

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

**RURAL AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES,
THRIVING AND PERSEVERANT:
WABAUNSEE TOWNSHIP,
WABAUNSEE COUNTY,
KANSAS—1865-1925**

**RESEARCH PAPER SUBMITTED TO
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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

**BY
JAMES "JC" C. RIVERS JR.**

MANHATTAN, KANSAS

Cover is an author's picture of the present day landscape east of Alma, Kansas in Wabaunsee Township; note, this landscape is rather representative of that encountered by pioneers arriving in Wabaunsee Township.

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For information concerning the Chapman Center for Rural Studies contact:

Kansas State History Department
208 Eisenhower Hall
Manhattan, KS 66502
885-532-6730
chapmancenter@ksu.edu

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INTRODUCTION

Some cloudy days in Wabaunsee Township, Wabaunsee County, Kansas one can see a ray of sun bursting through and illuminating a portion of the Flint Hills. Our discussion shines a ray of light through published history's omission to discover African Americans resolve and the display of flourishing kindred features, such as growth, successive generations, and maintaining a family unit. Their previous experiences in the Reconstruction/Redeemer South made them tenacious at employing social networks. These social networks are represented by four families, for the purpose of this paper, in the township during 1865-1925—Allen, Beard, Bradley, and Nichols (Nicholas or Boydston). There will be a brief familiarization with the nature behind African Americans streaming into Kansas during 1870-1882 followed by a discussion of the four families and a brief landscape description that they encountered.

David Lowenthal, Emeritus Professor of Geography and Professor Heritage Studies, said, "Heritage is not our sole link with the past. History, tradition, memory, myth, and memoir variously join us with what has passed, with forebears, with our own earlier selves."¹ We will link the township's African American families' ambitions, persistence, and social contact with historic record, allowing for reconstruction of broad patterns and making inferences. Virginia R. Dominguez, an anthropologist studying social identities and culture in Louisiana, said,

¹ David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996; Cambridge University Press 4th ed., 2005), p. 3.

Social identities, like material objects, become public 'knowledge' when they are named. Without a label to capture our conception of them, they have little social relevance because there is no 'knowledge' of their existence in the first place. The emergence of a new social label, therefore, carries with it the elevation of a new social identity to the domain of the public 'knowledge.'²

There are many accounts of white Americans' migration in local historic societies throughout rural Kansas. Recently, historians and the historic societies are adding another voice to the public knowledge base, African Americans cultural experiences and their lives in rural Kansas. Therefore, their lives and social identity contribute to the rural American discussion and add to the public knowledge domain.

BACKGROUND

The havoc in the former Confederate States after the Civil War influenced all aspects of Southern society. The freedom of former slaves infuriated many whites. White Southerners could not abide by Reconstruction's rules and laws, which the Republican majority in Congress began to place on them in 1865. Historian William Gillette noted, "Southern whites wanted above all to regain local power, regardless of the national outcome."³ The Reconstruction laws wrenched from white planters their influence at the state level, and many of the planters became impoverished due to the unstable nature of the labor force, the former slaves. The drive to regain the labor force and local power led whites to murder, violence, intimidation, and election fraud. Their actions compelled the United States Congress gave President Ulysses S. Grant powers "to use the military

² Virginia R. Dominguez, *White By Definition, Social Classification in Creole Louisiana*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), p. 256

³ William Gillette, *Retreat From Reconstruction, 1869-1879*, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), p. 334.

when necessary to enforce the Fifteenth Amendment” with the passage of First and Second Force Acts (1870 and 1871) and the Ku Klux Act of 1871.⁴ President Grant ordered federal troops into the South to restore order, and protection of blacks in 1871. Federal courts and officials maintained a semblance of freedom with United States troop’s encouragement and for several years in South Carolina following the withdraw of troops.⁵ The consensus among American historians is that President Rutherford B. Hayes’ removal of the last troops from the South in 1877 marked the end of federal efforts to protect the freedmen. For example, the leading Reconstruction historian Eric Foner wrote, “Reconstruction came to an irrevocable end with the inauguration of Hayes.”⁶ Richard Zuczek agreed with Foner, “Reconstruction had already begun its final chapter long before that winter” (1877).⁷ Nell Irvin Painter noticed a loss of hope among the freedmen during Reconstruction’s demise and the Redeemer’s rise.⁸

Upon gaining freedom, two of the foremost hopes of the former slaves were land ownership and education. Freedmen had a dire need to survive; many knew no other means of gaining continued existence other than farming. They knew that education was one path to remedy their plight. Nevertheless, education was not a channel for day-to-day feeding, clothing, and housing of

⁴ Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), p. 200.

⁵ Lou Falkner Williams, “Federal Enforcement of Blacks Rights in the Post-Redemption South: The Ellenton Riot Case,” in *Local Matters: Race, Crime, and Justice in the Nineteenth Century South*, eds. Christopher Waldrep and Donald G. Nieman, (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2001), p. 179.

⁶ Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1988), p. 587.

⁷ Richard Zuczek, *State of Rebellion: Reconstruction in South Carolina*, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 1996), p. 200.

⁸ Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, Inc. 1977; Norton Books, 1992.), p 44.

freed people—farming fulfilled these needs. The former slaves dearly loved freedom, and knew that “farming one’s own land on one’s own account meant being one’s own master.”⁹ As previously discussed, the collapse of Reconstruction in 1877 and the rise of Redemption between 1874-1880 resulted in intimidation and violence perpetrated by whites on African Americans, which caused a realization among the African Americans that their hopes of freedom—education and owning land—were bashed.

