

*African-American Genealogical Society - Cleveland, Ohio*

NEWSLETTER



*Juneteenth*

On June 19, at John F. Kennedy High School, AAGS-Cleveland lent its genealogical support to the **Metropolitan Cleveland Alliance of Black School Educators** (Dr. Robin R. Simmons, President).

Since 1981, Metro CABSE has had a strong commitment, dedication and mission to fight for equity in education for all students, particularly those of African descent. Its 2023 Juneteenth Awards and Celebration recognized high-achieving students and teachers from ten Cuyahoga County school districts by presenting a number of scholarships and awards.

AAGS-Cleveland members Joseph Jordan, Penny Jordan and Joseph Houser were available to offer family history assistance for those who attended this worthwhile community-lifting event.

### AAGS MEETINGS

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

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(March, June, September, December)

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

## GENEALOGY NEWS

- Article, **“Should you use AI Chatbots for Genealogy?”** [*lengthy, with informative ending*] at <https://lialouisecooke.com/2023/06/22/ai-chatbots-genealogy> - **OR** - Genealogy Gems video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFfM2KEhi7k>
- **“CNN host makes discovery about his family's past that shocks him”** - <https://youtu.be/yDq8W-hwj6g>
- **Microfilm Request Change at FamilySearch** - Requesting microfilms from the Granite Mountain Record Vault to be viewed in the FamilySearch Library will no longer be available after July 15, 2023 - <https://community.familysearch.org/en/discussion/147579/microfilm-request-change>
- **‘Reconstructing the Black Archive’** aims to create a more complete picture of history in South Carolina - <https://www.eogncom.wildapricot.org/page-18080/13221616>

DNA articles:

- **“A Time for Reflection”** (DNA under scrutiny) - <https://www.legalgenealogist.com/2023/08/20/a-time-for-reflection>
- **“Police Are Getting DNA Data From People Who Think They Opted Out”**  
<https://theintercept.com/2023/08/18/gedmatch-dna-police-forensic-genetic-genealogy/>
- **“Study sheds light on Black Americans' ancestral links”** through analysis of genetic data - <https://www.axios.com/2023/07/27/study-sheds-light-black-americans-ancestry>

### 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

## Proving Relationships: One Strategy

October 25, 2022 | Written by Robyn Smith

[Reprinted with permission - <https://reclaimingkin.com/proving-relationships/>]

Part of the joy of researching my family has always been the challenge of proving relationships once the “easy” records that state relationships don’t exist anymore. (In genealogical parlance this means once we don’t have *direct evidence*.)

When we don’t have birth and death certificates that name parents, marriage records that provide maiden names, or census records that tell us the family makeup, what then? I say that’s when the fun part begins.

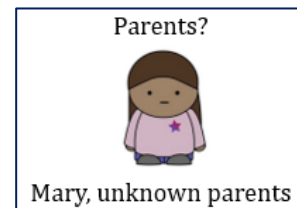
We must put on our thinking caps and strategize about how to prove the relationship. We have to work with the sources we do have. We have to be creative.

Let me show you a classic and timeless strategy.

### The Family of Ben and Sue

As a simple illustration of the concept, let’s say Ben and Sue are married. They have three children Mary, John and Daniel.

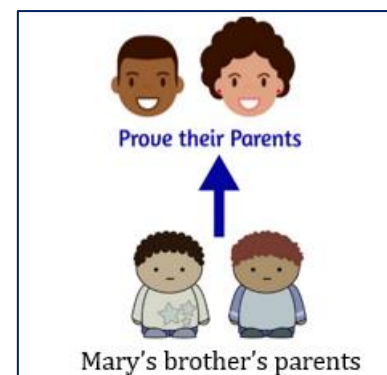
You trace your ancestry back to Mary but can’t find evidence tying her to her parents, Ben and Sue. Remember, you don’t know their names yet.



But you do eventually establish that Mary had siblings, John and Daniel. Maybe she names them in her will, or they are mentioned in her obituary.

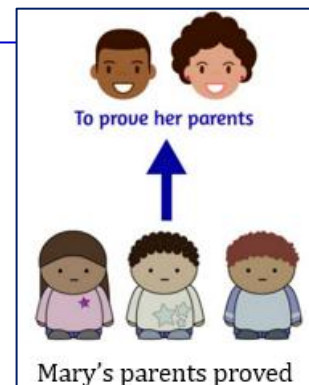


You begin researching John and Daniel, and you can tie one or both to their parents, Ben and Sue, using the records about *their* lives.



