

PRIMARY SOURCES

Uncharted Americana

1st Known Tinsley Boen About
1795
SOLD 1819 and Took Name of
Owner William Tinsley

SEE (1)

(2) Tinsley

(3) Photo Album (1) Leatherbound
1825

(4) Tinsley

(5) Book Albums (2) Blue
Photo Albums (3) Brown
Photo Albums (4) Green

MALINDA EDWARDS
Born 1825 Died March 12, 1855
Age 30



Wife of Washington Edwards
Mother of fourteen children
Picture taken about 1850
Married 1850

DAUGHTER of Malinda
"GRAND Mother"
Born - March 12, 1855
Died - August 3, 1924



The Tinsley-Edwards-Rich Family Archive

PRIMARY SOURCES

Uncharted Americana

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Robin and Laoma Beck

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- Net 30 days, payable in US funds. Check or major credit card via PayPal preferred.
- Libraries and institutions may be billed on approval according to budgetary requirements.
- Michigan residents please add 6.25% sales tax.



On the covers: The First American Land Patent.



NEGROES FOR SALE.

WILL BE SOLD,

On the 19th day of Feb. next,

at the late residence of William Tinsley, dec'd. in the county
of Amherst, near Tinsley's Mill, on a credit until the first day of
January 1821,

Six likely Young NEGROES,

Belonging to the estate of said dec'd, or so many thereof as will
be sufficient to pay the debts due from said estate.

December 17, 1819.

JAMES TINSLEY, } Admrs.
ISAAC TINSLEY, }

PRINTED AT THE LYNCHBURG PRESS OFFICE BY WM. DUFFY & CO.

CHART A

An African American Odyssey: The Tinsley-Edwards-Rich Family Archive

On December 5, 1865, eight months after Lee's surrender at Appomattox, the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution formally brought an end to chattel slavery in the United States, a quarter-millennium after the peculiar institution had taken root at Jamestown, Virginia, in August 1619. Now those liberties heralded in the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, which only freed enslaved peoples in states that joined the Confederacy, extended across the nation from so-called border states through all of the far western territories. Then the Fourteenth Amendment passed six months later, extending the rights of citizenship to all formerly enslaved peoples, including (in principle) the right to self-determination, to live in the place and according to the values of one's own choosing. Many African Americans left the South and forged new lives for themselves and their families in the North, on the Plains, and in the West. Yet others chose to stay, remaining in the land they had built through centuries of uncompensated toil and committing themselves to its rebuilding. This remarkable archive--centered on an extended African American family with deep roots in Amherst County, Virginia, and carefully compiled by a descendent through much of the 20th century--tells one such story of choices and possibilities, opportunities and constraints. From slavery to civil rights, the Tinsley-Edwards-Rich archive documents a journey not from one place to another but from one way of life to another. **It was an odyssey undertaken by countless Black families after the Civil War, but rarely as well chronicled as here.**





