Ancestral Vibrations Guide our Connection to the Land

We are the seeds of our ancestors' dreams

(this is the unedited version of the essay submitted October 15, 2019 by Jim Embry to **We Are Each Other's Harvest** by Natalie Baszile published by Harper Collins April 2021)

My Beginnings

As far back as I can remember during my childhood in Richmond, Kentucky, my mother, Jean, always planted a big edible garden in our backyard along with a beautiful and diverse flower garden in the middle. These garden areas as I recall were also full of honeybees, wasps, bumble bees, praying mantises, many types of butterflies and birds and even grasshoppers for us to bury in the ant hill. Since our bounty was so full it was quite acceptable for my brother, Richard, sister, Marsha, and me to pull and eat tomatoes from the vine or carrots right from the ground to satisfy our taste as long as we did not waste anything. On most weekends when we visited our maternal grandmother Parolee's farm or nearby farms of extended family members, we would bring even more delicious food goodies home from picking in the fields or foraging in the wooded areas.

Figure 1 Richard, Marsha & Jimmy

I grew up experiencing that the "great outdoors" was our family farms which contained pastures of crops and animals to tend; fruit orchards and berry patches to pick from; ponds and creeks to swim and fish in; wooded areas and thickets with trees to climb; brambles to get caught in; squirrels, deer and rabbits to hunt; and night darkness with lightening bugs to chase and stars to wish on. We loved being in the "country" as we called these sacred green spaces with so many black faces of loved ones.[1]

Even when my family moved North to the Cincinnati, Ohio area in 1959, as so many African American families had been doing since the Civil War ended, we still had a backyard garden that was shared with neighbors who also migrated from somewhere in the South. For several summers my brother[2] and I were sent back "down home"

[1] In recent years I have been labeled as being "black and green" as if being close to the land and caring for the natural world was a white thing.

[2] My sister Marsha died in 1952 because the segregated hospital did not give her the proper care in a timely manner for her pneumonia condition. Our mother experienced a "nervous breakdown" and spent time on the farm with her mother to heal from the trauma of losing her only daughter. Inspired by my mother's healing, I have spent many years providing therapeutic horticulture programs to groups that serve "women at risk" as outlined in these articles*: Greenhouse 17 combines gardening, business and healing for survivors of domestic violence,* www.kentucky.com/living/home-garden/article44613195.html; and From family's farm land, *Jim Embry brought*

during the summer to spend several weeks on the farm of our Aunt Bessie and Uncle Andrew who were like second parents to us. It was during these weeks of working on the farm that I began to think and see that our family members who were small farmers seemed to know everything and could do everything. They could not only work in the fields to tend the animals and crops, but they seemed to know everything about the flora and fauna all around us. They knew how to use their hands to fix anything and everything that needed attention. They could read the weather of days ahead, sew clothing and make quilts, build barns and houses, mix up herbal remedies, prepare delicious meals and tell great stories.

On our return trip back home from summer on the farm, our uncle's pickup truck, that we road in the back of in those days, was always loaded down with various items from the farm--green beans, corn, tomatoes, June apples and peaches, greens, chowchow relish, eggs, country ham and so much more. Back then it wasn't called local food or slow food but rather it was just this amazing diversity and deliciousness of food that came from our family farms. We didn't use any pesticides or very few and I had no clue that what we were doing back then is what we now call organic gardening. It was just the way of farming--using animal manures, cover crops, plant diversity and pasture rotation-- that was passed down from the elders who were also reading and applying the bulletins of George Washington Carver. For most all my life I have felt a closeness with the land, what it produced, those who worked the land and the natural world around it.