The trouncing of freedmen’s hopes was a forerunner to emigration fever. One of the emigration efforts was the Exodus to Kansas, which began as a trickle in 1874 and grew to the “Kansas Exodus Fever of 1879.”¹⁰ An outcome of the Exodus to Kansas was some Redemption refugees beginning homesteads and renting or leasing land in Wabaunsee, Wabaunsee County, Kansas. There was some irony of former slaves choosing the town and county site of the Beecher Bible and Gun Church to settle, a product of fighting in Kansas as a free versus a pro-slavery state before the Civil War.

WABAUNSEE TOWNSHIP, WABAUNSEE COUNTY, KANSAS

African Americans in Wabaunsee Township were never the majority group, six percent in 1895; yet, they were able to own land, work as they saw fit, travel the township and other areas as they wished, and see their children attend school.¹¹ There were approximately the same number of males as females and

⁹ Ibid, p. 6.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 147.

¹¹ Kansas State Historic Society, “Kansas 1895 Census Wabaunsee County,” (available from <http://www.kshs.org/genealogists/census/kansas/census1895ksresults.php?surname=&fname=&city=Kaw&county=WB&submit=SEARCH>), Internet, Accessed 6 March 2009.

adults as children in 1895.¹² The main source of employment, 1870-1925, was day labor, although domestic help, railroad, janitorial, ranch hands, and teamsters were other forms of work.¹³ African Americans arriving to Kansas found a drastic contrast compared to their pervious homes. The obvious change was the absence of physical harm and intimidation which they experienced in Southern states. Yet, as all races of pioneers moved westward, they took their 'hearth culture' or their values, intolerances, and traditions.¹⁴ Meanwhile, during 1865-1920, Wabaunsee, Kansas had the appearance of racial tolerance, which is apparent by the black homesteads, interracial marriages, and integrated schools. The subtle change, quite often overlooked by outsiders, was the landscape of their former homes, compared to Wabaunsee Township.

A majority of African American emigrants to Wabaunsee Township, 1870 - 1895, came from Missouri and Tennessee, with a few from Kentucky, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana.¹⁵ These portions of the South had mild winters and sultry hot summers. Wabaunsee Township, on the other hand, had cold winters and dry hot summers with winds sometimes reaching hurricane force. The upper-southern states have fifty inches average annual rainfall, 62 degrees mean annual temperature, and five inches average snowfall. Wabaunsee Township has 33 inches average annual rainfall, 54 degrees mean annual temperature, and 21 inches average annual snowfall.¹⁶

¹² Ibid.

¹³ As noted from Federal and Kansas State Census data of 1870-1925.

¹⁴ M. J. Morgan, "African Americans in Kansas," (from a lecture, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, 4 February 2009).

¹⁵ As noted from Federal and Kansas State Census data of 1870-1895.

¹⁶ Richard A. Wood, ed., *The Weather Almanac* 8th ed. (New York: Gale , 1984)

The similarities of the two areas geography are a river, alluvial plain, some springs, rolling hills, and valleys. However, this visual perspective is deceiving because the alluvial soil was not as vast as those in southern areas southern

areas. In Kansas, the substructure underneath the thin layer of soil rising up from narrow flood plains was limestone and flint hills as seen in figure one (as well as the picture on the cover).¹⁷ These climate and geography conditions dictated the flora and fauna that the

African Americans were leaving and those of their new homes.



FIGURE1
Geography of Wabaunsee Township
(U.S. Department of Interior, *Geologic Map of Wabaunsee County, 1959*).

The flora in Tennessee included many species of trees as well as berries and other indigenous edible and medicinal plants. Kansas, during the late nineteenth century had few species of trees, and fewer stands of tree. The hills were vast open prairie, with little resource for building a home that the African American emigrants utilized from previous experience. Some of the plants were

¹⁷ Homer E. Scolofsky and Huber Self, *Historical Atlas of Kansas*, 2d ed., (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), maps 3-5.

edible and others possessed medicinal properties, but they were not known to the arriving families.

The fauna was not an issue for the Wabaunsee Township African Americans, unlike other black communities in Kansas. The Kaw (later Kansas) River provided fish, but none of the other shell fish they had grown accustomed to eating. Deer, raccoon, and turkey were in the area, but they would require different hunting techniques. The climate, geographic, flora, and fauna differences the African Americans encountered did not stop their drive and adaptability to provide a safe, prosperous, and thriving environment for their families and the families of later arrivals.

DICY NICHOLS

Dicy Nichols was the first African American to homestead in Wabaunsee Township c. 1867.¹⁸ Mrs. Dicy Boydston traveled through Missouri with her family and Mr. James Boydston. Mr. Boydston probably found another wife, Mrs. Charlotte Boydston, a white woman. James Boydston continued to Kansas with his new wife, later settling in Newbury Township, Wabaunsee County.¹⁹ Dicy met a gentleman, Mr. Nichols, somewhere in Missouri during the trip with her four sons and two daughters, who may have survived the journey to the homestead, but he died or left the family shortly afterwards as he is not recorded in the 1870 Federal Census.²⁰ Mrs. Nichols was lost to history, due to census enumerators errors, except for a brief mention in Mrs. Ethel Morgan's memoirs, "She [Dicy]

¹⁸ Census records and memoirs record Dicy's name as Nichols, Nicholas, or Boydston.

¹⁹ 1870 U. S. Census, Kansas, Wabaunsee County, Newbury Township, (Series M593, Roll 442, Page 276).

²⁰ 1870 U. S. Census, Kansas, Wabaunsee County, Wabaunsee Township, (Series M593, Roll 442, Page 281, Kansas State Historic Society, Topeka, Kansas).

claimed the ½ section was unusual that black people homesteaded land at that time.”²¹



FIGURE 2

Dicy Nichols' Half-Section Homestead
(*Standard Atlas of Wabaunsee County, Kansas*, Chicago: Gillen and Davy, 1885.
Microfilm LM 497, no. 7, Kansas State
Historical Society, Topeka, KS.)



