

*African-American Genealogical Society - Cleveland, Ohio*

NEWSLETTER

“Juneteenth 2021”



Juneteenth is an occasion known by various names: Emancipation Day, Liberation Day, Freedom Day and Jubilee Day. And as of 2021, it is now a **national holiday** observing the end of slavery in the United States.

At the request of the Cleveland Public Library, AAGS-Cleveland participated in the city's first annual **JUNETEENTH FREEDOM FEST** which was held in Downtown Cleveland, Ohio on Saturday, June 19. Sponsored by MetroHealth, in partnership with multiple community alliances, the event's goal was "to educate, celebrate, and activate participants around the history of African American culture." At our booth, we gladly connected with festival-goers interested in discovering their family history.

The atmosphere was joyful and affirming. Thanks go to Dr. Deborah Abbott (coordinator) and the AAGS members who lent their support: Maxine Hairston, Joe Houser, Joseph & Penny Jordan, Fran Kelley and Sandra Milton.

Juneteenth--  
A day of reflection  
to appreciate  
the African American experience

~Cathy Neal,  
AAGS Newsletter Editor



### AAGS MEETINGS

Held on **4<sup>th</sup> 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



### 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

- **FamilyTree Magazine's 101 Best Genealogy Websites of 2021 -** [familytreemagazine.com/best-genealogy-websites/](http://familytreemagazine.com/best-genealogy-websites/)
- **Virtual Indiana African American Genealogy Group (IAAGG) Annual Conference, "The Healing Power of Telling & Preserving Our Stories,"** September 18-19, 2021– [iaagg.org](http://iaagg.org)
- **Helping African Americans Trace Slaveholding Ancestors Using DNA** (RootsTech DNA video by Andre Kearns) - [familysearch.org/rootstech/rtc2021/session/helping-african-americans-trace-slaveholding-ancestors-using-dna](http://familysearch.org/rootstech/rtc2021/session/helping-african-americans-trace-slaveholding-ancestors-using-dna)
- **Deciphering Olan Mills ID Numbers on Family Photographs -** [familytreemagazine.com/photos/olan-mills-id-numbers/](http://familytreemagazine.com/photos/olan-mills-id-numbers/)
- **Best Ways to Search for Photos with Google Images -** [lialouisecooke.com/2021/03/24/google-image-search/](http://lialouisecooke.com/2021/03/24/google-image-search/)

### 2020 AAGS Officers

Interim President.....	Joseph Houser, Sr.	Recording Secretary....	Karen Marshall
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President.....	Deborah Abbott	Corresponding Sec'y...	Maxine Hairston
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President.....	Joseph Houser, Sr.	Financial Secretary.....	Gayle Ector
Treasurer.....	Jonathan Stith		

## FamilySearch Family History Library Reopening!

Source: <https://media.familysearch.org/familysearch-family-history-library-reopening>

(June 08, 2021)

The FamilySearch Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah, announced it will begin a phased reopening starting July 6, 2021. The popular destination service has been closed since March 13, 2020, due to precautions pertaining to the global COVID-19 pandemic. The library serves beginner and professional family history patrons from all over the world and is a popular tourist attraction for the state of Utah. Initially, hours will be from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, with plans to extend to additional days and hours soon.

“While billions of our records are available online, we realize that many researchers—including professional genealogists whose livelihoods depend on reliable records—are anxious to access records in-person within the library. We know the extended closing has created difficulties, and we are excited to welcome our guests back into a safe environment for continued research and discoveries,” said David Rencher, director of the Family History Library and FamilySearch’s Chief Genealogical Officer.

### *New patron workstations*

The library has taken advantage of the prolonged closure to make needed renovations to the facility that will be very exciting to patrons when the doors reopen. “Guests will return to an environment that will significantly improve discovery and research experiences,” said Rencher. Crews have been busy preparing to welcome guests back by remodeling, adding new features like state-of-the-art patron workstations with multiple monitors and adjustable height desks to accommodate sitting or standing preferences, enhanced workflow throughout, and nearly 40,000 books from new acquisition and long-term storage.

The library has added or upgraded the following new, **free** patron services.

