

*African-American Genealogical Society - Cleveland, Ohio*

# NEWSLETTER

## Family History Research Clinics

### Return to CPL



On August 13, the African-American Genealogical Society, Cleveland resumed its successful in-person genealogy workshops in partnership with the Cleveland Public Library at the Downtown Louis Stokes Building.

Ready, willing and able AAGS members were on hand to assist patrons increase their research knowledge and piece together their personal histories by means of PCs, the library's supportive staff and other resources. Finding folks was fun and led to smiles, at least one case of emotional gratitude and promises from the newly "hooked" to continue the pursuit.

A giant "Thank you" to all the volunteers.



**Next AAGS Clinic:  
October 15**



*Photos courtesy of Ruth Perry, Joseph Houser, Sr. & Maxine Hairston*

### AAGS MEETINGS

Held on **4<sup>th</sup> Saturday** (exc. December)

- Meetings will be held virtually by Zoom until libraries reopen for in-person gatherings  
(An electronic link will be sent)
- 10:00-10:15 a.m. – socialization  
10:15-10:30 a.m. – info/announcements  
10:30 a.m. – 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

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(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

- **“Find a Grave: Optimize Your Search Results”** by Sunny Jane Morton - quick tutorial of how to make the most out of your searches for ancestor tombstones – [youtube.com/watch?v=h2n6hmYJbpl&t=91s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2n6hmYJbpl&t=91s)
- September 27, 2022 – AARP hosts **“Genealogy 201 - African American Roots,”** a FREE virtual discussion with genealogy educators **Dr. Deborah Abbott** and **Kenyatta Berry;** 7:00-8:00pm ET, registration required – <https://aarp.cventevents.com/event/8eab5e24-d4d5-4067-8615-c84759955121/summary>
- **YouTube series, “Behind the Leaves”** - Ancestry's Crista Cowan gives viewers a behind-the-scenes look at what's going on at Ancestry.com – [youtube.com/watch?v=rdCxbyM2bQQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdCxbyM2bQQ)
- The **45<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition** of the *Journal of the AAHGS* is available at [amazon.com/Journal-Afro-American-Historical-Genealogical-Society/dp/173570055X](https://www.amazon.com/Journal-Afro-American-Historical-Genealogical-Society/dp/173570055X); the journal publishes historical and genealogical subject matter of interest to African American family researchers
- **Ancestry.com updated its Terms and Privacy Statement:** it does not claim *ownership* rights to users’ content. Users grant Ancestry a *license* to their content which *ends* when users delete content. For full explanation, see [legalgenealogist.com/2022/08/16/getting-it-right/](https://www.legalgenealogist.com/2022/08/16/getting-it-right/)

### 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  
Corresponding Sec’y... Maxine Hairston  
Financial Secretary..... Gayle Ector



**Main Campus**  
of CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

# Genealogy & Family History Research Clinics

The Library's Genealogy Clinics are informal sessions that allow you to drop in to receive help from Library Staff and expert volunteers from the African American Genealogical Society of Cleveland. Please bring copies of any research-to-date and an idea of what you want to learn during the session.

**For beginners:** volunteers provide informal instruction in starting your family history and genealogy. Please plan to arrive by 10:45 to take advantage of the group instruction for beginners.

**For more advanced researchers:** volunteers draw on their extensive experience to help you answer your genealogy questions and to help you find strategies to move your research forward.



## 2022 Clinic Dates

Join us any time between  
**10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.**  
Free and open to all, from  
beginners to experts.

**Louis Stokes Wing**  
**6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Center for**  
**Local & Global History**  
**525 Superior Avenue**

**August 13**

**October 15**

**November 19**

**December 10**



Questions:  
Please call the Center for Local &  
Global History at (216) 623-2864

[cpl.org](http://cpl.org)

**NOTE: CPL Family History Day - October 29 (virtual)**

## AAGS MEMBER SPOTLIGHT ON:

**Theresa Odoms**



### Researching Granddad

I started on the trail in 2011 and then got sidetracked by a job relocation to Cincinnati, Ohio. I didn't begin again until after my return to Toledo in 2014. I seriously started delving into the family research after reading, copying and sharing a collection of my mother's notes (entitled, *Grandma's Gift of Memories*). The only facts I knew: a few names, interesting memories and locations mentioned.

My sister Harriet shared her 23andMe DNA results (206.1cM%) in 2014. This also propelled the genealogy bug. I restarted attending the local Journey Genealogy group meetings, along with a couple of fabulous all-day conferences. After doing an AncestryDNA test myself in 2019, the sniffles turned into a fever and, at some point, the "itis" took over. My nephew David (118.4cM%) took the MyHeritage DNA test. The results uploaded from three different tests corroborated our definitive relationships. Now I HAD to know the answers to the questions from Mom's notes rummaging around in my head. Thanks to "Covid-19" and a suggestion from Gary Franklin, I joined the Cleveland AAGS almost a year ago. That decision has been most beneficial.

