

# Heritage Newsletter

California African American Genealogical Society

**“Inspiring Family  
History Research”**



**One Person  
At A Time.”**

January 2025

Volume 37 Issue 1

## President's Message

By Muriel Jones

Greetings and Happy New Year!

We ended the calendar on a high note with our annual holiday celebration on December 7, 2024. Approximately thirty members & guests gathered at Dulan's, Inglewood, for the occasion. Thanks to the work of Steve Allen and his volunteer committee, the event went off without a hitch.

At our holiday celebration, the 2025 CAAGS Board & Officers swore their oaths of office. Outgoing President, Dr. Edna Briggs, presented Certificates of Appreciation to the 2024 CAAGS Board, for their service to the organization. We ended the holiday event with a marathon game of bingo, led by Steve and Lynette Allen.

I would also thank everyone who attended and contributed to our first-ever Holiday Toy Collection. The toys and gift cards were to benefit Los Angeles children from underserved communities. The toys were delivered to the Los Angeles City Stentorians, who acknowledged our contribution in a lovely thank-you letter.

There's no time like the present to begin planning for our 2025 annual holiday celebration. We should begin our search for a location. Please direct all suggestions to Steve Allen for his committee's consideration.

I would personally like to thank the members for their vote of confidence in electing me as President for the 2025-2027 term. I invite everyone to prepare for an exciting term. There is much to do as we seek not only to sustain interest among the existing corps of members but also to encourage others to learn about CAAGS, its programs and services.

I look toward to not only having CAAGS THRIVE, but to flourish! I know that you also want that for the organization. Your participation is essential for that shared vision to be realized.

As a start to my term of office, I have begun developing a strategic plan. After careful consideration, the goals are as follows:

- 1. Maintain current body of members
- 2. Increase new membership by a minimum of 25% by year's end.

CAAGS 2025  
ORGANIZATION  
GOALS

## IT'S UP TO ALL OF US!

I ask that you join me and your fellow board members in recruiting a minimum of one new member by year's end. In addition, the organization will need to undertake activities to increase visibility, participation, and collaboration with the community, and with allied organizations.

As we begin this new season of research and legacy building, with extended hand I am looking forward to your continued engagement in this adventure!

**Wishing you joy and peace  
for the holidays and  
throughout the coming year.**

*Muriel*

# JANUARY REMINDERS

---

## HOLIDAYS

- January 1 – New Year's Day
- January 2 – National Motivation and Inspiration Day
- January 15 – Humanitarian Day
- January 15 – Martin Luther King's Birthday
- January 16 – Book Publishers Day
- January 20 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- January 21 – Grandma Day
- January 22 – Celebration of Life Day
- January 24 – International Day of Education

---



## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 January – Monica Maurasse
- 7 January – A. Nelson El-Amin
- 9 January – Mary Alequin-Sosa
- 10 January – Cartellia M. Bryant
- 11 January – Corrine Hill
- 12 January – Michelle LeDoux
- 13 January – Ron Higgins
- 13 January – Patrice Jones
- 16 January – Stanley Johnson
- 18 January – Bettye Whitson
- 21 January – Dr. Edna F. Briggs
- 26 January – Deborah Fountain

---

## NEW MEMBERS

- Ellen Snead
- Naomi Miller McCoy

---

# THANK YOU DONORS!

As we reflect on our activities and accomplishments in 2024, we are deeply grateful for the incredible support from our generous donors. Thanks to your contributions, your gift helped CAAGS with the various operational expenses needed to maintain the organization. We are truly inspired by your commitment to our mission to foster genealogical research and look forward to continuing this mission in the coming year.

**Thank you to the below donors, as well as those that donated anonymously!**

Adrian Foushee  
Alisha Shakoor  
C Sanders  
CM Bryant

Dr. Edna Briggs  
Joyce Rucker  
Joyce Taylor  
Meshia Russell  
Verna King

**Ronald L Scott – In Honor of Paula Clagon**



## UPCOMING

**RootsTech 2025**, the world's largest family discovery event, is set for March 6-8, 2025 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Registration is now open for in-person and online passes. One-day passes are \$79, Three-day passes are \$129 and Online passes are FREE.

**FOR PASSES & MORE INFO:** <https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/>

<sup>1</sup> Post News Group. Advocates Demand Action on Reparations During Gov's Special Legislative Session. (December 2024). [Link](#)

<sup>2</sup> Evanston Round Table. Reparations town hall panelists reflect on their work, path forward. (December 2024). [Link](#)

<sup>3</sup> The Ithaca Voice. Common Council dedicated \$50,000 to fund a study into reparations. What could that look like? (December 2024). [Link](#)

<sup>4</sup> WCCS Radio. Bill would legalize marijuana, pay reparations to past offenders. (December 2024). [Link](#)

**Visit us at [www.caags.org](http://www.caags.org) and follow us on Facebook, California African American Genealogical Society.**

## REPARATIONS NEWS



**California** – A coalition of reparations advocates are demanding that Attorney General Rob Bonta and Gov. Gavin Newsom act in the [special session](#) on reparations bills that were stalled in Legislature; not getting a vote in the last session. The California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC) secured \$12 million in next year's budget to continue reparations legislation. Under new CLBC leadership, vice chair, Isaac Bryan, introduced [AB 7](#), a new reparations bill that would provide priority admissions for descendants of slaves at CSU and University of California campuses.<sup>1</sup>

**Illinois** – In celebration of the 5-year anniversary of the passing the Evanston's reparations program, the city's Reparations Committee held a town hall meeting at which panelists from around the nation discussed the impact of the program here and other reparations movements. To date, the program has paid over \$5 million to Black residents that lived in Evanston from 1919-1969.<sup>2</sup>

**New York** – The City of Ithaca could join the small number of local governments in the U.S. with a reparations program for Blacks living in Ithaca. Common Council approved \$50,000 in October to fund a study on reparations through an amendment to the city's 2025 budget.<sup>3</sup>

**Pennsylvania** – State lawmakers Rick Krajewski and Dan Frankel say they will take another stab at legalizing recreational marijuana in Pennsylvania. In addition, they want to pay people for the "damages" they have suffered for past marijuana offenses.<sup>4</sup>

# IN MEMORIAM

Remembering CAAGS Lifetime Member June Halson Rhinehart



**June 6, 1934 – October 26, 2024**

June Yvonne Halson Rhinehart, 90, was born on June 6, 1934 at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital in Santa Barbara, California. She was the oldest of three children from the union of John Duncan and Theora-Demetris Halson. She attended San Francisco State University and received a Bachelor's Degree in Education. Her spiritual life led her to join Corpus Christi Church, where she became a devout Christian parishioner. Every Saturday, she taught catechism to a group of young students in an effort to enlighten their spiritual knowledge.