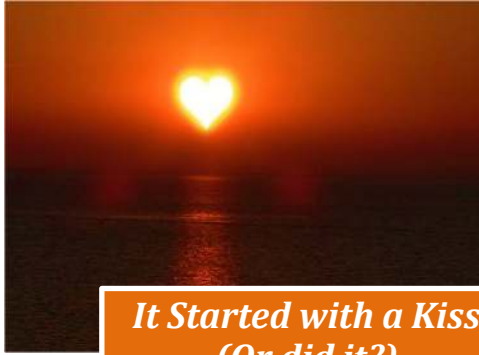
They are accessible through the new **Family History Library web page**.

[<https://www.familysearch.org/family-history-library/welcome-to-the-family-history-library>]

- Guests can sign up for free, **online, one-on-one virtual consultations** with a research specialist (available in languages).
- **Library look-up services.** If you can’t come to the library, a staff member can retrieve a book from its shelves and help you find what you’re seeking.
- In **FamilySearch Communities** online, guests can get assistance from volunteers worldwide, including locating or interpreting ancestor records, asking questions, or sharing their expertise with others.
- Check out the growing menu of popular free **online classes and webinars**. New selections are offered and recorded weekly and made available on-demand.
- In the library, take advantage of improved services to digitize your family photos and artifacts or convert family audio and video tapes to digital media.

FamilySearch family history centers and libraries will open based on the direction of their local ecclesiastical leaders and government guidelines. If you plan to visit a FamilySearch center soon, please call ahead to ensure it is open and its hours of operation.

## Meet Our “New” Member



*It Started with a Kiss  
(Or did it?)*

**...Keisha Bullard**

Greetings, fellow AAGS members. My name is **Keisha Bullard**. I joined this group a month before the pandemic hit last year! I was first invited to the meeting by my dearest friend Debbie Callahan. I haven't had much of an opportunity to interact with many members; however, I **have** attended a few Zoom meetings. I was excited when one of them included a Freedmen's Bureau workshop. Those were records that I have skimmed through but didn't know what I was really looking for.

I titled this article “It Started with a Kiss” because (although it may not be reality) I'd like to think that my beginning happened because two people fell in love. When I was growing up and into much of my young adulthood, my maternal great-grandmothers (Marian “Bessie” Brown of Millington, Maryland and Rosemary Teagle) were alive. Through their stories and some pictures, I was able to piece together some parts of their early lives. When I was a teenager, I would always ask my great-grandmom Rosemary (born in 1911) to tell me about her life in Pocomoke City, Maryland; she only ever shared the bits and pieces she wanted me to know. Her history is where I am most stuck.

I have been blessed with information about my maternal line (Pitts, Marshall, Taylor, Gunby and Fisher) and my paternal line through research done by some others. One is my cousin, genealogist Bessida Cauthorne White, from Virginia. After she discovered we were a DNA match on Ancestry, she blessed me with the gift of her detailed research of my father's maternal lineage (Vaughan, Montague and Braxton of King and Queen County, Virginia) in addition to pictures of my family that I NEVER thought would be possible. I was able to share this gift with my brothers. While I knew names, I now had pictures of my great-great grandfather James Robert Vaughan of Stevensville, Virginia, who was born around 1855.

At the beginning of the pandemic, I thought that I would be at home and would have a great amount of time to research and maybe even complete some indexing for FamilySearch. However, that didn't work out at all. Earlier this year my son and his girlfriend gifted us with our first grandchild. I realized that now is the time to share all that I know for the future generations. I would like to create a storybook for them, but I am stuck on how to begin. Any suggestions would be greatly appreciated. I can't wait to meet you all.

## AAGS ACTIVITIES

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

Monthly Zoom meetings continued with a line-up of top-notch speakers and research topics.



March 27 – **Robyn Smith** – “Putting it All Together: Making Sense of All the Research You’ve Done”

This presentation was loaded with insight on organization (physical & electronic), citing sources, recordkeeping tips (including the usefulness of charts), community research, plus other good points that will – without a doubt – be advantageous for members.

Check out Robyn’s Blog: “Reclaiming Kin”



April 24 – **Shamele Jordon** – “Freedmen’s Bureau eXperience”

Her interactive workshop was indeed a worthy experience. The group broke into small units by state/area and worked together to comprehend field office info. It was very effective in identifying specific sources for further individual research.