Now you can *use that to prove the parents for your ancestor Mary.*

You first 1) proved she had siblings, and 2) then proved their parents. With no evidence that the parents divorced or separated, or had outside romantic relationships, logic tells us that John and Daniel's parents must also be Sue's parents.



This is one reason why researching every sibling in each generation (also called collateral research) is so important.

The same idea can be applied to almost any family relationship.

No known siblings for your ancestor? What about an aunt or uncle?

Maybe you find a grandparent living with grandchildren in the census, but there is no hint of who the children's parents were. You can research all the known children of the grandparents and by process of elimination establish the parents.

## Two Examples

**A simple example** is my third great grandfather Mike Fendricks. While he lived most of his life in (and died in) Tennessee, he was from Alabama.

I began researching a man named Dee Suggs who Mike associated with and lived with in Tennessee. Tracing Dee Suggs back to his roots in Lawrence County, Alabama, I found his mother Sofrony Suggs and my ancestor Mike in the household.

They had different fathers but finding Dee's parents helped me find Mike's mother and place of origin when *none of Mike's own records contained that information.*

**Another good example** is in the post I wrote about my cousin Lydia.

Maryland-born Lydia had six children and appeared in the census records during her lifetime with two husbands.

I didn't know her maiden name, so I couldn't identify her parents. I went through her known children. Thoroughly researching the lives of her six children led to uncovering a third marriage for Lydia.

She did not marry this man in the local community; only researching in census records would not uncover this marriage. Once I found the marriage record (which was in another city), I found Lydia's maiden name and could assign her accurately within her birth family.

## Closing Thoughts

There's no doubt that the further back in time we research, relationships are harder to establish. That's often the first time researchers hit the infamous brick wall. That's where learning the strategies that others use to solve similar problems can help us.

## AAGS ACTIVITIES

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

#### June 24 - AAGS Meeting



This session, led by Dr. Deborah Abbott, was designed for members to network and improve their research skills.

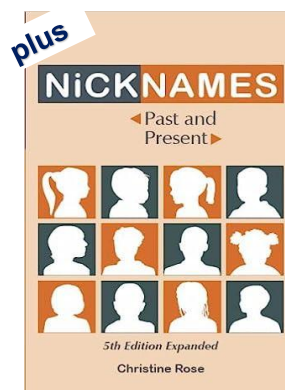
She explained how to use the **FamilySearch** research Wiki as your research guide and emphasized: Don't skim, read it—whatever is there. Go from state to county level & remember to check boundary changes. You'll find things you never knew before. She mentioned most public libraries have **Ancestry.com** library edition accessible for free. Paid versions give you more info.

A summary of some inquiries/responses:

- Q: How to find more info about grandmother who was unwed at the birth of her child?  
 A: Find birth record and backtrack grandmother's residence 9 months before child's birth. Check informant on death record. Check out the community on censuses. May need to use DNA.
- Q: It's hard to find records to back up family lore, even using FamilySearch. Next steps?  
 A: Don't heavily rely on oral history. Find the evidence. Records on FamilySearch microfilm don't come up on the main page under "records" heading. Use the catalog & collection indexes. Check state, county and local levels. If only the index is available, may have to contact the courthouse.
- Q: Sent for birth certificate; not yet received. Now what?  
 A: Also **call** and ask about obtaining both the certified & uncertified documents. Check for the "long" form vs. "short" form. Ask for the original vs. transcribed, including what's on the back.
- Q: How to learn more info about ancestors emancipated by Quakers / moved to a different state?  
 A: Study the laws for emancipation in the state.
- Q: With sketchy oral history, how do you make a request to resources (library, courthouse, etc.)?  
 A: Be as specific as you can. Reconstruct your family history to give the most accurate info. Remember that staff are references to point people in the right direction, not research for them.
- Q: How do you fill in the gaps during the time periods between the federal censuses?  
 A: Use city directories, plus some states have state censuses.

#### Some recommended references:

- [www.blackpast.org](http://www.blackpast.org) (for slave codes, etc.)
- Digital Library on American Slavery
- Google Books has a lot of court records





The session concluded with reminders/tips:



- There is no such thing as “Black records,” just records
- Never stop with indexes, follow through to obtain original documents
- Records are kept where the event occurred (county/municipality where born, died, etc.)
- Military enlistment records are different from draft registration cards (the draft process ended in 1973)
- Court records can be filed in an attorney’s (or other) name vs. person you’re interested in

### July 22 - AAGS Meeting

#### Topic: Genealogy Checklist - Do you need one?

Presenter: Joseph F. Houser Sr.

