Back There, Then

BACK THERE, THEN

A historical genealogical memoir by

Marietta Stevens Crichlow

with notes by Linda Crichlow White

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We hope you enjoy this family story. If you have clues about additional family history or just want to talk about the folks mentioned herein, send an e-mail to lindacrichlow@aol.com or call 202-607-7392.

For updates see www.backtherethen.com

Table Of Contents

Acknowledgments

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And thanks to Kwame and Khalila and all the other descendants who we hope will appreciate and carry on the stories.

Foreword

The life of African American people during the twentieth century is written in numerous media. There are photographs, oral histories, moving footage, and newspapers. The unique voice of life amongst the masses is often swept together during the Great Migration, Depression, World Wars, and civil rights era.

Rarely, has the unique voice of an average life successfully lived been documented. In the case of Marietta Louise Stevens Crichlow, such a life continues to live on in the pages of her meticulous notes. Her daughter, Linda Crichlow White, has painstakingly linked the past with the present in a spectacular fashion. Written in the first person, Mrs. Crichlow's story follows her family from places such as Appomattox and Lynchburg, Virginia; to Duquesne, Pennsylvania; Washington, DC; Boston, and beyond. Howard University figures prominently.

Beautifully accented with photographs of ancestors, original documents, and scholarship, Mrs. White presents African American life in real time and feel. Her mother, Mrs. Crichlow, wrote: "Prior to having electricity installed, the house had gas lights. Gas lamps were fastened to the walls. And the streets had gas lights." She also wrote "None of the high school personnel talked with me about attending college. There were no school counselors in those days. Two adults lived next door to us, Vernon and his brother, Frank Worrell. Frank had attended Howard University…but dropped out for lack of funds. It was Frank who suggested that I apply for admission to Howard." She attended Howard and graduated in 1941. On the occasion of her 30th high school reunion, out of the 14 Colored students, four attended college, which was unusual since women in 1930s America were expected to marry and raise children. This reminiscence is accompanied by a Latin Club photograph where the three brown faces stand out against the 20-plus white ones.

Throughout the narrative, education, faith, and family figure prominently. The primary source materials of certificates, college degrees, photographs, and church programs bring the reader into world of the Crichlow clan while on the campus of Howard University, funeralizing a loved one, welcoming a baby, or dealing with day-to-day life. In this work we see ourselves reflected in human possibility and our potential evident in the growth of a successful American family, living as African American citizens.

By Dr. Ida E. Jones, Ph.D.
Assistant Curator
Manuscript Division
Moorland-Spingarn Research Center
Howard University

Preface

This document was substantially written by Marietta Stevens Crichlow in the 1990s. It was "discovered" in 2009 while planning for Marietta's 90th birthday celebration as Linda was looking through Mom's voluminous cache of photo albums and other memorabilia.

Mom had diligently typed her memories of family members and events and bound them in a looseleaf binder with Xeroxed copies of photographs, but no page numbers or index. A couple of years later, and with the help of professional organizers, I found the originals to most of the copies and scanned them for a more professional look.

Marietta Stevens, ca. 1966

The history of African Americans continues to unfold. Regrettably, we have too often been depicted as slaves, drug users, good-timers, and rabble rousers in various states of subjugation, deprivation, misery, and squalor.

Linda believes that Marietta and our extended family represent the majority of African Americans and that we fit into none of the aforementioned categories. Our ancestors have been hard-working, self-supporting people who believed that God was their salvation and whose lives—in most cases—centered around the church. Indeed, many of the family members have been ministers and include Baptists (regular), Seventh Day Adventists, Seventh Day Baptists and AME's (African Methodist Episcopal) and there have been various other beliefs.

Mom collected and saved so much family memorabilia—in some ways too much stuff—but the saved news articles, funeral programs and letters help weave the stories. Memorabilia found among Auntie's (Mom's sister, Edna McIntyre) and Cousin Connie's possessions have also added to the stories.

Post 1990s when Marietta wrote most of this, Linda learned more about the family due to a few noteworthy events:

1. In 2004, 1st cousin Donna Crichlow Googled our grandfather's name and discovered volumes of stuff about our grandfather Cyril. She subsequently contacted Dr. Robert Hill, professor and archivist of the Marcus Garvey Archives at UCLA. We all had heard that Cyril had "worked with" Marcus Garvey but never knew the extent of his involvement until this time. Our grandfather had actually been Garvey's resident commissioner in Liberia. More about this in the section on Cyril Crichlow.

