

African-American Genealogical Society - Cleveland, Ohio

NEWSLETTER



Spring has arrived

A new season is upon us—a time to recharge and refresh our outlook. (That includes our outlook towards genealogy.)



This spring:

- If you're feeling stuck in your research, maybe it's time for a different approach (e.g., use different resources or consult with other AAGS members)
- Organize your material and look at it with fresh eyes
- Stop and look at your notes from all those Zoom sessions and classes and begin to apply them
- Commit to selecting a family member, a surname, a family story or a brick wall and move forward with focus (that means having a research plan)
- Re-awaken your genealogy enthusiasm

There is always more to explore.

~Cathy Neal, AAGS Newsletter Editor

AAGS MEETINGS

Held on **4th Saturday** (exc. December)

- Meetings will be conducted virtually through Zoom sessions until libraries reopen for in-person gatherings *(An electronic link will be sent)*
- 10:30 a.m. Member briefing, followed by a Speaker presentation

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### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Per calendar year  
Fees due by Jan. 31st

Students (to age 21) \$15 • Individual \$30  
Couple \$40 • Family \$45 • Organization \$50

### NEWSLETTER

**Published quarterly**  
(March, June, September, December)

Editor reserves the right to edit items submitted for publication.  
Permission is required to re-publish articles.

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To  
Discover  
Your  
Ancestors

Is to  
Discover  
a Part  
of You!

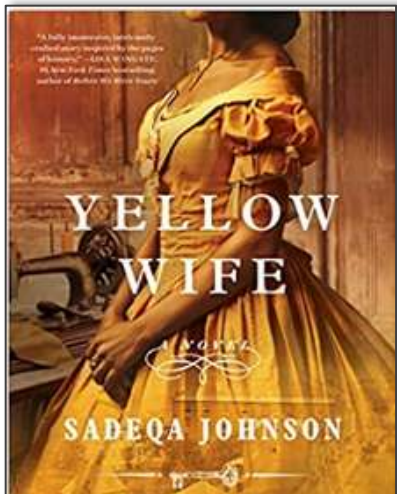
## GENEALOGY NEWS

- If you missed the **RootsTech Connect 2021** global family history conference, video sessions are still accessible (for the rest of the year) at [familysearch.org/rootstech](http://familysearch.org/rootstech)
- **Washington Post** article, “She sued her enslaver in 1870 for reparations and won” - [washingtonpost.com/history/2021/02/24/henrietta-wood-reparations-slavery/?arc404=true](http://washingtonpost.com/history/2021/02/24/henrietta-wood-reparations-slavery/?arc404=true)
- **Legacy Family Tree Webinars** for 2021 include **The Africa Diaspora series**, featuring Angela Walton-Raji, Nicka Smith, Renate Yarborough Sanders, Brian Sheffey, Janice Lovelace, Bernice Bennett, Anita Wills, David W. Jackson and Char McCargo Bah – [FamilyTreeWebinars.com](http://FamilyTreeWebinars.com)
- **MyHeritage** is being acquired by Francisco Partners, a global investment firm, keeping its DNA privacy policy - [techcrunch.com/2021/02/24/francisco-partners-is-acquiring-myheritage-sources](http://techcrunch.com/2021/02/24/francisco-partners-is-acquiring-myheritage-sources)
- **Tim Pinnick’s** Facebook page, *Conducting African American Research in University Libraries*, provides great info and a forum for researchers to share their experiences & pose questions

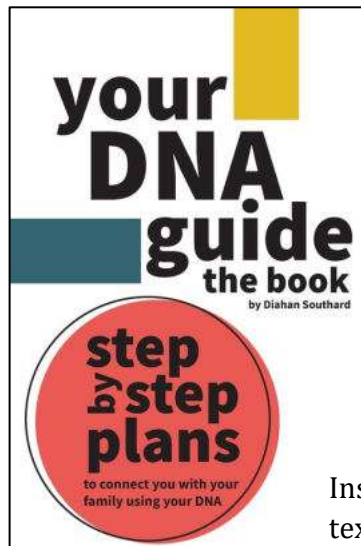
### 2020 AAGS Officers

Interim President..... Joseph Houser, Sr.  
 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President..... Deborah Abbott  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President..... Joseph Houser, Sr.  
 Treasurer..... Jonathan Stith

Recording Secretary.... Karen Marshall  
 Corresponding Sec’y... Maxine Hairston  
 Financial Secretary..... Gayle Ector

