, was based on the non-fiction book of the same title by



Harriet Tubman was a singular figure of the abolition movement, a slave who escaped captivity in Maryland and made at least 19 trips back to free more slaves. Tubman is estimated to have helped several hundred slaves find freedom in Canada via the Underground Railroad.
Image courtesy of National Women's History.org

Margot Lee Shetterly.

We recently celebrated Black History Month and Women's History Month. We should pause now to celebrate the undeniable contribution black women have made to the African-American community in the Boonslick and American society.

—Don B. Callimore

Boone's Lick Heritage Quarterly is published four times a year by the Boonslick Historical Society, P.O. Box 426, Boonville, MO 65233.

We encourage our members and others interested in history to contribute articles or other information of historical interest, including family histories, pertaining to the region. Please address all contributions and correspondence related to the periodical to the editor, Don B. Cullimore, 1 Lawrence Dr., Fayette, MO 65248, or email to: Don.cullimore40@gmail.com, phone: 660-888-3429. Editorial guidelines may be obtained from the editor. Publication deadlines are February 1 for the March (Spring) issue; May 1 for the June (Summer) issue; August 1 for the September (Fall) issue; and November 1 for the (Winter) December issue.

The Boonslick Historical Society was founded in 1937 and meets several times a year to enjoy programs about historical topics pertinent to the Boonslick area. Members of the Society have worked together over the years to publish historical books and brochures and to mark historic sites. They supported the founding of Boone's Lick State Historic Site, marked the sites of Cooper's Fort and Hanna Cole's Fort and have restored a George Caleb Bingham painting on loan to The Ashby-Hodge Gallery of American Art at Central Methodist University, Fayette.

Membership dues are \$15-Individual, \$25-Family, \$50-Sponsor, \$250-Patron, \$500-Life. The dues year is January through December. Receive our publication, *Boone's Lick Heritage Quarterly*, and attend annual Society events highlighting the region's history. To become a member, send a check made out to the Boonslick Historical Society, P.O. Box 426, Boonville, MO 65233.

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Boonslick Historical Society Vol. 19, No. 1 • Spring 2020

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CMU President Marianne Inman presents the University's Heritage Award to the Rev. Marjorie Casson in 2005. Photo by Catherine Thogmorton

Mrs. Sarah Humphries Dies at 101 Years

Cover image: "Slave Born Sarah Humphries Died Empress Free." An acrylic-on-canvas portrait by the late artist Robert MacDonald Graham (1919-2000), now part of the permanent collection of The Ashby-Hodge Gallery of American Art at Central Methodist University. Mrs. Humphries was 101 years old when she died January 9, 1954, at her home in Boonville. She was born in Virginia, and came with her parents to Missouri when she was a little more than four years old; her father was a free man. She was 10 years old and living with her family in Bunceton when the slaves were freed (1863). They were the first freed family to live there. She married Robert Humphries, a school teacher, in 1882. He died in 1906. Sarah lived in Boonville for the last 57 years of her life.

“God don’t love ugly” – the wisdom of Amanda Buttner

By Kenneth Westhues, PhD

REPORTS ON FAMILY REUNIONS IN *THE GLASGOW MISSOURIAN* make my eyes light up. Ties of blood and marriage are the strongest threads in the fabric of life. Celebrating those ties helps you know who you are.

I was captivated especially by the front-page photo on August 17, 2018, of the family of Walter and Amanda Buttner. More than 100 of the descendants of this long deceased couple had converged on Glasgow from New York, California, and ten states in between. They posed in matching tee-shirts for their biennial family reunion.

A memorable interview 54 years ago

News of the Buttner reunion caught my interest because way back in 1965, I spent an afternoon with the lady who started things off. Widowed by then, Amanda Buttner was 94 years old. I was 21, a college student eager to learn about the history of my hometown, looking for wisdom from one of its oldest citizens.

The occasion left a lasting impression. Countless times I have quoted a sentence Mrs. Buttner spoke: “God don’t love ugly.” I understood she was referring to behavior, not looks.

I had never heard that adage before, though Mrs. Buttner spoke it with such conviction I suspect her children had heard it many times. Now I learn that it comes from an old slave song, “God don’t love ugly ways.” Nobel laureate Toni Morrison wove the adage into her novel, *Beloved*, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1988. Mainly, the adage has been passed down orally from generation to generation.

In the context of our interview, what Mrs. Buttner meant by the adage was that morality is central to human life, choice between the good, virtuous, and beautiful on the one hand, the bad, vicious, and ugly on the other. She did not come across to me as a happy-go-lucky, anything-goes sort of person. Kind and generous, yes, but also righteous and true to her moral code.

Acceptance of human equality was part of that code, as was clear when our conversation turned to race relations in Glasgow. “God made us,” she said, “but He made the man first, didn’t He? He said, ‘Let’s make man in our image.’ He made man in His own image, black and white. I can’t help it ‘cause I’m colored. You can’t help it ‘cause you’re white, but God made you. He made us

all one and equal.

