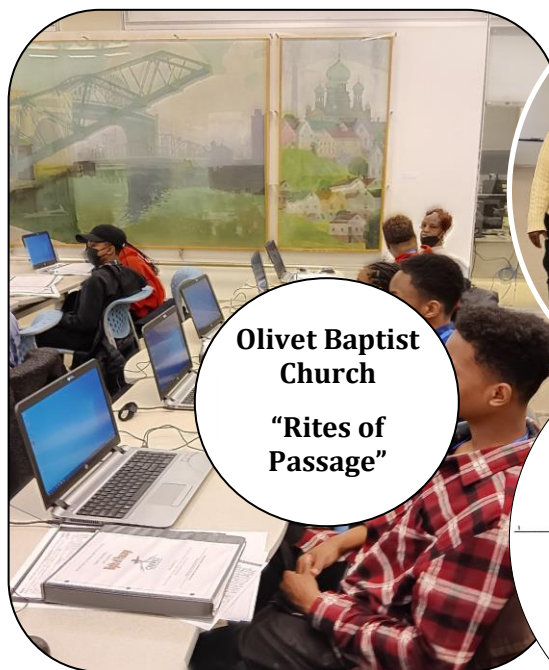
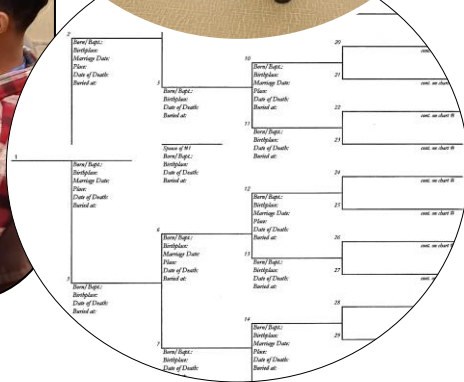


African-American Genealogical Society - Cleveland, Ohio

NEWSLETTER



**Olivet Baptist Church
"Rites of Passage"**



It's exciting to be involved with our next generation as they learn more about life and its lessons. Olivet Baptist Church in Cleveland, Ohio offers a program to its youth ages 11-15 called "Rites of Passage." Dr. Deborah Abbott assists with a portion of the program that exposes them to the importance of family history.

In April at the downtown Cleveland Public Library, Louis Stokes Building, AAGS volunteers joined the Olivet coordinator and the digital lab library staff in arming the youth with tools to conduct effective research, including Familysearch and Ancestry databases.

The genealogy "baton" is in hand. We're passing it on.

(photos from Maxine Hairston)

AAGS MEETINGS

- Held on **4th Saturday** (exc. December) in hybrid format
(In-person, along with Zoom)
Shaker Heights Library
16500 Van Aken Blvd.
Shaker Hts., OH 44120
- 10:00-10:15 a.m. – socialization
10:15-10:30 a.m. – info/announcements
10:30 a.m. – presentations/discussions



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.

Editor: Cathy Neal
newschair@aagsclev.org

Committee Members:
Keisha Bullard • Veronica Ferguson •
Maxine Hairston • Cecelia McFadden •
Ruth Perry • LaVera Wingfield

