

NEWSLETTER:

Tewksbury Historical Society

P.O. Box 522

Tewksbury, MA 01876

TEWKSBURY GAZETTE

FEBRUARY 2024

T E W K S B U R Y ' S F I R S T N E W S P A P E R

In Commemoration of Black History Month

John J. Gale

1848 - 1934

Mathews County, VA and Tewksbury, MA

The story of John J. Gale of Tewksbury, Civil War Veteran of the United States Union Colored Troops Cavalry at Fort Monroe, VA begins in Mathews County, Virginia where he was born into slavery in 1848.

Meanwhile, the second part of John's life was unfolding in Tewksbury, when Franklin Martin Spaulding was born in 1843.

Franklin was the great-grandson of Rev. Sampson Spaulding, the first pastor at the Congregational Church in Town Center, circa 1736 after the incorporation of the Town (1734.) Rev. Spaulding lived at a home constructed for him at 60 East Street, still in existence.

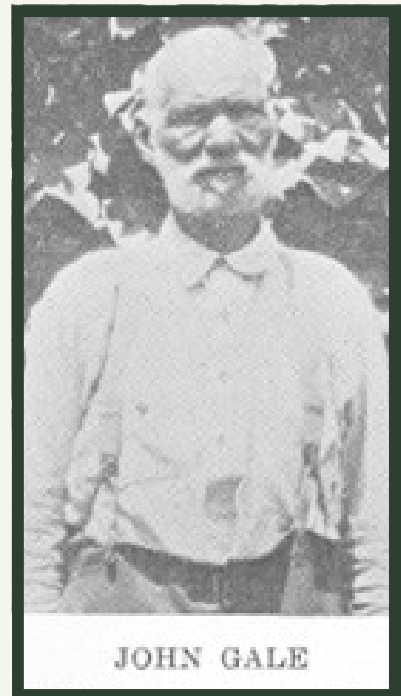
G. J. Lee U.S.C.T.
John J. Gale
Appear with rank of *1st Lt.* on

Muster and Descriptive Roll of a Detachment of U. S. Vols. forwarded for the 1. Reg't U. S. Col'd Cavalry. Roll dated *August 2nd 1865*

When born *Mathews County Va*
Age *19 yrs*; occupation *Sailor*
When enlisted *Dec 29, 1864*
Where enlisted *at Monroe Va*
For what period enlisted *3 years*
Eyes *Blk* hair *Blk*
Complexion *Blk* height *5 ft 6 in*
When mustered in *Jan'y 9, 1865*
Where mustered in *at Fort Monroe*
Bounty paid \$ *115.00*; due \$ *100*
Where credited *for service*
Company to which assigned
Remarks
As a Detach. of regiment
Back mark
W. J. Lee

Also, in Tewksbury, circa 1870, William H. Lee, built the home at 18 Lee Street, today's site of Farmer & Dee Funeral Home.

William's sister, Mary Augusta married Franklin Martin Spaulding and they built a house at 30 Lee Street, circa 1865. William and Mary were the children of George Lee, who had establish the tannery at 53 Lee Street.



From Civil War records, it has been found that John J. Gale served in the Union Colored Troops Cavalry at Fort Monroe, Virginia, starting in January 1865.

From Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors records, we find from Tewksbury, Franklin Martin Spaulding served as 1st Lieutenant of the 2nd Union Colored Cavalry, also at Fort Monroe, Virginia, also in 1865.

The map below of the Tewksbury Town Center area from 1875 shows the locations of homes with the owners' names.

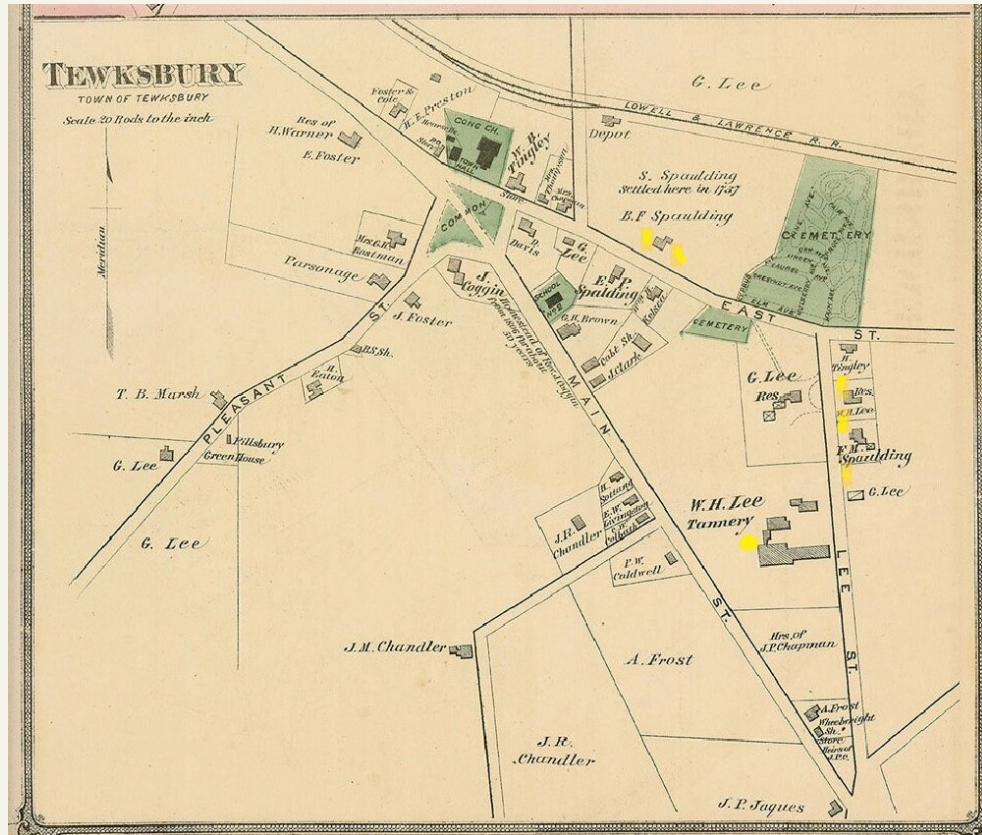
Highlighted properties are:

