

African-American Genealogical Society - Cleveland, Ohio

NEWSLETTER



20
25
BRAND NEW YEAR

Could this be **the** year?

The year that you...

- ✓ Organize your material
- ✓ Try different strategies
- ✓ Make new discoveries
- ✓ Power through a baffling riddle
- ✓ Find that elusive ancestor

In January, AAGS will get things started with Ari Wilkins (accomplished family historian, instructor and lecturer), who will re-examine censuses (population and non-population) and share how to effectively read and use census records.

Throughout the year, AAGS will continue to help stretch your knowledge through information, tips and support -- so that this year you'll be able to

- ✓ **Take your research to the next level**

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

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

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

GENEALOGY NEWS

- January 1: **More copyrighted works are in the public domain**; rights to books, movies, photos, etc. from 1929 expired & the public can legally copy/share without permission or a fee
- **New terms of use at GEDmatch** - Judy G. Russell, "Of money and chances" - <https://www.legalgenealogist.com/blog>: posted 22 Nov 2024
- Well-known genealogist **Thomas MacEntee** plans to retire from instructing at the end of 2025 - <https://genealogybargains.com/retirement-announcement-thomas-macentee/>
- **USA Today** article, "Can you read cursive? It's a superpower the National Archives is looking for" - <https://www.yahoo.com/news/read-cursive-superpower-national-archives-100612982.html>
- "U.S. newspapers are deleting old crime stories, offering subjects a 'clean slate'" - <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jan/04/newspaper-crime-stories>
- **Washington Post** article - <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/bakery-owner-discovers-longtime-customer-is-her-biological-son/ar-AA1u0Sdp>

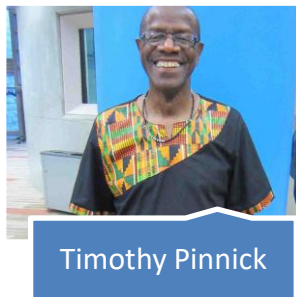
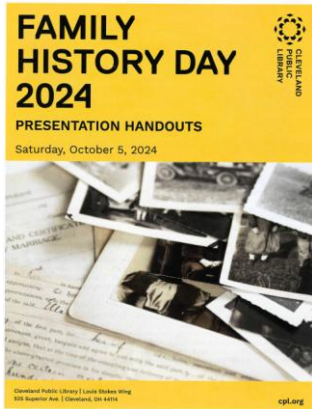
2024-2025 AAGS Officers

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

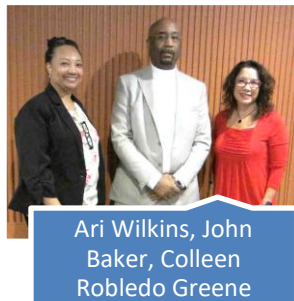
Treasurer..... Gayle Ector
Financial Secretary..... Ellecia Gant
Corresponding Sec'y... Maxine Hairston
Recording Sec'y.....unfilled

CPL Family History Day

October 5, 2024 | Downtown Cleveland Public Library



Timothy Pinnick



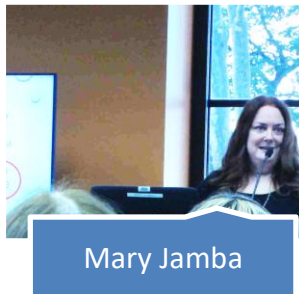
Ari Wilkins, John Baker, Colleen Robledo Greene

What a line-up.

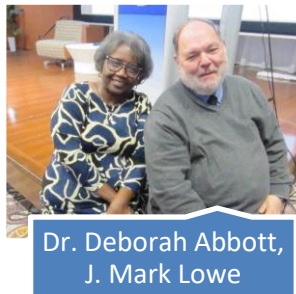
With their specialized topics, these talented group of instructors deftly lent their time and expertise--resulting in a great learning experience for the researchers in attendance, whether new or seasoned.