June had a love for books which led her to a career as a Librarian at the Excelsior District's branch of the San Francisco Library. She jumped at the opportunity to be the first African-American Librarian to be in place when the Bookmobile was being introduced in the city. She took pride in her efforts to promote literacy. This led her to a job selling World Book Encyclopedias door-to-door, being referred to as the "World Book Lady."

She met and married the "Love of her Life", William "Bill" Gerald Rhinehart, then moved to Southern California to begin a new life. In SoCal, she continued a career in education and chose to be a substitute teacher for elementary students. Both June and Bill were actively involved in their community, enjoyed attending the Rose Bowl Parade and grew organic fruits, vegetables and plants. June also took pride in helping families in need and was assigned to a role as a FEMA intake coordinator. Additionally, she received a medal for participating as an Olympic Volunteer in the 1984 Summer Olympics. June truly enjoyed living life to the fullest and seizing every opportunity to live it in full effect. She was a very sweet warm person and will be missed by everyone that had the pleasure to meet her.



Obituary Submitted by sister of June Rhinehart

Visit us at [www.caags.org](http://www.caags.org) and follow us on Facebook, California African American Genealogical Society.



### Martin Luther King, Jr Day Origin and Family

Martin Luther King, Jr. was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia, to the Reverend Martin Luther King Sr. and Alberta Williams King. His given name at birth was Michael King, and his father was also born Michael King. However, after a period of gradual transition on the elder King's part, he changed both his and his son's names after a trip to Germany in 1934. King, Jr. was a middle child, between older sister Christine King Farris and younger brother A.D. King. King sang with his church choir at the 1939 Atlanta premiere of the movie *Gone with the Wind*, and he enjoyed singing and music. His mother was an accomplished organist and choir leader who took him to various churches to sing, and he received attention for singing "I Want to Be More and More Like Jesus".<sup>1</sup> Sadly, King's mother was assassinated on June 30, 1974 at Ebenezer Baptist Church, while she played the "Lord's Prayer" on the organ. The assassin, Marcus Chenault, a 21-year old man from Ohio who claimed, "All Christians are my enemies".<sup>2</sup>

Following King's assassination, six years prior to his mother's assassination on April 4, 1968, his supporters moved quickly to recognize him by establishing a national holiday in remembrance. However, though legislation to honor the civil rights activist and pastor was introduced only 4 days after his death, it took more than 15 years for Congress to approve the holiday — and all 50 states didn't recognize the holiday until 2000. Martin Luther King Jr. Day is celebrated on the third Monday of January and gives the whole country an opportunity to honor Dr. King and recommit themselves to securing civil rights for all. Many people celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day by volunteering within their own communities. Congressman John Conyers (D-MI) proposed Martin Luther King Jr. Day on April 8, 1968, 4 days after King's assassination. While Conyers' legislation didn't get much traction initially, he kept proposing the bill each year.



Harlem, NY 1958. Al Pucci—NY Daily News Archive/Getty Images

Thanks to the support of the Congressional Black Caucus, the bill came to a vote on the House floor in 1979. The bill failed to pass, falling five votes short in the House of Representatives. Congressman Gene Taylor (R-MO) spearheaded the opposition to a King holiday, citing the costs to the federal government in declaring a new federal holiday. He also argued that no federal holiday had ever been named in honor of a private citizen who had not held political office.

Then in 1980, Stevie Wonder stepped in and released a song, "Happy Birthday to You," which rallied people to support the idea of a national holiday celebrating Dr. King. Coretta Scott King, King's widow, joined Wonder at rallies and concerts, including a benefit concert on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Wonder and Scott King joined the Congressional Black Caucus in collecting 6 million signatures on a petition backing the holiday. The support propelled the holiday bill passed with 338 Congress in favor. However, it was not signed into law until 15 years later.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Genestar. Family tree of Martin Luther KING. (2024). [Link](#), [Photograph](#)

<sup>2</sup> Stanford University. King, Alberta Williams. (2024) [Link](#)

<sup>3</sup> Ancestry. Celebrating Martin Luther King Jr. Day: Discovering Your African. (January 2024). [Link](#)

# 5 Genealogy Activities To Do in January

## 1. Define Your Research Goals

Determine your highest genealogical priorities and create a strategy to achieve them. Narrow your focus.

## 2. Go Back to the Basics

Revisit your research with fresh eyes. Start from the beginning and correct any errors you find.

## 3. Set Your Genealogy Budget

Create a genealogy budget as a New Year's resolution. How much did you spend last year? Find ways to reduce your costs, such as free trials or free collections.

## 4. Sign Up for Conferences or Webinars

Genealogy education will teach you valuable research skills and connect you with experts and the community.

## 5. Get Organized

Create an organization system that works for your research. Sorting your research throughout the year will save time in the long run.<sup>1</sup>



## Movie Spotlight: The Six Triple Eight

During the height of the conflict in World War II circa 1943, difficulties in the war led to a change in priorities, and much of the mail previously reaching soldiers on the front lines were halted. As warehouses begin to overflow with unfulfilled deliveries, soldiers' hopes are dashed as they lose contact with their families back home. To fix this problem, the 6888<sup>th</sup> Battalion the Women's Army Corps' all-Black battalion including over 800 female soldiers is sent to tackle the impossible challenge of sorting years' worth of backlogged mail. Even as military higher-ups hope to see the plan fail, the Six Triple Eight are determined to deliver hope to soldiers and families across the world. Faced with discrimination and a country devastated by war, they managed to sort more than 17 million pieces of mail ahead of time.<sup>2</sup> A Tyler Perry film, based on a true story.