AAGS • PO Box 201476 • Cleveland, OH
44120-1476 • aagsclev.org



*To
Discover
Your
Ancestors
Is to
Discover
a Part
of You!*

GENEALOGY NEWS

- **Tennessee Historical Commission Unveils Online Database of Cemeteries** - <https://tinyurl.com/2brb7xxr>
- **"Past Pursuits"** newsletter– After 20 years, the **Akron-Summit County (OH) Public Library, Special Collections Division** will cease the publication; staff will continue to feature local history content in issues of the Library’s newsletter, “Insight”
- Dick Eastman article on **“The Myth of Wearing White Gloves”** when handling old documents - <https://eogn.com/page-18080/13130214>
- At the Illinois State Archives, the **Illinois Death Certificates searchable database** has been updated **to include entries for the years 1951-1971** - <https://www.ilsos.gov/departments/archives/databases/idphdeathindex5171.html>
- Newly digitized: **“The City of Dreams: The Atlantic City Experience”** (at AC Public Library) features collections about the Black community in Atlantic City and its impacts in South Jersey and across the country– <https://www.atlanticcityexperience.org/collections-exhibit/city-of-dreams-project.html>
- **National Genealogical Society to acquire GRIP** (Genealogical Research Institute of Pittsburgh) - <https://upfront.ngsgenealogy.org/2023/05/press-release-ngs-to-acquire.html>
- **Genealogy ConferenceKeeper.org to merge with NGS** - <https://eogn.com/page-18080/13211702>

AAGS Officers

Interim President..... Joseph Houser, Sr.
1st Vice President..... Deborah Abbott
2nd Vice President..... Joseph Houser, Sr.

Treasurer..... Jonathan Stith
Corresponding Sec’y... Maxine Hairston
Financial Secretary..... Gayle Ector

Member Spotlight on...

Rochelle McNorton



My Research Journey: Finding and Researching Undigitized Newspapers

Background

My name is Rochelle McNorton. I have been researching the surname of Lee, my mother's paternal ancestral line. My Lee ancestors, along with other emancipated slaves (total 56) traveled from Orange County, Virginia to Jackson County, Ohio in 1844.

Recently, I became the new Lee Reunion historian. The group has met annually, mostly in southern Ohio, since 1923. This article is part of a larger story I am writing for our 100th Lee Family Reunion in 2023. Our century celebration will take place the weekend of September 2-5 on ancestral property at Bell Manor in Chillicothe, Ohio.

Research Plan

In August 2015, the African American Genealogical Society of Cleveland (AAGS) planned a research trip to Allen County Public Library (ACPL). My goal was to specifically research my Lee family's first and second generation in Ohio starting in 1844 to the early 1900s. I wanted to find information about the day-to-day life of the newly emancipated slaves living in a free state during the pre- and post-Civil War period.

AAGS held classes on how to prepare for a genealogy research trip and how to research the ACPL catalog. I investigated the ACPL catalog, concentrating on the subjects of "Ohio" and "African American" to find *hard copy* resources not found online. I used research planning worksheets or downloaded from the website all the resources I needed to review and/or read at the library. My reference material was organized by the type of resource (i.e., newspaper, newsletter, book). I planned to read about early Jackson County: social events, political history, newspapers, history of the surrounding counties (Pike, Fayette, Ross), books, and the Jackson County Historical Society newsletter (*Poplar Row*).

My First Discovery

I was very excited to read the *Poplar Row* newsletter. The Jackson County Historical Society is part of the Ohio Genealogical Society (OGS). This is why the newsletter is at ACPL. I read every available edition. Though there were not many newsletters to read, I found several small articles associated with my family. There were many personal articles written about local African American families who lived in the county's townships.

My biggest discovery was in the *Poplar Row* newsletter, vol XII, issue 4, dated December 1992. The article was entitled, "AN INTERESTING INTERVIEW WITH MR. JOHN M. LEE," **taken from *The Jackson Herald*, Wednesday, January 21, 1891.**

Surprisingly, this was an article by my second-generation ancestor John Milton Lee! I had already done some of his family history. He was emancipated as a young man in his early 20s. I was floored at the discovery!!

After reading it, I did not know whether the 1992 version was complete or just a portion of the original article. Fortunately, I had the newspaper reference. Over months, I researched digitized newspaper websites: Ancestry.com, Chronicling America, Cyndi's List, FamilySearch wiki, Cleveland Public Library, Western Reserve Historical Society and newspapers.com. I attended newspaper research classes/seminars/lectures and also read "How to research newspapers" articles in genealogy magazines.

No luck. I couldn't find the newspaper. This article was important because my goal was to search manuscript collections and newspapers for social history connected to my family.