Subjects were diverse:

- Tax & real estate appraisal records
- DNA use (including controversial concerns)
- Family journey from plantation to freedom
- Naturalization / immigration records
- Mexican research
- Cemetery records
- Ohio research
- Vital records before state registration
- Mysterious relatives
- Finding landless ancestors
- African American research
- Finding the last slave owner



Mary Jamba



Dr. Deborah Abbott, J. Mark Lowe



Judith Cetina

Note taking wasn't necessary because of the terrific handout booklet.



Ari Wilkins



Peggy Clemens Lauritzen



AAGS Members (former/current)

These annual CPL programs deliver plenty of depth and are well worth the effort involved.

AAGS Spotlight on...

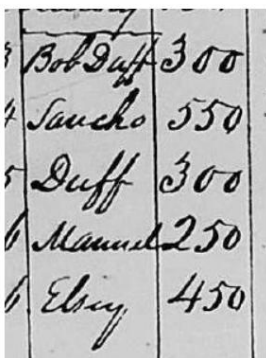
Ellecia Gant



Finding Elsie - first cousin, five times removed

(Posted on *Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery* web site)

I discovered from the advertisement that was placed in the *Christian Recorder* in 1866 that my 4th great granduncle, Duff Green, had a daughter named Elsie who was sold away in 1864. Elsie was my 1st cousin, 5 times removed. This was a heartbreaking discovery!



In this 1825 probate record, Duff Green is grouped together with his father and siblings. I now know that Duff Green likely named his own daughter, Elsie, after his sister, Elsey.

William Dunbar Plantation Probate, Adams County, Mississippi, January 26, 1825

In this 1848 probate record for William Dunbar, Adams County, MS, Duff Green is a 37-year-old blacksmith worth \$1,200.00 in a family group with his wife Hetty, and their 5 children, Suzan, Louisa, Rachel, Cornelia and Lewis. Elsie is not included in the 1848 or 1849 probate records, indicating that she was born afterwards. Therefore, she could not have been older than 14 when she was sold to Mr. Garret.



William Dunbar Probate, Adams County, MS, February 28, 1848

If it wasn't for the **Information Wanted**¹ database and the **Last Seen Project**², I would not know that Elsie existed.

Duff Green was enslaved by a Scotsman named William Dunbar Sr. (1749-1810). Dunbar settled near Natchez, Mississippi where he amassed over 1,000 acres that he named The Forest Plantation.

After Dunbar's death, members of my family--Bob Duff (my 5th great grandfather, b. 1784), Sancho (my 4th great grandfather, b. 1806), Sancho's siblings, Duff (b. 1812), Manuel (b. 1814), and Elsey (b. 1804)--were given to Dunbar's eldest son, William Dunbar Jr. This information comes from the 1825 probate record in which Bob appears with the surname Duff.

When William Dunbar Jr. died in 1847, my family was separated through inheritance and then sale.

Duff, his wife and children were given to Charlotte Dunbar. Duff's father Bob and Duff's sister Elsey were given to Field Dunbar. Duff's brother Sancho (my 4th great grandfather) was given to Mary Dunbar. Sancho's son Bob (my 3rd great grandfather) along with his wife Charlotte Ann and their two children, Sancho (my 2nd great grandfather) and Charlotte, were given to Mary F. Dunbar, the matriarch of the family.

My oral history begins with Sancho, my 2nd great grandfather, who was born around 1845.

Duff's brother, Sancho died around 1853. His family is listed in the 1870 census with the surname Lloyd. Robert Lloyd and his son Sancho Lloyd joined the U.S. Colored Troops (USCT) in 1863.

Duff and Hetty Green--their chosen surname--are listed in the 1870 census for Natchez, MS with their son Fredrick who was born around 1851. Their daughters Louisa Samuel and Cornelia Dobbins, along with his great nephew Sancho Lloyd, live nearby.

At this time, I do not know if Elsie was ever reunited with her family.

