



The Watson Family:

Tracing the History of an
African American Family
in 19th Century Wisconsin



Resource for Educators

Sponsored by Charles D. Jacobus Family Foundation
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The Watson Family House is featured in the Streets of Old Milwaukee Gallery in the Milwaukee Public Museum. The house is a replica of the Watson's mid-19th century cottage and features many 19th century artifacts, making it an excellent experience for students to see history come alive through objects. A Traveling Exhibit has also been developed to explain the history of a Milwaukee pioneer African American family.

This Resource for Educators is designed for use in middle schools and high schools. It can be used in conjunction with the exhibits or independently to enhance history curriculum.

The Watson Family House plus traveling
exhibit and educational materials are funded by

Helen Bader Foundation

Fleck Foundation

Milwaukee Foundation

Anita Tilton

State of Wisconsin - Department of Public Instruction

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Introduction

African people and their descendants figure prominently in the development of the United States from colonial days to the present. The lives of these individuals are often obscured by the politics and intolerance spawned by slavery and its legacy. Most Africans were brought to America as slaves. Some, through their own labor and ingenuity, gained freedom. Others gained freedom by a fortuitous birth and by rule of law.

The Watson family story gives us a glimpse into the lives of one African American family, their journey out of slavery, and their contributions to building Milwaukee and its community in the mid 1800s. Through use of documents, photographs, and lesson plans, this resource provides a guide for classroom educators to include the story of this pioneer African American family in the history curriculum.

Interpreting the Past

The history from and about African American families was primarily passed from generation to generation orally (through stories, music and song). Like most slaves, Sully Watson was not taught how to read and write. A record of his history in his own words is therefore not available. However, some family photos and documents were saved by Sully's descendants and obtained by the Milwaukee Public Museum. They provide a starting point for discovering more about life for one African American family in 19th century Wisconsin.

Historians use both primary source documents and secondary source documents to interpret the past. Primary sources are contemporary to the study focus. Primary sources are manuscripts, printed evidence, or photographs. Examples of primary sources are letters, papers, newspapers, books, photos, paintings, etc. Primary sources also include personal and official source materials from the time period. Secondary source material is interpretive printed sources from later times that draws on primary source material for facts and support of hypothesis and thesis.

The lesson plans in this resource are designed to assist students in using and interpreting photocopies of primary source documents as they learn about the Watson family, life in 19th century Wisconsin, and the study of history.

Relationship of Lesson Plans to the Wisconsin State Standards

The lesson plans in this resource were developed using the Wisconsin State Standards for teaching history and geography. Specifically, the following standards relate to the lesson plans:

History Content Standard

Students in Wisconsin will learn about the history of Wisconsin, the United States, and the world, examining change and continuity over time in order to develop historical perspectives, explain historical relationships, analyze issues that affect the present and the future.

B.4.1 Identify and examine various sources of information that are used for constructing an understanding of the past, such as artifacts, documents, letters, diaries, maps, textbooks, photos, paintings, architecture, oral presentations, graphs, and charts.

B.4.2 Use a timeline to select, organize, and sequence information describing eras in history.

B.4.3 Examine biographies, stories, narratives, and folk tales to understand the lives of ordinary and extraordinary people, place them in time and context, and explain their relationship to important historical events.

B.4.5 Identify the historical background and meaning of important political values such as freedom, democracy, and justice.

B.8.1 Interpret the past using a variety of sources, such as biographies, diaries, journals, artifacts, eyewitness interviews, and other primary source materials, and evaluate the credibility of sources used.

B.8.2 Employ cause-and-effect arguments to demonstrate how significant events have influenced the past and the present in United States and world history.

B.8.3 Describe the relationships between and among significant events, such as the causes and consequences of wars in United States and world history.

B.8.4 Explain how and why events may be interpreted differently depending upon the perspectives of participants, witnesses, reporters, and historians.

Geography Content Standard

Students in Wisconsin will learn about geography through the study of the relationships among people, places, and environments.

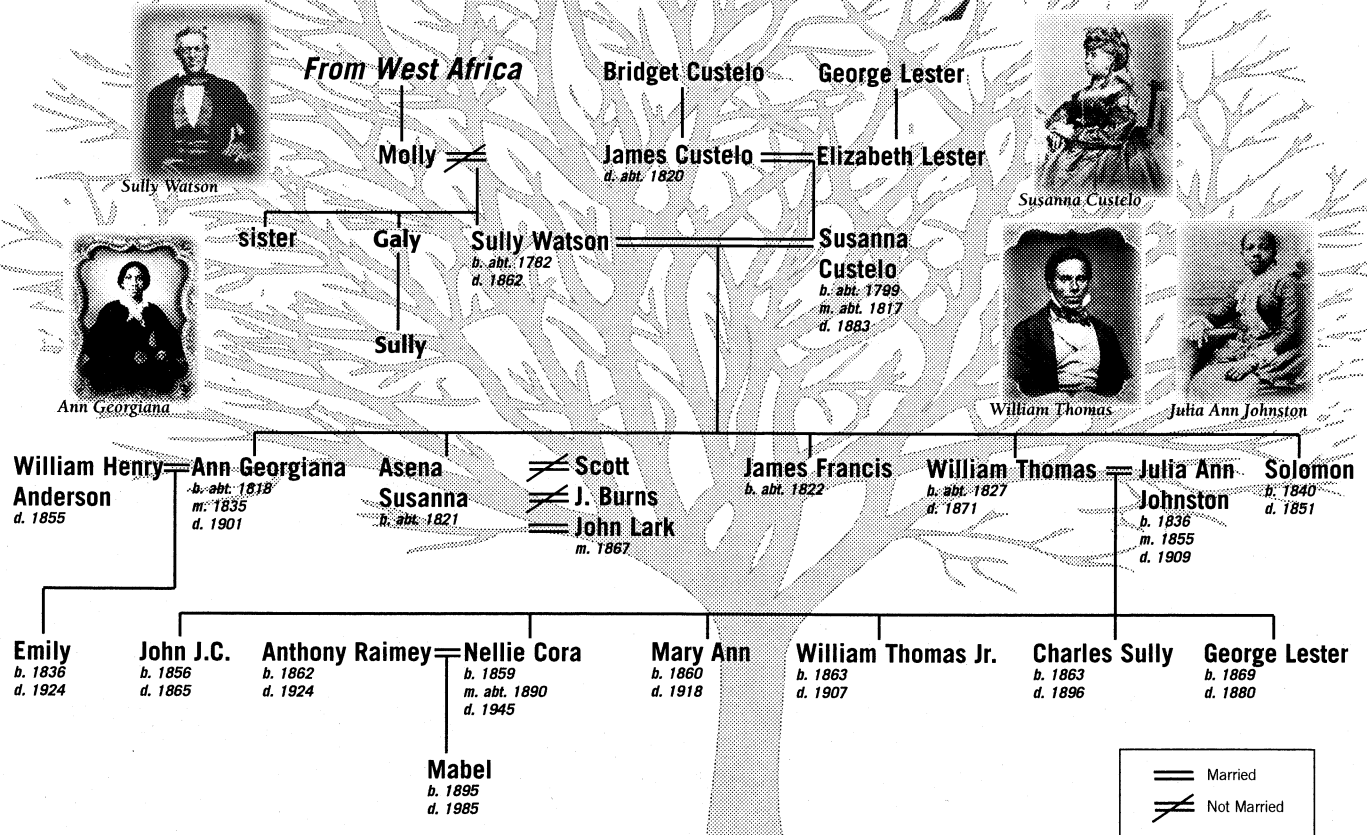
A.4.5 Use atlases, databases, grid systems, charts, graphs, and maps to gather information about the local community, Wisconsin, the United States, and the world.

A.4.7 Identify connections between the local community and other places in Wisconsin, the United States, and the world.

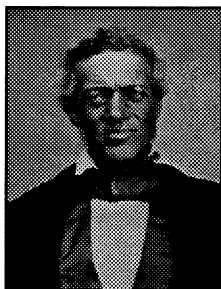


Who were the Watsons?