2. In 2006 I agreed to help manage the care for Mom's then 92-year-old cousin, Constance Glover Bruce. This required us to clean out her house at 444 Manor Place. Photos and documents there enabled us to learn more about the Glover and Bruce families. Connie's mother, Aunt Goldie Glover Bruce, had purchased the house in 1945 so there was an over-70-year accumulation of letters and memorabilia.

Marietta Stevens ca. 1924

3. In 2010, Auntie (Edna McIntyre) moved to an assisted living facility. In preparing for her move, we found much family memorabilia in the apartment where she had resided for 50 years.

4. A trip to Lynchburg, Virginia, and discussions with Mom and Auntie's cousin Carolyn Brown revealed more information.

5. A trip to Boston and Cape Cod, Massachusetts, and conversations with Cousin Lucy Cromwell provided more information about the Glovers.

6. When we organized Mom's memorabilia, more questions and answers came to light.

With this "new" information, new facts were revealed, so Linda is taking the liberty to add comments to Marietta's manuscript in the sidebars. It is hoped that eventually, other family members will expand upon this information and add their own or their immediate family members' personal recollections.

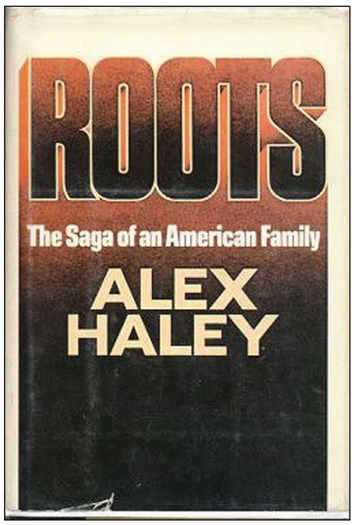
Most of this manuscript was written by Marietta in the 1990s. Instead of changing the tense, much of the material has been left in the present tense, including the mention of some now deceased people. See the notes section at the end of the book for updates on the narrative. We hope this is not too confusing!

Whenever Mommy tells stories of the past, she usually begins with ***Back there, then….***

Linda Crichlow White
2014

Marietta's Introduction

Perhaps the most precious resource of any people is their history. A working knowledge of the lives and accomplishments of our ancestors provides us not merely with a look back but a look "in." And through this insight, we are able to attain a greater appreciation of ourselves and our own possibilities.



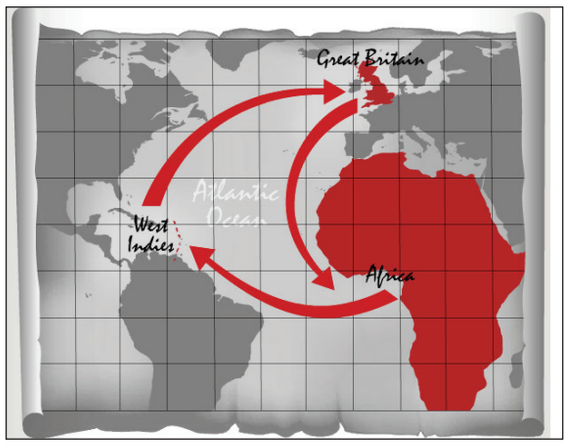
***Roots* by Alex Haley**

In order to better understand our present and our future, it is important that we know as much as possible about our past. This process involves reading, research, and talking with those persons who remember events from the past that occurred during their lifetimes, and which, for me, has been a very delayed process—putting it all together in an understandable format.

I have had this family history project in the back of my mind for many years but have let other things get in my way of putting it on paper. I have letters postmarked of more than thirty years ago that I received in reply to my inquiries about the family. I realize now that if I do not get at this task and assemble what information I have gathered, it is likely that it will not get done by me. It would probably be difficult for anyone else to make sense of my notes.

