

On the Trail of Fannie Jones James

By Ted Brownstein

Earlier this summer, my wife, Chris, and I packed up our RV for our annual trek from Florida to Wisconsin. But this year, in addition to camping along the way, we planned to visit a small town in Ohio with a fascinating connection to Lake Worth Beach history.

Our goal was to find out more about the oddly named town, Washington Court House (WCH), Ohio and its connection with Fannie and Samuel James, the first permanent homesteaders on the site of the future Lake Worth. Searching for clues about her life took a giant leap forward in 2013 with the publication of the book, *Pioneers of Jewell*. Previously, all that was known was that Fannie had been the only postmistress of Jewell, an unincorporated area, that was the precursor of the Town of Lake Worth.

Little was known of her earlier life, her origins, family, or the circumstances of her settling on the western shore of The Lake. But new internet research permitted digging into her background. We learned that she had been born in Granville County, North Carolina in 1842 to Lucy Mangrum and Henry Jones. The area was a producer of tobacco, which required extensive manual labor and utilized a large slave population. US Census and online documents lead to the discovery of the identities of her sisters, cousins, nieces, and nephews.

Fannie and Samuel accumulated a sizeable fortune by buying and selling real estate, farming, and construction. The extent of the James land holdings was discovered to range to the four corners of the future site of Lake Worth, including parts of the Bryant Park, Downtown Jewel, South Palm Park, Pineapple Beach, College Park, and other neighborhoods. The extent of their wealth allowed them to loan funds to the newly chartered, Bank of Lake Worth as well as prominent enterprises in Palm Beach.

Samuel was a skilled carpenter and built many of the early homes in the Jewell area, yet he was illiterate and signed his name with an "X." Fannie, on the other hand, had learned to read and write. Documents that she authored were found in the National and Palm Beach County archives including the James' homestead applications, the Jewell Post Office application, and many real estate transactions. Where did an African-American woman of that time get an education?

One possibility is the abolitionist stronghold of

WCH. Not only was that place known as a refuge for runaway slaves and an important stop on the Underground Railroad, but for its time was an amazingly welcoming place where blacks were treated as equals. As early as the 1850's, education was available for "colored" people, sometimes separate, but often white and colored children shared the same classrooms. Adults, too, were able to enroll. Other indications of the uniqueness of WCH and surrounding towns are the fact that blacks were granted the vote and own property before and during the Civil War.

But what did Fannie James, born in North Carolina, have to do with Washington Court House, Ohio?

Our visit to the library there, uncovered confirming evidence of what had previously been suspected.

During the Civil War, blacks fled Confederate areas, some going to areas held by Union troops and others leaving the South. Southern Ohio was a magnet for such refugees. The state took a special census of them, recording their arrival, place of origin, etc. Twenty members of Fannie's relatives are listed as having arrived in Fayette County, Ohio from Union County, North Carolina in 1863. Included in the groups were two of Fannie's married sisters, Eliza and Betsey.

Notably Fannie's name is missing from that list, but remarkably she shows up in the historical record, living in Washington Court House a few years later. How so? When veteran's records from the Civil War were made available on Ancestry.com, it was discovered that Fannie had signed a legal document in 1868 and given WCH as her place of residence.

The story goes like this. Fannie's brother-in-law, William Anderson had died while in the Union Army in 1865. Her sister, Betsey, was entitled to a widow's pension but lacked a legal marriage license. Fannie signed necessary legal affidavit in support of Betsey's widow application, testifying that she had been present at William and Betsey's wedding. The document was sealed at Washington Court House where Betsey Anderson also lived. Also, noteworthy, is the fact that she signed as Fannie James, indicating that she was already married to Samuel.

Our visit to WCH revealed many interesting tidbits about Fannie's family and the city's attitudes toward its "colored" citizens. At the local cemetery, we found the gravesites of Fannie's sisters and other family

members. Particularly significant are the markers for Fannie's sister, Betsey and her nephew Alonzo.

Notably, whites and blacks were buried side by side, Civil War veterans and civilians alike. Compare this to the situation in Lake Worth where blacks were not allowed burial in the Pinecrest Cemetery (on South A Street) and used the IA Banks Cemetery (on Wingfield Street). Separate cemeteries continue to be used to this day, but now more as a matter of custom than law.

As we dug through the WCH library records, several remarkable anti-slavery stories emerged. One account reported the exploits of ex-slave Augustus West. West purchased a farm just outside of WCH, built a large house and openly gave refuge to runaway slaves. When slave catchers or Federal agents, attempting to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law came around, they were misdirected. West was able to continue his operation for years with the support of the surrounding community.

More remarkable yet, was West's unique method for obtaining funds for his refuge. He teamed up with white abolitionist Alexander Beatty, who played the role of slave catcher. The two went south and West allowed himself to be sold into slavery. The men would then scheme West's escape and would return to WCH with funds to acquire land, purchase food and otherwise provide humanitarian aid to escaped slaves. The courage and audacity of this scheme is worthy of a Hollywood script. Moreover, West and Beatty repeated this plot at least three times before the Civil War.

