

TRACING MY ANCESTOR'S FOOTSTEPS IN SOUTHWEST MISSISSIPPI **A Genealogical Journey by Philip Terrell, Ph. D.** **Superintendent of Pass Christian School System**

It's simply amazing how once one reaches the age of forty, he/she almost instinctively begins to develop a strong desire to rediscover their roots. At forty-something, forty-three to be exact, I'm no exception.

Although I had studied U.S. history, Mississippi history, and European history at Mississippi State University in early to mid 1970's and had taught high school until 1980, surprisingly, the world of genealogy and my own history background never crossed paths until I passed the age of forty.

Although I had thought about my family history often and remembered some of the stories that my mother and father shared with me over the years, it was not until after a conversation with a colleague that I began to research my family history.

As a result of prior discussions with my father, Ledell Terrell, I knew that his parents were Richard Terrell and Jessie Gayten Terrell, who were my paternal grandparents. I also learned that Richard Terrell's parents and my great-grandparents were Jerry and Mary Terrell. However, with the exception of the fact that my father, grandfather, and great-grandfather all resided in Lincoln County, Mississippi, sometime during their lives, and that my great-grandfather, Jerry Terrell, homesteaded some land there, I had virtually no other information.

After locating old family documents and developing genealogical questions, I initially began talking to Ms. Anne S. Anderson (who once maintained a collection of genealogical material), my first stop was the Hancock County Courthouse. There I was able to locate documents concerning my parents in the Hancock County Circuit Clerk's office that promised to provide, and eventually did provide, information about my grandparents. To my surprise, the information had been there all along.

One of the first documents I obtained was a copy of my parents' marriage application. This document revealed that they were married in 1932. It also provided the address of my grandparents, Richard and Jessie Terrell, at the time of my parents' wedding.

And just a few doors down in the Chancery Clerk's office, I was able to locate the list of educable children. I had hoped this list would provide information once I began research on my mother's family, since my mother was originally from Hancock County.

Excitedly, I returned to the Anderson Genealogical Library and immediately fast-forwarded the process by beginning the task of reviewing census records. With some help, I was able to locate my grandparents, Richard and Jessie Terrell, in the 1910 census. I was shocked! There it was as it had been all along. The information listed Richard and Jessie Terrell living in a house on Jackson Street in the Norfield Village, which was near a local saw mill in Lincoln County. Their children were listed as James, age 3, who was my father's brother, and, of course, Lee, age 1 1/2, who was my father. My grandfather's age was listed as 27, while his wife, Jessie, was listed as being 22 years of age.

By now I was thoroughly hooked. Perhaps I could find my great grandfather in the U.S. Census! Because of time restraints, several weeks passed before I could get back to the Anderson Genealogical Library, but eventually I returned. And this time I knew exactly where to start.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Philip Terrell is originally from Bay St. Louis, and at present lives in Pass Christian with his family. Currently, Terrell is Superintendent of the Pass Christian Public School District and is active in various civic and community initiatives along the Coast. (This article will continue in the next issue)