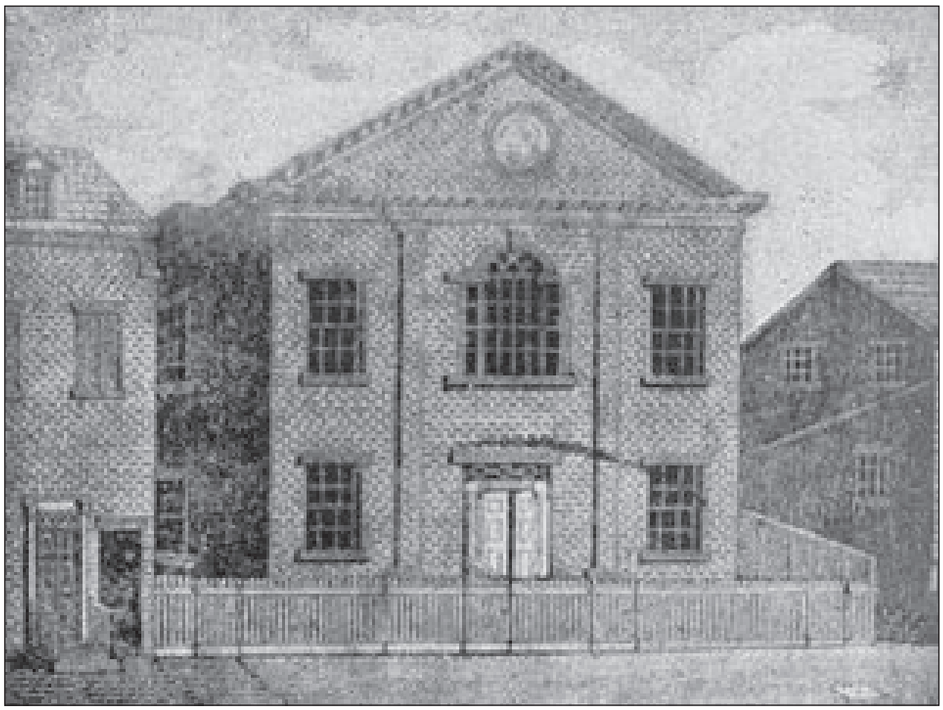
With the help of my computer, of which I have a meager knowledge, I plan to get at least some of my family's history sorted out and recorded. It should shed some light on my forebears and some of it might be interesting to the younger ones coming along.

Tracing the history of any Afro-American family prior to the freeing of the slaves in America is difficult. Some determined and conscientious writers have spent months and probably years searching their family history, as did Alex Haley who traveled to Africa and talked with the griots there to obtain information for his excellent book, *Roots.* Griots were African storytellers who remembered the stories of the family histories of the tribes. The television production of *Roots* in 1977 was the most-watched program at that time. I had the privilege of working with Alex Haley's sister-in-1aw, Doris Haley, at Sharpe Health School. She taught English there.



Triangle Trade

I have been able to gather pictures and bits of information of my ancestors who lived in the late1800s but little or noth-



New York African Free School No. 2, an institution founded by members of the New York Manumission Society 1787, to provide education to children of slaves and free people of color.

Linda's recent research has revealed that, up until about 1850, the folks now known as Black or African Americans proudly referred to themselves as "Africans." For example, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) was founded in Philadelphia in 1794. In Boston and in New York City, there were "African Free Schools." Historians have also begun using the term enslaved rather than slaves.

ing of what occurred in the family during slavery. We have been told that wave after wave of immigrants stepped onto the shores of America in the early 1600s. History books tell us that the first Negro slaves were brought to America and landed at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619. On the return trip from Africa, the slave traders sometimes stopped and dropped off Africans in the Caribbean Islands. These slaves were often put to work on the sugar plantations. The sugar was made into rum and on the return trip to Africa the traders would pick up the rum. The slaves would then be traded for the rum, often making the Africans drunk before loading them tightly on the ships bringing them to America. This became known as the Triangle Trade.

For Africans, at that time called Negroes, the so-called New World meant not only slavery but also a new climate and scenery, new customs, new language, and a land filled with people of a different color than they knew. African families became broken forever—husbands and wives, parents and children—never to see one another again.

Over the years, much was done by the slave owners to discredit Africans and their history and to wipe out whatever progress Africans had made in the continent. On coming to America, the Negro families were separated from their relatives and sold to different slave owners in various locations. They were treated more like animals than human beings. Many slave owners had children with their female slaves, but disowned the children. For this reason, much of the lineage of Negroes has been mixed up, not recorded, and generally lost. In recent years, the newspapers have reported that DNA samples have proven that President Thomas

Jefferson had children with his slave, Sally Hemings. It was probably a widespread habit during slavery for White slave owners to take advantage of the slaves in any way they saw fit.