[CLICK TO WATCH THE TRAILER](#)



<sup>1</sup> Family Tree Magazine. 5 Genealogy Activities to Do in January. (December 2023) [Link](#)

<sup>2</sup> IMDb. The Six Triple Eight Plot. (December 2024). [Link](#)

## CAAGS HOLIDAY CELEBRATION AT DULAN'S





## CAAGS HOLIDAY CELEBRATION AT DULAN'S





## YouTube Channel

### MLK Talks 'New Phase' Of Civil Rights Struggle

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xsbt3a7K-8>

### California's New Laws for 2025

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQL5k49UA80>

### AncestryDNA No Tree No Response

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HxtqbGMmbjM>

### The Untold Story Of The Black Mexicans Who Founded LA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZQptFgjJSk>

### Genealogist Who Tracks Down Modern-Day Slavery Practices

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6OXbJHsKB3I>

### Ancestry + FamilySearch = Powerhouse Strategy Revised

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8zoCptpkro>



## Legacy Family Tree

### Upcoming Webinars

<https://familytreewebinars.com/upcoming-webinars/>

### Webinar Library

<https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar-library/>



## Quick Facts

**January 1, 1863** – President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, as the nation approached its third year of bloody civil war. The proclamation declared "that all persons held as slaves" within the rebellious states "are, and henceforward shall be free." However, these words were not upheld; it did not end slavery. The Proclamation did allow the acceptance of black men in the Union Army and Navy. By the end of the war, almost 200,000 black soldiers and sailors had fought for the Union and freedom.<sup>1</sup>



**January 21, 1856** – Bridget “Biddy” Mason (1818-1891) was born enslaved without a surname in possibly Georgia or Mississippi. She later was given the nickname “Biddy” and adopted Mason as her surname. She spent five years enslaved in California, then took legal action for her freedom. On January 21, 1856, in the case of Mason v. Smith, the Los Angeles District judge approved Mason’s petition. This freed Mason and thirteen members of her family. The ruling was the first of its kind in California, setting a precedent. Following, Mason moved her family and saved her earnings as a nurse. Despite never learning to read or write, [Mason](#) began to purchase land.<sup>2</sup> The land acquisitions would lead her to becoming the first prominent citizens and landowners in Los Angeles in the 1850s and 1860s. She also founded the First African Methodist Episcopal Church in Los Angeles in 1872.<sup>3 4</sup>



<sup>1</sup> The National Archives. The Emancipation Proclamation. (January 2022) [Link](#)

<sup>2</sup> Freedom Center. Bridget “Biddy” Mason. (2024). [Link](#), [Photograph](#)

<sup>3</sup> California Local. 30 African Americans Who Made History in California. (February 2023) [Link](#)

<sup>4</sup> All photographs in this newsletter except for those cited, event and obituary pictures, hold a paid standard license for use.



## UPCOMING EVENTS.....

**January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025 –**  
Please pay your 2025 CAAGS Membership Dues

**January 7, 2025 – Finding Your Roots Season 11**  
with Henry Louis Gates, Jr premieres on PBS

**January 18, 2025 – CAAGS General Meeting-**  
Hybrid, Los Angeles Family Search Library,  
1591 E. Temple Way, Los Angeles, CA 90024  
10:30 am – 2:00 pm

**February 13, 2025 – CAAGS Writers Group-**  
Virtual, 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

**February 15, 2025 – CAAGS General Meeting-**  
Hybrid, Los Angeles Family Search Library,  
1591 E. Temple Way, Los Angeles, CA 90024  
10:30 am – 2:00 pm

*\*Schedule subject to change. Questions? Call (323) 806-5634*

## CAAGS FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Month Ending December 31, 2024

BEGINNING BALANCE	\$ 7,192.67
INCOME	718.56
DISBURSEMENTS	(1,018.61)
PETTY CASH	127.16
ENDING BALANCE	\$ 7,019.78

*\*Submitted by Jean Wright-Calhoun, CAAGS Treasurer, 1/3/2025*

**\*Please note the Disbursements total for the**  
November Financial Summary was corrected to  
-\$265.84



## CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. BOX 8442  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90008-0442  
(323) 806-5634

### General Membership Meetings

Third Saturday monthly (except July & August)

10:30 a.m.

Los Angeles Family Search Library  
1591 East Temple Way  
(Near 10741 Santa Monica Blvd.)  
Los Angeles, CA 90024



## Please Consider Volunteering



### VACANT – Parliamentarian

#### Summary of Duties:

- ① Advise members on Constitution and By-Laws procedures.
- ② Review proposed Amendments to ensure no conflict exists with Constitution or By-Laws and make recommendations.
- ③ Preside over By-Laws Committee for review of Constitution and By-Laws changes.
- ④ Maintain the Society's Policy and Procedures Manual.



#### 2025 CAAGS Annual Membership Dues Due Date Period: January 2025 – March 2025

Application can be downloaded from the CAAGS website, followed by payment:

<https://caags.org/membership-purchase/>



## *Letter from the Editor - Meshia Russell*

I want to give a big thank you for the recognition as Newsletter Editor at the CAAGS Holiday Celebration! Also, congratulations to everyone recognized for their hard work in 2024. I'm looking forward to 2025!

Please consider writing a review about any aspect of the content of this Newsletter and forward it to the Newsletter Editor [newsletter@CAAGS.org](mailto:newsletter@CAAGS.org) It will help to know if the effort to keep this publication going should be continued.



**A NEW BABY IS LIKE THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS – WONDER, HOPE, A DREAM OF POSSIBILITIES.  
PLEASE WELCOME MY NEW NEPHEW JUDAH SCOTT, THAT ARRIVED RIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS ON DECEMBER 20.**

## **2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

ELECTED OFFICERS	APPOINTED OFFICERS
<b>Muriel Jones – President</b> <b>Dr. Edna F. Briggs – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President/Education</b> <b>Valerie Warrick-Durette – 2<sup>nd</sup> VP /Membership</b> <b>Christina Ashe – Recording Secretary</b> <b>Jean Wright-Calhoun – Treasurer</b> <b>Marie Bryant – Corresponding Secretary</b> <b>VACANT – Parliamentarian</b> <b>Dr. Edna F. Briggs – Immediate Past President</b>	<b>Carolyn Conway – Librarian</b> <b>Steve Allen – Volunteer Coordinator</b> <b>Dr. Edna F. Briggs – Historian/NGS Delegate</b> <b>Web Site Admin – Vanessa McBride</b> <b>Meshia Russell – Newsletter Editor</b> <b>Monica Maurasse – Social Media Administrator</b>

