RACHAEL "FANNY" DEVEREAUX/MARTIN OF ALABAMA AND FLORIDA, A FREE WOMAN OF COLOR

Discovering a Name Change Through the Federal Census

By Donna R. Mills, M.A., C.G.R.S.

The decennial federal census is a cornerstone upon which modern genealogical research is laid. Yet the full potential of this popular source is often not realized. Even when researchers accept that they must do more than simply copy the data for the individual in whom they are interested, and even when neighbors are noted and included, additional steps are required for success. The data must be analyzed and correlated, of course; but they also must be carefully studied for clues that are less than obvious.

The common reliance upon censuses to solve relationship and migration problems can wreak havoc when an individual is "missing." Absences are usually explained by one of four presumptions: 1) the ancestor had not yet arrived in the area at the time of the enumeration; 2) the ancestor had already moved out of the area at the time of the enumeration; 3) the ancestor was simply missed by the enumerator; or 4) part of the census is missing. However, we cannot accept any such explanations without verification. Concluding that individuals had left an area prior to the enumeration can lead to distressing and expensive wild-goose chases if they, in fact, had not moved.

Rachael "Fanny" Devereaux/Martin poses a case in which conventional explanations for a census absence proved erroneous. The solution provides an additional reason for "missing entries." This study focuses upon a free woman of color who, as Rachael Martin, appeared on the 1850 census of Covington County, Alabama. Although that name was found only on this census, she nevertheless lived in the same geographic area, along the Alabama–Florida line, for a span of three decennial censuses and did indeed appear on all of them.

1850 ALABAMA

At the beginning of this writer's involvement with the Martin project, Rachael's only known census appearance was in 1850. Nothing was known of her prior life. Since Covington is a "burned" county, the other basic resources for identifying families and tracking them to earlier locations were not available. Thus, extracting all possible clues from her census entry was

crucial to locating her in earlier years. Those data follow:

1850 Covington County, Alabama

Federal Population Schedule, p. 129, #34/34 (26 Sept.) (National Archives Microfilm M432, roll 4):

Rachael	Martin	70	F	M[ulatto]	unknown
John		30	M	M farmer	Georgia
Eliza	*	28	F	M	Georgia.
Levina		25	F	M	Alabama
Lilas		16	F	M	Alabama
Morgan		14	M	M	Alabama
Nancy	"	30	F	_	North Carolina
Joseph		13	M	M	Alabama
Missuri		12	F	M	Alabama
Mary		10	F	M	Alabama
Caroline	•	8	F	M	Alabama
William		6	M	M	Alabama
John	*	4	M	M	Florida

According to these birthplaces, the Martins were in Alabama as early as 1825. Yet Rachael does not appear on the 1830 and 1840 returns. It could be argued that she was enumerated in an unidentified husband's household. However, only three Martin male heads of family were listed in these years (one in 1830 and two in 1840), and their data do not allow for Rachael and her family. (With no less than ninety-five other male Martin entries in the statewide census index, pursuing each in search of an appropriate household is not economical in cost or time.) It could be argued that the birthplaces for her family members were incorrect and they were actually living in another state in 1830 and 1840. However, Rachael Martin does not appear on any census index for the surrounding states of Florida, Georgia, or Mississippi or those for the Carolinas, from which so many Alabamians came.

Rachael's 1850 neighborhood proved crucial in locating her on the earlier census:

1850 neighbors, Covington County (all white except when noted):

William Wildin Shadrick Taylor Seth Dixon Rachael Martin [mulatto] Levi Welding Reubin Hart Cassius Siles Allin Hart Abram Smith Isaac Hart Nancy Welding Jane Dannelly [mulatto; with Wm Givings & fam., mul.] Z. Yarborough Thomas Heathcock [mulatto] Wright A. Stokes William R. Feagin Jacob Manning Wiley Payett John Hart William H. Campbell Henry Steel Reubin C. Timond Archibald Stegaul Elisha Bryan Lewis Taylor Eli T. Claghorne

1840 ALABAMA

When this neighborhood was located in 1840, a promising discovery was made: Although no Rachael Martin was found anywhere, a free woman of color named Fanny Martin was. The household and neighborhood data are as follows:

1840 Covington County, Alabama

Federal Population Schedule, p. 324, line 9 (Nat. Arch. Microfilm M704, roll 2):