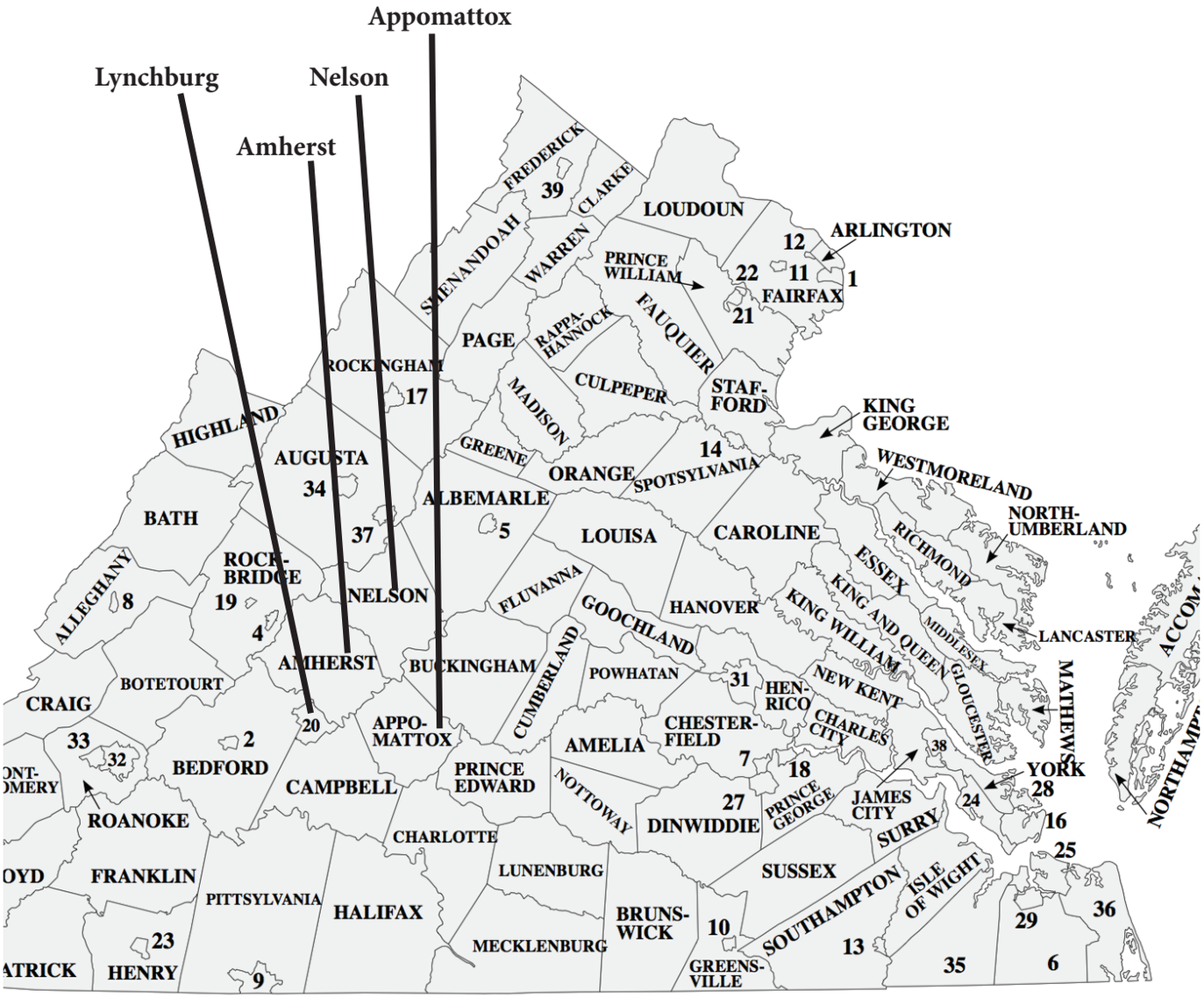
During the years that slavery existed in the United States and for a long time afterward, people with African ancestry were called Negroes. White people had a lot of trouble spelling the word with a capital N. Many called the slaves Niggers or Nigras, a demeaning term if Whites said it; sometimes a friendly term if Negroes said it. Queer? Yes, but true. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was organized in 1913 and soon many Negroes began to be called "Colored." During the Civil Rights Movement that began in the 1950s and escalated in the 1960s, Stokely Carmichael, one of the young leaders of the movement, coined the term Black Power.