Shamele is the host of “Genealogy Quickstart”



May 22 – **Angela Cathey McGhee Allen** – “World War I Draft Registration Cards: A Beneficial and Valuable Source”

Participants got more than they bargained for as she not only detailed the ‘ins and outs’ of the cards themselves, but also how ID #'s on some cards may link with prison records. It was fascinating to hear.

Angela is past 1st VP of the Illinois State Genealogical Society and past President of the AAGHS of Chicago

Member bonus: accompanying handouts filled with assignments, examples and resources



## Digital Preservation: One Key in Unlocking Your Genealogy Legacy

By Cecelia McFadden

If you've been doing genealogy research for a period of time, perhaps you've realized the power of collections and preservation. After all, how have you located an unknown ancestor without someone or some institution making a decision to preserve an artifact that provides a link to the past and the history of an individual, family, community or place?

In this post-pandemic era, chronicling the events of the near term and those beyond have historic significance. No longer can we rely exclusively on face-to-face interactions to retrieve materials and data that breaks down brick walls and closes genealogy research gaps. Virtual work and programs are here to stay, so flexibility and creating a digital preservation agenda to support your personal genealogy research is crucial. Simply put, is there a digital copy of every essential genealogy artifact you own? Do you have an item archiving system for your family history material? How can you learn more? Some suggestions follow.

### Personal Digital Preservation

Libraries and archives have been digitizing records systematically and strategically since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. What most family historians don't realize is that mobile device ownership makes them digital file preservationists.

How many photos are on your phone or tablet? How many files or documents on those devices are related to genealogy?

- ✓ Taking photos or uploading files to your device is **acquisition**.
- ✓ Placing them in a certain location for retrieval is **storage**.
- ✓ Systematically storing multiple files in a specific location for a specific purpose is **archiving**.

### Is your digital preservation activity intentional or unintentional?

Keep reading to discover tips for being a digital preservation strategist.



### Digital Preservation Advice

If your digital preservation activity is passive, you may be operating on the implied principle of "store and ignore." You took the photo, so it should still be on your device, right? Such an attitude is both risky and cavalier. Your personal preservation efforts should follow the same fivefold process that institutions apply to their collections.

- First, locate everything to be saved
- Second, decide what to keep
- Third, organize the files
- Fourth, save copies in different locations
- Finally, manage your collections

A sixth precept is applicable if your preservation plan uses software to manage your collections. Software needs to be updated frequently and systematically with upgrade cycles in mind. Some personal archiving software tools to consider include Folderit, GoogleDocs, Adobe Document Cloud, Archive.Life and PaperTracer. Each of these products have free versions with limited functionality. Your research plan and accompanying budget will govern choices in this area.



## Preservation Collaboration

Believe it or not, there are local and national resources to support your digital preservation efforts.

- The American Library Association ([www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org)) sponsors an annual “Digital Preservation Week” in the Spring. You can visit their website, download materials and listen to free webinars about the topic. Their 2021 event marked 11 consecutive years of content and their honorary event chair was Nikole Hannah-Jones of the *1619 Project*.
- The Cleveland Digital Public Library (<https://cpl.org/clevdpl>) offers support for personal digital preservation planning and has a lab where technical assistance is offered on a recurring basis.
- The Library of Congress (LOC) at [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov) has a website dedicated to digital preservation ([www.digitalpreservation.gov/personalarchiving](http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/personalarchiving)) and has instructional content on how to preserve digital photographs, digital audio, digital video, electronic mail, personal digital records and websites. LOC believes that it has achieved the original objective of creating awareness about the concept of personal digital archiving, so the existence of this online resource is tentative. At the time of this publication, the site is active. Visit while you can and download the resources you may find beneficial.

## Conclusion

As a digital preservation stakeholder and family historian, essential comprehension of personal digital archiving is key. Knowing how to virtually store your own memorabilia and how to recognize gaps in the strategies of other individuals and institutions is important to advance contemporary research agendas and plans. In this post-pandemic era, digitization knowledge is a vital skill. To level up, you must be active, engaged and empowered.