Early Family History

Through our family oral traditions[3] and additional research we know that our African ancestors given the names Matt and Hannah were brought to Madison County, Kentucky[4] around 1810 from Culpepper County, Virginia enslaved by the Tom Ballew family. Matt and Hannah had 13 children who all learned the many skills connected with small self-sufficient farms and who were instilled with the love of and commitment to family. Matt given the responsibility of overseer used this position to improve living conditions for all the enslaved on the farm which included receiving permission to establish the Colored United Baptist Church. As church moderator Matt was able to use teaching the Bible and church services as a platform to increase literacy and allow members to bear witness to their yearnings for freedom.

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knowledge, passion to Lexington's community gardens, www.kentucky.com/living/home-garden/article44614398.html

[3] Our family members who are great story tellers in the African griot style assembled this oral family history into a written document for our first Ballew Broaddus Simpson Noland Family Reunion in 1942. As we have done additional research in various archives, we have simply corroborated our oral historians.

[4] This region of Kentucky which sits at the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains and is part of the Kentucky River watershed was the ancestral homeland of the Shawnee, Cherokee, Chickasaw and other native peoples for thousands of years before the colonial period.

In 1864 as word spread that enslaved Africans were needed in the war effort and could fight for their freedom as part of the US Colored Troops, two of Matt and Hannah's sons, Jackson and George, enlisted at Camp Nelson, the third largest recruitment center for African Americans to join the Union Army. Both listed as farmers on their muster rolls, Jackson served with the 12th Regiment and died early in the war while his brother, George, as a member of the 114th Regiment[5] fought in Virginia, pursued General Lee and was present at Appomattox when Lee surrendered.

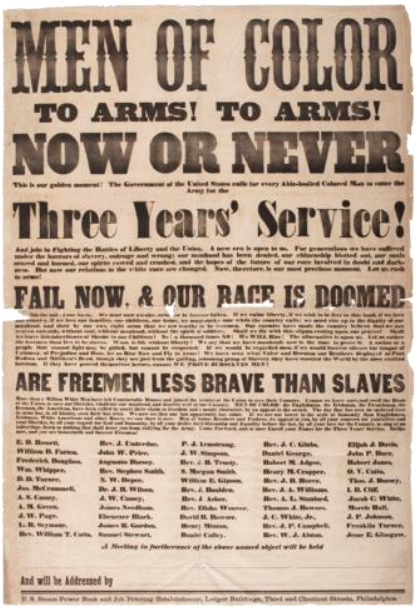


Figure 3 Poster used to recruit for USCT


Figure 2 African American soldiers at Camp Nelson USCT

Jackson's wife Elizabeth and their children were among the thousands of women and children who sought refuge at Camp Nelson with the hopes of gaining their freedom after the war. While at Camp Nelson these women and children were educated by John G. Fee, a white abolitionist preacher and the founder of Berea College, the first college in the South to admit women and African Americans.

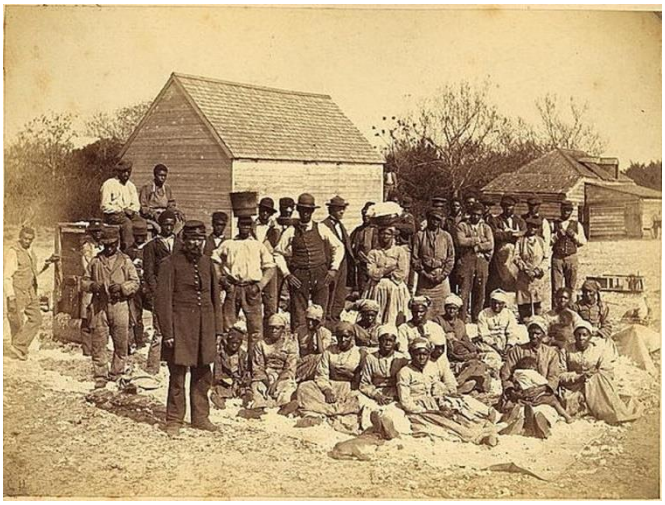


Figure 4 Men, wives and children at Camp Nelson

When the Civil War ended, even as thousands of freed people fled to the North, my great-great grandmother, Elizabeth, with the immediate need to provide for and protect her seven younger- 14 to 2 years old[6] - chose to return to the area of Madison County where they had been enslaved. The family began to work the familiar fields and homes as sharecroppers and eventually were able to purchase land to become owners of small farms. This post-war transition period for freed African Americans was bewildering, replete with disease and poverty, and impacted by escalating violence but still the

[5] We retrieved from the National Archives the Military Records of Jackson and George which contained not only military service records but also names and birth dates of their children.