INFORMATION WANTED.
Fifty Dollars Reward.

—

Information wanted of my daughter, **ELSIE**, who was sold in Columbus, Georgia, in 1864, to a Mr. Garret. I will give the above reward for any information that may lead to her recovery.

Address, **DUFF GREEN,**
Care "Courier" Office,
Natchez, Mississippi.

Ministers of colored churches, and all others who may feel disposed, are earnestly requested to read the above notice to their respective congregations, and to impart any information thus gained.

sept 22-1mo

Ellecia L. Gant's 4th great grand-uncle placed this ad in *The Christian Recorder* on September 22, 1866 looking for his daughter Elsie.

¹ *Information Wanted* database - <https://informationwanted.org>

² *The Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery* project aims to identify, digitize, transcribe, and publish ads placed in newspapers across the United States (and beyond) by formerly enslaved people searching for family members and loved ones after emancipation

AAGS ACTIVITIES

Supporting Genealogy In-House & In the Community

AAGS Monthly Meetings

Sept. 28
Topic:
 The
 Southern
 Claims
 Commission



Sharon Batiste Gillins



Julia A. Anderson

Oct. 23
Topic:
 African
 American
 Records &
 Strategies

Nov. 26
Topic:
 MyHeritage



Daniel Horowitz

Members have wide-ranging interests and there was much to absorb from these three presentations.

- **Sharon**, an educator by profession, briefed participants on the complexities of Reconstruction and the specifics involved with researching SCC files. She used the subtitle “Loyalists, Freedmen & Frauds” to thoroughly explain SCC contents and provide search tactics for files and claims.
- **Julia**, an accredited genealogist/lecturer and research specialist at the FamilySearch Library in Salt Lake City, detailed successful strategies for African American research. Her handout contained numerous resources.
- **Dan** gave a full look at what the MyHeritage platform consists of and what it has to offer, including DNA features and photo animation. He actively contributes to Legacy Family Tree webinars.

Community Activities



G. Morgan IV

M. Hairston

G. Morgan III

- Sept. 21 - Garrett Morgan IV served as master of ceremonies for the dedication of an Ohio Historical Marker for inventor Garrett Morgan’s Wakeman Country Club (in the community park). Kudos to **Phyllis Yarber and Marilyn Wainio** for their invaluable research efforts. Garrett Morgan’s grandchildren and great grandchildren were in attendance, plus AAGS members Maxine Hairston, Deborah Abbott, Joseph & Penny Jordan and others.

- September | October | November - AAGS continued to elevate others through volunteer work at the Cleveland Public Library family history clinics.

2025

Genealogical Activities

Conferences:

In-person and Virtual

MAR 6-8 † RootsTech 2025

In-person & Virtual • Salt Lake City, UT • Keynote speakers include author Ndaba Mandela and Olympic champions Tara Davis-Woodhall & Hunter Woodhall
• Also on the speaker roster: Robyn N. Smith and Cecelia McFadden • rootstech.org

APR 30-MAY 3 † OGS (Ohio Genealogical Society)

In-person • Kalahari Resort, Sandusky, OH • “Light Up Your Genealogy” • Keynote speaker: Judy Russell • ogs.org/2025-conference/

MAY 23-26 † NGS Family History Conference

(National Genealogical Society) • In-person • Louisville, KY • “Tales & Trails” • nsgsgenealogy.org

JUN 22-27 (Virtual) & JUL 13-18 (In-person) † GRIP

Genealogy Institute • LaRoche College • Pittsburgh, PA
• grip.ngsgenealogy.org

JUL 8-10 † MAAGI

(Midwest African American Genealogy Institute) • Virtual • maagiinstitute.org/

JUL 27-AUG 1 † IGHR

(Institute of Genealogy & Historical Research/ Georgia Genealogical Society) • Virtual • ighr.gagensociety.org/ • facebook.com/IGHR.Georgia

OCT † AAHGS

(Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society) • To be determined • aahgs.org • facebook.com/aahgs

