



Green family members have spent the week preparing for the reunion activities. Folding hundreds of napkins for the various meals are Lottie Wilson, Mardie Walker, Josephine McRant, Bertha Breazeale, Mildred Blocker and Dorothy Clinton.

Photos/Barbara Ball

Family of freed Fairfield slave reunites in Blythewood

Barbara Ball
Publisher

BLYTHEWOOD – “Harry Green was born a slave in lower Fairfield County between 1858 and 1860 according to U. S. Federal Census records,” recalled his great granddaughter Josephine McRant of Blythewood. “He labored as a farmhand and, at age 20, married Lucy, a cook on the plantation where he worked. Harry and Lucy produced 10 children and when he became a free man later in life, he apparently taught himself to read and was well thought of by everyone, including his descendants.”

This weekend, more than 160 of the descendants of Harry and Lucy and of Harry’s great nephew Jim and his wife Mary, will gather in Blythewood to honor their ancestors.

“It will be the first time in 30 years that our extended family has reunited,” said McRant who is also chairperson of the reunion. “Each of us descended from either Harry’s family or Jim’s family. And while some of us have moved away over the years, we are all still very close and keep in touch, and we are so looking forward to this reunion. It’s how we honor our lineage.” She lamented that it’s difficult to find information from the 1800s, especially for slaves for whom there weren’t a lot of records kept. “But it has been a joy, chairing the reunion,” said McRant who has been at the task for more than a year. She said it has been not only a labor of love, but also a learning experience.

“The area of Fairfield County where my great grandfather was born was later



Reunion chairwoman Josephine McRant of Blythewood holds a photo of her great grandparents, Harry and Lucy Green.

annexed into Richland County and is now part of Blythewood. He and his family were faithful members of Bethel Baptist Church,” McRant said, “and Harry died at age 60.” She said he left a legacy of hard work and devout faith.

James ‘Jim’ Green was born in 1875 in Blythewood as a free man. He married Mary Turnipseed and they had seven children. He died in 1983, well over the age of 100. Both Jim and his great uncle, Harry, are buried in the Bethel Baptist Church cemetery. Blythewood families who have descended from Harry and Jim include the Ables, Al-



Tom Poland

Fish in a Barrel –
The Walhalla State Fish Hatchery in – you guessed it – Walhalla.

Gone Fishin'

A 162-mile drive, about three hours, will take you to a memorable place, the Walhalla State Fish Hatchery. Make your way to Walhalla and follow the directions at the end of this column. If you come away with a desire to go fishing and a hankering for fried trout, blame it on this column.

Summer is a good time to make the trip. Green leafy mountains and winding roads make for a calming effect, something quite the opposite of the fish-frenzied Walhalla State Fish Hatchery. Walking through the hatchery you'll see fingerlings aplenty, all swimming to and fro, churning the waters.

The old hatchery is easy on the eyes. The Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps built it in the 1930s. Make note of the beautiful rock architecture. Earth tone and hues do much to make the hatchery blend into the mountain environment. It's said the rocks came from nearby mountains.

The hatchery is the only cold-water fish hatchery the South Carolina Department of Natural Re-



A Day Away

Tom Poland
Contributor

thrill when the fish splash them.

You'll find plenty to do when you're done visiting the hatchery. Adjacent to the hatchery is the Chattooga Picnic Area, operated by the U.S. Forest Service. Next to the picnic area is the boundary of the Ellicott Rock Wilderness. Hikers may take a trail that goes along side the East Fork for 2.5 miles to the Chattooga River. From there you can go upstream to Ellicott's Rock (1.7 miles) or downstream to the Burrell's Ford campground and parking lot (2.1 miles). Request a trail map.

On Highway 107 South toward Walhalla is the Oconee State Park. Here there are cabins, camping areas, swimming and numerous other recreational activities. Best of all it's refreshing to go to the mountains when summer heats up the land and you'll find it educational to learn about the life cycle of trout. And then you can plan a fishing trip and have that fish fry I mentioned earlier.

If You Go ...

**Walhalla State
Fish Hatchery**
198 Fish Hatchery Road
Mountain Rest, S.C. 29664
864-638-2866

Open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

There may be a few exceptions during the winter months if inclement weather makes conditions unsafe for visitation. The hatchery is closed Christmas Day.

Learn more about Tom Poland, a Southern writer, and his work at www.tompoland.net. Email day-trip ideas to him at tompol@earthlink.net.