[6] The seven minor children were Ann, Mary, Harriett, Sophia, Lyman, Don Buel (D. B.), Jackson.

responsibilities of freedom were much preferred over the more dehumanizing conditions of slavery. Even though a widow Elizabeth was able to provide for and protect her children while also instilling the importance of education as a pathway to more fully manifest their individual freedom and collective responsibility to help build community. When I think of my great-great grandmother with seven children in post-Civil War Kentucky and what she accomplished, I am absolutely at times overcome with tears of pain for what she surely endured and tears of extreme joy for her tenacity, courage and capacity to survive. Because she did survive with all her children, I can write this document and share her story.

Don Carlos Buel Ballew

I have often imagined that these could have been the words that my great grandmother, Elizabeth, would have spoken to encourage her children's education,

> "Now children your daddy ain't here no more but we got to hold on to each other and find our way. Remember that nice white man who educated us colored folks at Camp Nelson? Well I hear he got a school over in Berea that allows colored folks to attend. So in honor of your daddy who fought and died for us to be free, I want you to go to that school so you can teach and help other colored folks."

Following his mother Elizabeth's, advice and honoring his father Jackson's sacrifice, my great grandfather, Don Carlos Buel Ballew[7], born in 1862, taught by his sister, Harriet, to read and write, enrolled at Berea College in 1879. Besides the academic preparation the school also encouraged racial cooperation, service to community and, especially for the black students, land ownership. After completing his studies at Berea College in 1881, D. B., as he was known, returned home to be near his mother and began work as a teacher in the segregated rural schools. Because of his education he was often called upon to write letters on behalf of his mother or other community elders seeking veterans' pensions, or legal redress while also reading documents and letters to them. In 1885 D. B. married Senia Dudley and within a year they had enough money to purchase land (in her name) to begin farming and as a couple joined with others in numerous collective efforts to help develop a thriving, educated and empowered community.


MARRIAGE LICENSE,

THE COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY,

To any Minister of the Gospel, or other person legally authorized to solemnize Matrimony:

You are permitted to solemnize the RITES OF MATRIMONY between D.B. Ballew (of Col.) and Senia Dudley, the requirements of the law having been complied with.

Witness my signature as Clerk of Madison County Court,

Figure 5 Marriage certificate for D.B, & Senia

In 1870 when the Freedmen's Bureau pulled out of the South with its successes in some areas and impotent failures in others, it left a void in the efforts to provide safety, education, and legal aid for newly freed African

[7] We always wondered why our great grandfather had such a long name. As I was doing research for articles in the *Encyclopedia of Northern Kentucky*, I read that Union Army General Don Carlos Buell served in Kentucky and was known for not confiscating and destroying property of the farms in the South and for court-martialing pillagers. D.B.'s owner, George Ballew, was evidently pleased with the General's policies and most likely named the next born on his farm after General Buell.

Americans. Faced with increased violence, an all-out campaign to restore white supremacy within every institution by whites and diminished support from the federal government, African Americans across the South recognized that "being pulled up by your own bootstraps" was a necessary attitude and practice that needed individual and collective expressions along the perilous journey toward freedom. This outright betrayal of freed women and men by the federal government, was used by our ancestors to "pull themselves up and together" in various forms of mutual aid, cooperation and solidarity that served to enhance their self-determination and self-sufficiency.