“If the sun shines down, it don’t just shine on you, does it? It shines on all. If He made the rivers to run, that water’s free for you, free for me. When the wind blows, does it just blow on you? No, it blows on all of us. And if you’re in the fields working, and the thunder and lightning come, it don’t just strike me and leave you, or you and leave me, but if it does, it’s a lesson, get ready to meet Him.”

It was not just what she said that stayed with me, but the slow, deliberate, confident, rhythmic cadence of her voice and her overall bearing. She was regal and humble at once.

She came across as a woman who had seen a lot in a long life and gradually come to know exactly who she was. I asked her if she had her life to live over, would she do anything differently.

“My life? I think I’ve had a great life, a precious life, and today I’m just as strong in that life, living right, doing right, doing unto others as you’d have them do unto you.”

Christianity was at the core of Mrs. Buttner’s view of the world, as it was in my own family. My mother treasured the famous poem, “No less than the trees and the stars, you have a right to be here.” Mrs. Buttner voiced the same sentiment with respect to race: “If God hadn’t intended for the colored to be here, they wouldn’t have been.”

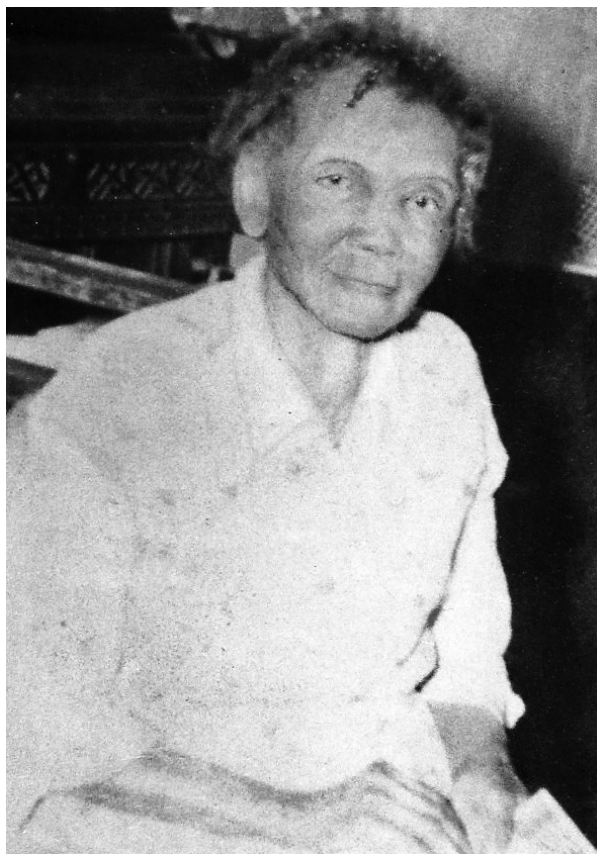
Organized religion

For her, Christianity was not just personal faith but membership in a faith community. She said we go to church to acknowledge what we believe in “and to give thanks to Him.” She described the church as “that great order you belong to, you go there and take vows. Oh, child, if

I could just tell you how to read the Bible, as I’ve taught all my children. All my children were raised in the church.”

In her case, organized religion meant Campbell Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church in the next block up the hill from her home. She had been much involved, even travelling to Chicago “for church.” I have the impression her children and their families made up a significant percentage of Campbell Chapel’s membership. She would undoubtedly be overjoyed that this diminutive structure, built in 1865, just after the Civil War, has been painstakingly restored in the twenty-first century.

Yet it didn’t bother this stalwart of the A.M.E. Church that oth-



Amanda Buttner at age 94.

ers preferred different denominations. Indeed, she seemed pleased that African-Americans had their own. “We haven’t been mixed in the churches. If anything special was going on, we’d invite the whites and they’d come, that church would be packed. We got all kinds of preachers, all kinds of big men, men with brains.”

“If everybody don’t belong to the same church, well, there’s always one you can go to.” Of Glasgow’s Catholics she said, “They’ve always been here. The older Catholic people were always friends of the colored. We never had no trouble.”

“We neighbored,” she said, several times using this verb in the sense of maintaining cordial reciprocal relations, which clearly ranked high on her scale of values.

Family history on a warm afternoon

Mrs. Buttner’s home, near the corner of Seventh and Commerce Streets, was a small frame cottage of the kind associated with Methodist Camp Meetings in the nineteenth century. It was probably that old. A low porch stretched across the front. Across the street was the decrepit house where four classmates and I had lived while running a summer program at the Evans School.

It was hot the day I visited. A fan on the floor helped a little. We had to unplug the single light for the room so that my tape recorder could be plugged in. That left dim twilight, though the sun shone bright outside. Mrs. Buttner rose from her bed for our interview and sat on the edge in her white dressing gown, an ethereal silhouette framed by the open window behind her.

“Eliza was my mother,” she told me, “Amanda was my grandmother, and my stepparents were John and Emily Turner.”

Not understanding her clearly, I asked, “Did you say Tanner?”

“No,” she said firmly, “Turner, T-u-r-n-e-r. Please get that right.”

John Turner, she told me, had been one of many slaves owned by Talton Turner, a member of Glasgow’s founding elite, whose mansion still stands just south of town. After freedom, John and other former slaves continued working for the Turner family, as well as for the Lewises, Jacksons, and the other well-to-do families that dominated the local economy well into the twentieth century.