FIGURE 3

The Nichols' Homestead as Seen Today
(Author's Photograph)

Dicy Nichols received a United States Homestead Certificate, No. 1595, for the half section as seen in appendix one page 24, “the North East quarter of the South East quarter and the South East quarter of the North East quarter of Section Four in Township Eleven of Range Ten.”²² In addition, the 1870 Census records a five-hundred dollar property value for Nichols' land. She managed the land, shown in figures two and three, according to the Homestead Act of 1862 requiring improvements on the land. Dicy worked the land and built a stone home

²¹ Ethel M. Pinchem Morgan, “Early Black Families,” (Wabaunsee Town Folder, Wabaunsee County Museum, Wabaunsee County Historic Society, Alma, KS., 1987).

²² Wabaunsee County Register of Deeds, 1880-1883. (Microfilm, AR5658, Vol. O, “Deed Records,” p. 524. Kansas State Historic Society, Topeka, KS). Dicy's name was misspelled once more, ‘Disa Nichols.’

with her family and two other boarders; the family tree can be seen in appendix two page 28.²³ Dicy sold the land to the Hart-Enlow partnership c.1883, which later became the Robert Enlow Ranch.²⁴ Later, the home became the ranch's headquarters, and Dicy's family moved to the tenant house near the center of the half-section. Dicy's sons were accomplished native stone builders as they assisted German builders with the stone barn located on Stone Barn road today. One can only assume the tenant house was also built of stone due to the lack of wood and the craftsmanship of Dicy and her family. Only one of her descendants, John Boydston, could be found in county by 1920.

This Kansas pioneer African American woman and her family deserve further research in Tennessee and Missouri to help unravel her marriages to James Boydston and Mr. Nichols or Nicholas. Dicy Nichols, also, should have further Kansas research to help resolve the sale of the land to Hart-Enlow as there were no grantor-grantee records recording the sale.

ALLEN FAMILY

The Allen family's presence in Wabaunsee began c. 1865 with the arrival of Frank Allen. Mr. Allen was born in Missouri, and he married a white woman, Sarah Jane Johnson, born in Missouri, too.²⁵ One can not accurately ascertain the actual place of the marriage; nevertheless, a good assumption is that Kansas was a better place for an interracial marriage than Missouri. Frank and Sarah homesteaded a place in Wabaunsee, and they owned eighty acres, "Western

²³ 1875 Kansas Census Agricultural Schedule, Kansas, Wabaunsee County, Wabaunsee Township.

²⁴ Ethel M. Pinchem Morgan.

²⁵ 1870 U. S. Census, Kansas, Wabaunsee County, Wabaunsee Township, Series T9, Roll 398, Page 352, Kansas State Historic Society, Topeka, Kansas.

corner ½ of NE of Section Four in Township Eleven of Range Ten;” the index entry is in appendix three page 30 (The only available record for this transaction is the index entry).²⁶ Frank Allen realized his dream, working his land for himself and not as a tenant, much like Dicy Nichols. The Allen family became a center for social activity among the Wabaunsee Township African American community. There is evidence of two of Frank and Sarah Allen’s daughters marrying men from later arriving black families, the Allen family tree can be seen in appendix four page 33. Cora Allen married Augustus Bradley and Lila Allen married Archie Beard; both of these marriages and families will be discussed later.

George Allen, Frank’s son, was the only remaining Allen family member on the homestead in 1895.²⁷ He married Ollie Gardenhire, daughter of a well known black family in Wabaunsee County. By 1920, Lila Allen Pinchem Beard and Cora Allen Bradley were the only Allen descendants in Wabaunsee County.²⁸ The Allen’s exhibited a prosperous family, first by homesteading the Kansas Flint Hills prairie, then maintaining a family farm, and finally, establishing a social network with other black arrivals. The white neighbors’ demonstrated racial tolerance, because Frank and Sarah Allen probably passed away on the family farm. The incidences of interracial marriage in Wabaunsee County were high, which deserves further research. The movement from the county by African

²⁶ Wabaunsee County Register of Deeds, 1872-1878. (Microfilm, AR5652, Vol. 3 “Grantee,” p. 2, Kansas State Historic Society, Topeka, KS).

²⁷ Kansas State Historic Society, “Kansas 1895 Census Wabaunsee County,” (available from <http://www.kshs.org/genealogists/census/kansas/census1895ksresults.php?surname=&fname=&city=Kaw&county=WB&submit=SEARCH>), Internet, Accessed 6 March 2009.

²⁸ 1870 U. S. Census, Kansas, Wabaunsee County, Wabaunsee Township, (Series T625, Roll 553, Page 155, Kansas State Historic Society, Topeka, Kansas).

Americans in the nineteen-teens and nineteen-twenties is another topic for continued research.

BRADLEY FAMILY

The marriage of Albert Bradley and Emily Roberts in Tennessee, c. 1866, lasted until Albert's death in Paxico, Kansas June 25, 1925.²⁹ Emily gave birth to Nancy, George, and Augustus in Tennessee; meanwhile, Cicero, Labon and Liby were born in Kansas.³⁰ Cicero's birth was in April, 1883, which suggests Albert Bradley, Emily, Nancy, George, and Augustus were a part of the Kansas Exodus Fever.³¹ Unlike Dicy Nichols or Frank Allen, Mr. Bradley did not homestead land nor did he buy any property. The census data from 1885 through 1920 suggest that Albert Bradley was a day laborer; the primary day labor in the township was farming or ranching. Therefore, Mr. Bradley might be one of the numerous tenant farmers or day labor for farms in the county during the late nineteenth century.