Watson Family Tree



Note: Approximate birth dates are a common phenomenon through the late 19th century. The Government did not require birth certificates at that time and the Church only kept dates of baptism and not birth dates. Therefore, the birth dates of most members of the Watson family are approximate.



Sully Watson (born 1782? - died 1862)

Almost nothing is known of Sully Watson's early life. According to the family story his mother, Molly, was from West Africa. She was taken from her family and brought as a slave to Virginia sometime in the mid 18th century. She had three children, with Sully being the only boy. By the time Sully was 18 he was owned by William Moncure of Stafford County, Virginia. Moncure was involved in a quarry business that produced fine white limestone. It is most probable that Sully learned his stone working skills in that quarry and performed many other tasks around the farm including woodcutting, harness making and white washing. Occasionally, Sully worked as a laborer in a Richmond warehouse owned by William Moncure's son. In Richmond, Sully met Susanna Custelo, his future wife. In 1827, Sully struck a bargain with the son of William Moncure to buy his freedom and worked off his debt dollar by dollar until 1832. He became a free man in 1834 through the last will and testament of William Moncure.

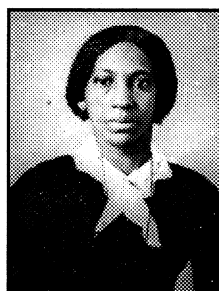


Susanna Custelo (born 1799? - died 1883)

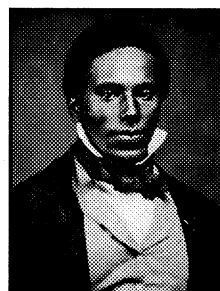
Susanna Custelo was born a free black around 1799. Her parents were Elizabeth Lester, a free woman, and James Custelo, a free man. Virginia law at that time dictated if the mother is free then the children are free. Not much is known about Susanna's parents except that Elizabeth was a seamstress and could read and write. Elizabeth taught Susanna how to read and write. She also taught her daughter skills to be a seamstress. James Custelo was a fisherman in Richmond.

The Watson Children

Susanna and Sully married between 1815 and 1820. They had 5 children: Ann Georgiana, Asena Susanna, James Francis, William Thomas and Solomon. Due to Susanna Custelo's free status, each of the children bore the Custelo name and were registered free blacks in the City of Richmond.



Anne Georgiana



William Thomas



*Julia
(married to William)*



Sully and Susanna left Virginia in 1834. They left for many reasons. One may have related to a state law which indicated that once a slave gained freedom, he/she had to leave Virginia within a year. They traveled overland by wagon drawn by mule or oxen and headed for Ohio staying in that state from 1834 to 1850.

While the family was living in Ohio, one of the daughters, Ann Georgianna, married William Henry Anderson in 1836. William Anderson came to Milwaukee in 1841, established a business and brought his wife and child to Milwaukee in 1845. William Anderson was a prominent black businessman in Milwaukee. He owned a barbershop at the United States Hotel.

In the spring of 1850, the Sully and Susanna Watson family arrived in Wisconsin. During their life in Milwaukee, the Watson family purchased a house, joined a church and fraternal organizations. The family prospered financially and personally.

William Thomas was one of the sons of Sully and Susanna. He traveled back to Ohio to marry Julia Ann Johnston in 1855. They returned to Milwaukee and had 6 children. William Thomas was a mason and politically active.

After Sully's death in 1862 and William Thomas's premature death in 1871, the Watson women (Susanna, Ann Anderson and Julia Ann Watson) held the family together. They maintained their homes working as laundresses and seamstresses. Economic depression and the influx of European immigrants reduced the ability of the Watson grandchildren to make a living.

The great granddaughter of Sully Watson, Mabel Raimy (born 1895 - died 1986) received all the benefits of education her family could afford and in 1914 she entered the University of Wisconsin. She earned a baccalaureate in English graduating from the University of Wisconsin in 1918. She was a founding member of the Milwaukee Urban League, 1918-1919. She taught English in the 1920s. She entered Marquette University Law School in 1924 and graduated in 1927. In 1927, Mabel passed the bar to become Wisconsin's first black female attorney. She practiced family and corporate law until she suffered a stroke in 1972. Mabel Raimy died in 1986 at the age of 90. As far as historians can tell, Mabel Raimy was the last descendent of the Watson family.



Where did the Watson Family Come From and Where did they Go?

Virginia

Sully Watson and Susanna Custelo married in Richmond, Virginia sometime between 1815 and 1820.

From 1820 through the 1830s Virginia "black laws" became very restrictive. Whether free or slave, it was more difficult to move about and earn a living. In February 1827, Sully struck a bargain with Henry Wood Moncure, the son of William Moncure, to buy his freedom. A receipt notes his "man price" at \$500 and shows how Sully worked off his debt dollar by dollar.

William Moncure died in 1832 at his farm in Stafford County. After the probate of his will, Sully gained his freedom. He was granted a pass to remain in Stafford while awaiting the issuance of his certificate of manumission in 1834. Now was the time for a decision, to remain in Virginia or move north. If he stayed, Sully could face fines or possible re-enslavement. Virginia law required that freed blacks either leave Virginia within one year of manumission or have appropriate permits to remain.

The Watsons opted for a new life in the north leaving relatives and friends behind. In 1834 the Watson family was most likely living in a place in Virginia called Windsor Forest. The most expedient route was directly north through Washington D.C., and Maryland, into Pennsylvania and finally into central Ohio where they settled in Columbus. A southerly route through unfriendly areas of the border states of Virginia and Kentucky was dangerous and presented the possibility of harassment and re-enslavement. Passing through the southern counties of Ohio, where African Americans were unwelcome, would leave them at risk of persecution.

Ohio

Ohio was the first state created from the Northwest Territory (1803). Early Ohio was populated by migrants from Virginia, the Carolinas, Kentucky and Tennessee. Early migrants settled mainly in the southern third of the state. An attitude of racial intolerance and prejudice was prevalent. Some wanted to retain slavery, others saw slaves and free blacks as competition to white workers. In either case, Ohio was not disposed to advancing the welfare of black society.

As Ohio opened up to greater settlement, people from New England and Pennsylvania came to live in the state. These men and women had a greater tolerance and were more accepting of freed blacks. This development, though not eliminating prejudice and intolerance, made it easier for families like the Watsons to take refuge in a free state. However, Ohio's ties with the South were strong and few wished to alienate southern businessmen and legislators by providing a refuge for runaway slaves. The people of Ohio created a body of "black laws" that restricted migration and settlement of free blacks and made concessions to the desires of southern slave holders regarding runaway slaves and their retrieval.

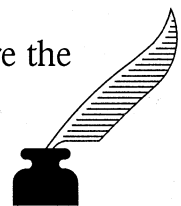
Reform of racial laws began as early as the 1830s in Ohio but it was a long, slow process. Ohio society remained segregationist with no attempt at establishing a body of civil rights legislation until after the Civil War.

The Watsons reached Columbus, Ohio as early as 1834. The 1840 U.S. Census lists the Watsons as residents of Franklin County, City of Columbus. The city directories for 1845 and 1848 list Sully Watson as living at 200 High Street.

Milwaukee

In 1849, Columbus may have been a slightly more tolerant place but it was much less healthful. Asiatic cholera broke out in the city that summer. Many people were sick, some died. In the spring of 1850 the disease recurred. Historians believe that Sully Watson was sick and having trouble recovering his health, though they do not know with certainty if he had cholera.

Transcripts from two letters between Susanna and daughter Ann underscore the closeness of the family and the desire to be together. An 1848 letter from Sully's nephew in Powhatan County, Virginia provides news of friends and relatives, indicating strong ties among Watson family members.



Between the desire for family unity, the press of disease and an intolerant society, Sully decided to move his family north to Milwaukee.

It would take the Watson family over a month to travel to Milwaukee by wagon. They arrived in Milwaukee in 1850 and were welcomed by their daughter Ann and her family.

What was Life Like for the Watsons in Wisconsin in the 1850s?

