



Courtesy photos

An historic meeting between representatives of two branches of the Durham family occurred at Wayman Chapel AME Church in Ennis, Texas. Donald Durham is from Fairfield County in South Carolina, while Debra Uzzel is from Fairfield, Texas. They are displaying copies of "The Durhams of Fairfield: An African American Genealogy" by Wayman Chapel Pastor Bob Uzzel.

Family ties bind

South Carolina Durham visits Wayman Chapel

By Dr. Robert L. Uzzel
For The Herald Independent

FAIRFIELD COUNTY — In 2012, I visited Fairfield County, S.C., where I conducted research for my fourth book *The Durhams of Fairfield: An African American Genealogy*.

Shortly after beginning my work on this project during the late 1970s, evidence indicated that the ancestors of my wife Debra, who is from Fairfield, Texas, had been slaves in Fairfield County, S.C., had come with their masters to DeSoto Parish, La., and had settled in the Butler Community,



The cover of *The Durhams of Fairfield*.

east of Fairfield, which is the county seat of Freestone County.

Further research confirmed this fact and Eddie Marie Durham, the wife of Debra's second cousin Bobby Jean Durham, wrote in her book *Mama, "Babe"*

and Me that "it is either ironic or intentional" that being born in the Fairfield District of South Carolina, the Durhams would settle in the area of Fairfield, Texas. I fully concur.

Since the publication of *The Durhams of Fairfield* in January, social media has put me in touch with many Durhams, both black and white, from various states and countries. On March 15, my Facebook friend Donald Durham worshiped with us at Wayman Chapel AME Church in Ennis. Don is the first member of the South Carolina branch of the

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ship in 2010 has led to substandard care, the mass exodus of veteran personnel and the hiring of unqualified clinic directors and counselors, according to senior Army clinical staff members and records obtained by USA TODAY.

"This is the crux of the whole thing," said Wanda Kuehr, a psychologist who agreed to speak out about the problems after retiring Feb. 2 as the program's director of clinical services.

Non-medical managers want to "get the reports in on time and fill the slots. They think that makes a good program. Our goal is to give treatment to soldiers. And (the bosses) see that as inconsequential ... What's happening to soldiers matters and the Army can't just keep pushing things under the rug."

Five current staff who described similar problems in interviews declined to be identified for fear of Army reprisals. They "are very frightened if they tell the truth they will lose their job," Kuehr says. "It's sad when we have [such] a climate."

The Army emphatically denies that its substance-abuse treatment efforts have declined. Yet Kuehr and the current personnel said the strongest evidence is in quality-review reports filed by Army clinic reviewers who visit each base, pore through medical files and talk with counselors.

Dozens of these reports show chronic problems with poor diagnosis and treatment. One tragic result: the Army estimates that since 2010, about 90 soldiers committed suicide within three months of receiving substance-abuse treatment.

At least 31 suicides followed substandard care, according to tabulations by the clinical staff, although they did not specifically link the deaths to poor treatment. In a 2012 case, Army managers hired an unlicensed counselor at Fort Sill in Oklahoma over the objections of senior clinical personnel.

The counselor began seeing patients and gave a "good" rating to a soldier who hanged himself two hours later, according to an internal Army report provided to USA TODAY. Other findings based on hundreds of pages of Army files, emails and reports, along with interviews with program personnel:

- As many as half of the 7,000 soldiers turned away last year after being screened for potential drug or alcohol problems should have been treated, based on documented evaluations of clinic performance by senior staffers.

- Half of the Army's 54 substance-abuse clinics around the world fall below professional standards for treating drug and alcohol abuse, and only a handful are in full compliance, an Army assessment shows.

- PowerPoint presentations created by Army substance-abuse

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Family

From page 1

family I have found living in Texas. I introduced him to Debra as a "long lost cousin."

Donald DeWayne Durham was born on March 25, 1977 in Fort Benning, Ga., where his father was stationed in the military. His parents, James and Florence Shannon Durham, were both natives of Ridgeway in Fairfield County, S.C.

In 2012, I interviewed Boykin Durham and his sister, Katherine Durham Pope, at the their homes near Lake Wateree. Both have Ridgeway

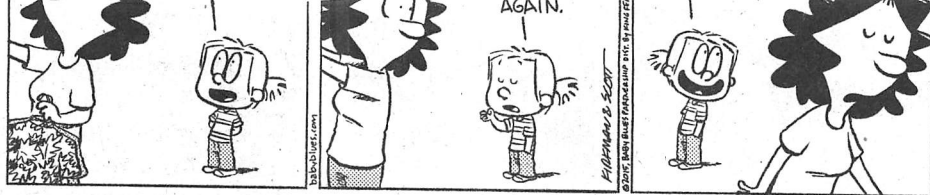
addresses. I also visited Ridgeway's Ruff Store, which has been in the same family for seven generations.

Don grew up on various military bases. He graduated from Manhattan High School in 1995 and spent two years at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kan. At age 16, he began working at Sonic Drive-In restaurants. He is now a managing partner with Sonic. He has managed Sonics in Junction City, Kan.; Roanoke Rapids, N.C.; Rocky Mount, N.C.; Houston, Texas; and Lancaster, Texas.

For the past two years, he has managed the Sonic at Forney, Texas. His wife, Sidney,

is a native of Dayton, Texas. They have a 3-year-old daughter named Devonae. He plans to continue his career at Sonic and, upon retirement, return to Fairfield County, S.C.

I am quite pleased that my book has inspired Don to pursue further genealogical research. This summer, we both plan to attend the Isaac Durham Family Reunion in the Butler Community. I hope and pray that this will be the beginning of extensive contact between the South Carolina and Texas branches of the Durham family and a greater appreciation of a shared heritage.



PARDON MY PLANET

By Vic Lee

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CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

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By Dave Green

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THE FAMILY CIRCUS

Today's Solution