Nancy Bradley married a Mr. Sax (first name unknown). They had three children in Colorado, but due to Mr. Sax's death, divorce or abandonment, Nancy moved back to her parents' home. She later went to live in Manhattan. Augustus and Cora Bradley, and their daughter, Ada, lived with Cora's brother, George Allen, in Wamego during the marriage's early years. Mrs. Ethel Morgan's remembered, "Gus and Cora Bradley were farmers and lived south of

²⁹ Kansas State Historic Society. "Kansas 1895 Census Wabaunsee County." (available from <http://www.kshs.org/genealogists/census/kansas/census1895ksresults.php?surname=&fname=&city=Kaw&county=WB&submit=SEARCH>. Internet. Accessed 6 March 2009).; Ancestry.com, Albert Bradley

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Nell Irvin Painter's *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction* is an excellent source for further understanding of the Exodus.

the grammar school [in the Town of Wabaunsee]. He rented or leased farm land.”³²

Gus and Cora had at least seven children. Ada died in childhood. The remaining six children—Orville Jones, Verda V., Leona E. Merle Kenneth, Cora Lavonne, and Lovalle Allen—were all born in Wabaunsee Township, probably in town. The Bradley children all attended the integrated primary and grammar school in District One Wabaunsee Township; their great-grand parents’ dream, which was an education for their children, was realized.³³ The Bradley family tree can be seen in appendix five page 35. Lovalle Allen Bradley moved to Manhattan with her parents, where Gus and Cora later died.³⁴ Employment may be one reason some African Americans moved to the black community in Manhattan as railroad construction was complete c. 1900-1905.

The Bradley home location in the Town of Wabaunsee deserves further research, but it will probably never be found as no rent records could be found, and the land, which might be the home site, is now a milo field.³⁵

BEARD FAMILY

The information search for African Americans escaping the South to Kansas in the late nineteenth is tedious and sometimes no information exists. However, some searches provide enough information to deduce economic,

³² Ethel M. Pinchem Morgan.

³³ Names students listed in School District #1 Binder, (Wabaunsee County Museum, Wabaunsee County Historic Society, Alma, Kansas); “Teacher’s Monthly and Term Report to Superintendent and Clerk, 1909-1921,” (School District #1 Drawer School Districts Cabinets, Wabaunsee County Museum, Wabaunsee County Historic Society, Alma, Kansas).

³⁴ Cora died March 27, 1956 and Gus died c. 1964; ancestry.com.

³⁵ The author surveyed the Wabaunsee community for signs of previous home sites, none were found, 3 March and 14 March, 2009.

education, and social conditions; one such family is the Beards. William Beard married Mary J., last name unknown, and then they left Tennessee to live in Kansas, Wabaunsee County, Alma Township, Alma with their children, Alice and Archie, c. 1874.³⁶ Ode, Rufus, and Emma were born in Alma Township before Mary Beard died; the Beard family tree can be seen in appendix six page 37. William remarried Jane, last name unknown, sometime before 1890. Their family grew as Mary's children lived with Jane's, Walter and Ernest.³⁷ William Beard continued to live in Alma where he was a day laborer. There were day labor jobs for people in Alma, which included working at ranches, salt works, Portland cement factory, loading freight on the trains, and domestic work. Jane Beard died sometime before 1910, and William Beard lived until c.1925.³⁸

One of William Beard's sons, Archie, left Alma to live in Wabaunsee with his wife, Lila Allen Pinchem Beard. Archie worked to build the railroad through Wabaunsee; he carried mail for the rail service from the depot to the post office and he did janitorial jobs at the school.³⁹ Archie died sometime before the census in 1910. Lila worked as a domestic, cleaning at the depot, and janitor at the

³⁶ 1870 U. S. Census, Kansas, Wabaunsee County, Alma, (Series T9, Roll 398, Page 343, Kansas State Historic Society, Topeka, Kansas).

³⁷ Kansas State Historic Society. "Kansas 1895 Census Wabaunsee County, Alma Township." (available from <http://www.kshs.org/genealogists/census/kansas/census1895ksresults.php?surname=&fname=&city=Kaw&county=WB&submit=SEARCH>. Internet. Accessed 6 March 2009).

³⁸ 1900 U. S. Census, Kansas, Wabaunsee County, Alma, (Series T623, Roll 520, Page 91, Kansas State Historic Society, Topeka, Kansas); 1920 U. S. Census, Kansas, Wabaunsee County, Alma, (Series T625, Roll 553, Page 51, Kansas State Historic Society, Topeka, Kansas).

³⁹ Ethel M. Pinchem Morgan; Register of Orders No. 10 November 22, 1909, (District Clerk's Report, School District #1 Drawer School Districts Cabinets, Wabaunsee County Museum, Wabaunsee County Historic Society, Alma, Kansas).

school after Archie passed away.⁴⁰ Lila was the janitor at the school until c. 1924.

Lila Beard was a member of the community who socialized with other black families, attended Juneteenth celebrations, and went to her children's, Edna, Frank, and Eugene, school events.⁴¹ Eugene could remember his mother telling him stories of black farmers in the area, pointing out their former farms as they traveled through the township. Another memory may explain some of the reasoning behind African Americans leaving the area; Eugene recalled that "during the 1920's The KKK burned a cross upon the hill [a place located north of present day Wabaunsee]."⁴²

Edna and Frank Beard left the area before 1920; whereas Eugene became "the oldest living resident in Wabaunsee, KS" in 1980.⁴³ Mr. Beard worked as a farm hand and lived with his mother until c. 1921. He married Mary Ann Bell of Holy Cross, Kansas in Wabaunsee County c. 1921. Eugene Beard continued his farm job, but he recalled "a great fascination for the early automobiles" and machinery as a child; he began to work on cars and tractors.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Register of Orders No. 10 November 4, 1910, (District Clerk's Report, School District #1 Drawer, School Districts Cabinets, Wabaunsee County Museum, Wabaunsee County Historic Society, Alma, Kansas).