Being unsuccessful, I eventually gave up and returned to researching other family histories. But I decided that this year I was going to find the original article. After an AAGS-sponsored Tim Pinnick lecture, I learned that many newspapers are not digitized. Deciding that this may be the reason why I couldn't find my newspaper, I made a new research plan. I emailed the Ohio History Connection (OHC) in Columbus and the ACPL with the above newspaper information. ACPL responded that they did not have the newspaper. The OHC librarian replied that they had the microfilm of the newspaper for that time frame, available through interlibrary loan. Locally, at Shaker Heights Library (SHL) I requested a transfer of the microfilm using the exact information from the OHC librarian. The transfer took about two weeks. SHL had one microfilm reader in its Local History room; librarian Meghan Hays loaded the microfilm and gave me instructions on its use.

What I Learned about Undigitized Newspapers

The *Jackson Herald* newspaper was published weekly (on Wednesdays) in the late 1800s. Each newspaper was about six pages long. This newspaper is no longer published. Scrolling and scrolling to get to the January 21, 1891 issue, there--on the front page--was the article by John Milton Lee. I was ecstatic. I read the article again thoroughly for comparison--both the *Poplar Row* newsletter reprint and the original newspaper article were the same.

It is worth the time to research newspapers published in the county where your emancipated ancestors lived. If you cannot find a newspaper on a digitized newspaper website, then think about undigitized newspapers. Advice from the OHC librarian: contact the nearest repository, state archive, historical society or local library of the county where your ancestors lived to see what newspapers were published during a specific time period. You can then find what is available, along with the best way to receive a copy.

Mr. John M. Lee.

Mr. John M. Lee, of Jackson township paid the Herald office a pleasant visit last Saturday, and gave some interesting history of the colored settlements in Franklin township of this county, he said:

"I was born a slave in Orange county in "Old Virginia." My masters name was Thacker V. Webb, and he was very kind to us and treated us all well. We were as happy and contented as we could have been in the condition of slavery. Our master died in 1856 and gave all our freedom. There were fifty-six of us, and we concluded to leave Virginia and come to Ohio.

Our master on his death left us about \$75 of \$80 apiece, but we were cheated out of it by the administrator of the estate, his brother. We started for Ohio in two four horse and one one horse wagon and a one horse buggy. We walked, rode and rested by turns, starting on the 8th day of September and reaching the Ohio river on the 8th day of October. We crossed the river and came over into Gallia county, and from there came to Franklin township, reaching the place where we settled in November of the same year. I was about 20 years of age at that time. We very well treated along the road. I suppose the reason was that our master was a gentleman and had raised us all so that we were good mannered and knew how to behave ourselves.

I was never insulted in my life until I came over the river into the free country. One evening I was passing along the road near Gallipolis and met two men, and said "good evening" to them. One of them turned and looked at me and said to his companion, "Why, that's a d--- nigger, aint it?"

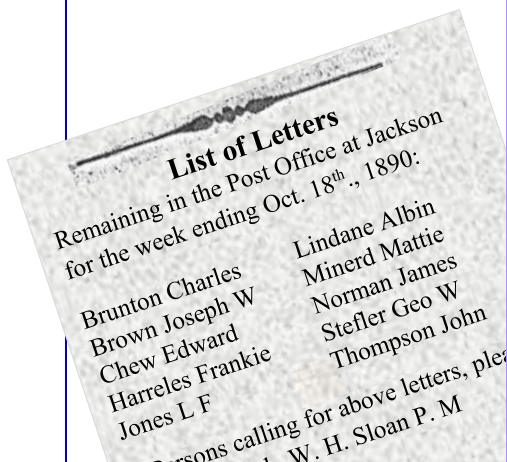
I got off my horse and ran after him, but could not catch him. That was the nearest I ever came to having a fuss in my life. We came into Franklin township and settled there. Land was cheap, about five dollars an acre, and most of us brought little farms. None of us had any education to amount to anything except my brother. I can read and write some now, but learned it since I have been in Ohio, and since I became a man.