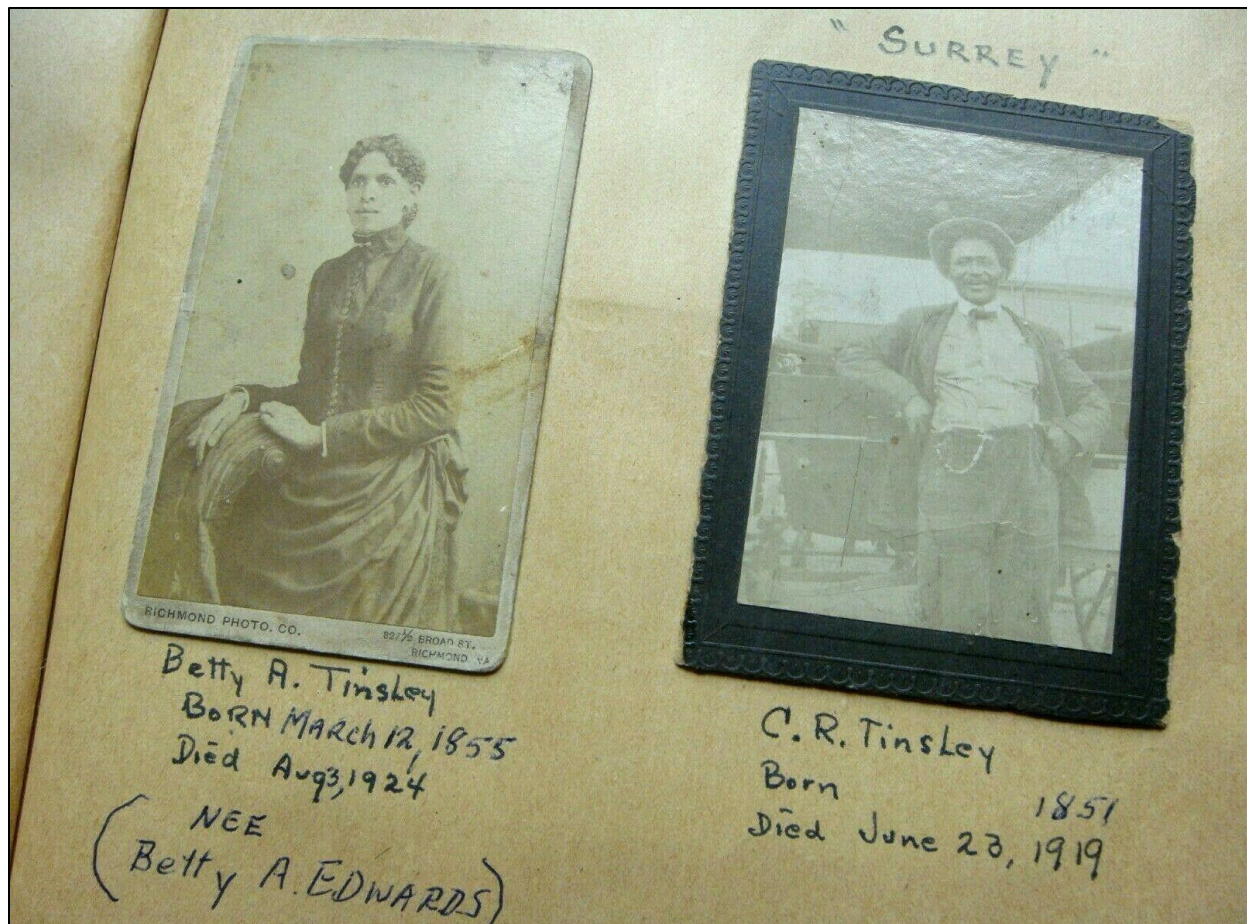


Amherst County sits at the western edge of Virginia's Piedmont, in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Charlottesville, home to Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, is about fifty miles to the north, while Lynchburg is less than twenty miles to the south. It is here in Amherst County, at a plantation originally known as Locust Ridge but later renamed Sweet Briar for its abundance of wild roses, that the stories of the Tinsley and Edwards families begins, or at least those portions of their stories that we can document today. The earliest record in this archive is the photocopy of an otherwise unknown broadside, dated December 19, 1819, announcing the forthcoming sale of "Six Likely Young Negroes" from the estate of William Tinsley, deceased. As the sale of five of these young men in February brought sufficient revenue to cover the debts of Tinsley's estate, its administrators--William's son James and brother Isaac--freed the sixth, who took the name of his former enslaver, William Tinsley. William, born about 1795, married in 1823, but the name and heritage of his wife are now lost. That same year, Tinsley and his wife had their only documented child, a son they named Nelson. Little else is known of William's life as a freedman residing in Amherst County, and nothing is known about the status of his wife, who might have been enslaved at Sweet Briar Plantation, where Nelson was born. If so, then Nelson was also likely enslaved, as is suggested by his efforts to reunite his own family after the Civil War.