⁴¹ "Attendance of Visitors," (Last three pages, School District #1 1905-1915 Log, School District #1 Drawer School Districts Cabinets, Wabaunsee County Museum, Wabaunsee County Historic Society, Alma, Kansas).

⁴² Wanda Beard Williams, "1980 Memoir of Eugene Beard, " (secured by Dawn Fulton, Wabaunsee County School District One Binder, Wabaunsee County Museum, Wabaunsee County Historic Society, Alma, KS., 1980).

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Mary Ann Beard worked to make the place a home for their children, Lila, Wanda, Joann, and Thomas. She became a member of the church that was a center for the free versus pro-slavery state in the 1850s, the Beecher Bible and Gun Congregational Church. Mary and Joann Beard, seen in figure four, attended the Congregational Church's One Hundredth Anniversary in 1957.



FIGURE 4

Mary Beard at Congregational Church Anniversary
Back Row: Mary Beard, Nellie Green, Josephine Brown, Ethel Morgan, Maude Mitchell, Dawn Fulton. Front Row: Joann Beard, Marilyn Green (Wabaunsee Town Folder, Wabaunsee County Museum, Wabaunsee County Historic Society)

CONCLUSION

This research began with Mrs. Wanda Beard Williams' 1980 transcription of Eugene's Beards memories, which lead to Mrs. Ethel M. Pinchem Morgan's memories of early African American Families in Wabaunsee Township, Wabaunsee County, Kansas.⁴⁵ Mrs. Morgan remembered stories of Dicy Nichols that resulted in the research of four families in the Township 1865-1925. There are places in the county that are associated with the Under Ground Railroad, but

⁴⁵ Ibid; Ethel M. Pinchem Morgan.

there is little scholarship involving the actual lives and sites of early African American families in Wabaunsee Township. Beth M. Boland wrote,

“Every state and locale can boost special places embodying the important stories of the past people and events. These places are sources of evidence that document how those who came before us lived and died, worked and played, expressed their creativity and beliefs, and governed themselves.”⁴⁶

The stories of Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Morgan help us realize that African Americans did live and thrive in the township, county, state and ultimately the nation. The stories included the interactions of the African American families as well as their relationship with white families such as Mary Morgan.

Mary Beard passed on c. 1971, yet she had a desire for religion and education for herself and the children. She was able to maintain her family unit. Mary Beard's feat was not unique for African Americans in Wabaunsee Township, Wabaunsee County, Kansas. Lila Pinchem Allen Beard, Mary Beard's mother-in-law, attended her children's school functions, and she was able to preserve the family, even after her husband's death. Dicy Nichols, an African American woman, is a western pioneer, which is an exceptional accomplishment. Mrs. Nichols came to the township with no land; she started a homestead, raised her family, and lived peacefully among her neighbors. Frank Allen married a white woman and began a homestead in the township, quite a remarkable event due to the conditions in a Jim Crow America. Augustus and Cora leased or

⁴⁶ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, “Visualizing History: Inquiring Minds Want to Know,” By Beth M. Boland, Journal report, *Cultural Resources Management, Creative Teaching with Historic Places*, vol. 23 no. 8 (2000), p. 6.

rented land to farm. They had six children, who were educated in an integrated school.⁴⁷

Eugene Beard became the oldest person in the county in 1980; yet this distinction has a sad note. Eugene's death, c. 1987, marked the end of any descendants of the late nineteenth century refugees from Reconstruction and Redemption living in Wabaunsee. Nevertheless, these families are representative of African Americans in Wabaunsee Township. The first arrivals experienced brutal hardships in their former homelands, the reason for their migration to Kansas. They established an environment that provided calm, education, religion, and prosperity—thereby encouraging flourishing and thriving family units. Their descendants were able to maintain successful family units until the 1920's.

⁴⁷ "Teacher's Monthly and Term Report to Superintendent and Clerk, 1909-1921,"

APPENDIX ONE

DICY NICHOLS' HOMESTEAD CERTIFICATE

Dicy Nichols' Homestead Certificate Entry
Page 1 of 3

United States } The United States of America, To all to whom
to presents shall come, Greeting:
Dicy Nichols Homestead Certificate No. 1595 } Whereas, The
Application 2128 } been deposited
General Land Office of the United States
Office of the Register of the Land Office at
St. Louis, whereby it appears that, pursuant
of Congress approved 20th May, 1862, "To sec
steads to actual settlers on the Public Do
and the acts supplemental thereto, the

Dicy Nichols' Homestead Certificate Entry
Page 2 of 3

The United States of America, To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:
do Homestead Certificate No. 1595 }
Application 2128 } Whereas, There has
been deposited in the
General Land Office of the United States a certifi-
cate of the Register of the Land Office at Topeka, Kan-
sas, whereby it appears that, pursuant to the act
of Congress approved 20th May, 1862, "To secure Home-
steads to actual settlers on the Public Domain,"
and the acts supplemental thereto, the claim of
Disa Nichols has been established and duly con-
summated, in conformity to law, for the North East
quarter of the South East quarter and the South East
quarter of the North East quarter of Section Four, in
Township Eleven of Range Ten in the District
of Lands subject to sale at Topeka, Kansas, contain-
ing Eighty acres according to the Official Plat
of the Survey of the said Land, returned to the Gen-
eral Land Office by the Surveyor General:
Now know ye, That there is, therefore, granted
by the United States unto the said Disa Nichols
the tract of Land above described: To have and to
hold the said tract of Land, with the appurtenan-
ces thereof, unto the said Disa Nichols and to her
heirs and assigns forever.
In Testimony whereof, I, Ulysses S. Grant, Pres-
ident of the United States of America, have caused
these letters to be made Patent, and the Seal