Since then, the word "Blacks" has been favorably and widely used when referring to people whose ancestors were slaves from Africa. Some people, as well as myself have a problem using the word "Black" to describe our race. Due to widespread miscegenation, the majority of Colored people in the United States are not black of color. Most are shades of brown to very light complexions. Some are so fair that to look at them no one would know they had African ancestry. But as the saying goes, "One drop makes you whole." Over the decades, many fair-skinned people crossed over and disowned their Negro ancestry so that they could obtain better treatment and better job opportunities. This practice became known as "passing." Shirlee Taylor Haizlip, the author of the book, *The Sweeter the Juice,* tells about this passing over in an interesting way.

Despite the brutality of slavery, there were some "loving" relationships between Whites and Blacks—in both the North and the South. And, some White slave owners left property to their Black offspring. Legend says that HBCU Spelman College for girls was founded by wealthy Whites for their Black offspring.

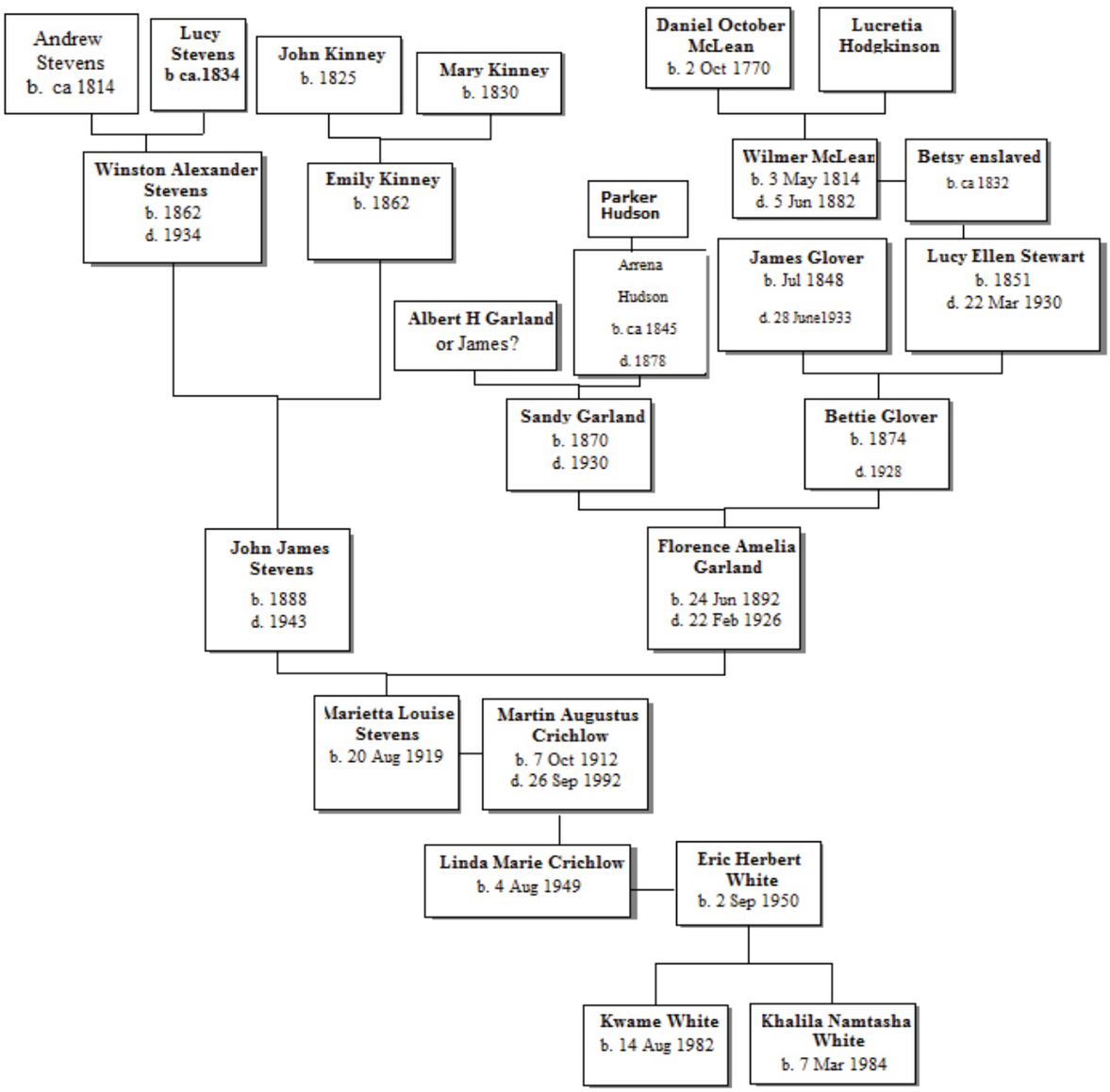
Recently, a Black journalist wrote that he had visited Somalia, Tanzania, and some other areas in present-day Africa. His personal conclusion was that, although the slaves were treated horribly, he was thankful that his ancestors had come over on the boat and were brought to America because the drought and tribal rivalry in those countries at the time of his visit seemed to him to be almost unbearable.