# Heritage Newsletter

California African American Genealogical Society

**“Inspiring Family  
History Research”**



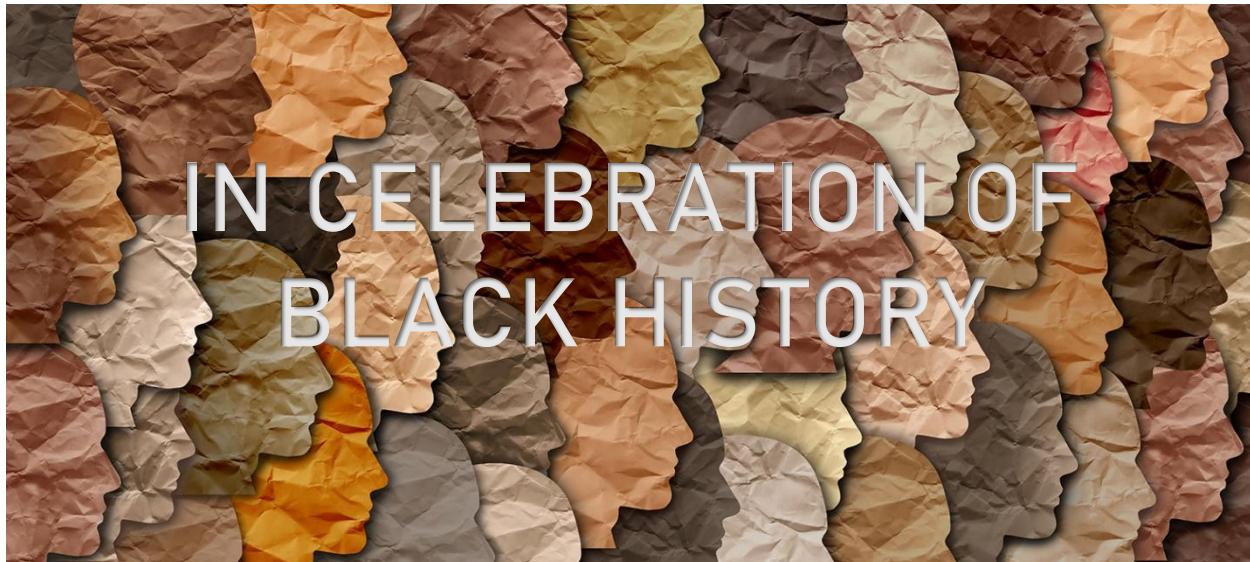
**One Person  
At A Time.”**

February 2025

Volume 37 Issue 2

## President's Message

By Muriel Jones



To CAAGS Members

Greetings all!

I am writing this February letter to our CAAGS members as Black History Month is upon us. This year our observance of this tradition occurs as organized efforts to obscure or eradicate the history and contributions of African American ancestors is in sharp focus. These efforts, often branded “anti-wokism” are expressed in various arenas of society and expressed in policy blueprints and executive imprints.

Awareness of these attempts should make us appreciate the importance of the work we as CAAGS members undertake with our individual family stories. In doing so, we reinforce the achievements our foremothers and fathers and just as important, we elevate their collective role in building this Nation, despite efforts to whitewash this part of US history.

Our commitment to strengthen CAAGS is born of this understanding. We are keepers of the flame lit by Dr. Woodson when he began promoting Black history. We are keepers of that flame.

At the first meeting of 2025, the California African American Genealogical Society (CAAGS) membership heard announced a new initiative issued by the organization's President. This President's Challenge is designed to measure the growth of membership over the 2025 term and to reward success in invigorating participation through paid enrollments in CAAGS.

Our existence matters! Let's continue to reveal the GREATNESS and offerings of our heritage no matter what is being espoused by others.

## **President's Challenge**

A \$100 gift card will be awarded to the California African American Genealogical Society (CAAGS) member who refers the most new members from January 2025 to June 2025. A new member is defined as first time enrollees, with no previous enrollment prior to January 1, 2025. The new member or family group must pay the full 2025 membership by June 2025 and a full 2026 annual membership by January 31, 2026. The CAAGS Membership Chairperson will review each new application for the name of the referee and report monthly at the CAAGS General Meeting. CAAGS Board Members are excluded from participating in this challenge. The President will present the winner at the CAAGS February 2026 General Membership meeting.

**Wishing you a productive Black Family History month**

*Muriel*

# FEBRUARY REMINDERS

---

## HOLIDAYS

- February 1 – National Freedom Day
- February 1 – First Day of Black History Month
- February 1 – Mardi Gras Celebration Continues
- February 2 – Groundhog Day
- February 4 – Rosa Parks Day
- February 4 – World Cancer Day
- February 9 – Superbowl LIX
- February 14 – Frederick Douglass Day
- February 14 – Valentine's Day
- February 22 – National California Day
- February 25 – African-American Scientist and Inventor Day
- February 28 – Ramadan

---



## FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 8 February – Asilah El-Amin
- 12 February – Paula Clagon
- 13 February – Olivia Nelson-Richard
- 15 February – LaMargo Washington
- 20 February – Jean Wright-Calhoun

---

## NEW MEMBERS

- Christie Baker
- Jessica C. Barbour, PhD
- Dolores S. Green
- Adrian Foushee
- Marilyn Mitchell

---

Ross Family Reunion  
Fanella Williams

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Parliamentarian** – The Parliamentarian role was vacant for most of 2024. We are happy to announce that it has been filled.

## Please welcome Jimmy!

Hello, I'm James "Jimmy" Murray and have been a member of CAAGS since 2010. I'm a Senior Deacon at Greater Zion Church Family in Compton, CA. I've lived in Uptown Long Beach 50+ years and married 51 years, with 2 adult children (boy and girl). I retired from L.A.P.D. Motor Transportation as a Auto Body Builder Repairer and currently building a Custom Pickup Truck (1952 International Harvester). Not only do I love genealogy, I also love to carve and have built a 3 level deck. I've also hiked the highest mountain in California, Mt. Whitney, that's 14,494 feet in elevation.