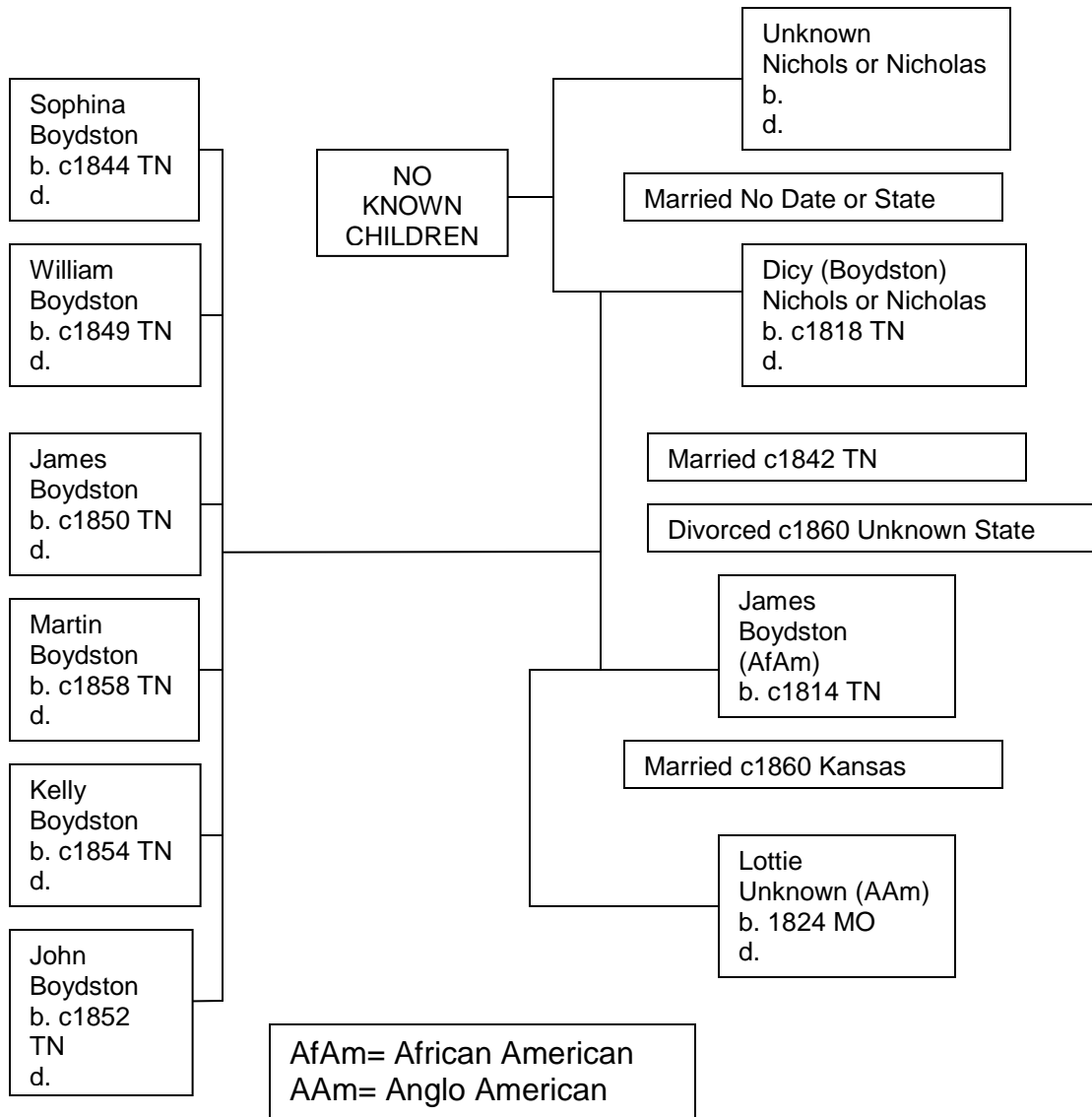
Dicy Nichols' Homestead Certificate Entry
Page 3 of 3

the General Land Office to be hereunto affixed
Given under my hand at the City of Washing-
ton, the Twentieth day of May, in the year of our Lord
one thousand eight hundred and seventy six, and
of the Independence of the United States the One
Hundredth.

By the President: U. S. Grant
Deals By D. D. Cone, Secretary
J. M. Armstrong Recorder of the General Land Office ad interim
Recorded, Vol 4, Page 37.
Filed for record May 27th 1881 at 11 A.M. EO