About 1850, Nelson Tinsley married Laura Broady, a woman of Black and possibly Native American descent, who was probably a daughter of William (Billy) Broady, a talented blacksmith enslaved on the nearby Glebe Plantation (Rainville 2019:57). Nelson and Laura had six children: Charles (born 1851), William, Sarah, Emma (about 1854), Nellie (about 1860), and Edward (about 1866) [in her study of African American families in Amherst County, Lynn Rainville (2019:106) identifies another daughter, Margaret, whose name is unrecorded in the family archive]. Sometime during or just prior to the Civil War, three of Nelson and Laura's children--Charles, Emma, and either Sarah or Margaret--were taken nearly 500 miles south to Rome, Georgia, by Sarah Penn and her husband, Hugh. Sarah was a daughter of Edmund Penn, owner of Glebe Plantation, suggesting that Laura was still enslaved there; Nelson may also have been enslaved there, or else had remained at Sweet Briar, about six miles south of Glebe.

As Rainville explains (2019:105-106), Nelson worked tirelessly through the newly created Freedman's Bureau to see his separated children returned to Amherst during the first year after the war had ended. By the autumn of 1866, Charles and Emma seem to have been reunited with their parents and siblings in Virginia, but the fate of the third child--whether Sarah or Margaret--remains unknown. Similarly, there are no other records of William, whose name appears in the genealogies but not in Rainville's book. The 1870 United States Census finds Nelson and Laura living with five children: Charles (18), Emma (16), Nellie (10), Daisy (8)--who does not otherwise appear in this archive's detailed genealogies on in Rainville's book--and Edward (4). Also living with the family was a Lucinda Tinsley, born about 1810. Lucinda would have been about 13 when Nelson was born in 1823, and it seems likely that she was either his mother (wife of William, whose name was thought to be lost), or his mother's sister.

Three of the Tinsley children married during the 1870s: Charles to Betty Ann Edwards in 1874, Emma to Daniel Jordan in 1875, and Nellie to Reuben Clarkson before 1880; Edward, the youngest, never wed. The compiler of the archive, William George Rich, III (1905-1988), was a grandson of Charles and Betty, so his genealogical research also includes some early details on Betty's side of the family. The earliest recorded Edwards ancestors are Betty's father, Washington



Edwards (1822-1907), and his third wife--her mother--Malinda (about 1830-1915). Washington is identified in the archive as a minister, although census documents also indicate his occupation as farmer. The earliest original item in the archive is a carte-de-visite of Malinda, marked as 1850 but dating more likely to about 1870. Betty was the second of 14 children born to Washington and Malinda. As documented by Rainville (2019:130-132), Betty's younger sister, Harriette, was the long-time mistress of Sidney Fletcher, white heir of Tusculum Plantation. Fletcher's father, Elijah, was an antislavery New Englander who had turned enslaver when he and his Amherst-born wife inherited Tusculum on the death of her mother, Sophia Crawford. By the 1840s, Elijah Fletcher owned both Tusculum and Sweet Briar, separated by little more than a 20-minute walk. Interracial marriage was illegal in Virginia until 1967, but during the 1880s Sidney gave sums of money and large parcels of land to Harriette and their two sons, Leslie and Ernest. The largest of the four albums in the archive contains two mounted photographs of the boys and a note: "Sons of Harriette Edwards Fletcher / She Married a White Man."

The 1870 U. S. Census lists Charles Tinsley's occupation as farm laborer, while by 1880 it had changed to carpenter. He and Betty had two young children: three-year-old Bessie, born in 1877, and infant Lillie, born in 1879. Three more would soon follow: Hattie in 1881, a son Hausie in 1883, and Signora in 1885. About 1880, Washington Edwards--Betty's father--gave her a tract of timber land in nearby Clifford. She and Charles sold it shortly after and purchased a substantial plot along Depot Road in Amherst, halfway between the railway station and downtown, as well as



a long rectangular lot on the facing side of the street. On the main lot, Charles used his skills as a carpenter to build the one-and-a-half story, clapboard house his children and grandchildren came to know affectionately as “The Homestead.” Their house lot included a vegetable garden, fields for sweet and feed corn, and a small apple orchard. At the far end of the plot, beyond the fields and apple trees, he built a small house for his parents, Nelson and Laura, who had never been able to buy a home of their own. Across the street, Charles built a stable and a two-story hayloft with an office on the first floor. There he began a livery business, meeting Southern Railway passengers at the train station and taking them on to their destinations. In his detailed essay that accompanies the “Tinsley-Edwards Legacy” album, William Rich III notes that:

He acquired five horses, a winter coach and a summer carriage with fringe around the top, and an open wagon to haul hay and feed for chickens, hogs and horses. Betty [who was a schoolteacher when they married and sent all of the children to school in Amherst]...tended children, house, garden, chickens and hogs. The children grew to maturity and ever mindful of their parents home-training given them, kept in very close touch [p. 3].