What is your opinion?



Virginia map showing location of Appomattox, Amherst, Nelson Counties and Lynchburg—locales where Marietta's family originated.

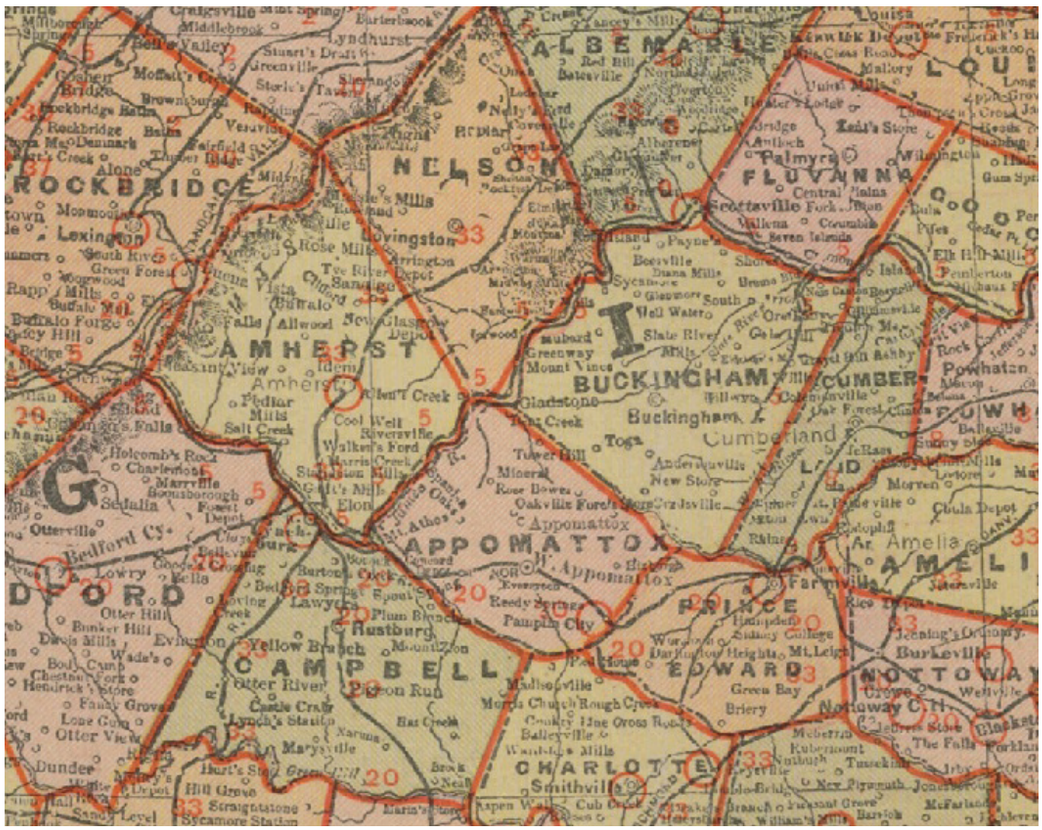
Marietta Stevens Crichlow Direct Lineage



CHAPTER 1

South Central Virginia circa 1870

[This part was written by Linda in May 2014 after obtaining new information about the family. You will learn more about the persons mentioned here in subsequent chapters.]