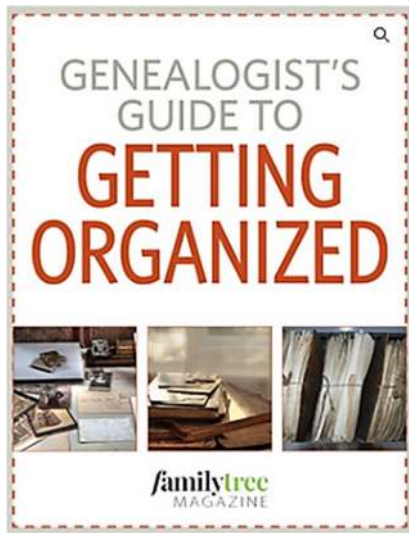


Based on a true story, **Yellow Wife** is a harrowing tale of the life of an enslaved woman in Virginia and how far she would go to protect her children. Author: Sadeqa Johnson, published by Simon and Schuster. \$26



Instead of learning in textbook style, Diahn Southard's expertise helps make sense of the DNA landscape by allowing the reader to select specific DNA questions to explore. (Paperback)

**PUBLICATIONS**



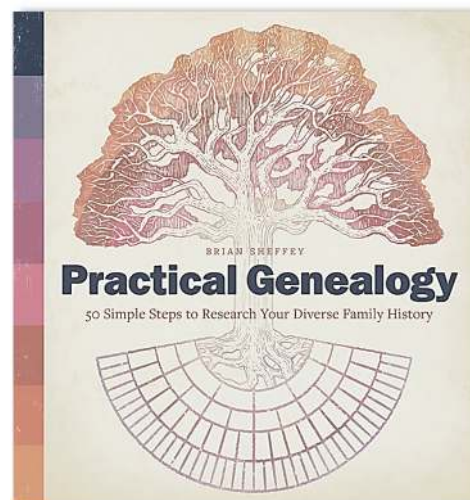
(E-book)

This 65-page PDF download has tips from seasoned family historians on how to more efficiently organize your hard-earned research featuring the latest in organizing trends, apps, software and research techniques. \$19.99

[familytreemagazine.com/product/genealogists-guide-to-getting-organized](http://familytreemagazine.com/product/genealogists-guide-to-getting-organized)

Brian Sheffey has written a new genealogy methodology book, titled **Practical Genealogy: 50 Simple Steps to Research Your Diverse Family History**, published by Callisto Media, released April 2020

For more info about the author, see his website: [genealogyadventures.net](http://genealogyadventures.net)



# AAGS MEMBER SPOTLIGHT ON:

## Ellecia Gant



In one of my first family interviews around 1996, I learned the name of my maternal 2X great grandmother's sister—**Ibby Barnes Robinson**—and that my 2X great grandfather, **Sancho Lloyd**, fought in the Civil War. I discovered through further research that Sancho Lloyd's father, **Robert Lloyd**, also fought in the Civil War.

I have since verified all of this information through census records, death certificates, NARA Civil War pension files, Ancestry DNA matches, and the slave narrative of Ibby Barnes Robinson. I obtained from the Cleveland Public Library, "The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography" by George P. Rawick and located the volume related to Mississippi.

### Ibby Barnes Robinson Slave Narrative 1936

"Ibby Barnes Robinson, an ex-slave, was born in 1846. Her parents were owned by Edwin and Louise Bennett. The Bennetts were large land owners on the Woodville road. They lived on Retirement Plantation, 15 miles south of Natchez. Ibby's father was part Indian. When 16 years of age she was unfortunate enough to lose her mother. Ibby being a precocious child was well liked by the Master's family. The young mistress took an especial interest in her. She has dark, smooth skin and when young had white (mortaglospa) hair, which is curled on special occasions. Ibby married J. Robinson, another ex-slave. The wedding took place in the big house. One boy and two girls were born to them. After marriage they moved to Chase's, then to Surgets. Later moved to town. Ibby nursed or cooked for the Welches, Marks, Dr. Metcalfe and Barclay families. She then went to the Jas. Lambert family, former owner of the *Natchez Democrat*. Ibby remained in active service for more than 30 years. She is still the possessor of good health and seldom misses a church service. Ibby lives on the corner of Pine and High street. She plays the leading role in the Negro Pageant "Path to Heaven" or "Heaven Bound" every year during the annual Pilgrimage sponsored by the Garden Club."