Fanny Martin 1 male fpc 0-10 1 female fpc 0-10 0 slaves

1 male fpc 24–36 2 female fpc 10–24 1 in agriculture

1 female fpc 24–36 1 female fpc 55–100

[fpc = "free person of color"]

Neighborhood (significant names are italicized):

Daniel Hart James Shulds
Shadrick Taylor Milton Tillery
[skip 2] James W. Carrell

Reubin Hart Thompson Taylor [with 1 female fpc 24–36]

Isaac Hart John Teel [skip 5] Fanny Martin Larkin Hart Morgan Martin Richard Martin skip 7 James Taylor Powel Smith Jacob Wilden Armstrong Smith Morris Kirnen Lewis Taylor John I. Tyrce Allen Woods William Payet Jr. Henry Woods Arthur Donelly Kinchen Chesnut Alfred Tilry

Several considerations weigh in favor of the 1840 Fanny and 1850 Rachael being the same woman: 1) the neighborhoods of both are irrefutably the same; 2) both are free women of color—an extremely small minority group in Covington County; 3) both are of the same age group; 4) the household compositions of both are compatible; 5) the given name *Morgan* can be associated with both; and 6) they do not appear simultaneously on any Alabama census.

1830 FLORIDA

The same problem existed for 1830. No woman of either name could be found in the Alabama statewide index under any conceivable variant or typographical error. Furthermore, John Martin—the sole Martin who did appear in Covington County—did not have a household that could accommodate

Rachael and her family. Again, neighbors provided the clue. A large portion of the 1840/1850 Martin neighborhood does not appear on the 1830 census for Covington County. A current family tradition, that a grandson of Rachael was born in Santa Rosa County, Florida, in 1844, prompted a census search of that state.

The family tradition is technically in error. At the time of the grandson's alleged birth, Santa Rosa was still part of Escambia County, Florida. The 1830 Escambia census likewise does not contain a Fanny or a Rachael Martin. Yet a significant number of the 1840/1850 Alabama Martin neighbors do appear on the 1830 Escambia County return. When this neighborhood was studied in closer detail, another fact was discovered: There was present one Rachael Devereaux, a free woman of color of the appropriate age to be Rachael "Fanny" Martin of Alabama. Household data are again compatible:

1830 Escambia County, Florida

Federal Population Schedule, p. 70, line 18 (Nat. Arch. Microfilm M19, roll 15):

Rachael Devereaux 3 male fpc 10-24 4 female fpc 10-24 0 slaves 1 female fpc 55-100

Neighborhood (significant names are italicized):

John Gardwin
George Gage
Wright Garcon
John Miller
Ane Simpson
Thomas Baggett [Walton Co., Fla.]
Rachael Devereaux
Wright Garcon
Robert McKennon
Reuben Hart Sr.
Eli Horne

Edmund Baggett [Walton Co., Fla.]
Edmund Baggett
Absolam Stokes
Reuben Hart Jr.
Norman Morrison
Powell Smith
Lin Horne
Rein Horne
Reuben Barrow
David Gurtman
John Hart

The analysis and correlation of both household and neighborhood data across three census years do justify a conclusion: Rachael Devereaux, the Harts, Smiths, and Stokes (at least) of 1830 Escambia County, Florida, moved together across the state line into Covington County, Alabama, by 1840. There, Rachael appears first as Fanny Martin and then as Rachael Martin. The reason for the Devereaux-to-Martin name change has not yet been determined.

This census study laid the foundation for further work on the Devereaux line, pushing it back into pre-1820 Georgia. Several facts have been found in this ongoing research that substantiate the Alabama name change. By way of example, in February 1819 in Hancock County, Georgia, Jane Devereaux married Arthur Danielly (Hancock Marriages 1806–1879, p. 8 [Family History Library, Salt Lake City, film #222,074]). The Arthur Donelly who lived

seven households from Rachael in 1840 with wife and children, and the widow Jane Dannelly and family who were four houses from Rachael in 1850, are of compatible ages, birthplaces, and household composition to the Georgia couple. (Regina Hines Ellison, CGRS, 158 Lafayette Circle, Ocean Springs MS 39564, is currently conducting the pre-Alabama Devereaux research.)

Such quirks as name changes were not so rare as modern genealogists may assume. These occurrences testify to the necessity of employing thorough research methods, and they remind us that success often requires the researcher to seek explanations beyond the obvious.

Donna R. Mills is a professional genealogist specializing in research in the gulf states. Her address is 1732 Ridgedale Dr., Tuscaloosa AL 35406.

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