These collective efforts to develop schools, churches, businesses, cemeteries and various other civic organizations were important and necessary efforts that D. B. and Senia were involved with during this post-war Black reconstruction period. These rural farmers working with city dwellers, both living in a small community in central Kentucky, were connected to state and national organizations and movements that served to empower African American communities across the country. "Lifting as we climb"[8] was the attitude and practice of this generation that moved communities from dependence to independence, from powerless to empowered and from landless to landowners.

My mother, Jean, who grew up living with her mother, Parolee, and grandparents, Senia and D.B., described her grandfather in this way,

> "Granddad was a baby slave whose father died serving as a soldier in the Civil War. Because of this granddad said he would 'never again work for white people.' He went to Berea College, taught school for many years, was a small farmer, served as the community butcher, in a back porch room he had a shoe cobbler bench to repair shoes and a barber chair to give haircuts and shaves, and he helped his brother, Jack, in his blacksmith shop. It seemed like Granddad was always working but he was also an avid reader who loved black history and studying those farmer bulletins."

Henry Allen Laine, Chautauqua and Carver

In 1900 D. B. began a collaborative friendship that lasted for many years with Henry Allen Laine, another Berea College graduate who also became a teacher in the segregated Madison county schools and a well-respected small farmer. With his interest in teaching and agriculture, Henry was appointed the director of the Black schools in the county in which he insisted that the schools teach agriculture as part of the curriculum. George W. Carver's bulletins were most likely part of the curriculum materials for agriculture. Laine also founded the Madison County Colored Teachers Association which he led for 20 years. He became the county's first African American agricultural agent in 1915, given the title "County Demonstrator for the Colored People," a position that was funded by the fiscal court. In 1917 Laine was named by the University of Kentucky as the first "Colored County Extension Agent" in Kentucky that served the African American farmers in Madison County. In 1920 there were 6,000 black residents in Madison County with some two thirds living on small farms. Feeding the fires of

[8] "Lifting as we Climb", was the founding principle of the National Association of Colored Women organized in 1896 with chapters in Kentucky. Core members, who were educators, entrepreneurs, and social activists, believed that by elevating their status as community organizers and leaders, Black women could improve the public image of Black women, bolster racial pride and elevate the status of their entire communities.

what Monica White calls “collective agency”[9], Henry was able to organize 15 farmer clubs of men and boys with 235 members, 20 homemaker clubs with 500 members and the annual “Colored Agriculture Industrial Fair” with attracted 1000+ people. He also held 32 community meetings with 4,000 people attending, visited 157 farms and 21 schools and handed out 130 farmer bulletins.

Figure 6 George W. Carver & D.B. Ballew

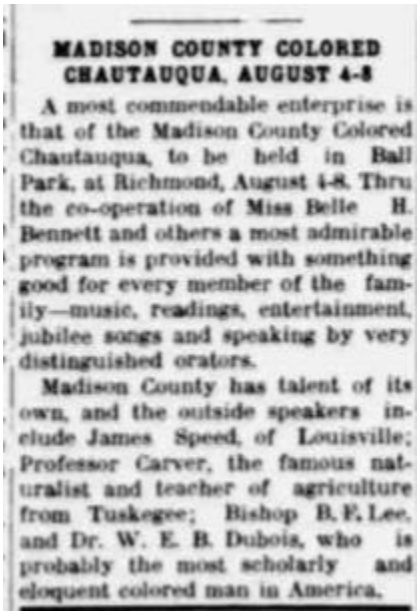
Even before 1920 my grandfather, D.B., Henry Allen Laine and other African American farmers in Madison County had developed a close relationship with George Washington Carver and his teachings. It is quite clear to me now that the farmer bulletins that my mother described her grandfather was always reading and the bulletins that were being given out to the farmer and homemaker clubs were some of the 44 bulletins[10] that Carver wrote, illustrated and published over his tenure at Tuskegee Institute. Carver’s bulletins full of practical ideas in a very readable format-- even though not given any credit by most white historians-- laid the foundation for the modern organic farming movement and are still quite useful and valuable today.