Ibby's death certificate identified her father as Dick (Richard) Barnes.

On the 1870 census, Richard Barnes, my 3X great grandfather born in 1796, lives next door to Edwin and Louisa Bennett (the former slave owners).

Ibby married Albert Robinson, a United States Colored Troop (USCT) veteran, and received a pension upon his death.

In the pension file, Ibby states that Mr. Edwin Bennett told her she was born February 18, 1845. Ibby died April 29, 1937 and she is buried with her husband at the Natchez National Cemetery.

1870 U.S. Census - Adams County, MS

| Dwelling No. | Family No. | Name           | Age | Sex | Race | Occupation    |
|--------------|------------|----------------|-----|-----|------|---------------|
|              |            | Wm             | 58  | M   | B    |               |
| 467          | 196        | Bennett Edwin  | 58  | M   | W    | Planter       |
| "            | "          | Louisa         | 59  | F   | W    | Keeping house |
| "            | "          | Kate           | 21  | F   | W    | None          |
| "            | "          | Julia          | 27  | F   | W    |               |
| 468          | 196        | Barnes Richard | 74  | M   | W    | Planter       |
| "            | "          | John           | 41  | M   | W    | Domestic Serv |
| "            | "          | George         | 23  | M   | W    | "             |
| "            | "          | Magline        | 25  | F   | W    | "             |
| "            | "          | Robert         | 4   | M   | W    | "             |
| "            | "          | Wm             | 1   | M   | W    | "             |



## Robert and Sancho Lloyd

**Robert Lloyd** was born around 1820 in North Carolina. His son **Sancho Lloyd** was born in 1846 on Elgin Plantation, Natchez, Mississippi. They both served together in the 5th Regiment, United States Colored Troops, Heavy Artillery unit during the Civil War and they both received pensions. Robert received a pension for deafness and Sancho for injuries to his back and legs. The depositions included in their pension records revealed that they were owned by Dr. John C. Jenkins (of Elgin Plantation) and his wife Annis Dunbar (of Forest Plantation) in Natchez, Mississippi.

The following are excerpts from the depositions in their pension files.

- Servern Woods, who lived on the plantation, testified, "My age is 80 years, I have known Robert Lloyd all my life. I also knew his wife Annie from the time she was a small yearling. Annie's maiden name was Bush. She was married to Robert a number of years before the war on Forest Plantation. Robert Lloyd lived with Annie until her death about 20 years ago. I saw her dead and buried in Mr. Jenkins graveyard."
- Frank Yates, a fellow soldier, testified, "We lived on adjoining plantations during slavery, I was on Hedges Plantation and he on the Jenkins place. We left Natchez together, enlisted in the same company and regiment. In the second year of his service, he began turning deaf. I first noticed it at Milliken's Bend. I heard our Captain curse Robert Lloyd many a times calling him a black scoundrel and worse names than that on the account of his being deaf. Robert became deaf by standing too close to the cannons during the Union victory celebration."
- Witnesses in a proof of disability affidavit stated, "In July 1865 while carrying orders from headquarters to subordinate officers, Private Sancho Lloyd was thrown from his horse. After falling on the ground his hands became entangled in the bridle reins and animal being spirited and vicious leaped and plunged and struck him with his forefeet in the small part of his back, above the hips and severely disabled him from rising up. He was attended to by the surgeon of the regiment and taken to the hospital in Vicksburg where he recuperated for two months. Due to his injuries, he was reassigned to the brass band as a musician."

Robert died August 10, 1896; Sancho died September 25, 1923. Robert and Sancho along with his wife, my 2X great grandmother Harriet Barnes (Ibby's sister), are buried at the Natchez National Cemetery.



## AAGS ACTIVITIES

### Supporting Genealogy In-House & In the Community



**January 23 - AAGS Meeting**  
**Sandra Beane Milton - “Genealogy 201”**

This session was **not** a typical “genealogy basics” review. Sandra started with a few poll questions, then took members beyond the usual to really get the most out of researching.

After brief reminders about pedigree charts, family group sheets, citing sources and common resources, she challenged us to look at things differently. For example, re-examine and thoroughly evaluate documents. If not a primary source, the original may offer more. Extend research outside the internet--investigate local histories and library learning centers and use interlibrary loan. Move beyond population censuses. Develop timelines. She also covered multiple new and underutilized sources on her handout.