Check Sites for Additional Events

- **AAGHSC** (Afro-American Genealogical and Historical Society of Chicago) • aaghsc.org
- **NEOGRT** (North East Ohio Genealogy Round Table (previously Cleveland District RT)) • <https://neogrt.org/>
- **Detroit Public Library** Family History Festival • Fred Hart Williams Genealogical Society • fhwgs.org
- **Franklin County Genealogical Historical Society** Columbus, OH • fcghs-oh.org
- **Indiana African American Genealogy Group** • iaagg.org
- **Oberlin African-American Genealogy & History Group** • oaaghg.com

Webinars / Free Online Resources

- **Allen County Public Library** genealogy programs - genealogy.acpl.lib.in.us/
- **Genealogy QuickStart** (hosted by Shamele Jordan) - broadcasts / videos / discussions • youtube.com/c/GenealogyQuickStart • facebook.com/GenealogyQuickStartTV
- **Georgia Genealogical Society Webinars** - gagensociety.org/events/webinars
- **Legacy Family Tree Webinars** - familytreewebinars.com
(Closed captioning added for those with difficulty hearing or with understanding English)
- **Southern California Genealogical Society Webinar Series** - scsgsgenealogy.com/
- **BlackProGen LIVE** (hosted by Nicka Smith) - web broadcasts / videos / chats • facebook.com/BlackProGenLIVE • youtube.com/user/whoisnickasmith



Unearthing Treasures: FamilySearch Digital Library

 **630,000**
Digital Books
Online
2024 FamilySearch

By Cecelia McFadden

As we enter the new year of 2025, know that our genealogy world is not slowing down. Technology helps us maximize the time spent on our family history. And, for 25 years, the FamilySearch website has been a pioneer in revolutionizing the way we explore our past. Within this vast website, there's a treasure trove that is often overlooked, a growing electronic resource – the FamilySearch Digital Library.

Operated by FamilySearch, this online resource grants access to a vast collection of genealogical records, many of which are exclusive to the library. Imagine having billions of digitized records at your fingertips, from birth certificates and marriage licenses to census records, obituaries and even historical photographs. This is the power the Digital Library offers, and it's completely free! FamilySearch Digital Library is a priceless resource for genealogy researchers, offering digitized books, family histories, biographies and other materials. Below are five notable features that make it an indispensable tool for the African American family historian.

African Oral Genealogies

FamilySearch has recorded and published oral genealogies from Africa, with searchable indexes for twelve African nations, including Ghana, Cameroon, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Being able to listen to an oral history with just a tribal name of origin that a researcher has captured via documentation, or a DNA test, can be a lead to other breakthroughs when researching continent origins or planning a genealogy tourism itinerary.

The 10 Million Names Project

FamilySearch has collaborated with American Ancestors on 10 Million Names, an initiative to restore names and information to families of an estimated 10 million people of African descent in pre- and post-colonial America. FamilySearch is sharing its artificial intelligence advances and other technology solutions to help identify freedom seeking persons in North America from its millions of searchable historical records, making new online discoveries possible from previously unavailable collections.

Dynamic Growth

With over 630,000 digitized items, the Digital Library boasts an extensive collection of genealogical resources from around the world. In 2024, the library added over 45,000 items to its online repository. All publications are free to search. Publication types include family histories, local histories, biographies, yearbooks and more, providing researchers with a wealth of information to explore their ancestral roots.

Full Text Search Capabilities Plus

FamilySearch is harnessing the power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology to change family history research in extraordinary ways. FamilySearch Full-text Search is training AI to unlock the rich information contained in handwritten historical records. With the combination of handwriting recognition and Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software, FamilySearch converts an image of a text into a machine-readable format, allowing users to experience full text search capabilities of documents. Additionally, users can search by title, author, subject, language and even specific phrases or wildcards, ensuring they can locate the information they need with precision.