One final discovery, relates to Fannie's nephew, Alonzo Anderson. Alonzo was born in WCH in 1863, just month after his family immigrated there. He remained close to Aunt Fannie throughout his life and visited Lake Worth many times. After Fannie's death in 1915, he served as an executor of her estate, repeatedly travelling to Florida by train to settle her affairs, liquidate her loans to the Bank of Lake Worth and others, sell her properties and so forth. The WCH library contained old City Directories which enabled us to find Alonzo's home. Apparently, his mother, Fannie's sister, Betsey, also lived in the house for several years prior to her death in 1913.

More about the settlement of Jewell, the Jameses and WCH can be found in the book, *Pioneers of Jewell*. Besides myself, others continue to research open questions about Fannie and

Samuel's lives. Notably former Palm Beach Post reporter, Scott McCabe, and Historical Society of Lake Worth president, Steve Lockwood, uncover new details as new resources become available. We would still like to know, the certainty and details of their reported

slavery and emancipation, where and when Fannie and Samuel met and were married, where they lived between WCH (1868) and Tallahassee (1880, when they first show up on the US Census), why the Jameses moved South and a host of other questions. Stay tuned.

Public Notices

Legal Notice No. 39287

FICTITIOUS NAME NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that NORTHERN REDNECK DISTRIBUTING, INC., OWNER, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of FLORIDA INDUSTRIAL SUPER CLEANERS located at 720 LUCERNE AVE, #1671, LAKE WORTH BEACH, Florida 33460 intends to register the said name in PALM BEACH county with the Division of Corporations, Florida Department of State, pursuant to section 865.09 of the Florida Statutes. Publish: The Lake Worth Herald October 14, 2021

Legal Notice No. 39288

FICTITIOUS NAME NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that JACKSON NGUYEN, OWNER, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of JL NAILS SPA located at 1685 FORUM PL, WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA 33401 intends to register the said name in PALM BEACH county with the Division of Corporations, Florida Department of State, pursuant to section 865.09 of the Florida Statutes. Publish: The Lake Worth Herald October 14, 2021

Legal Notice No. 39286

FICTITIOUS NAME NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that LAER REALTY INC., OWNER, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of LAER REALTY PARTNERS - BOWEN located at 12769 FOREST HILL BLVD, #1A, WELLINGTON, FLORIDA 33414 intends to register the said name in PALM BEACH county with the Division of Corporations, Florida Department of State, pursuant to section 865.09 of the Florida Statutes. Publish: The Lake Worth Herald October 14, 2021

Legal Notice No. 39319

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

PRIORITY TOWING, INC. gives Notice of Foreclosure of Lien and intent to sell these vehicles on October 26, 2021, 08:00 am at 214 SE 7TH AVE, BOYNTON BEACH, FL 33435, pursuant to subsection 713.78 of the Florida Statutes. PRIORITY TOWING, INC. reserves the right to accept or reject any and/or all bids. 2018 CHEVROLET VIN#1G1JF5S8XJ4107431 2007 HONDA VIN#1HGCM56827A155571 Publish: The Lake Worth Herald October 14, 2021

Legal Notice No. 39317

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

PRIORITY TOWING, INC. gives Notice of Foreclosure of Lien and intent to sell these vehicles on October 26, 2021, 08:00 am at 714 - 740 BARNETT DRIVE, LAKE WORTH, FL 33461-3208, pursuant to subsection 713.78 of the Florida Statutes. PRIORITY TOWING, INC. reserves the right to accept or reject any and/or all bids. 2004 FORD VIN#1FTFPX12574NB14255 2013 CHPN VIN#1GB3G2CGXD1186292 1995 HONDA VIN#1HGCE1890SA006189 2004 JEEP VIN#1J4GL48XK4W152173 Publish: The Lake Worth Herald October 14, 2021

Legal Notice No. 39289

FICTITIOUS NAME NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that RODNEY DEAN HENSON, OWNER, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of PURE BROKER located at 940 SWEETWATER LANE, SUITE 101, BOCA RATON, FLORIDA 33431 intends to register the said name in PALM BEACH county with the Division of Corporations, Florida Department of State, pursuant to section 865.09 of the Florida Statutes. Publish: The Lake Worth Herald October 14, 2021

Legal Notice No. 39285

FICTITIOUS NAME NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that ALEXANDRA FELICIANO, OWNER, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of HEALX AESTHETICS located at 1165 CRYSTAL WAY, APT E, DELRAY BEACH, FLORIDA 33444 intends to register the said name in PALM BEACH county with the Division of Corporations, Florida Department of State, pursuant to section 865.09 of the Florida Statutes. Publish: The Lake Worth Herald October 14, 2021

Legal Notice No. 39312

FICTITIOUS NAME NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that LISA JAIMUNGAL, OWNER, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of SUGAR N' SPICE located at 3011 LINTON BLVD, APT 201D, DELRAY BEACH, FLORIDA 33445 intends to register the said name in PALM BEACH county with the Division of Corporations, Florida Department of State, pursuant to section 865.09 of the Florida Statutes. Publish: The Lake Worth Herald October 14, 2021