**February 27 - AAGS Meeting**  
**Ari Wilkins - “Finding the Clues: Using the U.S. Federal Census (1790-1940) in African American Research”**

To use the census for genealogical purposes, Ari explained the benefits of understanding its origin and intention.

She also explained the background and function of enumerators and stressed the importance of reviewing their instructions since the guidelines had a direct impact on the information collected. Extra census taker notes are priceless.

She covered how the questions changed over the decades and highlighted studying the enslaver on both the regular census and slave schedules. Her examples of population, non-population, state, Indian, educable and other types of censuses were very revealing.

#### Forgotten No More

As part of a local News5 TV program for Black History Month, Sandra Beane Milton shared the remarkable story of successfully discovering her enslaved Dusenbury ancestors of North Carolina after decades-long research. She cited the fortuitous events of meeting people who were connected to her story. These coincidences led to finding a number of documents and ultimately the court order that itemized the parceling and separation of her family members. The heart-wrenching tale of how they were never reunited spoke volumes about the harsh realities of the past and the difficulties faced by descendants to recover their family history. **Note:** In the time since the story aired and was posted online (February 24), Sandra has heard from two descendants of those lost ancestors.



Sandra now possesses the mantel that stood in the old house where her slave ancestors toiled. After the home was turned into a Bed & Breakfast, Sandra visited and the owners gave her the treasured piece.

## Black History Focus

### The Harlem Hellfighters: Black Patriots and Heroes

By Veronica Ferguson



It was February 17, 1919 when 3,000 heroic Harlem Hellfighters marched proudly up New York City's Fifth Avenue from downtown all the way through Harlem. These men were led in step by James Reese Europe and his band. Reese was an internationally acclaimed and prominent African American musician. He too was a member of this honored regiment. The streets were lined full of people (black and white) coming to salute these World War I courageous champions who so valiantly helped France defeat the German oppressors.

These African American heroes willingly risked, and many lost, their lives defending the world for democracy.

The irony here is throughout the history of The United States of America black men have fought and died for their country domestically and on foreign soil only to be treated as disenfranchised, second-class citizens at home. The specter of race was always present and emerged to steal the thunder of these fighting men. It was no different when the Harlem Hellfighters entered World War I.

The assassinations of Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife Sophie on June 18, 1914 set off "the Great War" as it was dubbed. Serbia, Belgium, France and Great Britain became allies, while Germany supported Austria-Hungary. The "war to end all wars" was well underway when, on December 7, 1917, the United States declared war on the German ally Austria-Hungary.

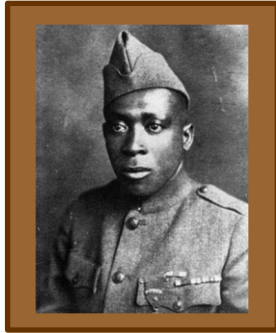
At this time, African-Americans were gaining power in New York City. The government thought it necessary to configure a New York National Guard. Recruitment began in 1914 and the unit would become the 15th Infantry Regiment. The recruitment center operated from the basement of the Lafayette Theater a famous venue located in the heart of Harlem. The soldiers were comprised mainly of African Americans and a few Puerto Rican American men who came from all over the country. They were laborers, clerks, lawyers, artists and salesmen--skilled workers and professionals of all sorts.

One of the most successful Black men in America was James Reese Europe. Europe, renowned for providing internationally popular music, was successfully recruited by the 15th. His close friend and associate Noble Sissle (composer, singer, bandleader and playwright) followed suit. The enlistment of these famous black musicians drew other African American men to join. The 15th was given its own flag (also known as colors) and reached nearly 2,000 volunteers, the strength of a wartime unit. Some of the highest-ranking black officers were Napoleon B. Marshall, a graduate of Harvard, Arthur W. Little from New York and Charles W. Fillmore, all captains. Benjamin Robeson from Princeton, New Jersey joined the unit as one of three chaplains.

The 15th was officially called up and mustered into the United States Army July 25, 1917 at Camp Whitman, New York and drafted into federal service on August 5. Its first assignment under federal jurisdiction was guard duty throughout New York state. A profound dilemma existed for these black soldiers. On one hand they were told to follow orders to protect their country while on the other they were told to accept their role as inferior citizens. Eventually, on December 27, 1917, the 15th was the first black unit to arrive and reach the shores of Europe. On New Year's Day 1918, the unit stepped onto the beaches of France and approached the front line.