Mrs. Buttner spoke of her stepfather with devotion. She said he “was a great hand for reading newspapers, keeping up with the times.” I asked her how he learned to read, since schools were off limits for slaves. She said the “Turner boys” taught him. After a day at school, Talton’s sons would bring their books down to a slave cabin, get down on the floor by the fireplace with John and other young slaves, and teach them to read. She said John was among the workers who, with only simple tools, drained and cleared the swampy valley on Glasgow’s east side where she now made her home, the area then called Newtown.

Amanda herself started school at the age of six, she told me, but there was as yet no school building for African-American children. Her classes were in the basement of Lewis Chapel on Saline Street, the other Methodist church built by and for emancipated slaves just after the Civil War. Once the Evans School was built, she continued her schooling there until the age of 16.

Two years later, Mrs. Buttner married. She said her husband worked for people named Fuller, her mother-in-law cooked for

them, and she herself did their washing. The people she was referring to were probably Berenice and John Morrison-Fuller, the famous heiress and her eccentric husband who moved back to Glasgow in the late nineteenth century and were the talk of the town until John’s death in 1910. Mrs. Buttner told me Walter also worked as a railroad section hand.

A lady worth remembering

Deeply touched by the interview, I transcribed it, intending to turn it into an article. I tried again and again, but a satisfactory way of writing it up eluded me. Eventually I gave up. Years later, I got rid of my outdated tape recorder and threw away the tapes. Thankfully, after hours of searching through musty files, I have found my typewritten notes, the basis for this article.

These notes confirm and flesh out the memories of that hot afternoon in 1965, that have never left my mind. Amanda Buttner was a lady worth remembering. She deserves the honor of the family reunions still regularly held in Glasgow by her descendants half a century later. I hope her descendants find solace in knowing this outsider shares their regard for her.

Beyond the kindness of answering my questions with patience and honesty, her single main gift to me that day was the pungent reminder: “God don’t love ugly.” In the midst of general decline of organized Christianity over the past half century, it is a reminder we all can use.

Kenneth Westhues, PhD, is Professor Emeritus of Sociology, University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. He is a native of Glasgow, Missouri.



Amanda Buttner (left) visits with friends Paddy Switzler and Lottie Jones outside the Campbell Chapel AME Church in Glasgow.

Images courtesy of Dr. Bonita Butner

www.boonslickhistoricalsociety.org

Faith and Family

By Bonita K. Butner, PhD

SHE WAS FOUND AT AN EARLY AGE ON THE BANKS of the Missouri River. As convenient grace would have it, John and Emily Turner came to her rescue. The Turners adopted her and raised her as their own."

This is the family lore that surrounds my great-grandmother Amanda Buttner. Her start in life would be a harbinger of a life of compassion and faith, knowing that God would always be a presence in her life. Amanda and

her husband Walter had eight children and from these eight, a family dynasty was created. Amanda died in 1966, but she left a legacy of faith and achievement that persist to this day.

Our family began a tradition of biennial family reunions in 1972. This was done to keep the memory and legacy of Amanda alive for future generations. Today, family members return to Glasgow during what always seems to be the hottest weekend in August to fellowship and remember from whence we come. When I asked some of the older members of the family for memories of Amanda, the themes that emerged were ones of character, respect and of course, faith.

Great granddaughter Shirley Beaver states "She was so sweet and serene. Never raised her voice. All she had to do was call our name and we would behave." Beaver also remembers "we would go to church on Sunday and come home to play church on the big rock in front of Grandma's house. The kids would play while the adults sat on the porch talking and watching over us."

Great grandsons Gary Enyard and Don Craig confirm this emphasis on how Amanda demonstrated character. "Grandma Amanda was respected by all and had so much wisdom" and "Dignity driven by absolute Christian faith" were the phrases they used to describe her. Each of them shared a special memory they had of

Amanda. Craig spoke of her "always reading the Bible and praying. Now that I am older, I realize she was a true Christian." while Beaver remembers "We would come down from Kansas City to spend the summer with Grandma. You know families did that in those days. Each Sunday, she would always sit on the left side of Campbell Chapel AME in a white outfit and white hat."

"Grandma Amanda instilled in me to always put God first, love my family, to think positive, and to be respectful and honest."

to say goodbye. She told me to take a seat and told me how proud she was of me and how happy she was that God had given all her grandchildren such 'good memories'. Then she gave me a gift—a

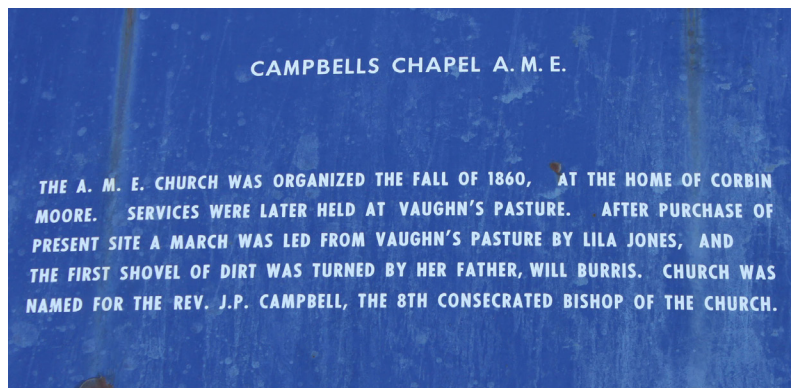
Enyard remembers "I was going off to college and stopped by Grandma's house. Simple and yet profound as I consider her financial condition coupled with her desire to give her grandson something as he was about to fulfill the dream of advanced education. A dream that she could not have imagined as a child picked up on the banks of the Missouri river.