Short answer: Yes. Research checklists are super helpful.

Whether you use one that is ready-made or self-made, it keeps you on track with research status (records you already have vs. what you need to keep looking for). Joe covered vantage points using different checklist formats.

**Family Tree** – preprinted with common categories (list of vital, marriage, land, individual census and a few other record types) in a “checkbox” style ([www.FamilyTreeTemplates.net](http://www.FamilyTreeTemplates.net))

**Midwest Genealogy Center** | Mid-Continent Public Library – preprinted with common categories plus additional details in a “write-in” format

**Thomas MacEntee** Genealogy Bargains – available in a “fill-in” Word format, it offers users the ability to edit/add/personalize (e.g., color code); has a more comprehensive list of categories

Joe mentioned other resources (Cyndi’s List, BFM Research: Genealogy Training and Education, Creative Family Historian, etc.) and suggested finding the most comfortable format. If it doesn’t suit you, you won’t use it.

Six lucky members won raffle items (DNA kits, genealogy and history-related books): Fran Kelley, Anthony Jackson, Quintilla Draper, Maxine Hairston, June Hall and Sherry Jackson

**NOTE:** No AAGS meeting in August

Our **October meeting** (normally scheduled on the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday) will be **canceled** so that members may attend the CPL Family History event (see below).

### DON'T MISS:

October 28 - Cleveland Public Library

**Family History Day**

Downtown main branch, Louis Stokes Wing

Register at <https://cpl.libcal.com/event/10751804>

## CPL Family History Clinics:

### The Volunteer's Perspective

No doubt, interested researchers who attend the monthly research clinics sponsored by Cleveland Public Library gain from the one-on-one knowledge and support that AAGS members deliver. What about the volunteers themselves?

#### Adrienne Waugh

I encourage AAGS colleagues to come and assist.

Visitors are not the only ones learning. Volunteers are also learning--venturing into territory that they may not be familiar with.

They're acquiring more knowledge about states that are outside of their personal research areas, different ethnic and cultural groups or the military, for example.

Aiding others helps hone skills.

Not only am I excited for others--when there is time available, I can also do my own research.



#### June Hall

Hi. Since joining AAGS-Cleveland, I have learned when volunteering that I have to be patient with the visitor's questions and difficulties. Also,

- Show empathy for any challenges they may encounter along the way
- Celebrate the visitor's discoveries, no matter how small they may seem
- Always respect the visitor's privacy and ensure that any discussions or findings remain confidential
- When possible, show the visitor how to use research tools with hands-on demonstrations

Genealogy research has been overwhelming for me at times so I try to break down the process into manageable steps and guide the visitor through each stage.

See 2023 schedule at

<https://cpl.org/wp-content/uploads/2023-genealogy-clinic-flyer.pdf>

## So Much To See, A Place to Be: RootsTech 2023

By Cecelia McFadden



It's been a few months since the World Health Organization declared that the global pandemic associated with the COVID-19 virus has officially come to an end. Yay! For over three years, the world in general, and our genealogy discipline specifically, shifted to virtual meetings and presentations in order to keep stakeholders safe and reduce the risk of virus contagion. Prior to that official "endemic" announcement, the in-person version of the world's largest family history conference resumed in apparent timely fashion. RootsTech 2023 was held March 2-4, 2023 at the Salt Palace Convention Center in Salt Lake City. This newsletter contributor attended and wanted to share some personal insights, advice and takeaways for the endemic conference traveler.



**Insights.** Whether you attended virtually (150+ classes) or in person (350+ classes), this year's edition of RootsTech was worth the wait. In the past, the onsite crowd has exceeded 30,000 over the conference duration, making event access and egress challenging. This year's event hosted about 7,000 attendees, making access to your onsite class preferences feasible and realistic. The expo hall was also a nice place to be, with line cues being manageable. This author was also budget conscious and saved over \$75 a night in hotel expense by choosing lodging closer to the airport that had a downtown shuttle versus staying in walking distance to the Salt Palace Convention Center.



**Technology.** Technology was in use everywhere. There were no printed programs or conference bags. The daily conference schedule was available for viewing via a QR code or on the conference mobile application. A RootsTech store was available in the Expo Hall or the Main Concourse to pick up souvenirs or a conference bag if desired. All conferences purchases were cashless.

**Proceedings.** There were 16 class choices for every time block offered except during the keynote block. This didn't include the vendor mini classes happening every 30 mins in the exhibit hall. Some of the virtual sessions were only online, others were recorded live from the convention. In either case, it was a savvy move to save the virtual presentation for later viewing if there was something else of interest being presented in the same time slot.