**2024 Donations** – A huge thanks to James Murray and Peggy Powell for your 2024 donation to CAAGS!



## UPCOMING

**RootsTech 2025**, the world's largest family discovery event, is set for March 6-8, 2025 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Registration is now open for in-person and online passes.  
**Keynote Speaker Announced:** Ndaba Mandela, grandson of Nelson Mandela  
**FOR PASSES & MORE INFO:** <https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/>

<sup>1</sup> Cal Matters. 'People are still mad': Will California pass reparations bills? (January 2025). [Link](#), [picture](#)

<sup>2</sup> City of Boston. Task Force on Reparations. (January 2025). [Link](#)

<sup>3</sup> Black Enterprise. Maryland Black Caucus to Support Commission Studying Reparations. (January 2025). [Link](#)

## REPARATIONS NEWS



**California** – On January 7, reparation advocates campaigned at the state Capitol. The advocates referred to the rally as "the first reparations advocacy day" in state history. The event was in partnership with the Coalition for a Just and Equitable California (CJEC), lead by Chris Lodgson. "People are still mad about the bills that did not get to the governor's desk last year...", said Lodgson. Additionally, the coalition is pushing for proposals to allocate \$30 million of the [\\$322 billion 2025-2026 state budget](#) to fund the agency; create a guaranteed income program for senior residents who are descendants of slaves; and compensate Black families who had their property seized through "racially motivated" eminent domain.<sup>1</sup>

**Massachusetts** – The Boston Reparations Task Force was established in 2022, through a City Council ordinance and appointed by Mayor Wu. The [task force's](#) focus is 1) Release of a study on the legacy of slavery in Boston and its impacts on descendants today 2) Engaging the community 3) Proving recommendations to the Mayor for reparative justice solutions for Black residents.<sup>2</sup>

**Maryland** – On Jan. 16, Maryland's Legislative [Black Caucus](#) indicated that its members would support legislation creating a commission to study reparations. The commission will examine a range of reparations that will consider financial restitution and supporting discriminated communities.<sup>3</sup>



## ARTICLES

### LOS ANGELES COUNTY WILDFIRES

On January 7, a fire began to burn in Pacific Palisades that would spread to areas like Pasadena and Altadena, burning for a few weeks, changing lives forever. How the fire started and whether it was a true “act of God” wildfire or if there was negligence on the spread with the electric company is under investigation. Attorney Ben Crump and the NAACP filed a suit claiming responsibility on SoCal Edison. Early on, there was lots of incorrect information floating around. This included a photograph of the Hollywood sign on fire, which was false. Additionally, there was a photograph of a luxury car surrounded by burning palm trees, that is believed to be a fake AI generated picture. Governor Newsome’s office created a fact-based website, called [California Fire Facts](#) to combat misinformation. Still, there were mistakes made by authorities, to include an evacuation alert mistakenly going out to the entire Los Angeles County. To continue, insurance companies did not renew homeowners’ fire policies, leaving normal wildfire victims that were not celebrities without a home and financial coverage. The area was declared as a national disaster area. However, FEMA’s help was a mere \$770. Additionally, companies begin rental price gouging to those seeking new housing. A [hotline](#) was setup to report anyone suspected of this price gouging or donation scams.

As the fires progressed, requests for help from surrounding fire departments and even other states went out. Help came from all over, to include incarcerated men from the prison firefighters’ program, the [Compton Cowboys](#) assisting by rescuing horses and the community donating food and clothing. Currently, rain has moved through Los Angeles, stopping the wildfires. All cities impacted are in the cleanup process and soon will be tasked with the rebuilding process. Events from this disaster are still unfolding daily in Los Angeles.



### HISTORICALLY BLACK ALTADENA

In the 1930s-1960s, “red-lining” was a banking practice that blocked people of color from getting mortgages, insurance loans, and other financial services. This practice was directly aimed at African Americans and Mexican Americans. In 1960, Altadena was overwhelming white at 95%. For a variety of Pasadena-linked causes including urban renewal, turnover of housing stock, and freeway construction—combined with larger events such as the Civil Rights Movement, Watts Riots, Vietnam War, and political assassinations — many whites began leaving Altadena. By 1970, the town was 68% white, then 49% white in 1980. Over the years, as white residency decreased, Black residency increased, reaching 31% by 2000 and continuing through the years. Altadena is now considered an affluent area and historically Black neighborhood, with less than 9% poverty and a strong homeownership rate of over 70%.<sup>1</sup>

On January 7, the Eaton Canyon wildfire swept through Altadena, leaving many lifelong residents without a home. According to researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), nearly half of the Black households in Altadena were either destroyed or severely damaged by the wildfires. The fire claimed 17 lives and destroyed over 9,400 structures across Altadena and neighboring areas. It has had a disproportionate effect on Black residents. UCLA researchers also found 48% of Black homes were either destroyed or majorly damaged. In comparison, 37% of non-Black households suffered similar levels of destruction.

Altadena has long been a center of Black homeownership in Los Angeles, with 57% of Black homeowners in Altadena over the age of 65. This makes them potentially more vulnerable to insurance issues and financial scams during the rebuilding process. Additionally, approximately 80% of Altadena’s homeowners, both Black and non-Black, are still paying off their mortgages, adding financial strain to the recovery efforts. The fires have also put at risk one of the primary means of building and passing down wealth in the Black community – homeownership. Despite the financial strain, Altadena boasts a rich history of nurturing Black artists, activists, and writers. The town has been home to notable figures such as Sidney Poitier and Octavia Butler.<sup>2</sup> Another notable figure that lived in the area was Rodney Nickerson, the grandson of William Nickerson, founder of Nickerson Gardens in Watts. Nickerson fought to save his home, but unfortunately the fires overtook him, and he perished. Love and prayers are extended to the family and the entire area.

<sup>1</sup> Altadena Heritage. Racial Change Over Time. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> Tavel Noire. California Wildfires Wipes Out Nearly Half of Black Homes in Altadena. (2025). [Link](#).

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH ORIGIN

Dr. Carter G. Woodson was born December 19, 1875 in New Canton, Buckingham County, Virginia. Born to parents that were enslaved and growing up in the Reconstruction era, he had few educational and employment opportunities. After his family moved to Huntington, West Virginia for better opportunities, Woodson saved up money to attend Frederick Douglass High School; one of the only Black schools at the time. He fast-tracked and received his diploma in just two years because he was already self-taught. In 1903, Woodson received his first college degree from Berea College in Kentucky and continued his education at the University of Chicago, obtaining another Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree, both in 1908. Woodson earned his PhD in History from Harvard University in 1912, making him the second Black American (only following W.E.B. Du Bois) to graduate with a PhD from Harvard; and the only person of enslaved parentage to earn a PhD in History from any institution in the United States.