APPENDIX TWO
DICY NICHOLS FAMILY TREE

DICY (BOYDSTON) NICHOLS or NICHOLAS FAMILY TREE



APPENDIX THREE

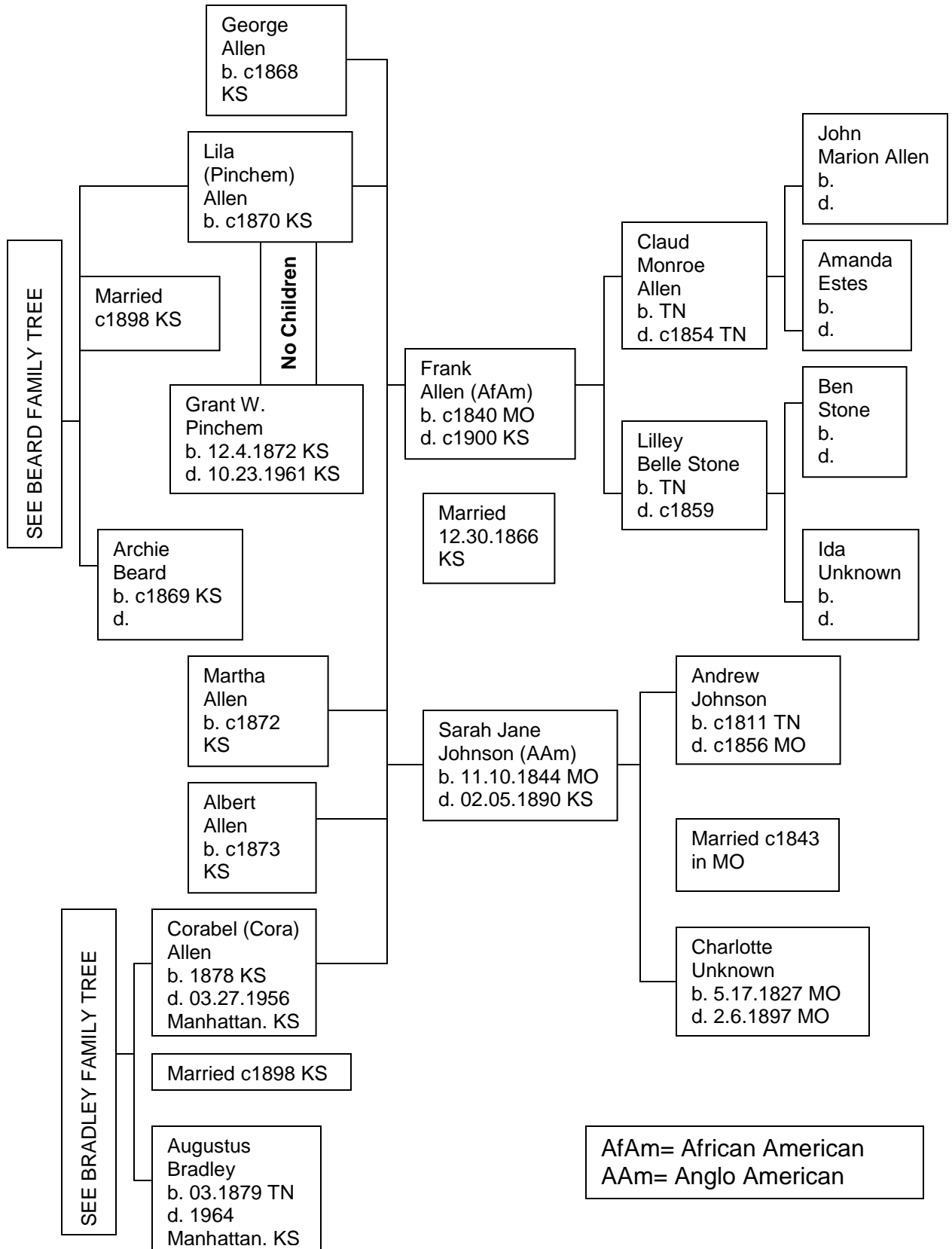
FRANK ALLEN'S HOMESTEAD INDEX ENTRY

Frank Allen's Index Homestead Entry
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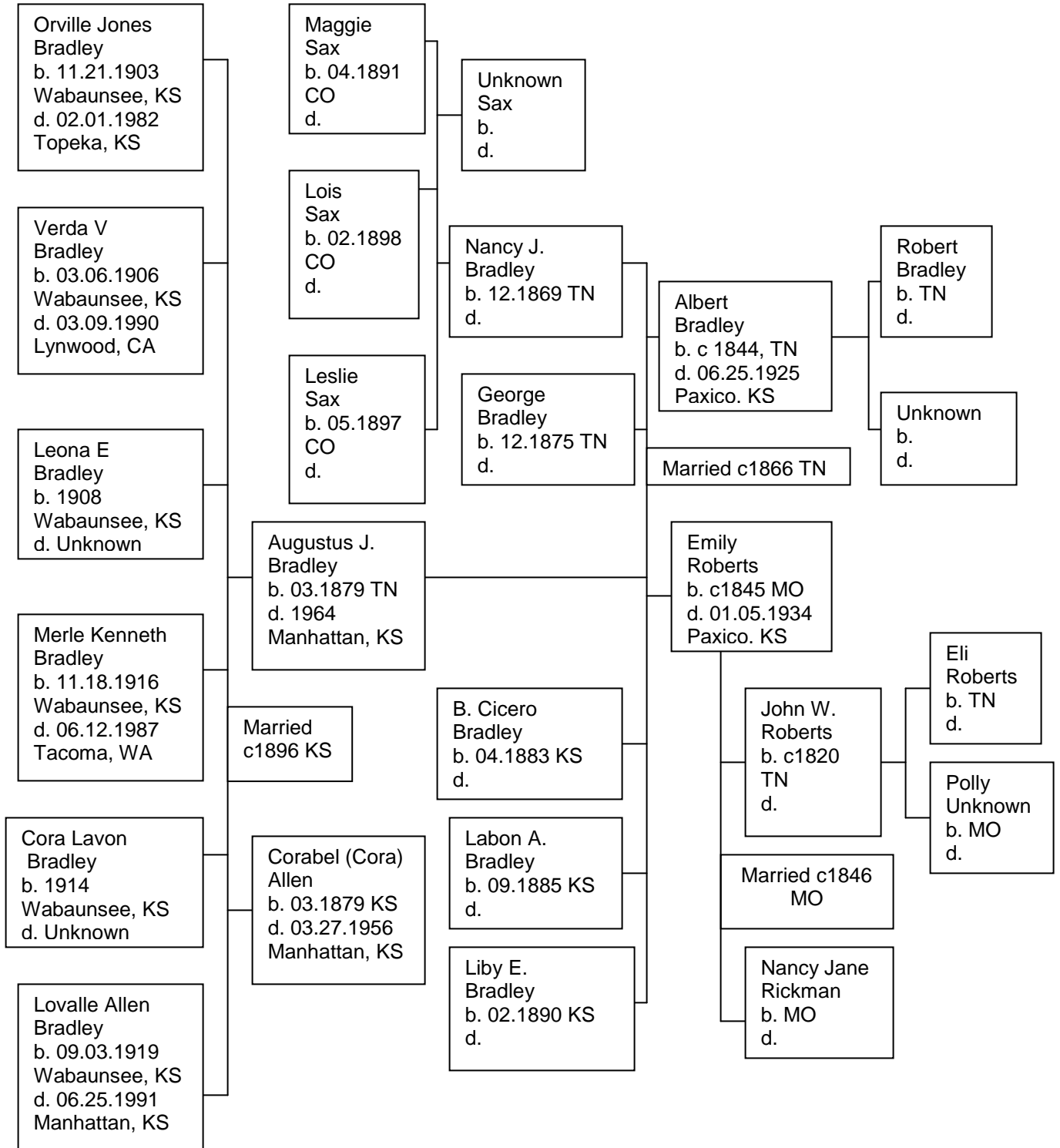
APPENDIX FOUR
ALLEN FAMILY TREE