The fifty-six of us who came over to Ohio and their children are all scattered now, and are all over the state. The only ones of the old men that are left are Harvey Webb and myself, but there are still several of the younger ones in the county. We have all had very fair success in Ohio, considering our opportunities. Some of our best colored men are those who came over in our crowd and their children. I would like to go back and see the old home in Virginia, but do not think I will ever get to do so, as I am getting old and am not able to do as much as I used to."

New Information Found

In the second paragraph of the article, John Milton Lee himself indicated that he was enslaved in Orange County, Virginia and Thacker V. Webb was the enslaver. (Those facts alone are worth the search.) His commentary continued with the description of the one-month trek of the emancipated slaves from Virginia to Ohio in 1844, as well as other details and explanations about their lives. I was aware of their time in Virginia and the name of their slave owner. I also have a copy of Thacker V. Webb’s will. Most of the information in the article I can verify and I plan to write other articles about my Lee family.

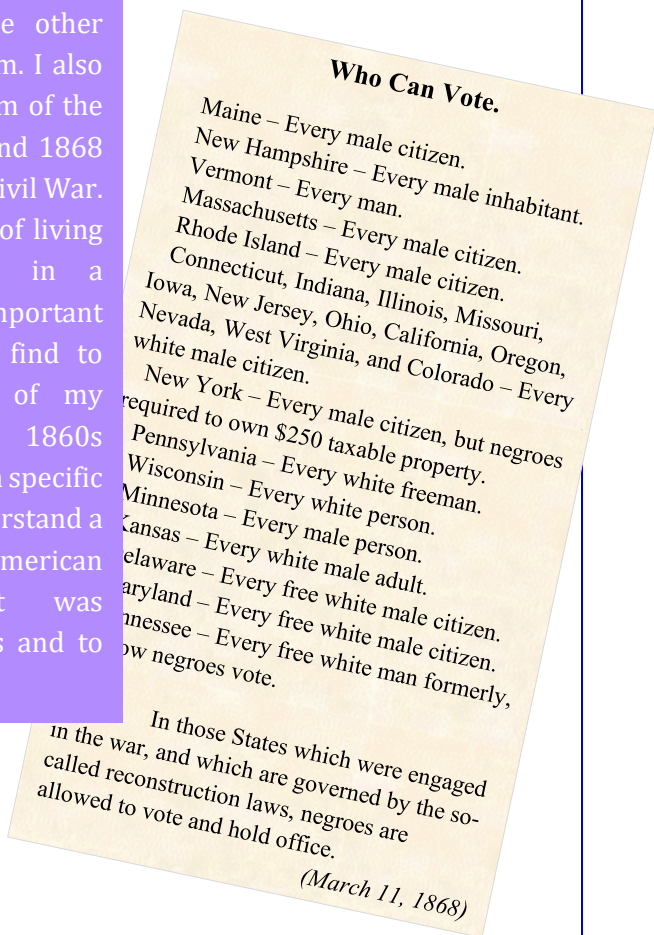
I also read other articles (about local meetings, political, state and national news, events of the day, etc.). I looked at store/vendor advertisements in that newspaper and in the other newspapers on that microfilm. I also received and read a microfilm of the same newspaper dated around 1868 covering the years after the Civil War. It gave me a clearer picture of living conditions post-Civil war in a northern state. This is the important social history I wanted to find to enrich my understanding of my ancestor's life. Reading 1860s newspapers connects you to a specific “time and place” to fully understand a very important time in American history, including what was important to your ancestors and to that community.