As Woodson began his academic career, he noticed a flagrant hole in the U.S. educational system. Very little was shared to the public on the role of African Americans in American history, and schools were not including it in their curriculum. He worked tirelessly throughout his life to remedy this problem, becoming nationally recognized as "the Father of Black History." On September 9, 1915, he co-founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Inc. (ASNLH), now known as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Inc. ([ASALH](#)). The organization aimed to inform the public about the contributions of Black Americans in the formation of the country, its history, and culture. Then in 1926, he created "Negro History Week," which was a celebration of African American history. It was created to encourage people to study Black history and to celebrate the contributions of Black Americans. It was built on existing Black history celebrations and coincided with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. The week was later expanded into what we know [today](#) as Black History Month.<sup>1</sup>



Portrait of Dr. Carter G. Woodson, ca. 1915,  
NMAH, Smithsonian Institution, Archives Ctr

## DEI DEVELOPMENTS

The acronym "DEI" has recently been the center of daily news, dividing America. What exactly is DEI? It stands for Diversity Equity and Inclusion. It aims to create a more just and inclusive society by valuing and supporting people from all backgrounds. However, some Americans believe this is a code word for "Black." Statistics show, this is not accurate. Black Americans make up the lowest number of DEI recipients; the highest DEI recipients being White American women. These statistics from the U.S. Department of Labor were removed from the website following an executive order from the president. Within a mere few weeks of being sworn in to office, Donald Trump signed a flurry of executive orders, ending federal DEI programs and reversing executive enforcement of civil rights laws. This led to the removal of Tuskegee Airmen videos from Air Force training, which is not only Black history, but also American history. Following public outcry, the decision was reversed and the videos restored.

This end of DEI order also cancelled historical celebrations for Martin Luther King Day, Black History Month, Juneteenth, Women's History Month, Holocaust Day of Remembrance, Asian American Pacific Islander Month, Pride Month, National American Indian Month, National Hispanic Heritage Month and National Disability Awareness Month. On January 29, independent journalist Ken Klippenstein, posted a letter ([click here](#)) from the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) on his Twitter (X) account that sent notification on these paused events. Then on January 31, Trump signed a [proclamation](#) recognizing Black History Month. The daily news on life-altering executive orders for the American public, has everyone perplexed in general and equally confused on how this will impact lives. It is unfortunate that the majority voted without considering the impact, until now. As the events play out, we must stay informed and seek ways to make our personal lives and community better.

<sup>1</sup> National Park Service. Carter G. Woodson (2025). [Link](#)



## NOTABLE BLACK HISTORY

1770: **Phillis Wheatley** – First Black American that was enslaved to publish a book of poetry.

1890: **Mary Ellen Pleasant** – First Black self-made millionaire, listing herself as a “capitalist” in the 1890 Census.

1856: **William Wells Brow** – A slave that escaped and became the nation’s first African American playwright.

1864: **Dr. Rebecca Lee Crumpler** – First Black woman to earn a medical degree in the United States.

1865: **Mary Lumpkin** – An enslaved woman that transferred a slave jail into an [HBCU](#), Virginia Union University.

1870: **Richard T. Greener** – First African American to graduate from Harvard, and with honors.

1875: **Oliver Lewis** – African American jockey and first person in history to win the Kentucky Derby, [riding Aristides](#).

1895: **The Colored Hockey League** – Hockey’s First Organized League in Canada that pre-dated formation of the NHL.

1900: **William H. Carney** – Born enslaved and became the first Black American to be awarded the Medal of Honor.

1908: **Lucy Diggs Slowe** – One of the founders of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority and first Black Dean at any university.

1921: **Bessie Coleman** – First Black woman to obtain an international pilot’s license after attending school in France.

1924: **Josephine Groves Holloway** – First Black Girl Scout troupe was in 1917 and Holloway the first leader in 1924.

1938: **Owls Club** – An all-Black women’s softball team in Seattle, Washington, later renamed the Brown Bombers.

1940: **Benjamin O. Davis, Sr.** – First Black General in any branch of the United States military.

1942: **Red Tails** – The Tuskegee Airmen graduated, becoming the first Black military aviators in the United States.

1946: **Fultz Quads** – First identical African American quadruplets, all named Mary by their opportunist doctor.

1949: **Frederick McKinley Jones** – Invented the portable air conditioner in 1938 and patented in 1949.

1956: **Otis Blackwell** – Black songwriter for many of Elvis Presley’s hits, such as “Don’t Be Cruel” and “All Shook Up.”

1962: **James West** – Co-inventor of the electric microphone and inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame.

1971: **Lisa Gelobter** – A computer scientist, technologist and CEO that created GIFs.

1978: **Max Robinson** – First Black American broadcast news anchor in American television history.

1979: **Sugar Hill Gang** – First rap hit song produced by CEO Sylvia Robinson was [Rapper’s Delight](#).

1992: **Mae Jemison** – First Black woman to visit space, flying aboard the Endeavor.

1993: **Octavia Butler** – Writer who prophesied 2025 LA wildfires. Her grave remains safe from the fires in Altadena.

1998: **Toni Braxton** – First African American to portray Belle in Disney’s Beauty and the Beast on Broadway.

2017: **Fawn Weaver** – First Black American to own a major spirits brand, Uncle Nearest.

2019: **Mariya Russell** – First [Black woman](#) chef in Michelin star’s 93-year history to earn a star.

2022: **Charlie Mitchell** – First Black chef in New York and second in the [U.S.](#) to receive a Michelin star.

2023: **Isaac Hayes, III** – First Black entrepreneur to raise \$10 million in crowdfunding for social media app, [Fanbase](#).

2023: **Romay Johnson Davis** – Oldest living Veteran of the 6888<sup>th</sup> Black Women’s Army Corps. turned 104 years old.

2024: **Colman Domingo** – Award-winning actor that released the first movie simultaneously in theaters and prisons.

2024: **David Steward** – At \$11.4 billion, he is richest Black American and founder of World Wide Technology (WWT).

2024: **Viola Fletcher** – “[Mother Fletcher](#)”, the oldest known living survivor of [Tulsa Race Massacre](#) turns 110 years old.

2025: **Dr. Bill Releford** – Owner of [Bloom Ranch](#), the largest [farm in Southern California](#), specializing in organic produce.

2025: **Camden Stewart** – 20-year-old London-based pianist, composer, singer and record producer.

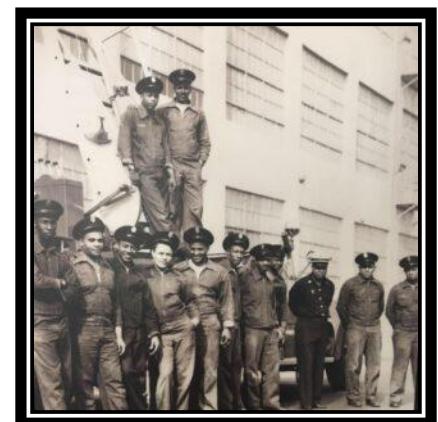
\*Please click the year and embedded links for more information.

