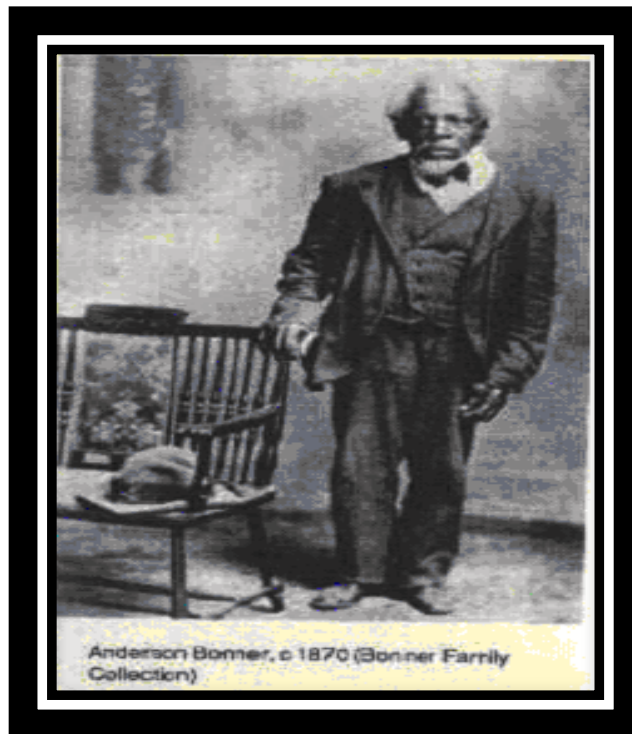


Family Genealogical Narrative

With family members by name

Oral presentation



“Reaching back to the Past to Create the Future”

Anderson and Eliza Bonner Family



Anderson Bonner, c 1870 (Bonner Family Collection)

The amazing accomplishments of Anderson Bonner (c. 1839 – c. 1920) An African-American landowner, entrepreneur, and early Dallas pioneer was born into slavery in Alabama, most likely in the late 1830s. As a farmer and owner of extensive holdings north of Dallas along White Rock Creek and Cottonwood Branch, have not been fully credited. By 1850 Dallas County had a population of 2,743, and by 1860 the number of residents had almost tripled to 8,665. Though the slave population rose faster than the white population, Dallas County had fewer slaves than some other Texas counties.

A former slave, Anderson Bonner signed his name with an X on deeds for hundreds of acres of land. He purchased the property with funds earned from his farm products and houses he leased to sharecroppers. The fact that all of his business transactions were handled with legal consultation and documentation tends to verify his brilliant business sense and knowledge of measures needed to secure his massive holdings. Records indicate that the warranty deed for one of his earliest land purchases (over sixty acres) was filed in Dallas County August 10, 1874.

According to the 1870 United States census, Bonner's personal financial worth was valued at \$275. He continued to build his unlikely empire and ultimately ended up with nearly 2,000 acres of land, located mostly along White Rock Creek and surrounding areas in what is today North Dallas and Richardson.

It is not known how Anderson Bonner, his brother, Louis and sister, Caroline, came from Alabama to the farm area North of White Rock Creek. There are indications that they may have lived in Arkansas for a while. Also, it was reported that at some point Anderson was given to a white family as a wedding gift to the daughter of his master, taking him from Alabama to Arkansas and ultimately to Texas.

Anderson Bonner married Eliza and nine known children were borne to that union; Newton, William, Ed, John, Andy, Mary, Martha, Charlie and Nash. Eliza was originally from Arkansas. The children helped work the farm. He grew cotton, corn, and fruit, along with other types of crops.

About 1903, Eliza lost her life as the result of a lamp explosion and fire in their home. Those who saw the explosion said she placed her hands over her head when the lamp exploded and caught fire.

Later on Anderson Bonner married Lacinda from Waxahachie, Texas. The sister of Anderson Bonner, Caroline, married Ed Fields, Pearl Turner-Bonner, Wife of John Bonner, was From the Turner Family. One of the Fields descendants married a Giddings. This established linkage among several of the pioneer African American families who migrated to the farm lands along White Rock Creek in settlements known as the Upper and Lower White Rock Creek areas. These families, along with others, had extensive land holdings along a line between Dallas and Richardson and from Garland to Carrollton.

The First school for black children in the North Dallas area was the Vickery and Hillcrest School. It was re-named to the Anderson Bonner School. The school was closed by the Richardson ISD when Hamilton Park School opened in 1955.

Prior to World War II many black groups held picnics on a section of the farm on Forest Lane, including the property where Medical City Hospital is now located (Forest Lane and Central Expressway). Central Expressway was cut through the farm. The City of Dallas officially named the park west of Medical City Hospital, Anderson Bonner Park. The park runs along White Rock Creek and is complete with bicycle trails and recreation areas. This area was also a part of the original farm.

Anderson Bonner had four surviving grandchildren, the offspring of Charlie and Hallie Bonner; Eunice Bonner-Turner, Henry Andersonson Bonner, and Marie Bonner and one child of John and Pearl Turner Bonner; Odessa Bonner-Hill. Odessa was the only surviving child of John and Pearl Bonner.

The Bonner's offspring have embraced their forefather's success in an effort to keep his legacy alive.

If your interest is pique by this presentation, check the following resources and reference:

“Anderson Bonner,” 2011 Education Awareness: Anderson Bonner Endowment, Hamilton Park Historical Preservation Foundation (<http://hp-foundation.net/Education/AndersonBonnerEndowment.aspx>), accessed March 30, 2012. Dallas County, TX–Cemetery–White Rock Garden of Memories (<http://files.usgwarchives.net/tx/dallas/cemeteries/whiterock.txt>), accessed August 28, 2012. Ruth Haesemeyer, “Richardson ISD School celebrates Black History Month, former slave and area leader Anderson Bonner,” neighborsgo.com (<http://neighborsgo.smallworldlabs.com/stories/80267>), accessed March 30, 2012. Vertical File, Dallas Public Library, Dallas, Texas. Texas Escapes website, Texas Black History, www.texasescapes.com/FEATURES/Texas-Black-History.htm Dallas Black History, <http://blacksindallas.com/dallasblackhistory/>

Black Dallas Remembered, Vol.1&2, BLACK DALLAS REMEMBERED INCORPORATED, citing Blacks in Dallas history, 7th floor Dallas Public Library

Thanks;

From the Bonner Family