Finally, I asked if there were any lessons learned from Amanda. Enyard states

"compassion for your fellow man, love of family and not to be judgmental. She taught me to always keep my faith in God through the power of prayer." Craig remembers "Grandma Amanda instilled in me to always put God first, love my family, to think positive, and to be respectful and honest."

Amanda Buttner was the matriarch of the Buttner family. It was through her quiet determination and love of God and family that her grandchildren can now claim a legacy that will endure.

Bonita K. Butner, PhD, is Associate Professor Emeritus, University of Missouri-Kansas City. She is the former Chair, Educational Leadership, Policy and Foundations Division at UMKC. She currently lives in Slater, in Saline County.



Faith-Based Architecture of a Historic Community Church

By Don Cullimore

The historic Campbell Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church has been a bedrock of the African-American community in Glasgow since the end of the Civil War in 1865.

The church group's founding actuality predates the physical structure by five years, dating to 1860, just before the start of what some called "The War Between the States." By any name or measure, the "War" was a brutal one that turned brother against brother, family against family, and saw the ruthless rampage of

guerrilla groups aligned with the seceded South, matched too often by the ruthless retribution of those aligned with the North, in and out of uniform.

In this madness the AME Church stood as a buttress against the pro-slavery elements so prevalent in "Little Dixie" and as a beacon of hope for what might come after the war, especially in light of President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation announced in September of 1862 and formalized in January of 1863. At the end

of the war, the newly-freed founding members of Glasgow's AME congregation bent their backs to the task of building a house of worship—Campbell Chapel AME Church, a venerable institution which continues today as a small but still active congregation, a guiding light for the local African-American community.

The church, a small, one-story brick building with a basement and with simple Greek Revival elements, is significant architecturally as well as socially in the history of Glasgow and the surrounding Boonslick area. In 1997 it was granted recognition on the National Register of Historic Places.

The history of Campbell Chapel AME Church is a story of human courage. Many generations of African-American families are part of it, including Amanda Buttner's extended family members, who have been associated with the church for more than three generations. The Rev. Marjorie Casson often preached in Campbell Chapel during her long tenure as an AME church pastor, providing many of the positive social messages that have flowed from its pulpit for more than 150 years. It is a classic story of the Church as Community.

(Editor's note: Campbell Chapel AME Church was the subject of a feature article and editorial comment in the 2013 spring issue of *Boone's Lick Heritage Quarterly* – Vol. 12, No. 1).



Campbell Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, located on the corner of Commerce and Sixth streets, in Glasgow, is one of the Missouri River community's most historically significant African-American cultural and architectural elements. Built in 1865, the church is a small, one-story brick building with a basement and with simple Greek Revival elements. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997. Photo by Don Cullimore

Marjorie Casson: A Trailblazer in the Boonslick African-American Community

By Catherine Thogmorton

Editor's Note: In the fall of 2004 and spring of 2005, Catherine (Cathy) Thogmorton, then editor of the Central Methodist University alumni magazine Talon, met with the Rev. Marjorie Casson and interviewed her during several sessions while preparing an article about Casson as the first African-American woman and student to attend Central College (now CMU) in Fayette and to graduate with a bachelor's degree in the 1950s. CMU honored Casson in February 2005 with a special Heritage Award in recognition of her life's accomplishments. What follows is a revised version of the Talon article published in May 2005, shortly after Casson died at the age of 96.

MARJORIE CASSON (1909-2005) DIDN'T LOOK LIKE A trailblazer. This diminutive 96-year-old black woman looked as if a breeze could sweep her off her feet. Nothing could have been further from the truth. She was a dynamo with a determination forged of steel and a love of humanity forged by God. She was, in fact, one of the most significant trailblazers in Central Methodist University's history.

On February 8, 2005, Linn Memorial United Methodist Church was nearly filled with students, faculty and staff, friends and family, ministers of various denominations, and elected officials. They had come to honor Marjorie Casson as CMU presented her with the Central Methodist University Heritage Award as the first African-American student ever to have enrolled at Central. In 1953 her matriculation was both historic and courageous.

The president of Saint Paul School of Theology, the Rev. Dr. Myron McCoy, brought the message; Earl Turner Sr. sang. Dean

Emeritus James P. Thogmorton, who was dean of students when Casson attended Central, presented the Reverend Casson to CMU President Marianne Inman, who conferred the award. The entire congregation stood, clapped and cheered.