Local Markets

(Corrected weekly by R. H. Dungan, the grocer)

Rice, per lb8c	Corn Meal, per bu.....75c
Beans, per lb5c	Pickled Apples, per hd.....\$1.10
Lard, per lb.....10c	Ship Stuff, per hd.....\$1.23
Salt, per bbl.....\$1.10	Coffee, per lb.....25 to 45c
Eggs, per doz.....15c	
Butter, per lb20c	
Hominy, per lb.....3c	
Hams-smoked....12½c	
Onions, per bu....1.40	
Flour, per bbl ...\$5.20 to \$7.00	
Chickens, per lb.....5c	
Turnips, per bu25c	
Potatoes, per bu.\$1.40	



I wrote this article with the hope that it inspires you to find the time to do newspaper research. To learn, most importantly, that not all newspapers are digitized. That many newspapers are no longer published but are still available by microfilm. These often overlooked newspapers can hold valuable information about your family history.

My thanks to mentors Dr. Debbie Abbott, Sandra Beane Milton and Timothy Pinnick for their wealth of genealogical research knowledge.

AAGS ACTIVITIES

Supporting Genealogy In-House & In the Community



March 25 - AAGS Meeting

“Finding Mumfrey Ector” presented by **Gayle Ector**

Gayle provided a fabulous step-by-step method of how she pieced together the where-abouts of an obscure ancestor.

The group’s pre-assignment was to view a few videos re: using cluster genealogy, developing research strategies and avoiding rabbit holes.

Key elements in her “Mumfrey” search:

- Group multiple censuses in Excel to quickly analyze data
- Find others using family characteristics
- Tap into the FAN method (friends, associates & neighbors)
- Look beyond nicknames
- Each lead (though small) can unearth more family info

Overall, Gayle shared that genealogy can keep your mind active by using new technology and by taking the time to analyze information.



April 11

“RootsMagic v8” Class at Shaker Hts. Library

Time for a little “hands on.”

In preparation for the Zoom visit by Bruce Buzbee, AAGS held a workshop for members to get a feel of the popular genealogy recordkeeping software.

Coordinated by Deborah Abbott and Joe Houser, the workshop concentrated on the basics of the program.

Users brought their personal devices (with RootsMagic already installed) to readily apply the instruction for their specific purposes.



April 22 – AAGS Meeting

“RootsMagic” presented by **Bruce Buzbee**

A standalone program “under your own control” is great for a number of reasons (retrievable if internet access is unavailable, online company subscription ends, etc.).

The creator of RootsMagic walked the group through the many helpful tools that the RootsMagic version 8 upgrade offers (considerable differences from version 7), such as:

- Better maneuverability among screen views
- Easier editing capabilities
- Multiple ways to create/manage citations
- Searches that link to offsite gen sites
- Task area with improved ability to free-type, prioritize, link to categories and add/filter folders

Bruce noted the many support options for RootsMagic (webinars, YouTube videos, Facebook).

He also mentioned that version 9 will include more media options, an automatic notice to back up the database and the ability to connect two people based on *non-family* relationships.



May 27 - AAGS Meeting
“The Importance of Vital Records & Other Sources”
 by Dr. Deborah Abbott

Thought you knew the ins and outs of vital records? There’s always more knowledge to gain when Debbie is doing the teaching.

She covered top-to-bottom points necessary to locate/comprehend/use these critical documents.

Her handout for members detailed:

- Background on U.S. vital records
- Birth & death records
- Marriage & divorce records
- Vital record substitutes
- Online resources
- Additional books & guides

The handy statewide vital records chart (created by *Family Tree Magazine*) was a great summation of when each state began their requirements, the wait times for mail-in requests, request restrictions and where to look for records and indexes online.



(AAGS member Gayle Ector and newly found “cousin” Danielle “Nikki” Dixon)

Snaking through familial ties that are tightly bound but not quite “blood” (e.g., some half-relations) led Gayle to seek info on a remembered “Tootie” in her grandparents’ past. From newspapers indicating the deaths of (real name) Marion Dixon and others, Gayle discovered Danielle Dixon’s name and contacted her. The ensuing connection resulted in Danielle attending the May AAGS meeting. She is a “storyteller” and found Deborah Abbott’s presentation very interesting, opening the door to learning more about genealogy.