60 East Street (Rev. Sampson. Spaulding)

30 Lee Street (Franklin M. Spaulding)

18 Lee Street (William H. Lee, later Farmer, where John lived in 1880)

53 Lee Street (Lee St. Tannery)



Black History Month is a monthlong commemoration of African American history, hardships and achievement that takes place each February in the United States. It began in 1976.

The idea for a Black History Month was first conceived by the historian Carter G. Woodson and his Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Together they organized a Negro History Week, beginning in February 1926.


Black History Week took place in February because February is the birth month of President Abraham Lincoln (born February 12, 1809) who had been responsible for the Emancipation Proclamation, and the African American orator and abolitionist Frederick Douglass (believed to have been born in February 1818).

Negro History Week was expanded to become Black History Month in 1976, with U.S. Pres. Gerald Ford urging Americans to participate in its observance.

Census records show that John had moved to 18 Lee Street, Tewksbury, next door to Lt. Franklin Spaulding by 1880 and was a boarder at the home as a laborer. The home was now owned by the Farmers.

10		Effie baby	7 7 9	Daughter	1	Attending school		1	Theresa	nee	nee
11	20	Kosmar Mangel	7 3 57			Working House			Mashaewitz	Madd	Madd
12		Frank	7 11 22	Son	1	Labor	✓		Mashaewitz	Madd	Madd
13		Eula John	8 12 22	Daughter	1	School		1	Virginia	Van	Van
14							✓		Mashaewitz	Madd	Madd

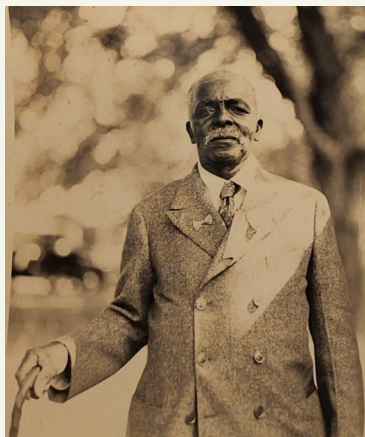
By 1885, John had brought his wife, Jennie and his 3 children from Virginia to Tewksbury and they had another 4 children here. They owned a home at 1147 Main Street, which was later moved to Helvetia Street near Round Pond. John had worked as a farmer and florist.



George Gale of Main Street is the night clerk at the office in the Town Hall. He is a member of one of the first families in town. His father, John, came North immediately after the Civil War in 1868. George has been "on duty" only three years but is considered an old standby. He is kind, courteous, and faithful. George has the "dubious" honor of being the only bachelor officer of the eight mentioned here.

Tewksbury Police Newsletter, circa 1945
Tewksbury Historical Society

According to a newspaper article in 1951 at the time of his death, Henry began working in town for James Chandler as a farmhand. He later became the custodian of the old wood-framed town hall, next to the Congregational Church, until it was destroyed by fire in 1918. Henry had also been the town gas-lamp lighter and each evening at dusk, with children following along, he would make the rounds in the Center, lighting each lamp.

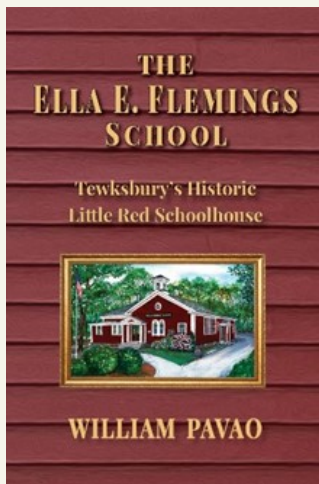


Henry Morris

This the story of how some of Tewksbury's founding families; Spaulding, Chandler, Lee, and Farmer welcomed and influenced the life of one black man, his family and one friend from Virginia, who impacted our Town and Country in a positive way.

Submitted by:
Nancy Reed
Tewksbury Town Historian
February 2024

Photos: Tewksbury Historical Society and Ye Town Book 1934
Research: Ancestry.com



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