All of the Tinsley daughters were married from 1901 to 1904; only the son, Hausie, never wed. Bessie would marry first. In 1899, Amanda Carter--a friend of hers from Amherst--moved to Washington, D. C., and began working as a cook in the home of Edward and Mary Fay. Edward



Fay was a teacher and vice president at Gallaudet College (now Gallaudet University), a federally chartered school for the education of the deaf; its affiliated grammar school, which offered classes through the 11th grade, was founded in 1856 and known after 1885 as the Kendall School. Carter seems to have taken to life in the city and soon talked Bessie into joining her there. Leaving home for perhaps the first time, Bessie likewise found work with the Fays, and about a year later she met William George Rich, Jr., a graduate of Kendall School and deaf himself, who had recently begun a lifetime appointment as the school's custodian.

William Rich, Jr., was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia, in 1868. U. S. Census data describes his mother, Polly--born in 1848--as "mulatto," but in the "Rich-Tinsley Legacy" album she is identified as being of "immediate Indian descent" (p. 1). Polly and William, Sr. (of whom little is known) also had a daughter, Sarah, born in 1869. William, Jr., appears to have been born deaf, and when friends of the family in Westmoreland County learned about the Kendall School in Washington, they encouraged his parents to send him there for his education. In 1875, at the age of seven, William began his schooling at the Kendall. A decade later, on June 14, 1885, he completed 11th grade and received his diploma, "which was one of his proudest possessions, life long" (Rich-Tinsley album, p. 3). William and Bessie married on November 27, 1901, and found a small, five-room, brick row home at 1228 Wylie Street, near Kendall School. Vernon Allan Rich was born there in August 1902. Soon they moved a few blocks east to 1226 Linden, where William George Rich, III (Jr.) was born in 1905. Months later, Gallaudet College built a new and rent-free

apartment for the Rich family on Kendall Green, with free gas, heat, and light. The two boys grew up on the grounds of the school and Gallaudet College, alongside the children of white staff and teaching faculty, while most summers the family returned to The Homestead in Amherst. But the Amherst Tinsleys regularly began visiting Kendall Green, as well. In 1915, Bessie and William welcomed a third child, daughter Celestine.

Over the next decade, the children grew and excelled in school and in the community. In the summer of 1918, after Vernon graduated from high school, they all returned to Amherst. "That year," William, Jr., writes, "Betty and Charles Tinsley were delighted that their grandson Vernon was the first ever to finish high school and had won a scholarship to Howard University. It was a very joyful summer. The last for Grandpa" (Rich-Tinsley album, p. 7). Charles Tinsley died at the age of 68 on June 23, 1919: "Nearly all the population of the Town, white and colored, turned out for the funeral. He was buried in 'His Tinsley Plot,' beside his Mother Laura and his Father Nelson. This was our quietest summer" (Tinsley-Edward album, p. 8). Five years later, on August 24, 1924, Bettie Ann would follow, and they were buried together in the family's plot at Amherst's Christian Aid Society Cemetery. The Homestead was rented to caretakers for the next decade, but they left or died about 1935, after which time the house and lot fell into disrepair. A friend of the family had purchased the stable lot in 1932 for \$500, and in October 1943 this same friend bought the residential lot for \$635 and The Homestead passed out of the Tinsley family.