*(Members: AAGS is interested in hearing about your digital anecdotes or your need for support. Contact [newschair@aagsclev.org](mailto:newschair@aagsclev.org). We look forward to hearing from you.)*

## “African Burial Ground 30 Years Later:



## Impacts on Black Cemeteries”

*By Veronica Lynn Ponds Ferguson*

The **National Museum of African-American History & Culture** offers a plethora of webinars and study groups to educate the public on historic, academic, scientific and many other subject matters concerning the African-American community and experience specifically and the world of the African Diaspora at large. Anyone interested can register on line to attend these events. All current members of AAGS Cleveland have access to these programs--our current president, Joseph Houser Sr., diligently and consistently sends out email alerts.

On May 7, 2021 an especially informative program was aired titled, **“The African Burial Ground 30 Years Later: Impact on Black Cemeteries.”** The program was hosted by Hannah Scruggs and Lisa Crawley with guest speakers Dr. Michael Blakey, Director of the African Burial Ground Project; Dr. Joseph Jones, Lecturer of Anthropology at the College of William and Mary; and Peggy King Jorde, Cultural Projects Consultant.

Dr. Blakey defined and described the significance of African burial sites. The project he presides over is a result of happenstance. In May 1991 on the island of Manhattan in New York City an area of land was slated for the construction of an office tower. Once excavated, the African burial ground was exposed. This cemetery was used by African-Americans during the 18th century to bury some 15,000 people of color who built the city and "whose people created the original wealth of the Western world," commented Dr. Blakey. Once uncovered and the community made aware of this ancestral burial ground, protesters and activists rallied round to preserve it. The governmental "powers that be" had no intention of saving what they felt as worthless skeletal remains thwarting their financial progress. The staunch protesters prevailed, the burial ground was not desecrated and the site was protected.

At first, governmental agencies were awarded the role of supervision, archeology and general study. Again, activists and African-American scientists loudly cried these are our people, who better than we to take on the task of maintenance, conservation and scientific study. They, too, triumphed and so began The African Burial Ground Project. So successful was this program that it became a model for African burial sites in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (Cemetério dos Pretos Novos) and Dakar, Senegal (Slave Wrecks Project). In New York City the site is now a national monument under the National Park Service's management and houses a large Visitor's Center which opened in 2009.

Dr. Blakey, during his initial study, coined the term "descendant communities" referring to the people, biologically related or not, who were tied to these sites and lived in the direct or neighboring areas to where these ancestors are buried. A descendant community develops or evolves from the ancestral community in question. It could be comprised of present-day blood relatives and familial blood lines, ethnic groups and culturally affiliated peoples. A descendant community, says Dr Blakey, is the "idea (that) these are people who care about (the) ancestor's disposition" and dignity and "involves those who care." Often consisting of people who were born and bred in and around the site in past times and who, even now, call the neighboring location home. In the case of the New York site, people of color born and bred in Harlem and Queens are considered a descendant community of the New York African burial site.



This project, and others like it, states Dr Blakey, is significant and pertinent in answering questions of "African-American origins and transformations, the physical circumstances of their enslavement and the modes of their resistance." And, on the other hand, to glean and comprehend our ancestors who were free people of color. To acknowledge their lives and lifestyles by contrast and the circumstances by which they were or became free. All are important queries to ponder in order to better know the lives and lifestyles of our progenitors. These are responses to history itself, a mode to allow us to a better future by understanding the histories of those who came before us.

Finally, young people should consider, if so interested, careers in anthropology, sociology, archeology and others that effect real historic truth. Also, any of us, if interested, can become involved in such community activities ourselves. Peggy King Jorde stressed the importance of "descendant empowerment." She claims where once African-American history was buried (no pun intended), we of this present era must strive to revive and keep it alive. In other words, seek out truth through the pursuance of genealogy and true history per public and private documents that are now availed to us. It's essential to encourage black communities to exhaust local and state governmental resources to protect our heritage and our history.

## Volunteer Projects...

Put your skills to good use.