Inspired by the Owensboro, KY Negro Chautauqua that presented Ida B. Wells as the featured speaker, the Madison County African American farmers’ and teachers’ organizations both led by Henry Allen Laine organized the “Colored Chautauqua”, an event designed to bring cultural, religious and social opportunities to the African American community. The Chautauqua events in Madison County were part of the National Chautauqua Movement that started in the 1870s and ended in the early 1930s. Madison County was one of very few counties in Kentucky to establish an annual Chautauqua for African Americans.

[9] Books by such authors as Monica White (*Freedom Farmers*) and Jessica Gordon Nembhard (*Collective Courage*) describe these intentional efforts of building community through farm cooperatives, mutual-aid societies and other forms of solidarity and collective action.

[10] The bulletins were published 1898-1943, https://www.tuskegee.edu/support-tu/george-washington-carver/carver-bulletins

The first "Colored Chautauqua" in Richmond was held August 4-8, 1915 at the city ballpark and was supported by the white Methodist lay leader and social reformer Belle Bennett. According to newspaper accounts the Chautauqua event drew 1500 African American participants and about 20 whites. The featured nationally known speakers included W.E.B. DuBois, Henry Hugh Proctor and George Washington Carver. The recommended reading list in preparation for the Chautauqua included Black newspapers, Carver's bulletins, books by W.E. B. Dubois, Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, Paul L. Dunbar. Mathew Henson[11] and others. Carver and DuBois returned to Richmond again in 1919 to speak at the "Colored Chautauqua" that coincided with the "Madison County Institute for Colored Teachers."



MADISON COUNTY COLORED CHAUTAUQUA, AUGUST 4-8

A most commendable enterprise is that of the Madison County Colored Chautauqua, to be held in Ball Park, at Richmond, August 4-8. Thru the co-operation of Miss Belle H. Bennett and others a most admirable program is provided with something good for every member of the family—music, readings, entertainment, jubilee songs and speaking by very distinguished orators.

Madison County has talent of its own, and the outside speakers include James Speed, of Louisville; Professor Carver, the famous naturalist and teacher of agriculture from Tuskegee; Bishop B. F. Lee, and Dr. W. E. B. Dubois, who is probably the most scholarly and eloquent colored man in America.

Figure 7 in the Richmond Register newspaper

Since by the 1900s whites in Richmond and around Kentucky in general had already begun to turn further and further away from their Union identity and started to more closely align themselves with the defeated ex-Confederate states, for these Black men and women to host an event, that attracted 1,500 African Americans with Dubois and Carver as featured speakers without any violent repercussions from whites and with lots of newspaper coverage, was a rather significant achievement. These individuals who worked the land and organized such events are better described as *agrarian intellectual activists* or "Freedom Farmers"[12] that more fully describes their work at building resilience within community institutions in local and national places even amid racial disenfranchisement and violence.

Berea College Legacy

Berea College founded by John G. Fee in 1855 was an institution much like Tuskegee, Hampton and other HBCUs which provided the transformative seeds of education that helped germinate this community of activists that worked towards racial equality and community empowerment across the state and nation. During these early years some other African Americans who attended Berea College include: James Bond—not secret agent 007-- but the early Kentucky civil rights leader who was also the grandfather of Julian Bond, the founder of the Southern Poverty Law Center and a Georgia state legislator; Carter. G. Woodson, author, historian and the founder of Black History month; Julia Amanda Britton, music teacher for the" Father of the Blues" W. C. Handy and the grandmother of NAACP leader, Benjamin Hooks; and Mary E. Britton, physician, suffragist and civil rights activist. Even more recently Naomi Tutu, daughter of South African Bishop Tutu, graduated from Berea College and feminist writer, bell hooks, is currently a Distinguished Professor in Residence.