Other Features

Many books in the Digital Library can be viewed online or downloaded for offline reading, providing researchers with convenient access to valuable resources from anywhere in the world. Lastly, collaboration with 19 other library systems that include Allen County Public Library and the Cleveland Public Library allow patrons to be exposed to a breadth and depth of materials that previously could only be obtained by a visit to an actual facility. This collaboration ensures that this collection will be diverse and dynamic going forward.

Conclusion

The FamilySearch Digital Library is a collection designed to ignite your virtual family history journey. The history of our ancestors themselves, the spaces and places where they lived are part of the materials collated. This variety affords an opportunity to capture lineage data, coupled with data to create meaning and context to your discoveries. Online searching assistance is available by chat & email:

DigitalLibrary@familysearch.org

Let us know how you're doing. Contact us at **newschair@aagsclev.org**.

Meet Our New Member

Sammie Giles



Sammie is a native of Yazoo City, a small town in central Mississippi. His interest in family genealogy started early. In high school he studied Biblical genealogies as a sideline. Late in high school, a classmate was said to have been a cousin. In order to confirm or deny this claim, Sammie consulted with a maternal grandaunt Annie Gibbs Foreman who agreed with the claim. Inquiring further, his grandaunt gave him names of ancestors explaining the family relations. Not recognizing the unfamiliar names, Sammie drew on a sheet of paper his first family tree consisting of nine or ten individuals. During the last two years of college, he lost the sheet of paper; and soon afterward his grandaunt died in 1973.

In 1983, after losing several elders, he began an effort to try to reconstruct the tree and add more names. There have been many more claims of cousinship; and interviews of ancestors along with searches of archives. He has gone far beyond the single branch involving the first schoolmate's claim. His family tree now includes many branches and almost 2400 names.

He continues to research primarily the Giles and Gibbs families of Yazoo County in the period 1800 - 1950. He is often invited to speak at family gatherings about family history. He makes regular reports to the Black Genealogical Society of Northwest Ohio, of which he is also a member.



Our Allen County Library Experience (in August 2024)

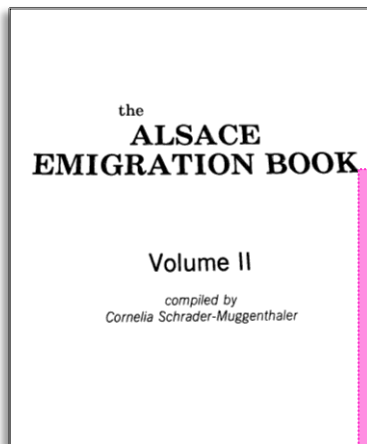
By *Linda Cameron and Karen Parks*

We had one main goal when we got there...try to **find out where our great-great grandfather was from** so that we could take our family research to the next level...Europe. We knew that everything said he was German but also that he was from Alsace-Lorraine, which would have been France. We wanted to know who his parents were, did he have any siblings, etc.

After looking for his declaration of intention and finding his naturalization paperwork, I thought we'd find our answers. But it sure didn't work that way. None of those details were on his paperwork.

When we arrived at Allen County Public Library, we did some research on emigration from Alsace-Lorraine to the U.S. and found a two-volume set of books that might have some information. It was a shot in the dark. Upon searching the cool moveable shelves, it appeared that the two volumes were in use. We went along and looked up other items in the meantime and thought we'd come back to look the next day.

Next day, no books. We were down to the wire with only 2.5 hours left to go before we were leaving to go back to Cleveland. Debbie Abbott told my sister Karen to find the librarian, look real pitiful, and ask about those two volumes. She actually went through the whole floor looking for these books and found them for us!! It was a long shot because we had not found a thing otherwise, but we opened one of these books and there it was -- we found his name and his emigration date and the place he lived and where he sailed from to come to the United States. **SUCCESS!!**



The book where we found our great-great grandfather's name, Christian (Chretien in French) Huy, listed with the town he was from (Romanswiller) in France before he boarded the ship in Le Havre, France to come to the United States at 20 years old.