General John Pershing stated that "these regiments were not to be used as labor troops" and offered the regiment to the French Army. The French military gratefully accepted the support; regardless of race, they needed assistance. During this era, the French did not have the same prejudices against black soldiers as did Americans. The 15th was the only American unit to serve under a foreign command during World War I. Now renamed the 369th Infantry Regiment, they trained with the French army. During April 1918, the 369th deployed to a position near the Argonne Forest, just a few hundred feet away from German troops. The fighting from the trenches was fierce.

On the night of May 15 while guarding the trenches,



**Henry Johnson** of Albany, New York and **Needham Roberts** of Trenton, New Jersey,

both members of the 369th, heard German soldiers cutting through the barbed wire which provided a boundary of cover between the warring factions. The two began to hurl grenades and fire their weapons. The Germans were close enough to grab Roberts and attempted to drag him away when Johnson began swinging a heavy battle knife. He fought gallantly, not relenting and finally the opposition started to flee. At dawn it became apparent that Johnson and Roberts had killed and wounded approximately one dozen Germans. The two themselves were severely injured but survived the drastic ordeal. The entire 369th never retreated and none of its members were ever captured. Due to their undying fortitude, they were dubbed "Hellfighters" by the French and "Black Devils" by the German armies. Their bravery saved many Allied lives and for their mettle Johnson was awarded Le Croix de Guerre (The War Cross), France's highest military honor. The 369th were also tactically involved at the Second Battle of the Marne and other armed combat. The French government bestowed the entire 369th Regiment with Le Croix de Guerre and also presented approximately 170 men with individual honors.

In late September 1918 during the three-day battle of the Village of Sechaut, the 369th lost 172 men and 679 were wounded. After the war ended with the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, it was recorded that Captain John Clark said of his men, "Above all the horror of these days of battle, stands out my pride in my men and in their heroism."

Henry Johnson died July 1, 1929. Some historians say his death was due to the injuries he suffered during the Great War. In 1996 President Bill Clinton posthumously awarded the Purple Heart Medal to this distinguished soldier and in 2015 President Barack Obama presented the Medal of Honor. A monument was erected in Johnson's honor at Albany, New York's Washington Park. Many other accolades were bestowed upon Private Henry Johnson in the U.S., all posthumously.



## Works Cited

- <sup>1</sup> Myers, Walter Dean, and Bill Miles. *The Harlem Hellfighters: When Pride Met Courage*. Harper Collins, 2006
- <sup>2</sup> Micklos Jr., John. *Harlem Hellfighters: African-American Heroes of World War I*. Capstone Press, 2017
- <sup>3</sup> <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-i/u-s-entry-into-world-war-i> (history.com editors)
- <sup>4</sup> <https://www.warhistoryonline.com/war-articles>
- <sup>5</sup> Henry Johnson and the Harlem Hellfighters in a parade up Fifth Avenue upon their return to New York in February, 1919 (New York Division of Military and Naval Affairs). <https://www.Smithsonianmag.com/history/remembering-henry-johnson-the-soldier-called-black-death-117386701>
- <sup>6</sup> Henry Johnson. Digital image. National Purple Heart Day profile: Charles Elder-AOLNews.[www.aol.com](http://www.aol.com)
- <sup>7</sup> Needham Roberts. Digital image. African-American recipient of the Purple Heart Medal. [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)
- <sup>8</sup> Black Heroes from U.S. History Who Deserve to Be Honored [allthatsinteresting.com/black-heroes/2](http://allthatsinteresting.com/black-heroes/2)
- <sup>9</sup> James Reese Europe Facts, Biography, & Harlem [www.britannica.com/biography/James-Reese-Europe](http://www.britannica.com/biography/James-Reese-Europe)



## A SELECTION OF WORLD WAR I RESOURCES

- [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/index.php?title=World\\_War\\_I\\_United\\_States\\_Military\\_Records,\\_1917\\_to\\_1918&mobileaction=toggle\\_view\\_mobile](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/index.php?title=World_War_I_United_States_Military_Records,_1917_to_1918&mobileaction=toggle_view_mobile) – Includes histories, photos, newspapers and other records
- **WWI draft records** are searchable on Fold3.com, Ancestry.com and Familysearch.org and are also available at the National Archives (NARA).
- **Fold3.com - Military Yearbook Collection, 1900-2011**  
Before embarking into military service, every member of the U.S. Armed Forces received specialized training in camps, bases and training facilities across the country. Military yearbooks contain names, photographs and details from a serviceman or servicewoman's training. Fold3® has a collection of 108 military yearbooks. They contain more than 157,000 indexed names and nearly 17,000 images.
- **National Archives** - In 1973, a fire at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis destroyed approximately 16-18 million Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF) affecting discharge records from 1912-1960. However, other info and records are available at [archives.gov/topics/wwi](http://archives.gov/topics/wwi). The Archives also has burial case files on people who died while in the military 1915 to 1939.
- **Newspapers** are great sources of detail about ancestors' lives. Digitized collections are on sites such as GenealogyBank, Newspapers.com and Chronicling America.