[11] The Daily Register, Richmond, KY, June 30, 1920

[12] Monica white, Freedom Farmers: Agricultural Resistance and the Black Freedom Movement (University of North Carolina, 2018)

Over the years numerous other members of my family and friends have attended Berea College and have gone on to successful careers with civic engagement that embody the founding principles-- spiritual values with action, equality of all people, service to others, and mindful living-- of the college. Presently living in the same county, I'm involved in a variety of ways with Berea College and find various ways to honor these longstanding family connections with this important and historic American institution.

Back to the Land

About six years ago I was asked by my cousins to move to our extended family's 30 acre farm to look after my aunt and uncle, Bessie and Andrew, who were both 90 and to look after a nearly 90 year old house that no one was living but needed considerable attention. This would mean moving back to Richmond, KY where I was born and to move out in the "country" as we called the rural community. At first I balked and said "Who? Me? I don't think so. I left Richmond 50 years ago and am now a city boy with no desire to move back to a small country town."

I didn't quite understand as clearly then as I do now that the voices of my ancestors were speaking through my cousins and providing clues to the paths ahead of me. These ancestral spirits understood that for me to elevate my ongoing work around social and environmental justice, I would need to literally become more rooted in the land where I could feel the soil beneath my feet and between my fingers, hear and see the birds singing their morning songs, watch the butterflies dancing amongst the flowers and be connected to the more visible celestial landscape as I had done in my childhood.

I remembered that my 50 years of food activism-which has included founding natural food cooperatives, developing community and school gardens, traveling internationally to study organic gardening in Cuba and attending Slow Food's Terra Madre in Italy, designing and presenting workshops on therapeutic horticulture and dismantling racism in the food system-links back directly to my childhood experiences with my parents and extended family members who connected me to this land. So I heeded the call of my ancestors just as Matt and Hannah, Jackson and Elizabeth, D. B. and Senia heeded their calling and I moved back to the land. Along my journey this ancestral guidance has also opened doors for me to become even more intimate with the histories of our family so I would have even more stories to share.

Back in 2008 when I first began working with Will Allen, founder of Growing Power, to plan the Growing Food and Justice Gatherings, I would introduce him at Kentucky speaking engagements and say

"Will has some really big feet and I hope all of us desire the same!"

Both he and I knew that when we choose to walk in the footsteps of our ancestors then we develop big feet in order to walk in their footsteps. If we learn to listen to the voices and tap into the wisdom of our ancestors-the human and animal people, the air and water people, the rock and plant people-then they reveal keys to the answers we are seeking and provide clues to ways of transforming our world.

The Way Forward-Transformational Change

Agriculture, which developed some 12,000 years ago serves as the foundation of modern human civilization and thus the axis of a much-needed cultural transformation. When we continue to foster radical changes in our agricultural and food systems, then we will also be in the creative cauldron of transforming every other institution within our human culture. As we remove the blinders that obscure the realities and interconnectedness of the collapse of ecological, social, and agricultural systems, the ongoing oppression of people of color and other marginalized groups, the mass extinction of species, and the accelerating disturbance of our planet's climate, then we see clearly that we have some really big work to do. While this transformation is unfolding, the declining culture will refuse to change, clinging ever more rigidly too it's outdated ideas and structures, nor will the dominant social institutions hand over the leading roles to these new cultural forces. The enormity and complexity of this transformation process challenges us to not just have ideas that are examples of thinking out-of-the-box; we need to think out-of-the-barn.