#### From Momma's notes, my trail begins...

I started a family tree with what I knew and requested my mom Jeannette Humes' birth record, which only took three tries! Momma Jeanette's notes were written around 1997. She passed in 2013. Contained inside that handwritten packet of memories were some fascinating tidbits she remembered and thankfully wrote down. She stated about her father [James Humes](#):

*"I only knew him briefly when he came back from Italy after World War II. He was injured (April 7, 1945, losing his lower right leg) in the war and received the Purple Heart commendation."*

[Granddad James Lawrence Humes](#) was deceased before any of us grandkids were born. I wanted to know more about him, more than just his name. It's taken about 73 years (1945-2021)--his lifetime and some of mine. I located the 1943 West Virginia Register of Marriage for my grandparents James and Naomi. Locating the family census information was a challenge due to name spellings. I also found a few articles on James at the [GenealogyBank](#) website.

In early 2021, via an Ancestry email, I was contacted by a new DNA cousin--JoAnn Humes in Michigan. She shared some facts she learned (our granddads are brothers). She also shared that her father Johnnie had at least 30 kids.

Through the help of Journey Genealogy members and research at Toledo Public Library-Lucas County (with a huge shoutout to family history researcher Ann), I learned SO much more. For instance, granddad James' additional marriage records, etc. Due to ensuing search frustrations, I ended up using an expensive site to obtain James' death certificate (but it arrived in two days, hand delivered).

**Finding the gravesite...**

Information received in 2021 presented a new problem. The Wendt Cemetery no longer existed. I emailed a person at the Fred Hart Williams Genealogical Society (Detroit) who was able to discern a cemetery name change to Wendt Lincoln Memorial Cemetery, but that was all. Now feeling antsy, I took a road trip to Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana...Eureka!

With the assistance of the fantastic staff there, I found more than eleven articles on James and the family AND the updated name plus phone number of the Lincoln Memorial Park Cemetery. The very next morning, I called and verified my granddad's grave was located there. Ironically, he's located in section J 853-1. (J=Jeannette, 8=my birthday month, 53=my birth year). The following Tuesday, I called and scheduled a road trip with my new cousin JoAnn and we traveled to the Lincoln Memorial Park Cemetery and took photos. Coincidentally, Great aunt Sheila still resides in the family home that I visited with my grandmother Naomi many years ago.

I feel a sense of peace knowing some of his story and especially his burial location.

**Three Most Interesting Facts**

learned so far from researching various sources:

- His participation in the 92nd "Buffalo" Military Division. (I am reading articles regarding the only all-colored unit sent to Italy. My NARA record requests are pending and I hope to find another photo of him.)
- Referring to Granddad's family history, the *Beckley Herald* newspaper states, "they were one of the pioneer (mining) families of Whipple." (I am following up on West Virginia mining history.)
- The *Michigan Chronicle* and other Detroit newspapers reported on his jewelry store court case (1945-1948). James was sued by a jewelry store & his government car seized due to a debt of \$48.00. The final result was a refund of \$76.02 and the return of his vehicle.

**Bronze Star  
For Hero Who  
Lost Leg**

BATTLE CREEK, Michigan – Eight rounds of ammunition and a loud voice were all that Corporal **James L. Humes** of Detroit, Michigan, had to halt a Nazi Patrol in



Italy and save his litter squad and some wounded Yanks – but he did the job. Now a patient in Percy Jones General hospital Battle Creek, Michigan, this veteran of the 92<sup>nd</sup> In-

fantry Division has been awarded the Bronze Star Medal for rescuing six wounded men under fire.

Corporal Humes lost his right leg on April 6 when he set off a n anti-personnel mine during the second day of the big Allied push which led to the complete collapse of the German troops in Italy.

The story of how Corporal Humes won the Bronze Star Medal is another "truth is stranger than fiction" testimonial to the courage and ingenuity shown by American fighting men when faced by larger odds.

Corporal Humes who gives his address as 5245 Williams avenue, Detroit, has been in service since January, 1942, and went overseas last September. He formerly worked at Ford Motor company.

Source: *The Detroit Tribune*. (Detroit, Mich.), 23 June 1945. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress.