The Ohio Genealogical Society held its annual conference in Sandusky April 26-29, offering a variety of well-covered tracks. Among the array of seasoned presenters: Tony Burroughs, Shamele Jordon, Cecelia McFadden and Sunny Morton.

At the exhibitor hall on the final day, AAGS-Cleveland joined with representatives of other genealogy groups to assist conference participants by explaining how to conduct research and also answer their questions on how to tackle “brick walls.”

(photos from Maxine Hairston and Joseph Jordan)



National Archives Website Update

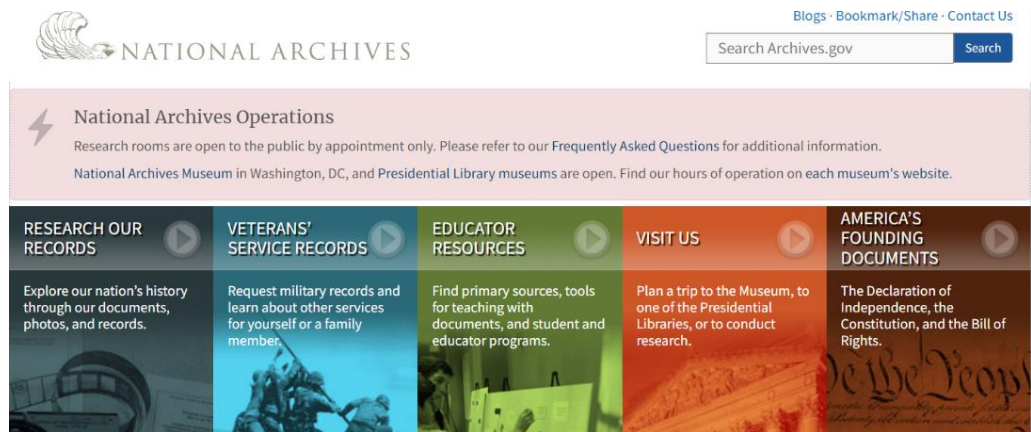
By Cecelia McFadden

If you've been following along with our articles, we hope that you're expanding your transcription skills using speech to text software (STT). The objective is to give you skills with a dual purpose – gain research efficiencies while keeping current with technology trends. It is on that note of “currency” that we explore the updates to a website we all should be familiar with: the United States of America’s National Archives website, known as nara.gov or archives.gov.

Background. NARA stands for National Archives and Records Administration. This government agency has been preserving and caring for the records of the U.S. government since 1934 and established online record access to our national memory in 1994. NARA also oversees the archival of legacy federal websites (<https://webharvest.gov>) and the Presidential Library system.

Website Areas of Emphasis. NARA has **six major online portals** that allow visitors to access information.

- 1) **Archives.gov** is the main site that is a gateway to general records access, veteran’s service information, educator resources and our country’s founding documents.



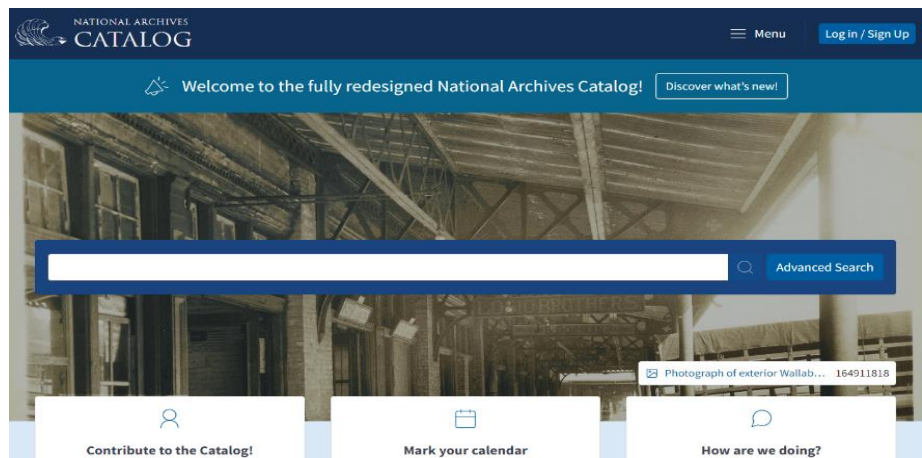
- 2) **The Guide to Federal Records** is the location where users learn about the federal record types, record type background and methods of access.