While living in Detroit and working closely with my longtime mentor, Grace Lee Boggs, as the Director of the Boggs Center[13], I attended and helped organize the State of the Possible retreats sponsored by the Positive Futures Network (1999-2004). It was at these retreats, summarized in the document, *Movement Building for Transformational Change*[14] and inspired by such books as the *Great Work,*[15] that I gained even greater clarity about the nature and purpose of community building for social change that I have been involved in for 60 years. Our retreat conversations and readings affirmed for me that our collective efforts need to combine at least three dimensions that are mutually reinforcing, equally necessary and most times overlapping:

1) **Holding Actions** to slow the damage to Earth and its beings. These are essentially what we normally call activism or direct action.
2) **Structural Change** that creates alternatives, develops new laws, policies, solidarity economies and new ways of being together and organizing.
3) **Vision and Shifts in Consciousness** are where we do the work of inner spiritual and psychological transformation and open ourselves into wider spheres of identity with the Earth, cosmos, and the whole of humanity.[16]

[13] I met Jimmy and Grace Lee Boggs in 1974, maintained a close and organizational relationship with them over the years, served as the Boggs Center board chair for 6 years and moved to Detroit in 2000 to serve as its first director. Boggscenter.org. See also Curt Guyette, "Down a Green Path**,"** *Detroit Metro Times,* October 31, 2001,

[14] Frances Korten and Roberto Vargas, *Movement Building for Transformational Change (*Bainbridge Island, WA: , The Positive Futures Network, 2006), These retreats included such luminaries as Vincent and Rosemarie Harding, Danny Glover, Belvi Rooks, Tom Goldtooth, Drew Dillinger, Joanna Macy and Fran and David Korten.

[15] Thomas Berry, *The Great Work (*New York, USA: Three Rivers Press, 1999).

[16] I explore this more in my article *Transforming the Heart of Agriculture* (Biodynamics Association Journal, Fall 2018, pgs.8-13) and Leah Penniman shares a similar framework in her chapter 15, Movement Building, in *Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land*, (Chelsea Green Publishing, 2018)

We are all Indigenous

What is the role of indigenous peoples' cultural and agricultural traditions within this movement of transformation in the USA? The First Peoples of North America--Turtle Island- have much to teach us concerning intimate presence to this continent (however and whenever we came here) and how we should dwell here in a mutually enhancing relation and spiritual intimacy with the land. Despite wars, cultural oppression and appropriation, poverty, and diseases, indigenous peoples have maintained diverse communities committed to self-determination, homelands, and ancestral traditions. It is a tragic and a long continuing story that endures into the present. Yet there is a sense in which the First Peoples of this continent, in the full range of their bearing and in their intimacy with the powers of the continent, have achieved something that guides and instructs all those who have come to live here. Our work around new laws regarding indigenous peoples should model Montana which passed in 1999 the law, *Indian Education for All,*[17] whose primary aim is to strengthen the understanding and awareness of American Indian culture and history.

As part of my work around food justice and food sovereignty, I go every two years to Slow Food's Terra Madre/Salone de Gusto gathering in Torino Italy. This international gathering brings together 8-10,000 delegates from 170 countries, all working on various aspects of our food and agricultural systems. Within the Terra Madre network there is also the Indigenous Terra Madre Network[18] which brings indigenous peoples' voices to the forefront of the debate on food and culture, and advocates for the continued custody by indigenous peoples of their native lands, so that they may maintain them and the great variety of seeds, animal breeds, fish, bees and other living organisms they host. Since all the people currently living in the USA at some time in our family lineage all came from indigenous cultures that we can reconnect with, it is important that we seek to find appropriate ways to support, help protect indigenous cultures for they provide a set of the keys that reconnect us with a world view that is eco or Earth-centric. Another level of our indigeneity is the notion that we are *all* indigenous; that we are all indigenous to this one planet; that we are indigenous to our home, Mother Earth.
In 2009, heavily influenced by a resurgent indigenous Andean spiritual worldview which places the environment and the Earth deity known as the *Pachamama* at the center of all life, Bolivia passed laws with changes in the constitution granting all nature equal rights to humans. The law gives nature legal rights, specifically the rights to life and regeneration, biodiversity, water, clean air, balance, and restoration and mandates a fundamental ecological reorientation of Bolivia's economy and society, requiring all existing and future laws to adapt to the Mother Earth law and accept the ecological limits set by nature. How can the *Law of Mother Earth* become woven into our out-of-the-barn thinking as we fashion alternative structures and project visions for a sustainable world with justice for all our relations?