Meanwhile, William had joined Vernon at Howard, where both earned degrees--Vernon in 1925 and William in 1928. William would go on to earn his Masters in Education from New York University in 1934. Celestine graduated in 1938. William, who trained in ROTC during college and graduate school, was drafted and served in the U. S. Army in WWII. In 1937, "Rich," as the senior William Rich was affectionately known across the Kendall and Gallaudet campuses, was given a special ceremony and notice for fifty years of service to the schools. His health had begun to fail by 1945, when he retired at the age of 77. He died on Friday, July 27, just two weeks after William, Jr., was honorably discharged. Bessie died six years later, on September 11, 1951. The children carried on: Vernon married and worked for many years in the New York City garment district; William, who never wed, became a statistical supervisor with the federal government in Washington, and in retirement applied his time to writing the family genealogy; Celestine married and raised a son. All lived well into their 80s, with Vernon passing in 1985, William three years later in 1988, and Celestine in 2003.

This is but an outline of the family legacy that William Rich compiled and organized over decades. His narrative essays that accompany the Tinsley-Edwards and Rich-Tinsley albums offer detailed recollections of the time that he and his siblings spent at The Homestead--from the joy of time spent with their grandfather Charles in his vegetable garden to the terror of hiding from view while Klansmen marched in the night down Depot Street. Likewise, he describes their memories of playing on the grounds of Gallaudet College and following father "Rich" around campus, as well as the pain of burying two parents. The archive consists of four albums:

1). Bessie Tinsley Rich's album: 117 mounted and approximately 50 loose photographs, all dating from about 1870-1950, including carte-de-visites, cabinet card photographs of various sizes, real photo postcards, professional photographs on mounts, and snapshots, as well as handwritten and printed obituaries, newspaper clippings, assorted ephemera, and various documents. Well-bound

in large, 1950s-style faux leather album covers, stiff cardboard pages, many page edges chipped with ink text annotations written directly on pages.

2). The Rich-Tinsley Legacy: 51 photographs in various formats, mostly 1910-1950s, additional documents, clippings, letters, printed obituaries, memorials, and assorted ephemera, genealogical charts, and a typed genealogical essay on family history, including personal recollections. Text block loose in modern (1980s) orange paper binder.

3). Tinsley-Edwards Legacy: 41 photographs in various formats, mostly 1890s-1950s, additional documents, clippings, genealogical charts, a manuscript plan map of the Tinsley “Homestead” and its plot in Amherst, genealogical essay on family history, including personal recollections. Text block loose in modern (1980s) yellow paper binder.

4). Celestine Rich’s album: 173 mounted photographs, approximately 35 loose, mostly 1930s but two of Rich and sons ca. 1915. Front cover loose, several pages loose, page edges chipped, some empty mounts (photographs loose in album).

In addition to the four albums are approximately 100 photographs of various sizes, including larger images of fraternity organizations, probably at Howard University, and a U. S. Army portrait of William. There are hundreds of photographic negatives, most gathered in three envelopes marked 1) Negatives / The Tinsley Homestead / Amherst, Virginia, / No. 164 Depot Road...; 2) Old Rich Family / negatives / Kendall Green / 1906 to 1928; and 3) Old Rich Family / negatives from / 1928 to 1956. These are largely unexamined for content but are in very good condition.

Altogether, the Tinsley-Edwards-Rich archive is a remarkable primary source, documenting multiple generations of an African American family with deep Virginia roots from the 1820s through the mid-20th century, from slavery to self-determination.

Relevant sources:

Rainville, Lynn

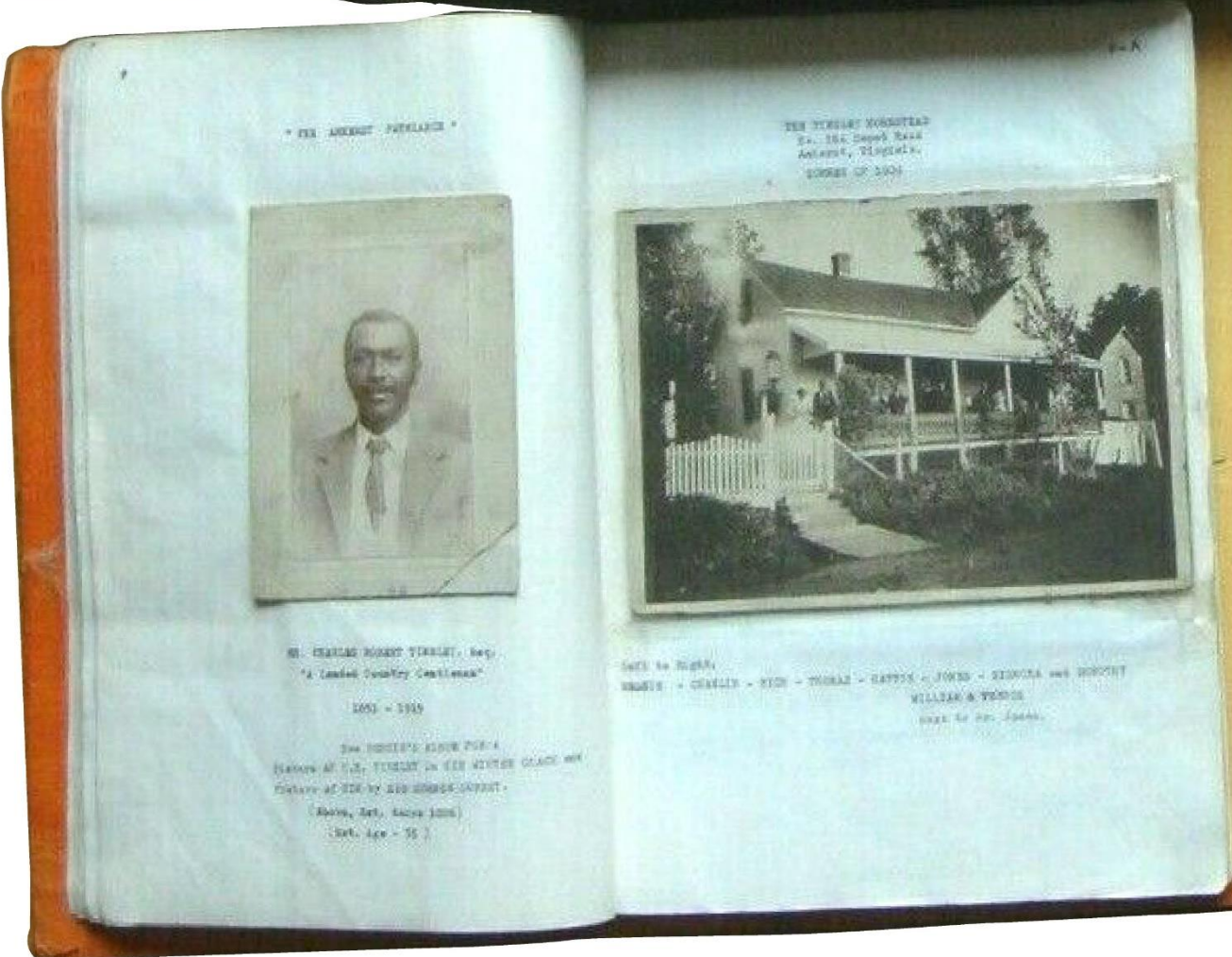
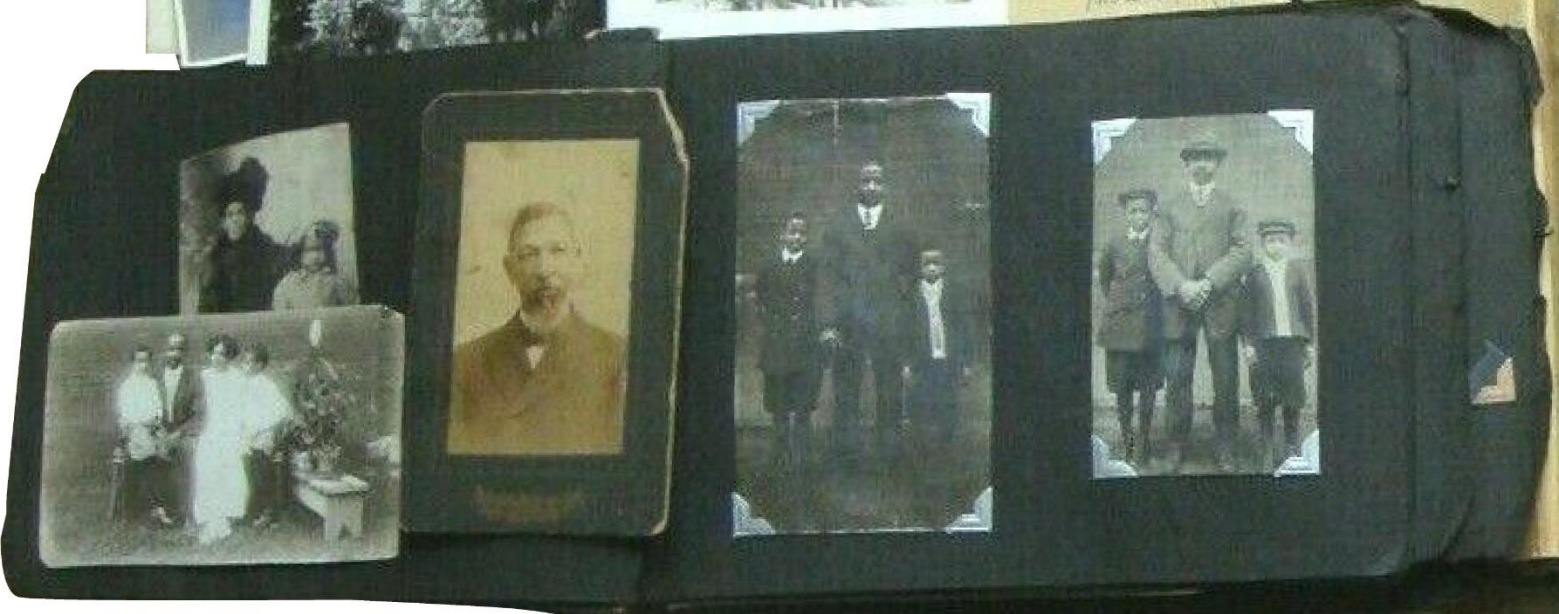
2019 *Invisible Founders: How Two Centuries of African American Families Transformed a Plantation into a College*. Berghahn Books, New York.