## AAGS ACTIVITIES

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

Recent monthly Zoom meetings touched on numerous topics:



**June 25 – Kurt Witcher –  
“Navigating the Genealogy Center at the  
Allen County Public Library – Fort Wayne, Indiana”**

Print collections. Virtual collections. Family histories. Culture-specific resources. Wide-ranging databases. PERSI. So many goodies available to researchers. Kurt covered them well, showing how to select effectively through the ACPL website. Access their FREE virtual programs at [acpl.lib.in.us/genealogy](http://acpl.lib.in.us/genealogy)



**July 23 – Dr. Deborah Abbott –  
“Funeral & Cemetery Records”**

Debbie laid out the background of funeral and burial practices, which is really key before delving into locating the actual records. She explained the importance of knowing such things as segregation practices, funeral home status, etc., then provided useful places to find records (offline and online) using older methods (e.g., newspapers) as well as newer technology (e.g., wikis, Legacy.com, etc.).



**August 27 – Member Questions, Inquiries  
& Brick Walls**

It was time to hear individual research challenges and get group assistance in overcoming obstacles. Penny Jordan asked about sharing graveyard photos. Adrienne Waugh sought the best way to verify info she learned about her ancestor George Ranson/m. Mark Lowe, Deborah Abbott, Rochelle McNorton, Eli Kirshner and others offered excellent leads sure to advance their progress (& that all members can apply).

(Members receive helpful handouts and have access to recordings of the monthly sessions.)

## Tag Cloud as a Genealogy Tool

By Cecelia McFadden

Our last newsletter article on browser extensions helped you save time and build efficiencies in your online research queries. Your browsing has netted some genealogy documents to further your legacy and, of course, you are documenting your findings and no doubt recording your results. By now, you've collated a variety of documents, graphical and textual, that provide insight to your ancestry and your ancestors. This article gives you a tool that you may have not previously considered to further your understanding of text documents that you've gathered or authored. This concept is known as tag cloud.

- **Definition.** A tag cloud, also known as a word cloud or text cloud, is a depiction of words in a dataset that displays the most used words from small to large, according to frequency of appearance in a record of choice. The visualization gives a glimpse into the most important keywords and gives the observer another way to analyze the information contained in the data.
- **Benefits.** A word visualization of a lengthy document can assist a family researcher in the following ways.
  - **First**, a cloud will **create a literal picture** and identify the focus of a written document that reading alone can't capture
  - **Second**, visualization, by nature of how the brain works, will **create a connection** between the viewer and the text data that may not have previously existed
  - **Third**, it is a **timesaver** and establishes themes that take more time using written notetaking or summary methods
  - **Fourth**, it is engaging and **sparks interest** from viewers that may not develop until a reader has completed the reading and study of the same textual dataset
  - **Lastly**, it is **inexpensive**

Let's learn about some software options.

- **Word Cloud Software.** Although many organizations use the paid version of a tool called Wordle™, there are other free options to explore. WordArt.com, WordClouds.com, Word Cloud Maker, ABCya, and TagCloud are software that you can use to experiment with the method. From a skill perspective, the only thing the user needs to understand is how to enter or copy/paste the text data into the software box that will create the cloud. Some tools require a spreadsheet or a comma-delimited file (CSV) in order to use the product. Once created, there are options to edit the results with fonts, colors and shapes. Each of the options has the potential to translate into more communication value for the author as well as the intended audience.
- **Application.** After opening several of the forementioned options, this writer decided that all readers should consider this method at least once and use it on a meaningful document from their research. It really can be enlightening. Below is an example. Dr. James Turner, a tour de force in the founding of Africana studies and departments at the collegiate level, died on August 6 in Ithaca, New York (<https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2022/08/james-turner-giant-africana-studies-dies-82>). A multitude of tributes can be found on the world wide web about him. This writer took the tribute published by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) and created the word cloud below.





## Black History: A Look Back

Submitted by Cathy Neal



The 6888<sup>th</sup> was the only all-black, all-female battalion overseas during World War II. It consisted of 800+ black women (31 officers plus enlisted personnel) and was nicknamed "Six Triple Eight."

In 1945, warehouses in Birmingham, England were filled with millions of pieces of mail intended for the U.S. military, U.S. government personnel and Red Cross workers serving in the war effort. Due to a shortage of qualified postal officers, the system was in chaos.<sup>1</sup>

Tasked with sorting and routing mail for millions of American service members and civilians, the battalion was trained for its overseas mission at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. This was during a time of growing pressure to include Black women in the Women's Army Corps and allow them to join their white counterparts.<sup>2</sup> The first contingent of the 6888<sup>th</sup> left the United States on February 3, 1945 for Britain, sailing on *Île de France*, and arrived in Glasgow on February 14.<sup>3</sup> The ship encountered several German U-boats on the trip, forcing it to take evasive maneuvers.<sup>4</sup> The women then took a train to Birmingham, England. When they arrived at their temporary post office (airplane hangars), awaiting them were letters stacked to the ceiling. Mountains of piled up mail had troops grumbling about lost letters and delayed care packages—leading to the Six Triple Eight motto, "No Mail, Low Morale."<sup>5</sup>

Housing, mess halls and recreation facilities were segregated by race and sex, forcing them to set up their own operations. Unit commander Major Charity Adams was at one point criticized by a general during inspection who threatened to give her command to a white officer. She responded, "Over my dead body, sir."<sup>6</sup> A potential court-martial was avoided and the general's attitude later changed to appreciation of the battalion.