### Descendants Research Project

Led by prominent researcher **Timothy Pinnick**

The **New Hanover County** (North Carolina) **Community Remembrance Project** is seeking volunteer researchers to aid with research activities to identify and contact living descendants of victims and survivors of the Wilmington, N.C. 1898 insurrection. Could include such tasks as downloading documents or creating file folders.

Project completion target: October 2021

- Tim conducts **Zoom sessions** on the last Wednesday of the month (Mar. 31–Oct. 27)
- **Register** by emailing [blackwilmingtonresearch@gmail.com](mailto:blackwilmingtonresearch@gmail.com)
- **See project updates** at <https://www.facebook.com/nhccrp/>

### "Transcribing History" with NARA

Help make the records of the National Archives and Records Administration more searchable and discoverable. The **Citizen Archivist Program** is NARA's new crowdsourcing tool for tagging, transcription and digitization of records.

- For guides on how to **get started**, find information and **view instructional videos**: [archives.gov/citizen-archivist/resources](https://www.archives.gov/citizen-archivist/resources)
- To view **topics/categories** (wide-ranging, including African American court case files & pension records, Civil War hospital staff records, WWI photographs, Escape and Evasion Reports from World War II and many, many more): [archives.gov/citizen-archivist/missions](https://www.archives.gov/citizen-archivist/missions)

The lighter side of family history.

**“A Curious Occupation”**

*Submitted by LaVera Wingfield*

While examining the 1940 federal census record of a relative from Mississippi, I was drawn immediately to the answers he provided to the enumerator regarding his occupation, employment and income. He stated that he worked on his farm as an unpaid farm worker, had worked for 48 weeks the previous year (with \$0 income), however he had other sources of income.

Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940 POPULATION SCHEDULE				
OCCUPATION, INDUSTRY, AND CLASS OF WORKER				INCOME IN 1939 (12 months ending Dec. 31, 1939.)
For a person at work, assigned to public emergency work, or with a job ("Yes" in col. 21, 22, or 24), enter present occupation, industry, and class of worker. For a person seeking work ("Yes" in col. 23): (a) if he has previous work experience, enter last occupation, industry, and class of worker, or (b) if he does not have previous work experience, enter "New worker" in Col. 28, and leave Cols. 29-30 blank.				
OCCUPATION	INDUSTRY	Class of Worker	CODE (leave blank)	Number of weeks worked in 1939 (Equivalent full-time weeks)
Trade, profession, or particular kind of work, as - <i>Frame spinner</i> <i>Salesman</i> <i>Laborer</i> <i>Rivet heater</i> <i>Music teacher</i>	Industry or business, as- <i>Cotton mill</i> <i>Retail grocery</i> <i>Farm</i> <i>Shipyard</i> <i>Public school</i>			Amount of money, wages or salary received (including commissions)  Did this person receive income of \$50 or more from sources other than money wages or salary (Y or N)

After reading this, my mind went back to a visit to his residence with my father when I was young. It was about 8 a.m. and my father had to take care of some business nearby, after working a “graveyard shift.” We encountered a line of about 8 or 9 people standing at the front door, each carrying an empty bottle or jar. When my father gave me the go ahead to “go & play,” I immediately headed to the back yard when I became curious about the origin of a certain smell.

Years later, upon overhearing “grown folks talk,” I was able to learn what my relative’s occupation really was. He always kept a low profile, lived in unpainted shacks with no house number (yet people knew how to find him), and he moved to a different county after a few house fires.

You probably have already figured it out--he was actually a “Moonshiner”!



## IN MEMORY

**DAMON CARROLL**

**Died April 4, 2021**

AAGS-Cleveland is still enjoying the fruits and labor of Damon Carroll, one of the co-founders of our society. In March 1990, he stepped out on faith and served as its first president. At that time, the group was formed as the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of the national Afro-American Historical & Genealogical Society and was the first African American family history group in the state of Ohio. Damon took the reins and, with other early officers, developed plans to get the group “off the ground” while promoting genealogy research in the community. The group benefited greatly from his pleasing personality, straightforwardness and strong leadership skills. His wife Annette Carroll is also a co-founder. Kudos to this trailblazer.

*Finding the path our  
ancestors walked is not  
always easy but the rewards  
of the journey make the  
effort worthwhile.*

*~ Author unknown*



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