In his introduction of Casson that day, Thogmorton said, "Heritage is something that belongs to one by reason of birth, something reserved for one. When Marjorie Casson came to Central College in 1953, nothing had been reserved for her. She had no inherent rights or privileges – no heritage – that assured her an education at Central. The Supreme Court decision of 'Brown versus the Board of Education,' which repealed the concept of 'separate but equal' education, had not yet been made. It would be another ten years before Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his 'I Have a Dream' speech, another eleven years before the Civil Rights Act was enacted. No African-American student had ever been granted admission to Central."

At age 44 Marjorie Casson came to Central to pursue a degree. She had been teaching in black schools and preaching in African Methodist Episcopal (AME) churches for a number of years already. She did not have to return to school. She did not have to choose an all-white college. Yet, she did. And in so doing, she began a rich heritage that would encourage other black students to attend, catapulting Central into an age of increased inclusiveness and rich diversity which today is reflected in its mission statement and creed.

Casson was born in 1909 in Sioux City, Iowa, with both Negro and American Indian in her lineage. Before she arrived at Central, she had already studied at Western University in Kansas City, Kan-

sas (now part of the Quindaro Historic Ruins) and at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, both all-black universities. She credited Kentucky evangelist Etta Graham for pushing her into finishing her college studies.

"I met this woman from Louisville, Kentucky, at a revival. I was just selling song books and old junk," Casson reminisced. She began traveling and eventually preaching with Graham who told her she had to go to school. "Oh, Lordy!" Marjorie remembered saying, "well, I'll go." And she did.

She began commuting to classes at Central while living in Brunswick, still preaching and teaching school. "I loved teaching in the school system," Casson said. "I didn't have any trouble with children's behavior." Neither did she have trouble being the first black student in then-Central College. "I knew I was," she said, "but that wasn't an issue."

Because Marjorie Casson broke the color barrier at Central College, the road became easier for young blacks to attain an education. In 1954 Fielding Draffen entered Central and became Central's first African-American graduate in 1957. He went on to become the first black air-traffic controller in the tower at Kansas City's Downtown Airport. Two other African-American men, Cecil Hueston and Nathaniel Graves, entered Central in the mid-1950s. And in 1959 Central accepted Abel Muzorewa, an African who went on to become Zimbabwe's first black Methodist bishop—and its first black prime minister.

During the last year or so of her studies at Central, Marjorie Casson moved to Fayette. She supported herself by cooking and cleaning for a local white family who encouraged her to do well in her college courses. When she finished her work in the evening, she would study. She praised the attention she received from Central's professors. "Central just made you get it," she insisted. "I'm glad I came along, you know, like I did." After six years of attending classes part-time and, finally, full-time, she on graduated August 7, 1959, with a Bachelor of Science in Education degree. She was living her creed: "Do your work, get the job done."

Getting the job done had always guided Casson's actions. Her granddaughter, Nina Falls, remembered vividly an incident some years back when a child fell into a well. "All these people were standing around in a panic, trying to figure out how to get her out of the well," she said with a grin. "My grandmother simply said, 'Hand me a rope!' She tied the rope around herself and climbed down into the well. She kept the girl from drowning, hauling her out to safety." This can-do attitude was a hallmark of the Rev. Marjorie Casson.

On her long journey to the venerable age of 96, Casson fol-

lowed many paths. She had been a principal, nurse, janitor, cook, laundress, undertakers assistant, and lawyer's assistant. She even remembered picking cotton in the Deep South. "I lived with a minister who worked two or three days and. made some money out there," she recalled. I did what they did—I went out there in the cotton field. My Lord!" And always she preached. She declined to speculate on her longevity although she did make some personal observations, "I don't sleep much, but when you go to bed, that's time to sleep. Now, in the day, you have to keep real active. I don't stay in this chair." She added, "What's mostly killing people nowadays—it isn't diseases. It's stress. I ain't gonna let nothin' worry me."

Casson was in ministry for more than 70 years. She built and remodeled churches, even climbing on roofs to set shingles. She preached to many congregations, supporting, cajoling, and scolding them as the spirit moved her. People expected her to perambulate around the church during sermons that would not end until she had walked every last aisle.

Casson's work took her throughout North America and garnered her numerous awards. Ultimately, she resettled in Brunswick where she served as assistant pastor to the Zion A.M.E. Church. Shortly before her death on April 14, 2005, the Rev. Stephen Barnes, pastor of that church, called her a blessing. "Her value in the lives of those whom she has influenced is monumental," he says. "She is incredibly courageous, and a magnificent spiritual leader. As my associate pastor, she is invaluable with her wisdom and encouragement. We love Reverend Casson."

Clearly everyone at chapel on Feb. 8 fifteen years ago in Linn Memorial Church loved her, too. People who have known her for years and people who had yet to meet her rose together in tribute to honor this trailblazer.

She shared her advice with all. She called on the people to "get up our of your rocking chairs." True to form, she admonished, "Do your work." It is a motto that befits a trailblazer.

Catherine (Cathy) Thogmorton holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in education and English. She retired recently after a second career as editor of the Central Methodist University alumni magazine Talon. This was on the heels of her first career—25 years as a high school English teacher. She currently resides in Fayette where she owns Grey Willows Arts & Antiques, housed in one of the community's oldest buildings, the Shepard-Davis House (1825). She has served as the graphic designer and assistant editor of the Quarterly for the past eight years.