Since we had only **two hours left** at this point, we started frantically scanning pages and taking pictures with our phones and getting everything we could possibly find to take back home with us. We finally found the information that we had been searching for all along and the bus would be ready to leave shortly!

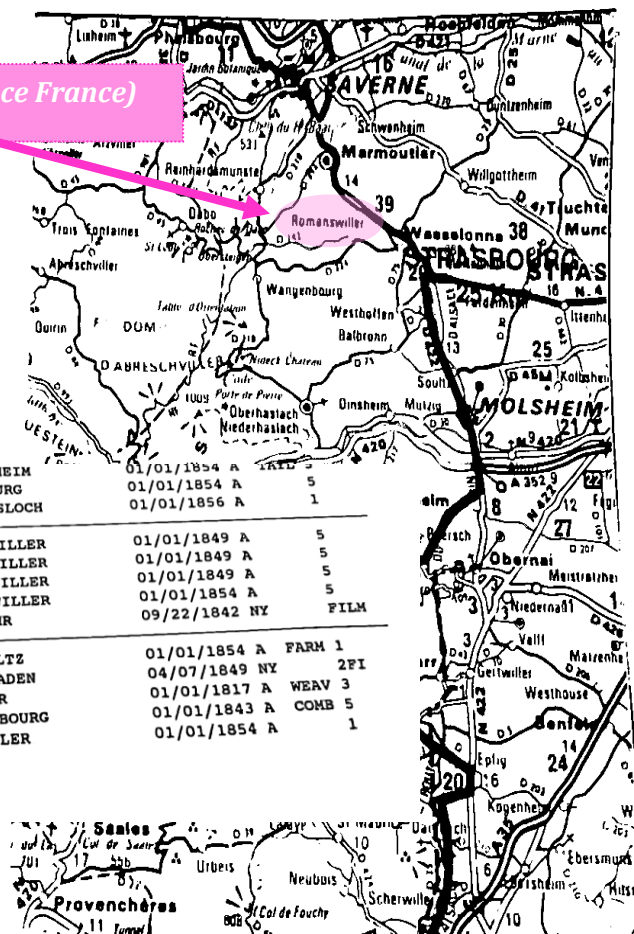
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Romanswiller, Alsace France)

ALSACE

Emigration Log

HUTH	JEAN	1834 WITTERSHEIM	01/01/1854 A	FARM	5
HUTHER	EDOUARD	1834 STRASBOURG	01/01/1854 A		5
HUTHI	JOSEPH	1836 LAMPERTSLOCH	01/01/1856 A		1
<hr/>					
HUWILLER MN WENDLING	M.ANNE	MORSCHWILLER	01/01/1849 A		5
HUWILLER W PARENTS	JOSEPH MARC	1829 MORSCHWILLER	01/01/1849 A		5
HUWILLER WW CH	ANTOINE	MORSCHWILLER	01/01/1849 A		5
HUY	CHRETIEN	1834 ROMANSWILLER	01/01/1854 A		5
HYLANDT W CH	ANNA ?	1810 HUNAWIHR	09/22/1842 NY	FILM	
<hr/>					
HÜBSCH	PIERRE	1834 RIEDELTZ	01/01/1854 A	FARM	1
HÜGEL	CAROLINE	KEHL BADEN	04/07/1849 NY	2FI	
HÜLESCHER WW	MICHEL	MUNSTER	01/01/1817 A	WEAV	3
HÜTTNER	JEAN MICHEL	1823 STRASSBOURG	01/01/1843 A	COMB	5
HÖBEL	FERDINAND	1834 NEEWILLER	01/01/1854 A		1



We now have a focus, a starting point, on learning how to research in Europe to find the additional information that we need to further our family line. We considered this trip a huge success!

(NOTE: WorldCat is an excellent source to obtain book call #'s prior to visiting ACPL)



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