[17] https://opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/Indian-Education-for-All
[18] https://www.slowfood.com/our-network/indigenous/about-us/

George Washington Carver back in 1898 was dropping similar nuggets of wisdom that linked this indigenous view and quantum science view[19] that is so critical to our work of becoming the re-imagine-neers of our food and agriculture system, when he wrote:

"The highest attainments in agriculture can be reached only when we clearly understand the mutual relationship between the animal, mineral, and vegetable kingdoms, and how utterly impossible it is for one to exist in a highly organized state without the other."[20]

At this inner edge of a human epochal shift from our industrial growth society to a life sustaining civilization, as we claim our native Earth-ness, how shall we move? Shall we distance ourselves from and lag behind the insightful, revolutionary and Earth-centric traditions of our ancestors or do we keep them close, move with them, move beyond them, and move on for them, for ourselves and our children to transform this nation? How do we move from the winter of darkness and despair to the spring of light and hope? How do we gather all that we have gleaned from the past and move it into the deeper internal spaces of our cells and into our total being?

As the seeds of our ancestors' dreams, we have germinated, have become trees that produce fruit which is nourishment for the present and will provide the seeds for those who are on their way. Our dreams then also become the seeds for future generations. This work of reclaiming our sacred connections to the soil from which we are made, to the air and water that replenishes us, and to the plants and animals that are family, is a quest much bigger than a single country or continent but it is a journey that will provide a leap in development in the evolution of humans as a species. This journey begins anew every single day.

[19] Through the lens of quantum science and spirituality Barbara Holmes dissects white supremacy, the cult of whiteness and the acceptance of reason/logic and western scientific methods as superior to intuitive indigenous practices for obtaining knowledge. Barbara Holmes, *Race and the Cosmos: An Invitation to View the World Differently* (Harrisburg, PA:Trinity Press, 2002).

[20] George W. Carver, "Nature Study and Garden for Rural Schools," *Bulletin* of the Tuskegee Agricultural Experiment Station , no. 18 (1898), p. 3.

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Jim Embry Bio

The great grandson of formerly enslaved small farmers and often labelled as "Black and Green", Jim Embry considers himself "stardust congealed in human form" that represents billions of years of Earth's evolution. As an evolutionary being, his purpose is to contribute to the paradigm shift towards *the Ecozoic* period guided by sacred Earth consciousness*.* An activist since 10 years old, Jim has participated in all the major social movements of his era and now believes that the sustainability movement encompasses all the other movements and will serve to further "bend the moral arc of the universe towards justice" for all Earth family members. As an "*agrarian intellectual activist',* the founder of Sustainable Communities Network (sustainlex.org) and a leader in various social movements, Jim seeks to contribute to the theory and practice of sustainable living at the local, national and international levels with a focus on food and agriculture systems. He is at home at every level, whether as a six time USA delegate to Slow Food's Terra Madre in Italy, a visitor to Cuba and Brazil to study organic farming, an organizer of urban agriculture and local food projects, or serving currently as a land steward on his 30 acre family farm. Jim maintains that the sustainable agriculture and food justice movement can serve as a fulcrum for transforming all other institutions in the USA.

As a scuba diver and photographer, Jim has traveled widely to capture the beauty of the land and oceans. He has exhibited his photos in hospitals, galleries, conferences, magazines and books. Working now on two books, Jim has contributed articles and photographs to ***We Are Each Other's Harvest*****,** the ***Sustainable World Sourcebook, Encyclopedia of Northern Kentucky, Kentucky African American Encyclopedia, Latino Studies, Biodynamics Journal, African American Heritage Guide, Ace Weekly*** and other publications. Jim believes that we need some big ideas that connect humans in a sacred relationship with the Earth, which will require us to think not just "out of the box" but "out-of-the-barn".

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