Legal Notice No. 39313

FICTITIOUS NAME NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that STONE ROAD ENERGY LLC, OWNER, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of BEELINE PROPANE located at 2635 ELECTRONICS WAY, WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA 33407 intends to register the said name in PALM BEACH county with the Division of Corporations, Florida Department of State, pursuant to section 865.09 of the Florida Statutes. Publish: The Lake Worth Herald October 14, 2021

Legal Notice No. 39318

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

PRIORITY TOWING, INC. gives Notice of Foreclosure of Lien and intent to sell these vehicles on October 26, 2021, 08:00 am at 7153 SOUTHERN BLVD, SUITE A, WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33413, pursuant to subsection 713.78 of the Florida Statutes. PRIORITY TOWING, INC. reserves the right to accept or reject any and/or all bids. 2014 FORD VIN#1FA6P0H73E5388610 1989 PONTIAC VIN#1G2F521S2KL258638 2003 HONDA VIN#1HGCM72613A029566 2013 NISSAN VIN#1N4AA5AP4DC804449 2015 TOYOTA VIN#2T1BURHE4FC346245 2015 HYUNDAI VIN#KMHCT5AE3FU224355 2006 HYUNDAI VIN#KMHND46DX6U299336 Publish: The Lake Worth Herald October 14, 2021

Legal Notice No. 39290

FICTITIOUS NAME NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that NICOLE FLORINA, LUCIA FRANCO, OWNERS, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of MAXINE & MARGO PRESS located at PO BOX 1971, JUPITER, FLORIDA 33458 intends to register the said name in PALM BEACH county with the Division of Corporations, Florida Department of State, pursuant to section 865.09 of the Florida Statutes. Publish: The Lake Worth Herald October 14, 2021

Legal Notice No. 39291

FICTITIOUS NAME NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that TARYN LISA CELLUCCI, OWNER, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of LUCIA FRANCO located at PO Box 1971, JUPITER, FLORIDA 33468 intends to register the said name in PALM BEACH county with the Division of Corporations, Florida Department of State, pursuant to section 865.09 of the Florida Statutes. Publish: The Lake Worth Herald October 14, 2021

Legal Notice No. 39292

FICTITIOUS NAME NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that PADMA ALWALA, OWNER, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of INDIC ARTS AND CRAFTS located at 833 UNIVERSITY BLVD, APT 206, JUPITER, FLORIDA 33458 intends to register the said name in PALM BEACH county with the Division of Corporations, Florida Department of State, pursuant to section 865.09 of the Florida Statutes. Publish: The Lake Worth Herald October 14, 2021

Legal Notice No. 39311

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

Palm Beach Auto Disposal gives Notice of Foreclosure of Lien and intent to sell these vehicles on October 28, 2021, 08:00 am at 506 NE 3RD ST., BOYNTON BEACH, FL 33435, pursuant to subsection 713.78 of the Florida Statutes. Palm Beach Auto Disposal reserves the right to accept or reject any and/or all bids. 2012 NISSAN VIN#JN8AS5MT4CW606293 On October 30, 2021, 8:00 am 2015 TOYOTA VIN#4T4BF1FK9FR483934 On November 12, 2021, 8:00 am 2000 KAWASAKI VIN#JKAENVC10YA164843 2014 HYUNDAI VIN#KMHTC6AE8EU210794 Publish: The Lake Worth Herald October 14, 2021

Legal Notice No. 39298

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

On OCTOBER 29, 2021 at 10:00 AM a public auction will be held at 2712 Park Street, Unit A, Lake Worth, FL. The following vehicles will be auctioned off for cash. All sales cash. 2006 MAZDA VIN#JM1CR293960116320 2018 TAOI VIN#L9NNTCGPS9K1010559 Publish: The Lake Worth Herald October 14, 2021

Legal Notice No. 39304

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

ATLANTIC TOWING & RECOVERY INC gives Notice of Foreclosure of Lien and intent to sell these vehicles on October 28, 2021, 10:00 am at 850 NW 1ST AVE, BOCA RATON, FL 33432, pursuant to subsection 713.78 of the Florida Statutes. ATLANTIC TOWING & RECOVERY INC reserves the right to accept or reject any and/or all bids. 2005 LINCOLN VIN#5LMEU88H45ZJ29924 Publish: The Lake Worth Herald October 14, 2021

Legal Notice No. 39315

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

PALM BEACH GARDENS TOWING gives Notice of Foreclosure of Lien and intent to sell these vehicles on OCTOBER 28, 2021, 10:00 A.M. at 1108 3RD AVE. N., LAKE WORTH, FL 33460, pursuant to subsection 713.78 of the Florida Statutes. PALM BEACH GARDENS TOWING reserves the right to accept or reject any and/or all bids. 2005 NISSAN ALTIMA VIN#1N4AL1E95N419296 2017 NISSAN ALTIMA VIN#1N4AL3AP2HC261137 Publish: The Lake Worth Herald October 14, 2021