The Watson family arrived in Milwaukee in June of 1850. In Milwaukee, they found a small black community of slightly less than 100 people. Sully and his son, William Thomas, bought property in what was called Old Juneau Town, the 1st Ward (222 E. Mason Street). Milwaukee, in the 1850s, was a bustling place only 2 x 3 miles square. The City of Milwaukee was divided into eight areas called "wards." Each ward was governed from within by an alderman, school commissioner, justice of the peace, constable and railroad commissioner, and all together they made up the city council.

The 1850s were a time of political unrest. Milwaukeans were concerned with issues of abolition and slavery. In 1850, Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act which allowed anyone to detain an alleged fugitive slave and after a short hearing, remove that person to his/her master. The black community in Milwaukee, accompanied by supportive whites, held a rally to refute the law. A committee of black men drafted a letter against the repugnant act. While the committee met, a number of African American community leaders addressed the crowd including William Thomas Watson. He spoke of "... slavish commissioners or judges whose fiat would be omnipotent in deciding us to be chattel property."

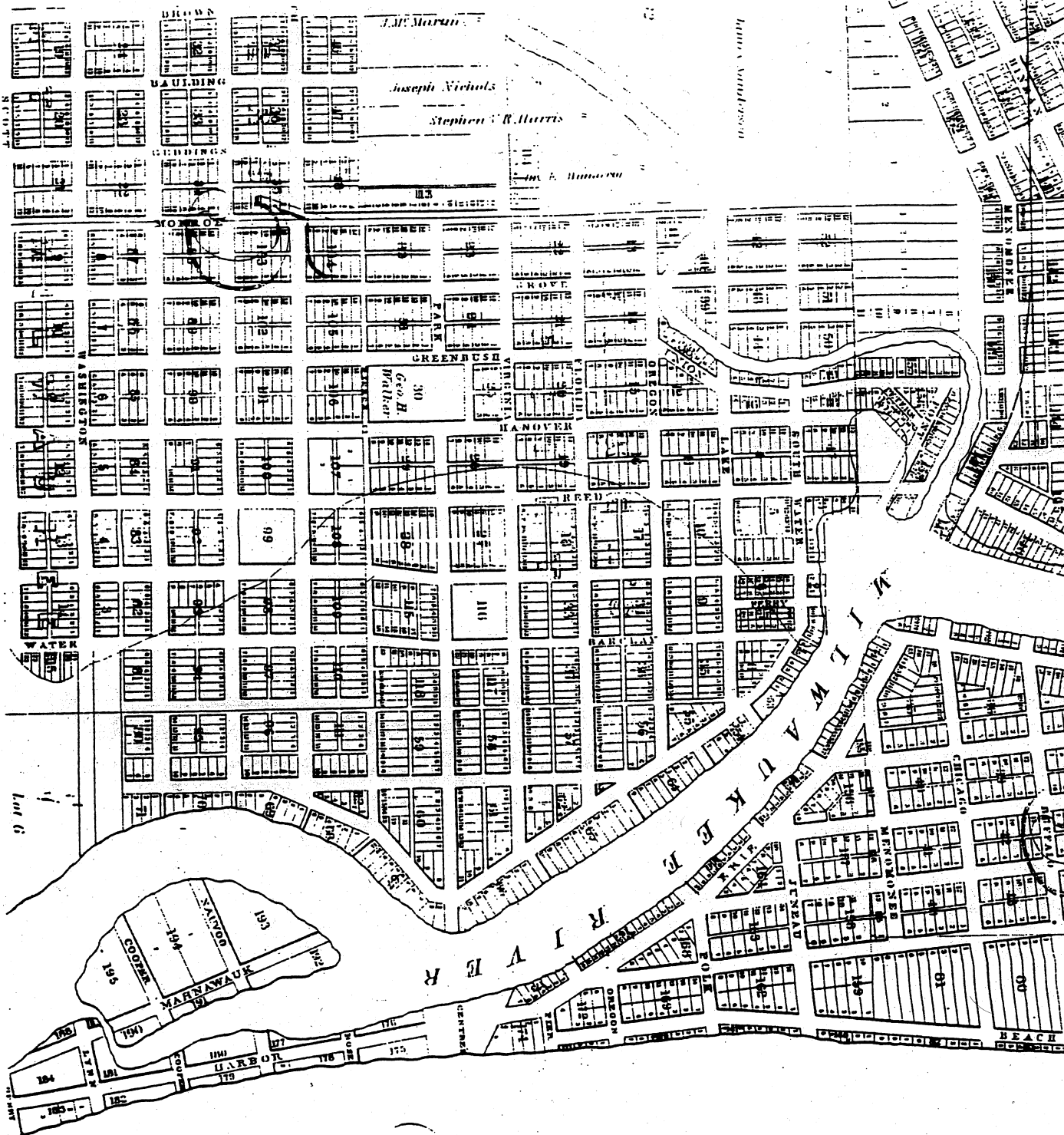
It was also believed that the William and Ann Anderson house at 310 Sycamore (Michigan Avenue) was a stop on the underground railroad. This information comes from oral reminiscences of a late 19th century newspaper account. This information is based on hearsay evidence rather than actual evidence.

The meeting of Milwaukee's "colored citizens" in 1855 to petition the State of Wisconsin for black suffrage would surely have been attended by William Thomas. He and other African American community leaders collected money and offered a sum to help support Wisconsin troops during the Civil War. He is listed among the 14 African Americans registered to vote in the 4th ward in 1870.

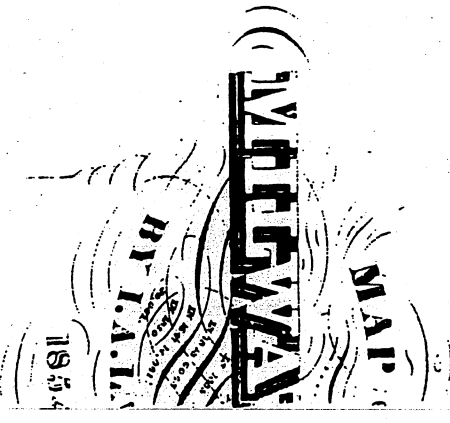
Later, Sully and William Thomas sold their property on Mason Street and bought property at 100 Third Street in the 4th Ward. The population in the 4th ward was 3,603 people with 1,838 American born residents and the balance of foreign birth.

This new property included a house built around 1852. The new property was only a block away from their daughter, Ann Anderson. Sully sold the back half of this 3rd Street lot to William Thomas, who in 1858 built a house there. The 4th ward property (3rd Street) was not sold until 1886, long after Sully's death. It was sold to the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad for \$2,400.

William Thomas was a mason and worked on the construction of well known Milwaukee landmarks including the Iron Block Building and the cream city brick buildings at the National Soldier's Home, both of which are still standing in Milwaukee today.



J.A. LAPHAM
MAP OF MILWAUKEE
1854

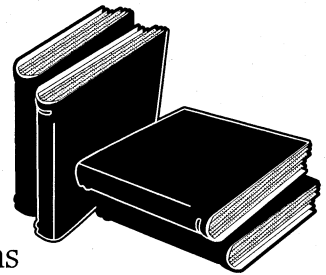


Scale 600 Feet to an Inch



Why the Watson Family History is Important

Historians search for documentation in many places – among personal papers, in libraries, archives, courts, county and city clerks offices, and U.S. government repositories. Documents found in each have different purposes and different levels of information. Historians consider and interpret the information from these sources to discern government or cultural patterns and personal patterns and thoughts. From this, historians are able to “clothe” the framework of American history. Local history is the building block of the larger United States history.



The Watson collection of photographs and documents provides an example of one family living in the 19th century, and provides an example of the migration of African Americans from the southern part of the United States to settlement in Wisconsin.