**Post-Conference Activities.** If an attendee still had energy after a full day, the FamilySearch Library was open late for research activities and support. The first floor welcome center within the library has been remodeled and the accessibility of equipment and staff, despite the crowds, exceeded expectations. A complimentary printout of your family tree was encouraged, particularly if you were able to further your research with a find by staff or by sources only found in their onsite collection. There were also other activities to engage in around the convention center that included varied dining options, live music, the local public library and a nice shopping mall.

**Takeaways.** This first onsite RootsTech conference will not be my last. Onsite registration was just \$99, and organizers said they would maintain this price point at least through 2024. It was a pleasure to meet many of the speakers with a national reputation as well as explore new products and service offerings in the Exhibit Hall. One application that many speakers talked about as an option for organizing personal research was AirTable (<https://airtable.com>). Storied and Mylio were two additional applications that I hadn't heard of. I only learned about their capability through the vendor classes in the Expo Hall. Storied (<https://storied.com>) is a family history site that combines newspapers with traditional historical records all while giving the user opportunities to build a unique family story with layers depending on audiences of their choosing. Mylio (<https://mylio.com>) is a photo management application that manages and secures pictures captured across any source: software, phone, computer, cloud storage, tablet and more.

**Conclusion.** Whether you decide to attend virtually or in person in 2024, plan on attending RootsTech. Take advantage of the technology that sets it apart from other conferences. If you didn't attend virtually this year, it's not too late. Virtual participation is complimentary. Sign up at (<https://www.familysearch.org/rootstech/>) or login using your existing FamilySearch credentials. You will be able to listen to the recordings of the virtual proceedings at least until the next RootsTech conference. As of this publication, there were over 350 on demand sessions to view. Depending on the presentation, the content may be available for up to three years. Sign up for notifications about the 2024 event taking place February 29-March 2. If you'd like further information about the author's 2023 experience, send an email to [newschair@aagsclev.org](mailto:newschair@aagsclev.org).



AAGS members Cecelia McFadden and Angela Smith at Expo Hall, Storied vendor booth



## “What’s the Difference?”

You have the right document. Check.  
You know the meaning of its terms. Check.  
**Do you really?**

**Can you match the term on the left with its correct meaning?**

### Definitions:

**Land records** (in American law)

- 1. **Land deed vs.**
- 2. **Land patent**



- a. shows the first transfer of land ownership from the sovereign to a private person
- b. any transfer of land recorded from later owners to others

**Burial sites** (used interchangeably today)

- 3. **Graveyard vs.**
- 4. **Cemetery**



- c. primarily refers to the area of a church ground used for burial
- d. references a separate burial ground

**Marriage documents** (which is which?)

- 5. **Certificate vs.**
- 6. **License vs.**
- 7. **Bond vs.**
- 8. **Application**

- e. record giving lawful permission to wed
- f. intent to marry/has most genealogical info
- g. confirmation of marriage
- h. pledge made to the court to marry



- 9. **Primogenitor vs.**
- 10. **Heir vs.**
- 11. **Beneficiary vs.**
- 12. **Progenitor**

- i. a direct ancestor
- j. person who inherits assets based on a will
- k. firstborn legitimate child to inherit the parent's entire or main estate
- l. person eligible to inherit assets when a relative dies

*(answers on page 11)*

## Answers to “What’s the Difference”

- 1 - b
- 2 - a
- 3 - c
- 4 - d
- 5 - g
- 6 - e
- 7 - h
- 8 - f
- 9 - k
- 10 - l
- 11 - j
- 12 - i

*~Submitted by Cathy Neal*

### Sources:

Land records: Judy G. Russell, “Of patents and deeds,” The Legal Genealogist, <https://www.legalgenealogist.com/2021/11/22/of-patents-and-deeds/>

Burial sites: <https://currently.att.yahoo.com/news/heres-difference-between-cemetery-graveyard-233811271.html>

Marriage documents: Powell, Kimberly. "Marriage Records." ThoughtCo, Oct. 11, 2021, <https://www.thoughtco.com/marriage-records-types-4077752> and [https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United\\_States\\_Marriage\\_Records#Applications\\_and\\_Licenses](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United_States_Marriage_Records#Applications_and_Licenses)

Probate terms: [https://support.ancestry.com/s/article/Glossary-of-genealogical-terms?language=en\\_US#P](https://support.ancestry.com/s/article/Glossary-of-genealogical-terms?language=en_US#P)



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