Rev. Marjorie Casson at age 96. Photo by Catherine Thogmorton

Fannie Marie Tolson: Influential Black Educator and Administrator

By James H. (Jim) Steele

FANNIE MARIE TOLSON DEDICATED MOST OF HER LIFE to public education. She was the first person in her family to graduate from college and was the first African-American educator to teach in the desegregated schools of Fayette. During her 94 years of life, Fannie Marie left an enduring legacy on the Missouri civil rights movement.

Tolson was born in 1911, on the family farm near Fayette, the daughter of Ernest Willoughby Tolson and Anna Bell Hill Tolson. She died in 2005 after a brief illness.

A teacher in the Fayette schools for nearly 25 years, Miss Tolson began her education as a student at Fayette's Lincoln School until 1928, and then completed high school at Lincoln University in Jefferson City. After graduating high school, she stacked hay to pay her way to continue college at Lincoln. Once enrolled at Lincoln, Miss Tolson held various jobs to pay for expenses including working as a chaperone and cook. She graduated from Lincoln in 1934, the first in her family to earn a college degree. She held lifetime teaching certificates for social studies, economics and sociology.

Her first high school teaching position was in Bowling Green in 1936. A year later she accepted a post in Boonville at a new modern school for blacks known as Sumner School where she served 13 years. In 1949, she returned to Fayette to care for her mother. In 1952, Miss Tolson began teaching at the Lincoln School in Fayette where she was principal from 1960 to 1966.

Fayette schools were gradually integrated and in 1966 she began teaching sixth grade at the Clark Middle School, the first black teacher in the recently integrated school system. Miss Tolson retired in 1977, but returned occasionally to substitute. In total she had taught nearly for 40 years.

In the early 1960s she helped form Howard County's first

Human Development Corporation and also the Human Enterprise Organization of which she was elected vice-president in 1990. In 1965, she helped organize Howard County's first Head Start Program.

Miss Tolson was a life-long member of St. Paul United Methodist Church in Fayette where she

was church historian, and a co-chair of the administrative board. After retirement she studied to become a certified Lay Speaker for the United Methodist Church in 1982. She was a member of Howard County Retired Teachers.

Miss Tolson received many honors. In 1976, Gov. Kit Bond made her an honorary Bicentennial Commissioner and in 2000 she was a speaker at the opening of an exhibit at the State Capitol on Missouri Segregated Schools. She received two special recognitions in 2005; Missouri Treasurer Sarah Steelman selected her as the first recipient of the 'Missouri Treasure Award' and in 2004 she was the co-grand marshal of Fayette's annual Juneteenth celebration.

Editor's note: An earlier version of this article was published in the Fayette Advertiser in August 2005, when Fannie Marie Tolson died, by then editor/publisher Jim Steele. A Fayette resident, Steele is now retired and serves as president of the Boonslick Historical Society. He holds degrees in history and political science from Central Methodist University and in journalism from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Lincoln School History

The first establishment of a public school system in Missouri was in 1839. After the Civil War, the U.S. Congress created the Freedman's Bureau in 1865 and one year later that agency was given authority to establish black schools. Five years later (1871) Lincoln Public School was established in Fayette. The public school system in Howard County was under the oversight of County Commissioner A. F. Willis.

When Lincoln opened, there were 130 "colored" children of school age in the district. Willis Anderson was the teacher. Although little is known about the structure of the building, it is assumed, based on the number of school-age children, that the schoolhouse was more than a one-room building. In 1882, land was purchased on a three acre plot and a school building constructed at 321 East Hackberry Street (part of the acreage was sold to Second Baptist Church).

On March 5, 1923, shortly after eight o'clock in the morning, the square-frame school building "met the unfortunate fate of a fire due to a defective flue and was practically totally destroyed," according to the Fayette Advertiser. The students finished the school term by attending classes at the Second Baptist Church and St. Paul Methodist Church. After passage of a school bond on May 10, 1923, to support construction of "new colored and white school buildings," a two-story rectangular red brick building with eight classrooms, at a cost of approximately \$16,000, was formerly opened in October 1923. The building was considered "impressive." According to the local paper, "the new building is constructed according to the principles governing the best school house architecture in the country today." Also, the building was equipped with a telephone.



According to Lincoln School records, Andrew Cravens was principal from 1915 to 1935. In 1920, enrollment was estimated at over 150 students. Teachers at that time were Mrs. N.D. Diggs, Miss Alexena Johnson and Miss Lillian Hinch. Three years later (1923) enrollment had grown to 180 students. In 1935, J. J. Williams took over as principal at Lincoln. Students attending school did so up until the 10th grade. Those wishing to continue their formal education had to attend high school in Dalton or Boonville (Sumner High School). Fannie Marie Tolson attended school there in 1928 and later taught from 1952 to 1960. She then became principal from 1960 to 1966.