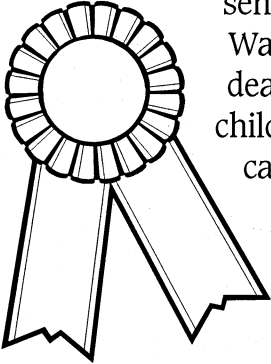
Watson history is important because the documents exist, they are a touchstone of the past. The documents provide an outline of African American life in the 19th century. The documents provide facts of life, culture and law that affected many people, not just African Americans. These documents lead us to look at the following larger issues related to society and politics:

- slavery and abolition
- U.S. sectionalism
- States rights
- race relations and tolerance
- law s. passion
- rights of freedom vs. rights of property

The uniqueness of the Watson family history can only be appreciated when it is understood that printed pieces of paper related to lives of African slaves in the United States were usually not saved despite the fact that it was a legal necessity for African Americans to keep and display certain papers in order to exercise simple daily functions. The Watson family experience from 1827 to 1890s was recorded through a series of receipts for purchases of cloth, rents, payment requests for sewing services, manumission papers, free black registration certificates, letters, permits and photos.

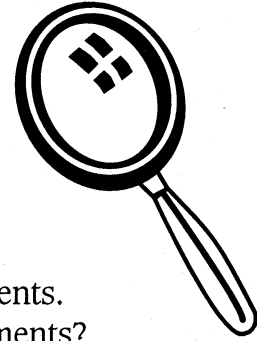
Family history can make students more aware of human experiences with history. This packet provides replicas of documents and activities for students to help in analyzing, evaluating and realizing the importance of family history preservation. These documents are also a reflection of the dominant culture during this period of time and their efforts to account for and control African Americans.

The Watson story indicates a strong belief in education and a strong belief in supporting the family. There is evidence to show that Watson children continued studies in public schools. Achievements in studies were treasured. One child, Charles, won a certificate of merit from his teacher. A book that held meaning for them was an explanation of slavery and the slave trade in the United States published in 1836. The strong sense of family is also apparent in the Watson story. The women in the Watson family made sure that the children could read and write. After the death of Sully, it was the women of the family that worked to support the children and success of the family. This sense of family strength and caretaking of children helped the Watson family survive in very difficult times.



Lesson Plan 1

Document Detectives (Recognition)



Objectives

- Demonstrate the ability to recognize and interpret primary source documents.
- Integrate research and interpretation using primary source documents.
- Helps students answer “What is a document? Who creates documents? Who keeps documents and why?”

Supplies

- paper

Time

- one class period of 45 minutes

Procedure

1. Ask students to think about what activities they were involved in the past 24 hours.
2. Give each student a piece of paper. Have them create two columns on their paper. In column 1 have them write the activity in which they were involved. In column 2 have them write what evidence was left behind that relates to that activity.

For example, the student may have gone to a movie (column 1) and received a movie ticket stub (column 2). Perhaps they wrote in a diary, wrote an email, made a phone call, threw away something in the garbage, wrote a note, bought something in a store and received a receipt, etc. Another example, the teacher takes attendance and keeps track of grades (column 1) and the teacher's attendance and grade book (column 2) is evidence of student attendance and grades.

Discussion

1. Ask students if their actions would be recorded in a school record? A business log? A government document? etc.?
2. Ask students if any local, national or international events affected their weekly routine or vice versa?
3. Indicate to students that the evidence left behind by an individual's actions is what historians use to tell the story of what people were like and what they did. Activities always leave some sort of evidence. The evidence is often fragmentary and

“filtered.” “Filtering” is related to who decides what evidence to keep and what to throw away. “Filtering” also involves mental priorities and physical sorting. The key is knowing where to look for evidence and how to interpret it based on how the evidence was filtered.

Extension

For a lesson in “filtering,” that is, to understand how much information survives and interpreting its meaning, try the following activity.

1. Have students keep a diary of their daily activities for a week. Have students create an archive of documents.
2. At the end of the week have students work in pairs.
3. Have each student exchange the documents they collected. Have them read the documents and try to write a story about what the week was like based on the documents.
4. Then have students compare their stories based on an analysis of the documents with the diary. Was their interpretation the same as the actual account? Why was it different? Were there some activities that were not included in the story? Why was the story based on an analysis of the documents incomplete? This extension will show that sometimes interpretation of evidence does not always match reality. History is objective facts collected and viewed through the subjective experience of the historian. Interpretation is different for everyone.
5. Now have the students combine the documents they had been collecting for the past week. Have the students work together to sort the documents into groups. First have them sort into two groups: documents to save and documents that can be thrown away. Have them justify why it might be OK to throw documents away. *(Documents may be copies or there may not be space to keep everything and so only documents that are considered the most important are saved. This is an example of one filtering mechanism. . . sometimes documents are not saved and the information is lost.)*
6. Now have the students look at the documents they believe should be kept. How would they sort the documents? By date? By name? By subject? Have one pair of students compare their sorting strategy with another pair of students. Is the sorting the same or different? Is one type of sorting strategy better than another? How does sorting affect future research? *(People file information differently which makes it more difficult to find specific documents and understand contextual meaning. Documents have meaning based on original placement and order.)*

Lesson Plan 2

Document Detectives (Analysis): Who were the Watsons?

Objectives

- Demonstrate the ability to analyze and interpret primary source documents.
- Integrate research and interpretation using primary source documents.

Supplies

- 5x7 index cards
- Watson documents (photocopy those documents in the appendix)

Time

- one to three class periods of 45 minutes each

Procedure

1. Review with your students differences between primary source documents and secondary source documents. (*Primary sources are actual documents, photos, letters, etc. from the person(s). Secondary sources are the interpretation of the primary source.*)
2. Divide the students into pairs. Give each pair a copy of one of the document replicas included in this packet and one index card. These documents are evidence of activities which members of the Watson family engaged in.
3. Each pair is to create an information card about the Watson family using the document they received. Have students complete the following questions by using the document. Place information on the front of the index card and date of the document on the back of the index card.

Questions:

What is the type of document? (receipt, letter, certificate, permit, etc.)

Is this a primary or secondary source material? Why?

Are there any dates on the document? Why would it be important to include dates?

Are there any names on the document? If there are names, is the name of the author on the document? Is the name of a member of the Watson family? Why would it be important to include names?



For what audience was the document written? (parents, government, law enforcement agent, etc.) Why would it be necessary for this audience to require this document?

Why do you think the document was written?

List three things the author said that you think are important.

Have each group give an oral interpretation about their document.