[Virginia--African Americans]: [MULTI-GENERATIONAL ARCHIVE OF AN EXTENDED AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY FROM AMHERST COUNTY, VIRGINIA, ASSEMBLED BY WILLIAM GEORGE RICH, JR.]. [Amherst County, Virginia, and Washington, D. C., most original materials from ca. 1870 to 1950s]. Four albums with nearly 400 mounted photographs of various sizes and formats, as well as nearly 200 loose photographs in and out of albums. Albums and archive also include documents, clippings, obituaries, genealogical charts, a plan of the family homestead and property, several hundred photographic negatives, assorted ephemera, and typed essays on family history. Overall good to very good.

SOLD.



I. J. Kaine Tinsley, Born about
 1795
 Served 1814 and Took Name of
 Thomas William Tinsley
 5000 Flyer - dated 1919
 (1) Tinsley-Edward Genealogy
 (2) Photo Album - Oysterbound
 1825 To 1951 "MOTHERS"
 (3) Tinsley-Rick Genealogy
 (4) Book Albums (2) Book
 Photo Albums (2) Book
 Photo Albums (2) Book



"THE ANCEST - PEARLAGE"



MR. CHARLES ROBERT TINSLEY, Sec.
 "A Gentle Country Gentleman"

1895 - 1915

The HOUSE'S ALIVE FOR A
 (House at 1-2, Tinsley in the winter house and
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 (House at 1-2, Tinsley in the winter house and

THE TINSLEY HOUSE
 No. 154 South Road
 Atlanta, Georgia
 1900 - 1910



(Left to Right)
 THOMAS - CHARLES - RICH - THOMAS - HARRY - JAMES - EDWARD and ROBERT
 WILLIAM & JAMES
 (Left to Right)