



There's More Leaves on the Tree

Charles Lee Bilberry

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There's More Leaves on the Tree is about the author's 14 year journey in search of his great grandfather's Frank Bilberry's white father and African American mother. The book starts out with a visit to his grandfather's Ladell Bilberry old home site. The visit reveal that the old home site was now overtaken by the forest where it can barely be found any longer. The home he knew as a child has now fallen down with a few remnants left from the past. It was a place where his ancestral family and extended families once bought land raised and sold crops to make the best living they could. He reminiscences about how his mother and father once lived in this area. His mother really didn't like living on a farm and designed a way to convince her husband to move closer to the town of Marion, Louisiana. The author writes a chapter about "The End of Jim Crow Education" in Union Parish, Louisiana. He recalls how the Plessey vs Ferguson doctrine of 1896 and the Brown vs Education doctrine of 1954 co-existed at the same time. One law allowed African Americans to have separate but equal facilities as Whites but in 1954 the Brown vs Board of Education stated it was acceptable to go to the same schools. The book delineates the struggle his high school, the community and the Union Parish School Board had in trying to reconcile this dilemma when it was time for the senior class to graduate in 1970. The Bilberry surname originated from White immigrants from Alabama who made their way to the rich fertile land of Union Parish, Louisiana. Most of them bought land, raised and sold crops to make their living. Many owned slaves. Slaves were valuable property to the slave owners. Many mulatto children were fathered by slave owners with the slave female. It was not uncommon for this to continue after the emancipation of the slaves. The latter is the case with Frank Bilberry.

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