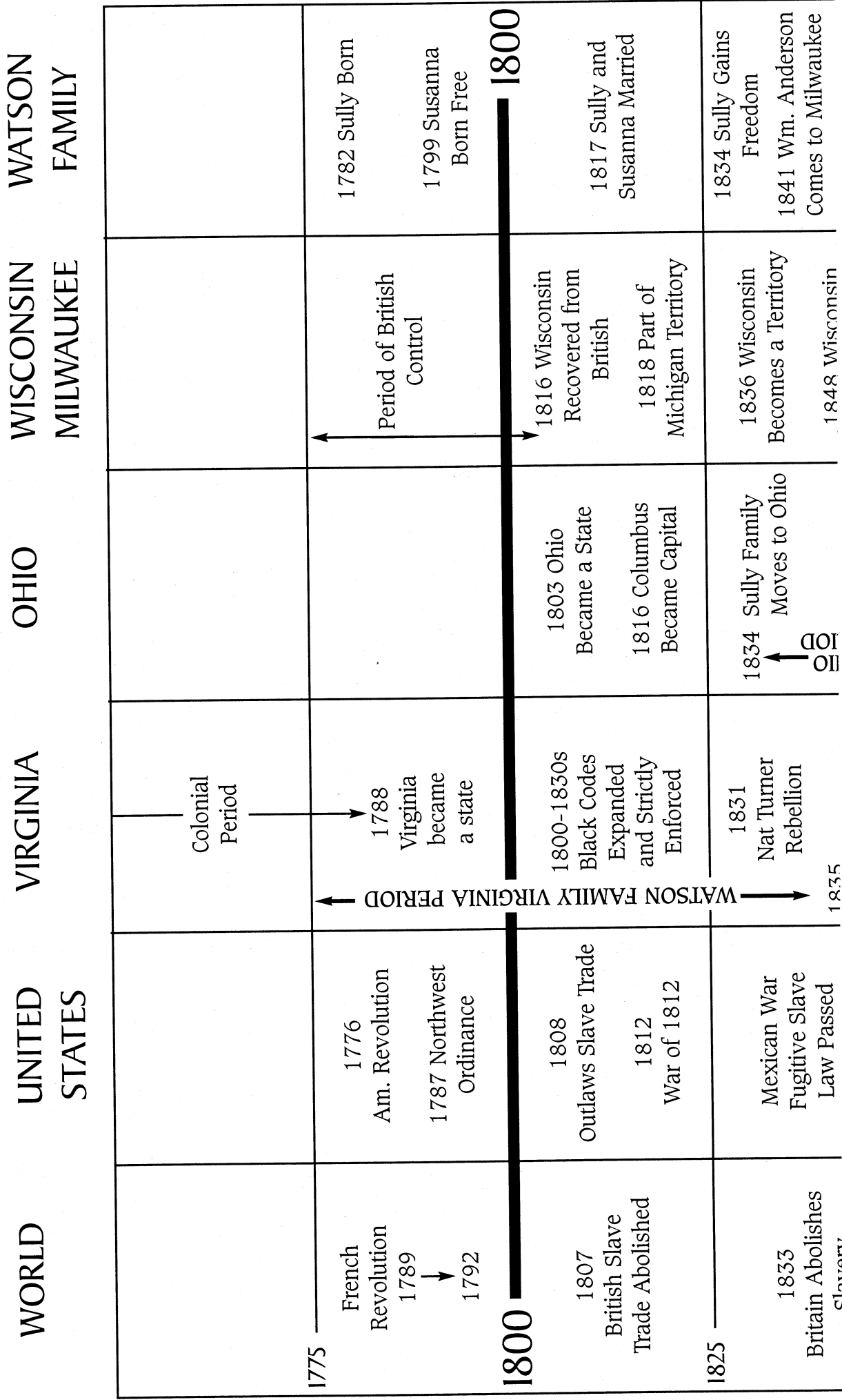
Discussion

Evaluate with the students the ease and/or difficulty in analyzing historical documents. Analyzing documents is a process followed by historians. Was it easy to figure out the answers to the questions from the document(s)? Analysis of documents requires an overall knowledge of the time period. Without it, it is not possible to clearly analyze documents. Use the enclosed timeline to assist with document analysis.

Extensions

1. Arrange the index cards by date on a blackboard. At the end students will have created a timeline of the documents.
2. Add major events to the timeline, i.e. Civil War, Spanish American War, Presidents, etc. Discuss with students how major events in the United States affected the lives of Wisconsin residents.

Watson Family Timeline



1850	1840	1850 Sully Family Moves to Milwaukee 1856 Wm. Thomas Against Fugitive Slave Act 1862 Sully Dies 1871 Wm. Thomas Dies	Becomes a State	1845 Ann Georgiana Comes to Milwaukee
1875	1860	1860 Civil War 1863 Emancipation Proclamation 1864 Fugitive Slave Law Repealed 1864 Reconstruction 1876 Rise of KKK	Virginia Succeeded from the Union 1876 Virginia Readmitted to Union	
1900	1900	1895 Wisconsin Establishes Civil Rights Legislation 1917-1918 Large Influx of African Americans to Work in Factories 1927 Mabel Became 1st African American Female Lawyer	1917-1918 Large Influx of African Americans to Work in Factories 1940-1945 Large Influx of African Americans to Work in Factories During War Effort 1967 Civil Rights Demonstrations 1970	1900 Mabel Attended Marquette Law School
1925	1920	WWI 1914 → 1918 1926 Slavery Abolition Pact Signed WWII 1940 → 1945	Competition Between European Immigrants and African Americans for Housing and Jobs	
1950	1940	Civil Rights Movement		
1975	1970			

Lesson Plan 3

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

Objectives

- Demonstrate the ability to analyze and interpret primary source documents.

Supplies

- Watson family photographs

Time

- two 45-minute class periods

Procedure

1. Photographs, as primary source documents, give different informational perspectives. Working in groups, students can analyze the photographs of Watson family members. Divide the class into pairs. Give each pair a photograph.

2. Have students answer the following: Was the photograph taken recently or a long time ago? How can you tell? *(Note: Photograph technology offers strong clues about age and identification. Daguerreotypes, Ambrotypes, Albumin prints, Tintypes, etc. can be researched by students to help provide clues about date identification regarding when the photograph was taken.)*

Are there any objects included in the photograph? Do they give you clues about where and when the photograph was taken?

Write a sentence about what you believe is happening in the photograph. *(Many photographs are often formal portraits. Make an inference about why a formal portrait would have been taken. Was it to commemorate an important event in the life of the person photographed or for some other reason?)*

If there are people in the photograph describe what they are wearing. Does the clothing give you clues about the kind of job or lifestyle of the people? Describe the person in the photograph. Be sure to include gestures, clothing, furniture, and background.

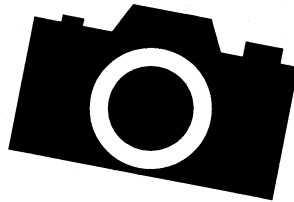
3. Students may need help to “read” their photograph and to build inferences of their observations. Therefore, it is recommended that the teacher model the activity described. The teacher can bring in a photograph of a family or any historical photo and model the procedure for students. A newspaper photo is also a good object to review and analyze. Then, students may work in pairs with the Watson family photograph.

Discussion

Ask students, what other questions are raised by observing the photograph? Discuss with the students how they might go about finding an answer.

Extension

Have students gather photographs (groups, portraits, scenes, etc.) from their family that may go back two or three generations. Have students conduct oral interviews which answer “who, what, where, when and why” with their family about the people represented in their own photographs. Have students document their findings on an information sheet. Have them write 1 - 2 paragraphs about the scene and people in the photograph. Have students bring the photographs and their oral research to class. Have students work in pairs. Allow them to exchange their family photographs with each other in their pair. Have the students apply the questions listed above to the photographs. Compare their inferences with the oral histories collected. Students will see how inferences differ from the actual events.



Lesson Plan 4

Trek Across Country

Sully Watson left Virginia in 1834, packing up the family and traveling in a mule pulled wagon. Traveling in the United States during that time was not an easy job. Using the Watson's documents and their own research, students will interpret travel routes from the southern to the northern part of the United States.

Objective

- Demonstrate skills of map reading and interpretation.

Supplies

- map of United States (wall map)
- 3x3 post-it-notes
- crayons, markers or colored pencils



Time

- one to two class periods of 45 minutes each

Procedure

1. Ask students "What route do you think the Watsons took from Virginia to Ohio, and to Wisconsin?" Have the students highlight the route on a map.
2. Using a mileage chart have students calculate the miles on "their" routing maps. Have them calculate how many hours it would take to travel from Virginia to Ohio to Wisconsin in a car traveling 55 mph.
3. An ox drawn wagon goes approximately 2 MPH. Have students calculate how many hours it would take to travel the same distance by wagon. Remember that a travel day was sun-up to sun-set, about 12 hours.
4. Now give the students the Underground Railroad map. Have students re-draw the possible route and recalculate the mileage and hours by car and by mule. People traveling on the Underground Railroad traveled by wide means – usually by foot (1-1.5 mph), sometimes wagon (2-4 mph) and/or steamboat (8-12 mph).
5. Using the document replicas labeled A and B located in this resource, find the dates and locations of the Watson family travels from Virginia, to Ohio and Milwaukee.

Using post-it-notes, have students place the name of the person and date in the document next to the location on the map to which the document refers. Now using the travel timeline based on the documents, calculate the possible route, hours and mileage. How does this figure compare to the automobile time and mileage? To the mule travel time and mileage?

Document A is Sully Watson's manumission or "free" paper. This document assured his freedom. Virginia law stated that once a slave gained their freedom they had to leave Virginia within a year. From this, students can infer that Sully Watson left Richmond, Virginia for Ohio in 1834.