"Other names to remember and not forget" are A. B. Barber (Supt.), J. E. Sutton (Supt.), William N. Clark (Supt.), C. C. Hamilton (Principal), Emma Turner (Principal), Floyd Ancell (Principal), Marabelle Moore (Principal), Anna Mae Baskett, Barbara Alexander, Bernal Chomeau, C. Amelia Turner, Emma Lincoln, Ernest Boone, Frankie Hurt, Irma Adams Johnson, James Dickerson, Lawrence Johnson, Lela May, Lillian Kemp, Marjorie Casson, M. Anna Tolson, Mary Jane Davis, Mary Power, Ms. Coley, Pauline Foster, Rosie Barnes, Ruth Shepard, Virginia Stemmons, Willa Estill, W. Elphra Curtis, and many other administrators and teachers who served Lincoln.

William N. Clark became Superintendent in 1954 (and served until retirement in 1976) "and deserves a great deal of credit for his leadership." It was during his tenure that integration began in

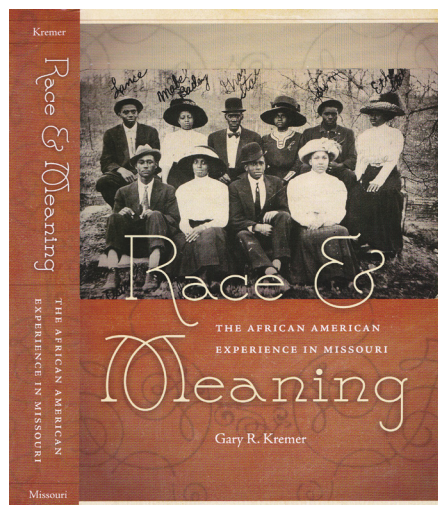
1955 when Lincoln students entering the 11th and 12th grades were integrated with other white students. This was precipitated by the landmark U.S. decision "Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka." Two years later the 9th and 10th grades were integrated. And in the fall of 1961 the 7th and 8th grades were integrated.

Many of the classroom materials, including books, were passed down from the white to colored schools. Although the "hand-me-down books" may have been seen as inferior, many students

saw this as a plus since many of the handbooks had answers to questions recorded in them. Lincoln Public School had been open for ninety-five years when the doors were finally closed in May 1966 and the remaining grades integrated.

Lincoln provided the foundation and rich beginning of a formal education for thousands of African-American students. The students were blessed to have such devoted teachers, administrators and a community that paved the way and opened doors to create the key to success in immeasurable ways for all.

Editor's Note: Information for this article came from literature made available by the Lincoln Public School Memorial Committee. It was organized to: "preserve the rich history of Lincoln School to promote 'key to success' by engaging the community and youth through educational scholarships and leadership development." Image courtesy of Jim Steele.



Gary Kremer Book on Black History

Over the past four decades, historian Gary Kremer has written extensively about the African-American experience in Missouri. A longtime university professor of history, Kremer is currently executive director of the State of Missouri Historical Society.

Fourteen of his best articles on the subject are available in one place in the recently published book, *Race and Meaning: The African American Experience in Missouri* (University of Missouri Press, Columbia, 2014). By placing the articles in chronological order of historical events rather than by publication date, Kremer combines them into one detailed account that addresses issues such as the transition from slavery to freedom for African Americans in Missouri, all-black rural communities, and the lives of African Americans seeking new opportunities in Missouri's cities.

In addition to his previously published articles, Kremer includes a personal introduction revealing how he first became interested in researching African-American history and how his education at Lincoln University – specifically the influence of his mentor, Professor of History Lorenzo Greene – helped him to realize his eventual career path.

Two BHS Members Pass Away

Two longtime BHS members died recently. Elizabeth Ann (Beckner) Betteridge, 87, of Pilot Grove, died February 4, and Paula Karen (Lowther) Shannon, 73, formerly of Boonville but living in Parker, Colorado, at the time of her death, December 29, 2019.



Betteridge was born on August 25, 1932 to Claude and Arrena (Woods) Beckner. She grew up in Webster County, Missouri, graduating from Marshfield High School in 1950. She earned an her associate's degree from Southwest Baptist College in 1952, a bachelor's degree from the University of Missouri, Columbia, as well as a master's degree and a specialist degree in education.

She married Robert (Bob) Betteridge in 1952. He preceded her in death.

She was the first Kindergarten teacher in Pilot Grove and continued in that role for 24 years. Afterwards she taught dedicated reading classes in Tipton and Otterville, Missouri. She was a member of Alpha Omega Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, a women educator's organization.

In 1989, she co-founded the Cooper County Historical Society with her friend and neighbor, Florence (Winky) Friedrichs. The society was originally founded to fund the creation of a book of local history aimed at fourth graders. The book, *Discover Cooper County, by Looking Back*, was authored by Betteridge and illustrated by Friedrichs.

Betteridge and her husband lived in the historic Betteridge family home, Crestmead, circa 1857, near Pilot Grove in Cooper County. They restored the home to its former glory after a devastating fire in 2008 destroyed a large section of it. In 2012, Anne Betteridge received the Preserve Missouri Award from Missouri Preservation for this work.

Surviving family includes her two children, William (Diane) Betteridge and Karen Betteridge.

Shannon was born December 22, 1946, in Trenton, Missouri, the daughter of Paul and Josephine (Jo) Lowther.