## AFRICAN AMERICAN FIREFIGHTER MUSEUM

The African American Firefighter Museum (AAFFM), located in Los Angeles across from the historic Coca-Cola Building on South Central Avenue, opened its doors on December 13, 1997. The dedication of the [AAFFM](#) also served as acknowledgement of what was then believed to be the city's first 100 years of service by African American Firefighters (1897-1997). In 2002, a Los Angeles Times historian contacted AAFFM with information indicating that its history started before 1897. It was confirmed that [Sam Haskins](#) was the first Los Angeles firefighter of African descent. Haskins was hired in 1892 and killed while responding to a fire in [1895](#).

The museum resides inside Fire Station # 30, which is one of two segregated firehouses in Los Angeles between 1924 and 1955. The firehouse was relocated for Station # 30 because the school district became concerned about school children looking African American firefighters were in positions of authority. The area of relation, seemingly by design, was also the area where many Blacks moved to when migrating to Los Angeles. Then in 1936, the Los Angeles Fire Department opened Station # 14 at 34th and Central to Black firefighters, making it the second segregated station. The stations integrated in 1955, and Black firefighters were transferred to other stations but were met with extreme hostility.

Today the [AAFFM](#) stands as the first and only free-standing museum dedicated to African Americans in fire service in the United States. The museum has pictures, artifacts and other African American firefighter memorabilia from around the county. The building is a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is not only Los Angeles history, but Black American history to be celebrated.<sup>1</sup>



## AFRICAN AMERICAN SCIENTIST AND INVENTOR DAY

Charles Drew was born in Washington, D.C. in 1904. His desire to pursue a degree in medicine was influenced by the experience of losing his sister to tuberculosis while in high school. After attending medical school, he enrolled at McGill University in Montreal, Canada and distinguished himself by winning the J. Francis Williams Prize in Medicine. During his residency, Drew studied issues related to blood transfusions.



Working with John Scudder in 1938, both conducted extensive research in blood preservation and fluid replacement, leading to developing a trial blood bank. Drew's 1940 doctoral thesis, "Banked Blood: A Study in Blood Preservation," cemented him as an expert in the field. He invented a safe way to store, process and transport blood plasma. His work saved lives during World War II and revolutionized blood plasma storage through the process of blood banking, which continues to save lives today.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> AAFFM Museum. About, Museum History. (2025). [Link, photograph](#)

<sup>2</sup> National Inventors Halls of Fame. Charles Richard Drew. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>3</sup> National Archives. Charles R. Drew picture. Reyneau, Betsy Graves. (ca. 1943 – ca. 1963). [Link, photograph](#).

# Binge-Worthy Genealogy TV Shows

## ✓ ABC – The Genetic Detective

CeCe Moore uses her skills to transform crime solving.

Watch: [www.abc.com/shows/the-genetic-detective](https://www.abc.com/shows/the-genetic-detective)



## ✓ BYUtv – How I Got Here

Immigrant families embark on a 10-day homeland trip.

Watch: <https://www.bryutv.org/how-i-got-here>

## ✓ BYUtv – Relative Race

Teams on a journey as they race to find long-lost relatives.

Watch: <https://www.bryutv.org/relative-race>

## ✓ NBC – A New Leaf

Everyday people looking at family history and DNA.

Watch: <https://www.nbc.com/a-new-leaf>

## ✓ PBS – Finding Your Roots with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Exploring the ancestry of influential people.

Watch: [www.abc.com/shows/the-genetic-detective](https://www.abc.com/shows/the-genetic-detective)

## Queen Tahj – First to Design Super Bowl Logo

Tahj Williams, also known as Queen Tahj, is a Mardi Gras Indian of the [Golden Eagles Tribe](#) from New Orleans, Louisiana. At a young age, she became interested in the [Black Masking](#) culture, rooted in African and Native American heritage. The culture originated from African Americans that were initially excluded from mainstream [Mardi Gras](#) festivities. The “masking” tradition derives from the West African masquerade ceremony, where an individual takes on the role of a god, spirit, ally from slavery.

As a young girl, Queen Tahj was captain of the football team and only girl. Which seems to bring her full circle with football in being the first person in NFL history to design the Super Bowl logo. A master in meticulous hand-sewn beadwork, Queen Tahj has broken barriers in many areas and captured the heartbeat of New Orleans to be displayed in Super Bowl LIX.<sup>1</sup>

[CLICK TO VIEW THE NFL VIDEO](#)



2

<sup>1</sup> MyNewOrleans.com. Artist Queen Tahj Becomes First to Handcraft Super Bowl Logo and Theme. (2025). [Link](#)

<sup>2</sup> Facebook.com, Queen Tahj. Picture. (2023). [Link](#)



## YouTube Channel

### Pasadena Black History Celebration

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Un0LPahwxIw>

### Rare audio of enslaved people connects history

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Cb\\_jw\\_NEI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Cb_jw_NEI)

### Researching U.S. Tri-Racial Ancestry

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJz3HvGV\\_ql](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJz3HvGV_ql)

### Altadena/Eaton the "Black Sheep" of LA Fires

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=II1FaW9ByJA>

### Oral History at Home — Five Easy Steps

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxrkkhLExxw&t=21s>

### Nicka Smith - Genealogy Workshop Series: Beginning Genealogy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSjcWFsnMdc>



## Legacy Family Tree

### Upcoming Webinars

<https://familytreewebinars.com/upcoming-webinars/>

### Webinar Library

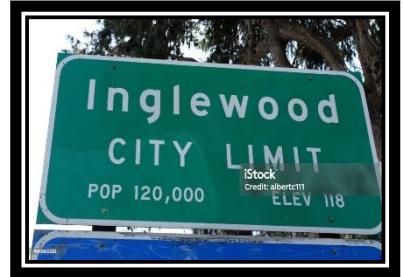
<https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar-library/>



## Quick Facts

**February 8, 1908** – Inglewood's history began with the Centinela Adobe, built in 1834 by Ignacio Machado, son of one of the soldiers protecting the first settlers of Los Angeles on their way from Mexico. Inglewood was the first settlement to be carved out of the 25,000 acre Centinela Ranch in 1888. The new town of 300 residents opened for the first day of school, May 21, of that same year, enrolling 33 children in a new livery stable until the school building could be erected. In 1905, Inglewood recovered from a nationwide financial crash after establishing a Poultry Colony in the present North Inglewood.