Document B is a letter written in 1847 indicating desire for Sully Watson and his wife to leave Ohio for Wisconsin. From this, students can infer that that family news and connections were important. Other evidence shows that the Watson family was in Ohio in 1848.

It is part of the oral tradition of the Watson family that Sully Watson and his wife arrived in Milwaukee in 1850. No primary source evidence documenting an arrival in Milwaukee has been found by historians.

Discussion

Why are the routes not in a straight line? (*Hostile territory, mountains, waterways, etc. affected the route. It also was not safe for African Americans to travel to some places in the United States during this time.*) Was this the fastest route? (*In 1834 there were no highways, no cars and trains were new. There was no direct water route from Virginia to Ohio that was navigable or that would accept black passengers. Although there was a water route from Cleveland to Milwaukee, the cost of 4 or 5 tickets for Sully's family plus passage for their worldly goods would have been expensive for Sully. It is likely that Sully and his family traveled by wagon and foot.*)

Lesson Plan 5

Who's Who: The Family Tree

Objective

- Use a model chart to organize and create a family tree.
- Demonstrate communication skills, through interviewing and oral or written presentations.

Supplies

- Genealogy Chart and pencils and paper

Time

- one to two class periods of 45 minutes each

Procedure

1. Using the Watson family tree as a guide, create your own family tree. Use the Genealogy Chart to fill in as much information as you can without family input. Then take the chart home and ask family members to help complete the chart. More branches may be added to the chart.

(Note: Anecdotes and family stories are important lore but must be backed up with facts and documentation. Genealogists require documentary proof, such as birth certificates, marriage certificates, census information, military discharge, etc. to confirm oral sources.)

2. Genealogists use abbreviations to help them develop family trees. Some of these include:

- b. = date of birth
- p.b. = place of birth
- m. = date of marriage
- p.m. = place of marriage
- d. = date of death
- p.d. = place of death


Discussion:

Discuss with students why it is important to know their family lineage.

1. It is interesting and fascinating to find out where we came from, who our ancestors were and how they lived.

Chart No.





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List sources on reverse side

WISCONSIN STATE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

FAMILY GROUP CHART

HUSBAND _____ Ancestor No.* _____

Born _____ at _____

Died _____ at _____

Buried _____

Married _____ at _____

Father _____ Mother _____

Other wives _____

Other residences _____

Church _____

WIFE _____ Ancestor No. _____

Born _____ at _____

Died _____ at _____

Buried _____

Father _____ Mother _____

Other husbands _____

CHILDREN

	Name	Born	Died	Married
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				

Compiler _____

Address _____

Date _____

Show sources of information on reverse side.

*Ancestor No. should correspond to same ancestor's number on Pedigree Chart

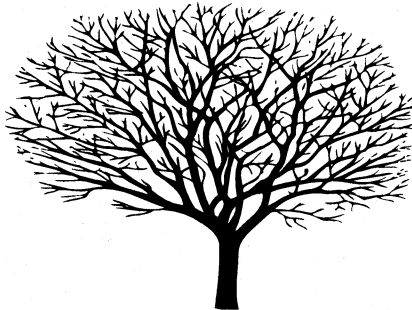
2. The search for our roots and how to go about it is as interesting as the information itself. The search helps uncover the locations of public and private records, books and connections to different people.

3. Tracing family roots can show how local, national and international events in history have affected people in our families. One gains a better appreciation of history when tracing a family tree.

4. The skills used in creating a family history are those of a detective and an historian. One comes to appreciate the time involved by historians in uncovering the past.

Extension

Students can create a timeline of family members using birth, marriage and death dates. Have students add national and international events. Have them discuss how the national and international events affected their family. Have students interview family members to gather stories about the events and how the events affected their lives.



Resources

BEFORE FREEDOM CAME, African-American Life in the Antebellum South.
Ed. Edward Campbell Jr. and Kym Rice. University Press of Virginia, Richmond, 1991.
A museum exhibition catalog with many photos, drawings, maps and object images along with excellent overview essays on aspects of African American life on plantations, cities, women's issues and archaeology.

SLAVES WITHOUT MASTER. By Ira Berlin.
The New Press, NY, NY, 1974.
A classic work on the lives of free blacks in the American south before the Civil War.

FREE PEOPLE OF COLOR. By James O. Horton.
Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington DC, 1993.
An inside look at the African American communities in the free north before the Civil War. Much information about the self image and political unity of African Americans.

THE NEGRO IN VIRGINIA. Compiled by the Writer's Program of the Works.
Progress Administration, State of Virginia.
John Blair, Publisher, Winston-Salem, NC, 1994.
Interviews and first hand accounts of the lives of Virginia slaves recorded by WPA workers in Virginia in the 1930s.

BLACK MILWAUKEE. By Joe William Trotter.
University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 1985.
An in-depth report on the growth and industry of Milwaukee's black community between 1915-1945. Some background, overview material on Black community 1870-1900.

WE WERE ALWAYS FREE, a 200 year family history. By T.O. Madden Jr.
W.W. Norton Co., NY, 1992.
Madden traces his family history based on the discovery of a trunk full of family papers. Events begin in 1758 in Spotsylvania County, Virginia and parallel the Watson story.

AMERICAN WORK, four centuries of black and white labor. By Jacqueline Jones.
W.W. Norton Co., NY, 1998.
An overview of American labor couched in the experiences of, and between labor class Americans. Outlines the social and racial setbacks initiated and experienced between workers.

BLACK HISTORY. A guide to civilian records in the National Archives. By Debra L. Newman. National Archives Trust, Washington DC, 1984.

An overview of records (non-military) concerning African Americans in the United States. A guide to governmental resources, departmental records and first person accounts.

WE ARE YOUR SISTERS, Black women in the nineteenth century. Ed. Dorothy Sterling. W. W. Norton Co., NY, 1984.

A compilation of first hand accounts of black women taken down by the WPA Writer's Project.

UNCOMMON GROUND. Archaeology and Early African America, 1650-1800.

By Leland Ferguson.

Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington DC, 1992.

An overview of the archaeology of African America and the objects of daily life in the colonial (1650-1782) and early national periods (1783-1800). Information on housing, pottery, food ways, farm ways.

BLACK LAWS OF VIRGINIA. By June Purcell Guild.

Afro-American Historical Assn. Fauquier County, Virginia, 1936.

4th printing by Willow Bend Books, 1995.

A compilation of the laws of Virginia from the 17th century through the 19th century affecting the lives and livelihood of African Americans.

THE BLACK LAWS OF THE OLD NORTHWEST, a documentary history.

By Stephen Middleton. Greenwood Press, Westport Conn., 1993.

An overview of the laws concerning African Americans in the states that made up the "Old Northwest" ie: Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin. Includes relevant sections of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 and the State constitutions. Each state section is prefaced by commentary by the author.

Web Sites

www.ohiohistory.org/africanam

Digital collection of Ohio's African American community from 1850 to 1920 in the words of the people who lived them. Great resource for education and students grade 6-12.

www.newdeal.feri.org/asn

Web site offers classroom activities, such as "Been Here So Long," slave narratives. Great resource for educators and students grades 6-12.

www.historymatters.gma.edu

Designed for high school and college teachers as a gateway to Web resources. An emphasis on materials focusing on lives of the ordinary American.

www.genhomepage.com

Web site is a key to unlocking many useful genealogy sites. Great resource for educators and students (all grades).

www.myhistory.org

A millennium project that focuses on classroom activities, kid's corner and community projects. Great resource for education and students (all grades).

www.georgetown.edu/crossroads/asw/afam

Created to be a link for educators to resources regarding African American history. Can also be used for high school and college students as a resource.

Appendix of Documents

Document A

Sully Watson's Manumission Paper or "Free Paper"

This is a very important document. It is an example of Sully Watson's free papers. If Sully Watson were stopped by anyone, he needed to produce these papers and could go on his way. This document assured his grant of freedom. It made him a free man. It was signed by H. M. Conway, a relative of William Moncure.