Paula graduated from Boonville High School in 1964 and earned a degree in Education from the University of Missouri, in 1969. She later earned a masters degree in public administration, from the University of Phoenix, in 1996. She married Jim Shannon, of Boonville, Missouri in 1966. He preceded her in death.

An active member of the Boonslick Historical Society, Shannon served on its board of directors and as its treasurer for many years. She was a founding member of the Katy Bridge Coalition, in 2005, and later served as its executive director. The coalition overcame Union Pacific's intentions to tear down the Katy Bridge, ultimately saving the bridge as part of the Katy Trail.

Shannon initially worked for Littleton Public Schools, in Littleton, Colorado, serving as a literacy specialist inspiring "at risk" children to love to read. She later became director of curriculum

and assessment for the district.

After retiring from Littleton Public Schools, Shannon and her husband moved back to her hometown of Boonville, where they bought a historic Victorian home on High Street that overlooked the Missouri River.

Survivors include a son, Mitch (Kristen) Shannon, a sister and brother.



BHS Board Nominations Approved

Two-year terms for five members of the Boonslick Historical Society Board of Directors were approved by the membership during the fall meeting in Boonville.

The new terms began in January. The five board members are Carolyn Collings of Columbia, Don Cullimore of Fayette, Sam Jewett of Boonville, Jim Steele of Fayette and Mike Dickey of Arrow Rock. Collings will continue serving as board secretary, Jewett as treasurer, Cullimore and Dickey as directors at large, and Steele as president of the Society.

Board membership is open to all members. Anyone wishing to nominate someone for consideration as a board candidate should contact BHS President Jim Steele at 660-537-0484 or by Email: jsteele@woodcreekmedia.com. A brief bio of the candidate being nominated should be provided to Jim.

Announcement of board candidates will be made in the BHS magazine and at the fall 2020 meeting, when members will be asked to vote on them. Ten board members are the maximum allowed.

From the *Franklin Intelligencer* May 12, 1826

The constitution of the Fayette Circulating Library Company was published in its entirety, 29 articles in length. One of the interesting rules was the fine of one mill for every 10 pages in a book that was 30 days or more overdue, but not more than 6 ¼ cents for each day.

February 8, 1827

Lost – on January 23 in or near Franklin, a pair of saddlebags containing 38 dollars in specie, together with various articles. The finder will be liberally rewarded by leaving them with James M. Samuel, Esq., of Franklin or returning them to the subscriber.



P.O. Box 426
Boonville, MO 65233

Important Information about BHS Events

To members and friends of the Boonslick Historical Society, for reasons of public health and safety related to the pandemic coronavirus (COVID-19), we are canceling the May 9 Spring BHS meeting at the Center for Missouri Studies in Columbia, headquarters of the State of Missouri Historical Society. State and federal public guidelines require that meetings or events be limited to 10 or fewer persons. Also, the State Historical Society is currently closed for an indefinite period. As most of us know, Missouri is under a “stay-at-home” order issued by the governor for an indefinite period.

We will notify members and the general public in June if coronavi-

rus-related public safety issues require us to cancel the July 12 Summer BHS meeting. It is scheduled to be held at Oakwood (circa 1835-36), the historic home of Abiel and Jeanette Leonard and their family in Fayette.

No plans have been made at this time for a fall meeting and banquet.

For further information, contact BHS President Jim Steele at: jsteele@woodcreekmedia.com.

Let us hope for strength and unity during these trying times and please do everything possible to stay well during the days and weeks to come

—Jim Steele and the BHS Board of Directors.

BHS Member Publishes Technical Editing Book

Technical Editing: An Introduction to Editing in the Workplace

By Donald H. Cunningham,

Edward A. Malone, & Joyce M. Rothschild

Publisher: Oxford University Press (November 12, 2019)

ISBN-10: 0190872675 & ISBN-13: 978-0190872670

Paperback: 592 pages, available online \$72.95

Boonslick Historical Society member Donald H. Cunningham, professor emeritus of English, Auburn University, is the lead author of a new book, *Technical Editing: An Introduction to Editing in the Workplace*, published by Oxford University Press.

Cunningham, an award-winning author and teacher, has published numerous articles and reviews, as well as several books, including *How to Write for the World of Work*, now in its seventh edition. He and his wife live at Wooldridge in Cooper County.

The book offers a comprehensive, accessible, and current approach to technical and professional editing. The first part of the text provides an overview of the editing process (appraising the document, creating an editing plan, and implementing the plan), the second part covers substantive editing (editing for organization, completeness, accuracy, etc.), and the third part explains copyediting (from its principles and procedures to their application in practice) and proofreading.

The authors discuss such topics as fraud in the workplace and whistleblowing; navigation aids in print and digital documents; redaction of

classified or confidential information; layout and design principles; controlled languages, the plain English movement, and international varieties of English; content reuse and content management systems; and electronic editing skills. The book provides ample coverage of grammar, punctuation, and usage,

with many authentic examples from technical and business documents.

Cunningham taught at both the undergraduate and graduate levels over the course of his thirty-five-year teaching career. He served in a number of administrative roles, including coordinator and director of technical communication programs at both Texas Tech and Auburn University.