ALLEN FAMILY TREE



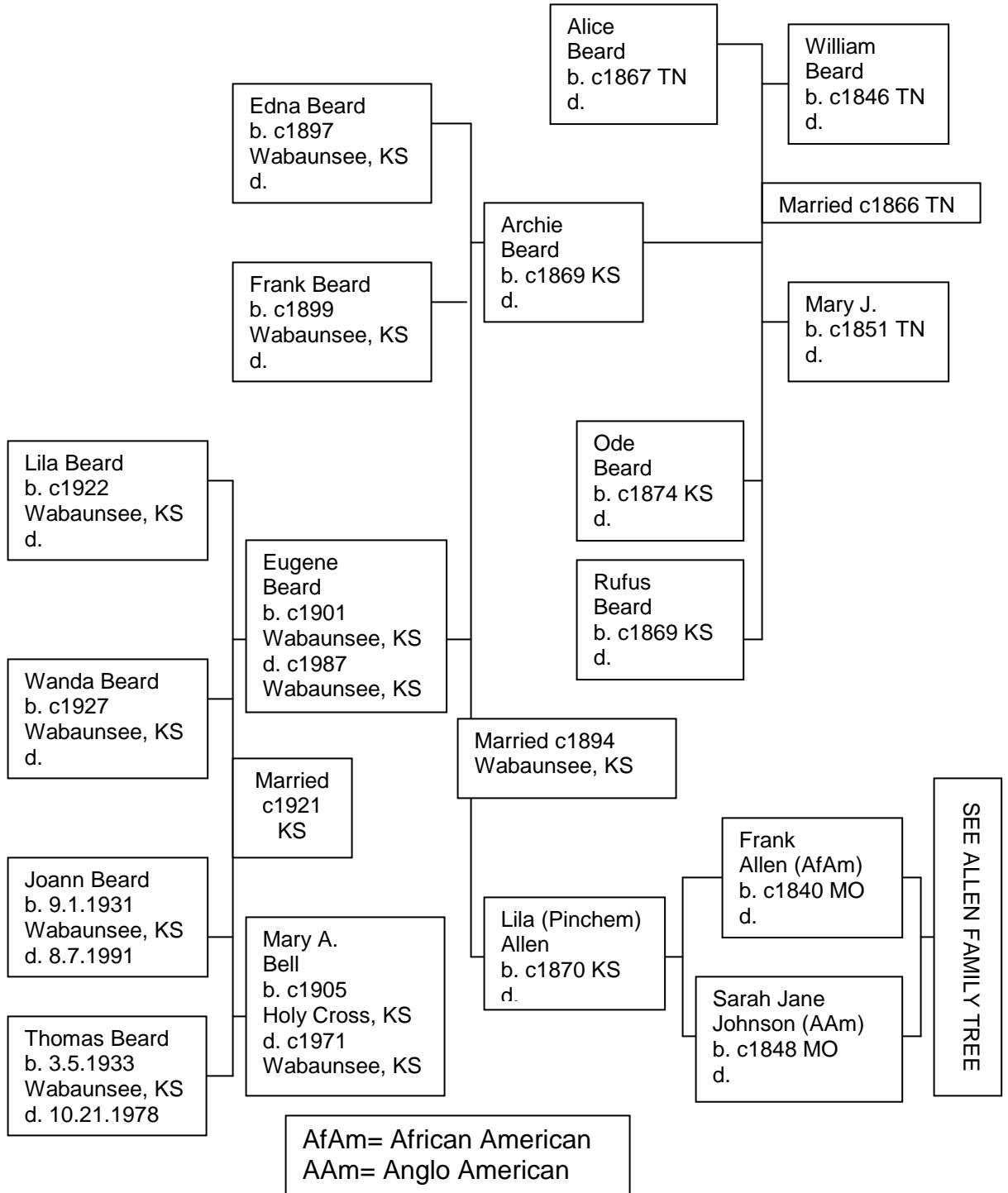
APPENDIX FIVE
BRADLEY FAMILY TREE

BRADLEY FAMILY TREE



APPENDIX SIX
BEARD FAMILY TREE

BEARD FAMILY TREE



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