The documents reads:

No. 276

Sully Watson a man of a dark copper colour with short black woolly hair-a little grey – long face wrinkled on each side of his mouth. Prominent features – a scar on the right cheek – five feet ten & a half inches high – about 50 years old – liberated by the last will and testament of the late William Moncure of Windsor Forest –

Stafford County Court March term 1834

The Court doth certify the Register of Sully Watson as taken by the clerk thereof to be correct and true

Virginia Stafford County to wit

As Clerk of the County Court of Stafford in the State aforesaid, I certify the foregoing to be true copies from (illegible) my office.

In testimony whereof I hereto set my hand and affix the seal of my said office at the courthouse this 10th day of March 1834 in the 58th year of our foundation.

Saul S. Brooke (a Justice of the peace for the county Estate aforesaid)

HM Conway

No 276.

Sully Watson a man of a dark copper colour, with short black woolly hair - a little grey - long face wrinkled on each side of his mouth - prominent features - a scar on the right cheek - five feet ten & a half inches high - about fifty years old - liberated by the last will and testament of the late William Moncure of Windsor Forest -

Stafford County Court, March term 1834

The Court doth certify the Register of Sully Watson as taken by the Clerk thereof to be correct & true -

Virginia - Stafford County to wit:

As Clerk of the County Court of Stafford in the State aforesaid, I certify the foregoing to be true copies from the records of my office -

In testimony whereof I hereto set my hand and affix the seal of my said office, at the Court house, this 10th day of March 1834 - in the 5th year of our foundation -

at h. p. Saml S Moore a Justice of the peace for the County State aforesaid

W. H. Conway

Document B

Letters to the Daughter and Son-In-Law
(William and Ann Anderson) from Susanna Watson

The following letters were written by Susanna Watson during her time in Ohio with Sully Watson. They are the only examples historians have found to date written by Susanna Watson.

Letter; Susan Watson to William and Ann Anderson

Columbus Ohio October 4 1847

Dear son and daughter it is with great pleasure I now imbrace this oportunity of (w)riting to you to let you know that we are mend and hopes that these few lin(e)s may find you all in good he(a)lth (.) We have had a vary (very) sick family (.) little aseane died with the warm crupe(.) 2 doctors tended her but co(u)ld do her no good (.) your brother Thomas Watson took som(e) turpintine and it like to killed him but he is vary(very) weak at present but hopes for the better(.) your daddy has be vary (very) sick but he is on the mend (.) at present you don(') t (k)now what trouble I has seen but I hopes that the Lord will be with me (.) I want to see you all so bad but I hopes that it won(')t be vary (very) long before I shall see you all (.) Suseanne takes the death of her child vary (very) hard (.) Little solloman gr(i)eves day and night (.) She was so much company for him (.) if any body tro(u)bled her she wo(u)ld kiss her younkil (uncle) Henry and anty (auntie) and tel(l) them that would put her in a good youmer (humour) (.) your too (two) liknes (likenesses) one hangs at the head of my bed and the other at the foot whare (where) I can see you both (.) Sister Margret (margaret) trent and sister randol (randall) dined with me yesterday and both joins in love to you all and says that they wants to be with you all (.) we had such alaf (a laugh) about your dream but last weak (week) the association sent up 7 preachers and organised our church (.) your father and mother anderson is will (well) and the children davey and susean (.) is polly vergina that thay (they) don(')t think that she will live (.) she was taken sick at cincinata (Cincinnati) when thay (they) went to the association (.) I received your kind letter by Mr. Tobury (?) and was glad to he(a)r from you all (.) he has told the darkes(t) about home (Virginia?) . Will you is adoin (a doing) and thay is distracted to move out thare (there). William tamas (Thomas) talkes of starting 20 of this month if he can (.) Your father is still poly (poorly) but has not gave out coming if (it) please God (.) Tho(s)es that you want won(')t get out of h(e)art looking for your for I want my bones laid whare (where) you all is if (it) please God (.) No more a(t) preasant (present) but remain your mother until death Suseann Watson (.) suseannah and tamas and solloman your daddy all joins in love to you all (.)

Letter; Susanna Watson to William and Ann Anderson

Columbus Ohio February 8 1847

Dear son and daughter it is with great pleasure I now imbrace this oportunity of riting (writing) to you to let you know that we are all in good helth (health) at pressant (present) and hopes that these few lins (lines) may find you all in good helth (health) (.) I recived (received) your letter of 25 december wich (which) was great fun for yous all (.) you don('t (k)now how glad we was to hear that you all are doin(g) well (.) you said som(e) thing about elixandra (alexandra?) that was afal (awful) (.) He jest (just) wanted to rob joh (joe?) out of his money (.) your cosin (cousin) rosinea sent your father a letter (.) She saw frank trunk but the Captain wold (would) not let her have it (.) we still want to come out this fall if we can (.) we had al(m)ost of 50 dollars (.) by the high water the people says that thay (they) never saw it so before (.) your father anderson says that he (k)now that if we come out thare (there) that you will shout and go som(e) whare (where) els (else) for he (k)now that you was lo(o)king for a place when you went to madison (.) I want you to (w)rite we word wheather (whether) or not it is so far (.) I wold (would) stay her(e) all my life for I was in hopes that your minds was settled to stay ther (e) (.) Your daddy says that he is not satisfied about emily (.) The next letter you must let her scrable (scribble) a little on it with his pen that he may see that she is alive (.) Gorge (George) not has got back and is well and sends his love to you all (.) Little ascaner (?) Scot can walkabout the house (.) She can call daddy and mama (.) Suseanna is determined to come out ther(e) (.) Solloman (Solomon) says that he want to see emily and let her howday (?) (.) your daddy joins in love to you all (.) your father and mother anderson both is well today and joins in love (.) William T(h)omas joins in love to you all (.) illegible you to send me word wheather (whether) you have got your letter or k(n)ow the church told the clerk to send it to you (.) you must (w)rite as soon as you can (.) your daddy and suseanna is to the post of(f)ice every day or too (two) to hear from you all (.) The news is that Ann Good is goin(g) to be mar(r)ied to Ambrus neal (.) you both of you (k)now him (.) his lips (?) will make good heals for illegible spouse (.) She was his hunay (honey?) and was well (.) she says that you must (w)rite to her and let her (k)now wheather (whether) you got her letter or k(n)ow we all joins in love to you all (.) no more at present but remain your mother unto death (.)

[signature] Susan Watson

*Document C***Permit for Sully Watson to Travel**

The following document is permission for Sully Watson to be in the town of Stafford while awaiting processing of his free papers.

The document reads:

The bearer

Sully Watson is one of the servants lately liberated by the last will of Mr. Moncure Esq of Windsor Forest. He is remaining in the county until Sunday next open court day in order to procure his free papers.

H.M. Conway
Mar 6 1834

The house
shelby Nelson is one of the several lately elevated by the last will of Mr.
Nelson. Son of William Nelson. He is remaining in the County until summer
will over cast day in order to procure his free papers

Wm. Nelson

March 6. 1834

*Document D***Permit for Sully Watson to Travel to Church**

The following is a copy of the permit for Sully Watson to travel to a church outside of his county. Sully lived in Stafford County, Virginia but sometimes attended church at a meeting house in Goochland County, west of Richmond. Sully carried a copy of this permit which he would show if anyone were to ask him where he was going. The permit was good for 7-10 days. Dr. Frank Harris, an associate of Mr. Moncure, was trusted to issue permits in the name of Mr. Moncure and acted as an agent for Mr. Moncure.

Sully had family and friends near this meeting house. It was considered special, that he was allowed to go to a church other than his master's church and that he was allowed to mingle with free blacks.

The document reads:

The Bearer Sully Watson has permission to go to Goochland to preaching at Websters Meeting House and to return unmolested by any one

July the 11th 1830

Frances Harris

The Bearers fully Watson has permission
to go to Goodland to preaching at
Adele's meeting-house and to return
accompanied by any one
July the 14th 1830 Francis Harris

Document E

Permit for Sully Watson to Travel

The following is a copy of a document permitting Sully Watson to travel to Powhatan County, Virginia to visit family. When Sully received his free papers, he left for Ohio but his sister, nephew and mother remained in a community of free blacks in Powhatan. This document specifies a route. Why is this important? (*If Sully Watson were found outside the route, he might be considered a runaway slave and face serious consequences.*) Why would Sully Watson want to travel to Powhatan County, Virginia?