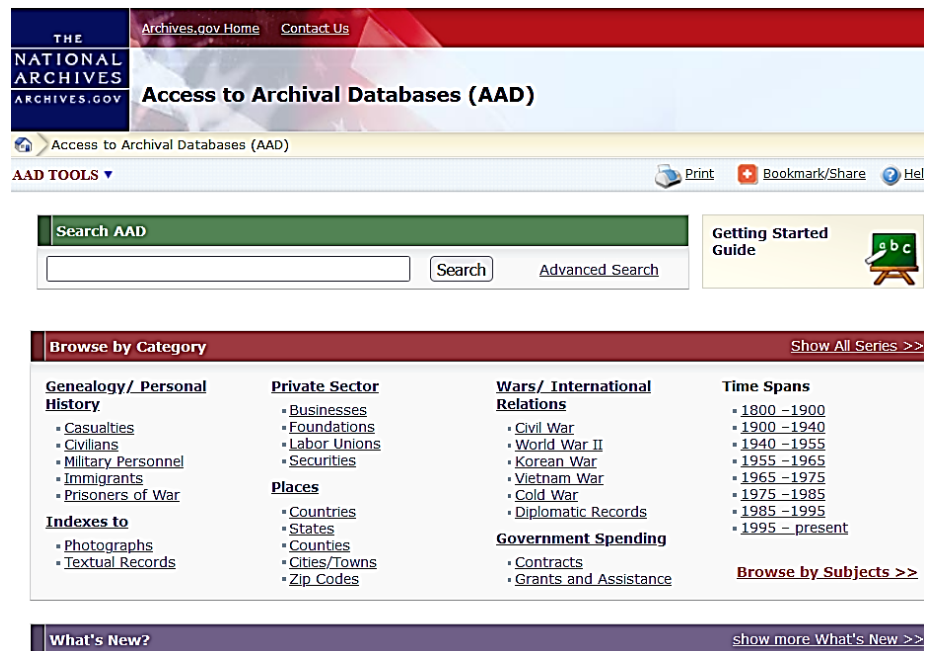
3) The **NARA Microfilm Catalog** allows the searching and browsing of records available on microfilm along with ordering information.



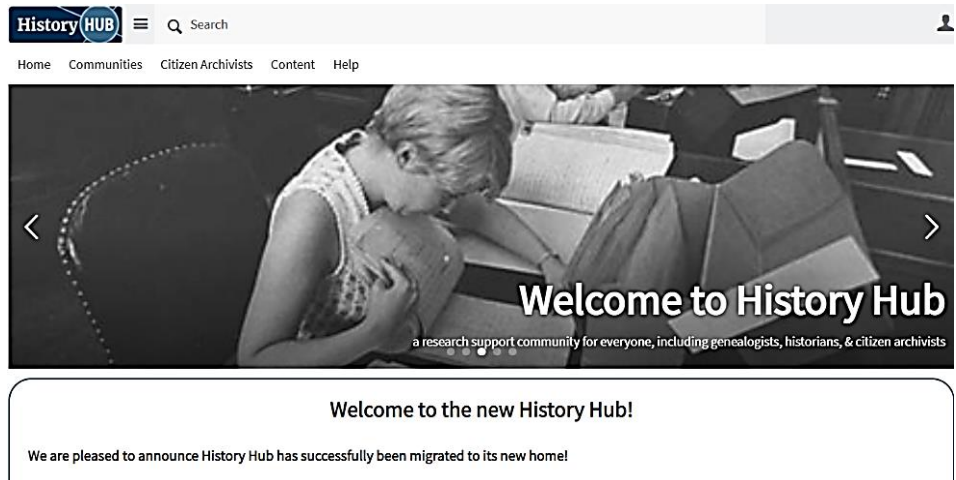
4) The **National Archive Catalog** is the portal for access to NARA's digitized content, no matter what format.