As Allied forces drove across Europe, ever-changing locations hampered mail delivery. This remarkable group of women cleared out a backlog of approximately 17 million pieces of mail in three months — half the time projected.<sup>7</sup> With the immense load gone, the battalion sailed to France on June 9, 1945, shortly after V-E Day, encountering another backlog of undelivered mail dating back as far as two to three years; it took an estimated six months to process.<sup>8</sup>

During their service, members of the 6888<sup>th</sup> were awarded the European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, the Good Conduct Medal and the World War II Victory Medal. Mary Ragland, Gladys Shuster Carter and Alyce Dixon were honored by President Barack Obama in 2009.

Many of the women of the unit were successful after the war; only a half-dozen members are still alive. Former Six Triple Eight member Fannie Griffin McClendon was promoted to Air Force Major, the first woman to lead an all-male squadron in the Strategic Air Command. At age 101 (as of August 2022), she stated in an AARP Magazine article, "I'm grateful to have lived an amazing life, but what matters most is what all those letters represented: staying connected to the ones we hold dear."<sup>9</sup>

**References**

- (Photo) <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/>, "Somewhere in England, Maj. Charity E. Adams and Capt. Abbie N. Campbell...inspect the first contingent of Negro members of the Women's Army Corps assigned to overseas service." – Source: National Archives and Records Administration
- <sup>[1] [2] [4] [8]</sup> Fargey, Kathleen, "6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion," *U.S. Army Center of Military History*, February 2014, <https://www.history.army.mil/html/topics/afam/6888thPBn/index.html>
- <sup>[3] [5] [7]</sup> "Black female WWII unit recognized with congressional honor," *Associated Press*, March 1, 2022, <https://thegrio.com/2022/03/01/6888th-central-battalion-congressional-gold-medal/>
- <sup>[6]</sup> Earley, Charity Adams, *One Woman's Army: A Black Officer Remembers the WAC*, Texas A&M University Press, College Station, copyright 1989, second printing 1996, <https://books.google.com>
- <sup>[9]</sup> McClendon, Fannie Griffin as told to Robin Westen, "Woman of Letters," *American Association of Retired Persons Magazine*, August/September 2022
- "Congress honors the Black women veterans of the 6888 battalion," *MSN*, March 16, 2022, <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/congress-honors-the-black-women-veterans-of-the-6888-battalion/vi-AAV8pGA?category=foryou> [short video clip]

**1639**  
First official mail service appeared in North American colonies

**1775**  
Post Office Department began, the predecessor of the U.S. Postal Service

<https://about.usps.com/publications/pub100.pdf>

**National Archives**

Holds civil servant records for some federal agencies, incl. Post Office (employment 1919-51)<sup>1</sup>

If employed after 1951,<sup>2</sup> contact Nat'l Personnel Record Center-Civilian Personnel Records<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1a</sup> <https://www.archives.gov/st-louis/civilian-personnel/holdings-table>

<sup>1b</sup> <https://www.archives.gov/st-louis/opf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.archives.gov/personnel-records-center/civilian-non-archival>

**Interesting Reads at:**  
[about.usps.com/who/profile/history/personnel.htm](https://about.usps.com/who/profile/history/personnel.htm)

- History of **19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>** century African American postal workers
- **List of 1800s** African American letter carriers, postmasters, clerks
- History of female carriers
- **List of famous postal workers**



## Old-Timey Occupations

By LaVera Wingfield

Can you match the occupation in Column A with its meaning in Column B?

Column A		Column B	
1	saddler	a	fish peddler
2	baxter	b	potter
3	draper	c	makes bows & arrows
4	brewster	d	dealer in dry goods
5	crocker	e	door keeper
6	webster	f	washer woman
7	joyner or joiner	g	maker of barrels
8	cooper	h	roofer
9	porter	i	maker of beer
10	slater	j	skilled carpenter
11	collier	k	baker
12	lavender	l	makes and repairs saddles
13	hayward	m	coal miner
14	jagger	n	weaver
15	fletcher	o	keeper of fences

*(Answers on next page)*

Are any of these occupations surnames on your family tree?

(Occupations can be found on many documents: vital records, censuses and city directories, to name a few)



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***Answers from page 11***

*1l, 2k, 3d, 4i, 5b, 6n, 7j, 8g, 9e, 10h, 11m, 12f, 13o, 14a, 15c*