## Meet Our New Members



**Nicole Y. Culliver,  
Ph.D.**

nicoleculliver@gmail.com

I have always been inquisitive about my family history. I asked many questions as a child and was always fascinated when my maternal grandfather told me stories of “wringing chicken necks” and his gift of “breaking wild horses.” I often “interviewed” my grandparents about all the family he talked about and wanted to know more. This continued as I got older and I joined *Ancestry.com* in 2006, only dabbling on the site now and then.

It wasn’t until more recently I found out I had a brother that I did not know about from my paternal side. Upon learning this, I decided to dig deeper into my paternal side of the family which I had very little knowledge of. This was the start of my concerted efforts in finding out more about my ancestry.

Family members being researched are:

| Names    | State       | County/City  | Time frame   |
|----------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Arnold   | Ohio        | Cuyahoga Co. | 1960         |
| “        | Arkansas    | -            | 1920         |
| “        | California  | -            | 1960-present |
| Geter    | Georgia     | Augusta      | 1920-present |
| “        | S. Carolina | -            | 1915-1920    |
| “        | New York    | -            | 1960-present |
| Williams | Ohio        | Cuyahoga Co. | 1970-present |
| “        | Mississippi | -            | 1915         |
| Gilliam  | Mississippi | Quincy       | 1915-present |

My main challenge is taking the time to cross-reference to make sure the information that I have retrieved about unknown ancestors is correct.



**Barbara  
Eady**

I am a storyteller and a quilter. Last year when we were quarantined, I had time to explore *Ancestry.com* and was surprised that I could trace my family to 1807 using census records alone.



I made a quilt embroidering 165 names of eight generations of my family members. I thought I was finished with this task but I realized it was only the beginning - because now I want to know their stories. I joined the society to properly learn to research my family history.

Names, states and counties being researched are:

| Names    | State    | County  | Time Frame |
|----------|----------|---------|------------|
| Akins    | Alabama  | Calhoun | 1807-1940  |
| Lockhart | Arkansas | Lee     | 1825-1985  |



Theresa started her research using her mother’s previous notes and handwritten memory book. Her interest grew further after learning of her sister’s *23&Me* DNA test results.

Research discoveries include finding a distant relative that worked as a domestic in the Governor’s mansion in West Virginia. DNA findings reveal being in the same haplogroup as Nelson Mandela (Xhosa tribe).

Since her grandfather passed before she was born, Theresa is sure there are many more unknown cousins she has yet to meet. Her paternal great aunt Mary passed in 2017 at age 107.

Foreseeable challenges:

- Connecting the dots to the correct records, especially on her Mom’s side.
- With DNA results indicating 3% Indian heritage, Theresa is unsure how to pursue or verify relations she believes are great grandmothers.

Names and states being researched are:

| Paternal | Names                                                               | State                                        |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
|          | Wadkins/Watkins<br><br>(Possible slave holder: Peter, Good, Lawson) | Virginia,<br>West Virginia,<br>Mississippi   |
| Maternal | Names                                                               | State                                        |
|          | Dailey, Humes,<br>Perkins, Johnson                                  | North Carolina,<br>Alabama,<br>West Virginia |



RootsTech’s first virtual global family history conference has come to an end. So much to see, hear and take in!

It was impossible to get to every live-streaming program or interesting learning session in the relatively short timeframe of February 25-27.

However, you can still browse the huge collection of videos at [familysearch.org/rootstech](https://familysearch.org/rootstech)

## AAGS Members:

If you participated in **RootsTech 2021**,  
let us know  
about your experience—  
for inclusion in the AAGS newsletter

- Was it your first time at RootsTech?
- Did it meet your overall expectations?
- What type of sessions interested you?
- Which speakers captured your attention?
- Did you browse the Expo Hall or take part in live events?
- What info was new or useful for you?

**Drop a few comments to:**  
[newschair@aagsclev.org](mailto:newschair@aagsclev.org)



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