The document reads:

The Bearer Sully, my servant, has my permission and is authorized by me to pass from this place, my residence, Windsor Forest, to his home and family in Powhatan County on James River with travel through (illegible), Bowling Green and city of Richmond. Given from under my hand this eleventh day of October eighteen hundred and thirty, Windsor Forest Stafford County Virginia

To all whom it
may concern

William Moncure

Document F

Susanna Custelo Registration Papers

African American people living in Virginia were required to renew their registration papers every year as long as they were living in Virginia. If there was a general alarm to search for an escaped slave or put down a slave revolt, a call for citizen assistance went out. There were patrols of deputized landowners or their agents (deputized by county or local officials). The deputized citizens could ask black people for registration papers or travel permits. If the papers could not be shown then the individual questioned could be jailed. This requirement ended with the end of the Civil War.

The spelling of Susanna's last name varies from document to document. In some cases it is spelled "Custelo" and in other cases "Custaloe." It varied upon the clerk preparing the documents. For the purposes of this resource, the spelling "Custelo" will be used.

The document reads:

City of Richmond, To wit:

Registered, in the Office of the Court of Hustings for the said City, the nineteenth day of August 1834, No. 276, Susan Custaloe, a bright mulatto woman about five feet five inches high, and about twenty six years old, who was born free as appears by the oath of William Rowlett. There are many moles about her face, particularly a bright black one not far from the corner of her left eye. No other marks worth noticing are apparent on her head, face or hands.

A true copy—Witness my hand, and the seal of the said Court of Hustings, this 19th day of August 1834.

Teste,
Howard Clk
Joseph Tate
Charge of Said City

CITY OF RICHMOND, To wit:

Registered, in the Office of the Court of Hustings for the said City,
the nineteenth day of August 1834, No. 276, Susan
Cushloe a bright mulatto woman

about five feet five inches high, and about twenty six
years old, who was examined as appeared by the oath of William
Howell. There are many marks about her face, particularly
a light black one not far from the corner of her left eye. No
other marks worth noticing are appeared on her head, face or
hands. A true copy—Witness my hand, and the seal of the said Court of Hustings,
this 19th day of August 1834.

Teste,

W. P. Howard, c. cl.

Joseph Cate, Attorney
for said City



Document G

Registration Papers for Ann Custelo

African American people living in the United States in the 1800s either carried papers or had papers in a safe place that were registered with the clerk of circuit court. These papers were called "registration papers" which registered a person from birth and identified them as "free" or which registered the time they became "free." Registration papers were also used to register new, free black people coming to the area, though black migration was frowned upon. Authorities preferred free blacks stay where they were freed to live in the communities that freed them. It minimized new migrants and transmission of ideas and views. It made the owner's community responsible for the free black. It was easier to live where the free black was known.

The following document is a sample of the registration paper for the daughter of Sully Watson and Susanna Custelo.

Notice how the daughter's name is written on the document, "Ann G.W. Custaloe." Susanna Watson paid homage to the Watson name by inserting the "W" in the certificate. Later, the Custelo name would be dropped when the family left Virginia and all children became known as "Watson."

When Ann was ten years old, she was registered by her mother under the name of Custelo rather than Watson. Susanna registered her daughter under her maiden name as a safeguard to preserve Ann's free status.

The document reads:

City of Richmond, To wit:

Registered, in the Office of the Court of Hustings for the said City, the 27 day of February 1827, No.1 937; Ann G. W. Custaloe, a mulatto girl about four feet two inches high, and about ten years old, who was born free, being the daughter of Susan Custaloe a free born mulatto woman.

A true copy—Witness my hand, and the seal of the said Hustings Court, this 21st day of August 1833.

Teste,
Th: C. Howard Clk
Joseph Tate
Charge of Said City

CITY OF RICHMOND, TO WIT:

Registered,

in the Office of the Court of Hustings for the said

City, the 27. day of February — 18 27, No. 937, Ann G. W.

Custaloo a mulatto girl — about four feet two

inches high, and about ten — years old, who was born

free, being the daughter of Susan Custaloo

a free born mulatto woman —

A true copy—Witness my hand and the seal of the said

Hustings Court, this 27th day of August

1833.

TESTE,

W. C. Howard Clk.

Joseph Cate,
Mayor of said
City

Document H

Certificate for Charles Watson

Sully Watson's grandson, Charles Watson, received a certificate when he was in 4th grade. An education to the 8th grade was considered exceptional in the 19th century while an education to the 3rd to 4th grade was the average.

The school which issued the certificate is the Fourth Ward School in Milwaukee. Early records of Milwaukee Schools do not often list students by name until well past the 1870s. By then, most of the Watson grandchildren were out of school.

The certificate lists the name of Charles' teacher. Historians tried to find more information about the teacher in hopes of linking the Watson grandchildren to specific years in school. To date, historians were unable to find more information about the teacher.

Because the certificate was saved by the Watson family, it indicates that the family considered education important for the children and treasured the award given to Charles.



Document I

Letter to Sully Watson from his Nephew

This letter is not transcribed. It is included to provide an example of the difficulties encountered by historians as they search records from the past. Penmanship in early documents was generally good. However, deciphering spelling, syntax and actual meaning of the documents takes time. Also, some words have different meanings than they do today. Therefore, historians need to know the vocabulary and common usage of words and abbreviations.

In 1848, there were no computers, no telephones, and no typewriters. Before the advent of the typewriter, documents were manuscript (hand written) or printed by a printing process. Often it was a combination of the two—like some Watson documents. Most documents were signed; signatures were a way to identify a person. Government documents were signed and sealed to show authenticity and official sanction.

Parkston Virginia Feb 9th 1849

My Dear uncle Tully

I took it upon my self to write you a few lines in return to your letter I received your letter last Sunday by William Bentley all of the ^{family} are well at present we have had very bad luck in our family my wife has had thirteen children and we have lost seven children John Crittenton and Nancy Crittenton are both well and join me in much love to you and your family

William Bentley and his wife also join me in love to you he had four children but he has not got but three more one of them died two or three years ago my wifes mother ^{lived} four years ago

Megilvord and his wife are both well and join me in love to you all Megilvord my self and my wife William Bentley and his wife have all joined the Baptist Church at last we joined the church in the year 1841 Nancy Crittentons children have all joined the church except the youngest your mother is living at the same place that you moved from she is very well and joins me in much love to you her desire is that she will meet you in heaven for she never expects to see you here I wish remembers

his love to you and all inquiring friends he is pretty much like he was when you left him his mind is not changed from the same thing Charles Bonnet and his ^{wife} are both well and join me in love to you all he and his wife have also joined the church Charles Howell is very well and also joins me in much love to you and he has joined the church too I am very sorry that I have never

written to you before my mother joins me in
love to all she has also joined the church she
is quite old but yet looks very fresh Edgar
is very well and joins me in love to you
Paulina is very well and also me in love
to you her oldest son has bought her and
give eighty dollars for her Magdalen son
married Paulinas youngest daughter your
sister Fady is very well and joins me in much
love to you all Nancy Fords son also joins me
in much love to he has also joined the church
there was a great stir of religion here in the
year 1841 but it is very cold now I am glad
that I have time to write you these few
lines

your affectionate
nephew

Gulley Webb
son

N37166

Document J

Sully Watson Death Notice

In the June 27, 1862, page 1 column 8 of the Milwaukee Sentinel, was the death notice of Sully Watson. His death notice was placed on the front page of the Milwaukee Sentinel, a place reserved for those esteemed in the community.

The article reads:

DIED

In this city, June 21st, Mr. Sully Watson, aged about 90 years.

He was born in Virginia some time before the commencement of the Revolutionary War and more than half of his long life was spent in slavery. He had through many years been an exemplary disciple of the Lord Jesus and died in the enjoyment of that peaceful hope which Christianity alone can inspire.