Our ancestors lived in the Virginia counties of Nelson, Appomattox, and Amherst in the mid- to late 1800s.

Massies Mill circa 1880

Marietta's great-grandfather Andrew Stevens lived in the Massies Mill section of Nelson County and his occupation was listed as farming in 1870. Maternal great-great-grandfather Parker Hudson was also listed as a farmer. Farming was what nearly everyone did. Even ancestor Wilmer McLean was listed as a farmer in the Prince William County, Virginia, census of 1860. Tobacco was one of the important crops in these counties and throughout Virginia.

By 1870, some of them were living in Lynchburg, Virginia, having moved from rural to urban like so many others—both Black and Whites—after the Civil War and throughout history. In 1870 Grandmother Lucy Glover lived with her mother

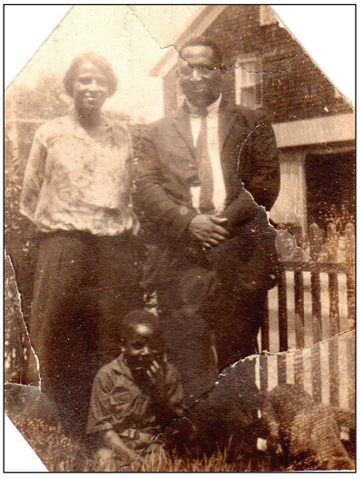
CHAPTER 9

Cyril Askelon Crichlow Father of Martin A. Crichlow

Cyril Crichlow

Cyril Askelon Crichlow was the only child of Samuel Augustus Crichlow and Agnes Louise Crichlow. I do not know her maiden name. Cyril was born in Trinidad, British West Indies on September 12, 1889. His father was born in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, British West Indies in the year 1858 and died on June 8, 1929, at 71 years of age. Samuel Crichlow had worked in real estate on the island. Samuel's mother was Rebecca Pilgrim. I do not have any other information about Cyril Crichlow's parents.

Cyril Crichlow had attended the public schools in Trinidad and was sent to the United States in about 1904 when he was 15 years old. He enrolled at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska. Union College was a Seventh Day Adventist institution. It was at that school where he learned more about the fundamentals of the Bible. According to some sources, he attended Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee, but did not complete his studies there. Cyril spoke with very good diction. *[Linda: As children, we Crichlow grandchildren thought Grandpop spoke "proper." We didn't realize until much later that he was speaking with a British West Indian accent. Even though we always knew he was from Trinidad, we really didn't know about the people and culture of Trinidad.]*



Lillian, Cyril and Luther ca. 1914

On May 30, 1909, Cyril Crichlow married Lillian Elizabeth Warnick. The marriage ceremony was performed in Mobile, Alabama. They were missionaries of the Seventh Day Adventist Church and traveled from place to place. Their first two children, Luther and Martin, were born in Yazoo City, Mississippi. Their youngest child, Allwyn Forrester, was born in Nashville, Tennessee. Martin had told me that the family also had lived in Huntsville, Alabama; Anniston, Alabama; New York, New York; Brooklyn, New York; Newark, Jersey City, Bound Brook, and Asbury Park, New Jersey; and in several locations in Washington, D.C.

In 1918, Cyril Crichlow served with the American Expeditionary Forces in France and Germany during World War I. Records show that in 1921 he was secretary to Marcus Garvey, who during the 1920s was working toward encouraging the Colored people in the United States to return to Liberia, Africa, to set up a free state. Garvey's organization was the United Negro Improvement Association—UNIA. With another gentleman, Cyril Crichlow set up a business school in New York City on Seventh Avenue—Crichlow-Braithwaite Shorthand School. He was an expert typist. See copy of an advertisement for the school on page 92.

The family was living in Asbury Park, New Jersey, when Cyril moved to Washington, DC, to take a job as mail handler at the Munitions Building, Department

There is much more about Cyril and Lillian in the book!

and more about other Crichlows…a
nd Stevenses, Garlands, Glovers, Lees and more!