

# The Augusta Chronicle

## Woman seeks her roots in Augusta

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It was Rita Woods' first time in Augusta, but in many ways it was like coming back home.

Woods, who is from Fresh Meadows, N.Y., spent nearly a week in Augusta earlier this month hoping to learn more about her ancestors who once lived in the Augusta, Hephzibah and Waynesboro, Ga., areas. She also hoped to find family members who may still live here.

Her interest in researching her family's history began a few years ago when she was invited to attend the 97th anniversary celebration for First Church of God in Far Rockaway, N.Y. Her great-grandfather, Enoch Evans, was the church's first pastor.

"An aunt, a cousin and I went to the anniversary celebration. They called me up to speak and they said, 'Can you tell us something about your great-grandfather?' I said 'No, but if you invite me back for the 100th anniversary I will,'" Woods said. "I came home that night and I got on it. It's been a labor of love ever since."

Since she began her research, she's discovered a lot about her family; numerous names of ancestors, some of the churches they attended and even names of family friends -- including the Rev. C.T. Walker, who seemed to be a close friend of Evans, she said.

With a foundation to build on, Woods decided to come to Augusta and view resources from local churches and museums and visit streets where her family lived.

One of her first stops was at the Lucy Craft Laney Museum of History, where Corey Rogers, the museum's historian, assisted her by providing some of the materials they have.

While viewing a directory of persons buried in Cedar Grove Cemetery, Woods was surprised that she was able to recognize the names of several family members and took note of those who may have been related to her family.

She later went to the cemetery to visit the graves in hopes the tombstones or markers would provide more information.

Resources such as cemetery directories, funeral programs, church histories and museums can have a wealth of information for those conducting family research, Rogers said.

The key is to be open to what you may find in your research, he added.

"The neat thing about historical research is that you may find something that will take you down a path you never even thought about," he said. "If it does, go down that path. You may find something extraordinary."

Woods' advice to those researching their family's history is to be persistent.

"There is so much information out there. Use everything as a lead. Read as much as you can about the area," she said. "You just don't know where you're going to get information from."

Woods plans to return in the spring to continue her research, and in the future, have a family reunion in Augusta and possibly write a book about her family.

**Links:**

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