

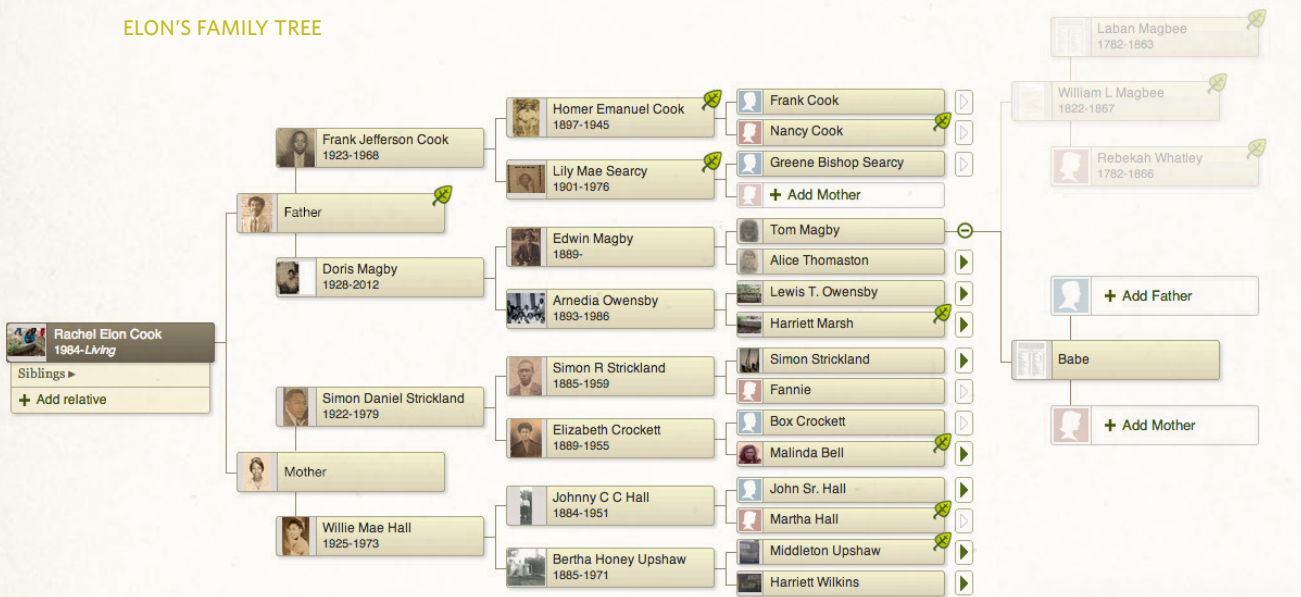
# Great-Aunt Gusty was a sly one.

Born into slavery, Augusta “Gusty” Magby Bates learned to read by tricking the master’s children into teaching her the alphabet. Augusta would challenge them to write their letters in the dirt, or she’d say, “I bet you don’t know how to write my name,” explains Gusty’s great-great-grandniece Elon Cook. “So they’d draw their letters, and after they were gone, Augusta would trace them herself until she knew her alphabet. She’d ask the children each day what they’d learned in school, so she could learn along with them.” But Gusty had to be careful. As a slave, she couldn’t let anyone know she was learning how to read and write.

Though she never had children of her own, Gusty saw to it that her nieces, nephews, and even great- and great-great-nieces and nephews got an education. Since there was no middle school for local African American children, her young relatives would live with her in Heflin, Alabama, where Gusty herself would teach them and prepare them to enter high school.



## ELON'S FAMILY TREE



Elon learned these stories about Aunt Gusty firsthand from her own 90-year-old cousin, Lula Maude, one of many children who lived with Gusty over the years. Elon initially connected with Lula Maude’s son Hubert while researching the Magby family tree on Ancestry.com two years ago. Soon afterwards, Elon traveled to Florida to meet Lula Maude face to face and record stories about the family and Gusty.

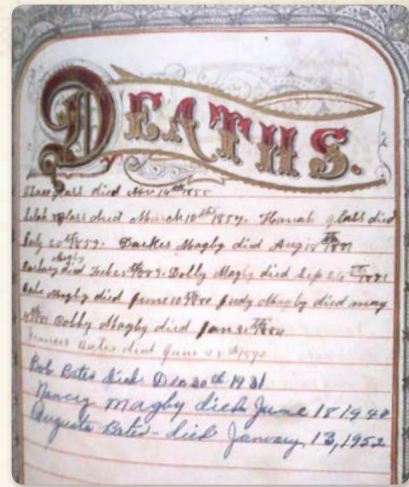
One of the stories showed how brave Aunt Gusty was, even as a child enslaved to the Magbees. Knowing history and what could have happened to Gusty makes the story that much more important to Elon. “When Gusty was about five or six years old,” recounts Elon, “she was out in the barn with her mother, who was milking a

## AUGUSTA'S FAMILY TREE



cow. A white man entered the barn and Gusty hid behind a bale of hay. When he tried to assault her mother, Gusty charged out and bit the man on the leg. As Lula Maude tells it, 'She was chewin' on him and he was hollerin' 'Come here and get this lil...something off of me' and he was slanggin' her and she was hangin' on. And you know, she never did turn him loose until someone from the master's house came to get her. ... But he never bothered her mother again.'"

It's the stories that keep Elon coming back to her family's history. And this summer there will be even more as the family prepares for a reunion in the county where Gusty was born. Included will be the descendants of the former master's son, who fathered Gusty's oldest brother. The two families initially connected in 2010 over coffee, where they shared information and old records. No doubt, when they meet again, Aunt Gusty will be one of the main topics of conversation.



FAMILY DEATHS RECORDED IN AUGUSTA'S BIBLE

### AUGUSTA'S FACTS & EVENTS

**Augusta Magby**  
Your great-grand-aunt  
Birth abt 1859 in Georgia  
Death

Fact	Source	Media
Name	1900 United States Federal Census 1900 United States Federal Census 1940 United States Federal Census	No media has been added. Add Media
Gender	Female	No media has been added. Add Media
Birth	abt 1859 Georgia	No media has been added. Add Media
Marriage	1881 (Age: 22) to Bob Bates (1)	No media has been added. Add Media
Residence	1900 (Age: 41) Heflin, Cleburne, Alabama	No media has been added. Add Media
Residence	1900 (Age: 71) Heflin, Cleburne, Alabama	No media has been added. Add Media
Residence	1 Apr 1940 (Age: 81) Heflin, Cleburne, Alabama, United States	No media has been added. Add Media



ELON COOK