5) The **Access to Archival Databases (AAD)** is a curated collection of historical records of interest that come up frequently in historical conversations and research threads.



- 6) Finally, the **History Hub** is a place to view selected content, pose questions and receive crowdsourced answers to queries.



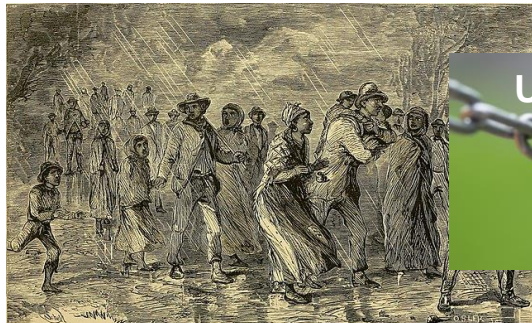
What's New at NARA. March 16, 2023 represented the final go live milestone for the National Archives Catalog update. The old version of the catalog is retired and users now have access to a variety of new features and content made possible by a strategic technology upgrade. OpenSearch technology will allow quicker access and return of records. A mobile first initiative will allow an enhanced site experience when using mobile devices to access and download content. The new unified login experience allows a single sign-on experience for federal websites in addition to NARA, as well as a dashboard feature that gives users a search history of what they've looked for previously and how they may have contributed to transcribing and tagging archival records.

Future Expectations. This technology upgrade will allow faster digitization of site pages, expands the ability to tag materials, provides more user-friendly displays of archival descriptions, allows PDF viewing without leaving the Catalog, increases the capacity of bulk records exporting and aligns with international standards set for image quality and interoperability. The upgrade also complies with standards for electronic records access for users that are differently abled.

Conclusion. Access to our National Archives is essential for understanding how and when your ancestors may have interacted with federal agencies. Whether your ancestor had a relationship with a federal agency, or were at an event governed by federal jurisdiction, or had a legal matter adjudicated by the federal court system, NARA is a place to jump start your query. The upgrade to the Archives Catalog will enhance your ability to search specific artifacts, expand the percentage of online records available and allow you to create a record of your search activity. Understanding what the Catalog can do for you is important. Please visit the new catalog as soon as you can. Remember, clicks are visits and your virtual access will let our elected officials know how important funding and maintaining the online presence of our national memory is.

As always, let us know how you're doing. Our email is newschair@aagsclev.org.

Make tech tools key in 2023!



W O S e a r c h d

Submitted by LaVera Wingfield

Y E T D H O U N D S J Q B H Z J S L
 F N B A C P N R D D O A A R F E D G
 R S W E A U E X X K G G B L E P N M
 E L F E N S D O U U W U O E R H E A
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 Y H I S N I R B E T L N T E V Z R N
 R O U T E W X S E N V V O I H H F K
 Z G H C F O F R E E D M A N K Y C S

Word List

- abolitionist
- friend of friends
- Fugitive Slave Act
- Freedman
- Canada
- Mason-Dixon
- destination
- paddy rollers
- NorthStar
- ferry
- hounds
- enslaved
- hidden
- escape
- freedom
- route

(Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons from Internet Archive)

(answers on page 12)



Beryl B. Williams, a past AAGS member, died April 19. Our condolences to the family.



P.O. Box 201476
 Cleveland, Ohio 44120-1476
aagsclev.org

Answers for page 11 word search:

