

Therefore, I decided I would make a form on the order of the original page but with five columns. I would incorporate pertinent data from the original record into these five columns. Over the years as people asked me to seek information concerning their slave ancestors, I would look in the SLAVE STATISTICS first. Each time that I used the reference I would copy a few pages. I finally put all of the pages in numerical order and found that I had transcribed over three-fourths of the book. Then, why not copy the rest of the book and insert an index. In this manner, the book would be assessible to everyone, and this is what I did. This copy would be especially valuable to those whose ancestors were slaves. It would be also valuable to those seeking the name of the slave owner.

After several trips to the State Archives and continued reading and examining each page, I finally came to a page on which I came face to face with the names of some of my ancestors. I carefully read the names one by one. There were the names of William, Frank, Matilda, Temperance, Alice, Ellen, all Canes. Altogether, there were 12 Canes listed. These were my ancestors, these were the folks that I had been seeking. There was the name of Dr. Walter Hanson Briscoe, the owner of a large plantation named Sotterly and the owner of 53 slaves. Here were the names of my ancestors, written boldly and legible for everyone to see. Here were slaves identified in official records with a surname. This was overwhelming.

The first name I came across was George Cane, age 20 and his brother Frank Cane, age 17. These were some of the same names that my father told me that his father relayed to him. In fact, some of the names of the 12 Canes listed as being slaves of Dr. Walter Hanson Briscoe, my father knew when he was a child. Frank Cane, his father's brother and the father of Julia Kane Jordan, (1900-1993) died in 1928. My father knew him well.

I turned two more pages and there under the ownership of Chapman Billingsley, the Judge of the Orphan's Court of St. Mary's County were the names of more Canes. From this point on I felt that I must let others know that they can find their slave ancestors. So I continued to gather notes on slaves in some cases entire families. I always noted the page number so that I would not have to look all over the book when I wanted to refer back to a particular name. Persistently, I compiled page after page of data and shared it with whomever asked for assistance. This book is definitely a major research tool for anyone who has ancestral "roots" in St. Mary's County, Maryland.