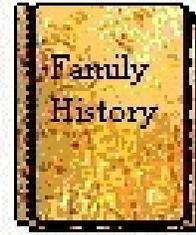


# Freeman James Gunn

1803 - January 12, 1869 Brunswick  
County, Virginia



Freeman James Gunn is the son of James Gunn, Jr and his wife Elizabeth Jordan. Freeman was named for his maternal grandfather, J. Freeman Jordan, and his father James Gunn, Jr. Freeman was born between 1800 and 1802 in Brunswick County, Virginia depending on which census record you chose. His obituary mentioned he was 66 when he died in 1869. His age from the 1850 and 1860 census listed his age as 50 and 52 respectively. He had a younger sister, at least ten years, perhaps 15 years his junior, Elizabeth J. Gunn, who was born in 1818, and a brother Henry Garner Gunn who was born about 1812 and was 9 to 12 years his junior. Another possible sibling is Burwell Gunn who was born August 29, 1794. Burwell married in 1810 at the age of 16, and did not appear in his father's census record.

Both Elizabeth and Henry were young children when their parents died about 1828, leaving orphaned, daughter Elizabeth and son Henry. Elizabeth and Henry Gunn were raised by their father's widowed half sister, Elizabeth Gunn who first married Burwell Wilkes, and after his death, married second to Philip Claiborne. Wilkes and Claiborne were both gentleman of status and wealth. Freeman was about 25 years old and had been married three years when his parents died. While other siblings were shown in early census records, they have not been identified.

There is some speculation by Gunn researchers that say Freeman's parents James, Jr. and Elizabeth, left Brunswick County about 1828, and did not die in Virginia. In 1828, James Gunn, Jr. would have been about 63 years old and his wife, Elizabeth in her late 40's. It is highly improbable James and Elizabeth Gunn, would have left Brunswick County to live in another state (Georgia), leaving behind a young daughter, and a son who was not quite a man to be raised by a relative. There is no documentation showing James Gunn, Jr and his wife left the state of Virginia. James Gunn, Jr., nor his wife Elizabeth appeared in the 1830 census.

Like his father, Freeman was a farmer. In September 1823, a deed shows that 20 year old, Freeman had worked for his father as an overseer for two years. In exchange for this labor, he received a deed from his father, for the slave Hannah, and \$120.00. Freeman was a hardworking and mature young man by today's standards. He was judged responsible enough assume the responsibility of an overseer: to direct slave labor; to regulate slave well-being, behavior and punishment when necessary; oversee the planting and harvesting of all crops; be responsible for the care, and well-being of the animals; and upkeep of the farm implements, carriages, wagons, tack, etc. His father, James Gunn, Jr, was likely in poor health. As overseer, Freeman acted in behalf of his father and was paid accordingly.

Records beginning in 1812 and lasting until 1828, reflect that Freeman's father experienced increasing financial difficulties. James Gunn, Jr., had sold or otherwise indebted most of his property holdings. Fortunately for Freeman, he purchased 200 acres of land in January 1825. The land bordered the road from Stephen Jones Bridge to Flat Rock Church in Brunswick County,

Virginia. This was land his father James Gunn, Jr. had indebted to John Rives in 1823.

Ten months after the purchase of this property, Freeman married Maria "Polly" Bridgeforth, the daughter of John and Mary Miller Bridgeforth on November 8, 1825. The couple were married by the Reverend John Doyle in Brunswick County. They lived in the St. Andrew's Parish District. Freeman was a slave owner and planter.

Four children were born to Freeman and Maria Bridgeforth. If there were other children, they did not survive infancy. Their first child was John Burrell Gunn born in 1827. John's birth was followed by Richard James Gunn born in 1828, and Samuel Harrison Gunn born in June of 1831. Samuel's birth was followed by daughter Mary S. Gunn who was born in 1834. Mary never married and died Nov 3, 1873.

On August 21, 1850, when the census for Brunswick County was taken, Freeman listed his occupation as planter. Freeman and Maria were 50 years old. Also living in the home was Freeman's son Samuel Harrison Gunn who was 18, and Sam's wife Martha Daniels and their 2 month old infant. The infant of Samuel and Martha Daniels Gunn did not survive infancy. Mary S. Gunn, Freeman's youngest daughter was also in the home.

The sons of Freeman and Maria Bridgeforth Gunn married into the Elmore family.

1. In 1851 Richard James Gunn married Mary Augusta Elmore, the daughter of James Elmore, JR. and his wife Martha Barnes.
2. In 1853, John Burrell Gunn married Lucy Jane Elmore, the daughter of James Elmore, SR and his wife Mary Pritchett.
3. In 1857, after the death of his first wife, Martha Daniel, Samuel Harrison Gunn married Lucy Ann Elmore, also a daughter of James Elmore JR and his wife Martha Barnes. Lucy Ann Elmore died in 1874. In 1876, Samuel Harrison Gunn married Addie Elmore, the daughter of Edward Elmore and his wife Desdemonia Robbins.

Sometime between 1850 and 1860, Freeman James Gunn moved from Brunswick County, Virginia to the third district of Nottoway County, Virginia. Freeman was working in Nottoway County as an overseer. The duties he knew well. He worked for a larger plantation owner and his duties were extended to include a larger number of slaves. Large plantation owners did not grovel in the day-to-day handling of slaves, but hired overseers like Freeman, to delegate slave labor, and to administer punishment if needed. Overseers ran the plantations prior to the Civil War, and were accountable only to the "master". Freeman worked for John Gillam Powell on the plantation "Falkland" located on the Ridge Road, outside of Blacks and Whites, which is present day Blackstone, Virginia. When the 1860 census was taken, Freeman gave his age as 52. The census did not reflect he owned real estate in Nottoway County. Freeman's daughter Mary S. Gunn and his grandson, James Freeman Gunn age 2, who was the son of Samuel Harrison Gunn were living in the home with Freeman.

Samuel Harrison Gunn and his second wife, Lucy Ann Elmore were living in Lunenburg County, in 1860. Freeman's son John Burrell Gunn was living on his father's farm in Brunswick County, Virginia, and son Richard James Gunn may have been living in the Totaro District of Brunswick County, but did not appear on the 1860 census.

Freeman James Gunn's obituary was published in the Richmond Whig on January 12, 1869 (volume 48, page 1 ) reads as follows: Freeman J. Gunn died in Nottoway, Virginia on 12th ulto, age 66, formerly of Brunswick County, Virginia.

By 1870, Freeman's wife, Maria Bridgeforth Gunn had moved from her home on the Powell plantation in Nottoway County, to the home of her son Samuel Harrison and his wife Lucy Ann Elmore, in Brunswick County, Virginia. Samuel and Lucy moved between 1860 and 1870 from Lunenburg County, to Brunswick County, perhaps on the land owned by his father. Maria Bridgeforth Gunn died between 1870-1880. It is not known where Freeman and Maria Bridgeforth Gunn are buried. Some of this line were laid to rest on the farm of John Burrell Gunn.

Children of Freeman and Maria Bridgeforth Gunn. Because of the intermarriage of these three sons, I've written a history for each of their sons. Daughter Mary S. Gunn died single on November 3, 1873 in Dinwiddie County, Virginia.

Richard James Gunn

John Burrell Gunn

Samuel Harrison Gunn

My Family History continues with Samuel Harrison Gunn the father of two of my grandfathers, Peter Harrison Gunn and James Freeman Gunn