Inglewood Park Cemetery was developed and the streetcar line brought both coffins and mourners. February 8, 1908 Inglewood, with a booming 1,200 population, was incorporated as a city, but it was the earthquake of 1920 that put it on the map. People came to see the damage and stayed because of the wonderful climate. From 1920 to 1925, Inglewood was the fastest growing city in the United States.<sup>1</sup>



**February 21, 1965** – Malcom X was born 1925 as Malcolm Little in Omaha, Nebraska. The son of James Earl Little, a Baptist preacher who advocated the ideals of Marcus Garvey and received threats from the Ku Klux Klan. In 1931, Malcolm's father was murdered by the white supremacist Black Legion. In 1937, he was taken from his family by welfare caseworkers. Once he reached high school age, he dropped out and moved to Boston where he became involved in criminal activity. At 21, he went to prison for a burglary conviction. While in prison, he encountered the teachings of Elijah Muhammad, the leader of the Nation of Islam. He self-educated and took the last name "X" to symbolize his stolen African identity. After being released from prison, he became a minister for the Nation in Harlem, New York. In the 1960s, he began to develop a philosophy that was more outspoken than Elijah Muhammad, who believed Malcom had become too powerful and suspended him from the Nation of Islam. After leaving the Nation, he made a pilgrimage to Mecca and founded the Organization of Afro-American Unity, upon his return. His movement gained followers and because highly influential to the civil rights movement. Then on February 21, 1965, Malcom X was assassinated as his pregnant wife and four daughters sat in the front row. Three members from the Nation of Islam were charged with his murder and sentenced to 20 years in prison.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> City of Inglewood. City History. (January 2022). [Link](#)

<sup>2</sup> History.com. This Day in History. Malcom X Assassinated. (February 2024). [Link](#), [picture](#)



## UPCOMING EVENTS

February 6, 2025 – New Beginners Class,  
Genealogy 101 - Virtual, 7:00 pm

February 8, 2025 – The Invisible Ache: Black Men  
Identifying Their Pain and Reclaiming Their Power:  
Courtney B. Vance and William Allen Young,  
Central Library, 630 W. 5th Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90071, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

February 13, 2025 – CAAGS Writers Group-  
Virtual, 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

February 15, 2025 – CAAGS General Meeting-  
Hybrid, Los Angeles Family Search Library,  
1591 E. Temple Way, Los Angeles, CA 90024,  
10:30 am – 2:00 pm

February 22, 2025 – Inspiring Journeys: African  
American Histories, Central Library, 630 W. 5th Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90071, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

February 23, 2025 – Los Angeles Black History Month  
Festival, Pan Pacific Park, 7600 Beverly Blvd, Los  
Angeles, CA 90036, 11:00 am – 6 pm

*\*Schedule subject to change. Questions? Call (323) 806-5634*

## CAAGS FINANCIAL SUMMARY

### Month Ending January 31, 2025

BEGINNING BALANCE	\$ 6,892.62
INCOME	808.21
DISBURSEMENTS	(73.59)
PETTY CASH	127.16
ENDING BALANCE	\$ 7,754.40

*\*Submitted by Jean Wright-Calhoun, CAAGS Treasurer, 2/2/2025*



## CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. BOX 8442  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90008-0442  
(323) 806-5634

### General Membership Meetings

Third Saturday monthly (except July & August)

10:30 a.m.

Los Angeles Family Search Library  
1591 East Temple Way  
(Near 10741 Santa Monica Blvd.)  
Los Angeles, CA 90024





## 2025 CAAGS Annual Membership Dues

Due Date Period: January 2025 – March 2025

\$5.00 Late Fee if Paid After March 31

SCAN THE BELOW QR CODE



### Online Instructions to Join or Renew:

1. Complete Membership Application: <https://caags.org/join-caags/>
2. Submit Membership Application to: [membership@caags.org](mailto:membership@caags.org)
3. Add Membership type to cart and click pay: <https://caags.org/shop-caags/>



### *Letter from the Editor - Meshia Russell*

Please consider writing a review about any aspect of the content of this Newsletter and forward it to the Newsletter Editor [newsletter@CAAGS.org](mailto:newsletter@CAAGS.org) Submissions are due by the third Saturday of each month. It will help to know if the effort to keep this publication going should be continued.

## 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ELECTED OFFICERS	APPOINTED OFFICERS
<p>Muriel Jones – President</p> <p>Dr. Edna F. Briggs – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President/Education</p> <p>Valerie Warrick-Durette – 2<sup>nd</sup> VP /Membership</p> <p>Christina Ashe – Recording Secretary</p> <p>Jean Wright-Calhoun – Treasurer</p> <p>Marie Bryant – Corresponding Secretary</p> <p>James (Jimmy) Murray – Parliamentarian</p> <p>Dr. Edna F. Briggs – Immediate Past President</p>	<p>Carolyn Conway – Librarian</p> <p>Steve Allen – Volunteer Coordinator</p> <p>Dr. Edna F. Briggs – Historian/NGS Delegate</p> <p>Web Site Admin – Vanessa McBride</p> <p>Meshia Russell – Newsletter Editor</p> <p>Monica Maurasse – Social Media Administrator</p>

# Heritage Newsletter

California African American Genealogical Society

## “Inspiring Family History Research



## One Person At A Time.”

March 2025

Volume 37 Issue 3

### President's Message

By Muriel Jones

Greetings CAAGS Members,

In March 2023, then-President Gloria Wallace wrote the following message:



*“Our common goal first is willing to put in the time and effort to CAAGS. Volunteering, attending meetings in person or virtual and being an active member this year. Your input is valued, if you have new information on genealogy, share it. Help a new member get organized. Serve on a committee. Recommend pertinent speakers on genealogical and family research. Represent CAAGS at a national or regional conference. Also, recruit one new member. Our plans this year will involve more genealogy and research. We are planning sessions on organizing your research, writing the family history, cemetery research, church records, trips to special libraries, and research centers in the area. Let us make this year fun and informative.”*

Gloria Wallace

In March 2025, I find myself asking what has changed since she wrote those words. A quick review reveals readily anticipated changes—changes in the composition of CAAGS officers, slight fluctuations in our membership, and a change in location of meetings.

What has remained constant over the two years is the encouragement from the Board, and me as President, for members to take an active role in the organization’s operations. We hold fast in our request for you to come forward to serve on committees and in events that sustain the organization. I, joined by the Board, continue the request that members represent the organization in outreach activities that take place in the community and participate in the other platforms described in the 2023 message.

I see raising awareness of CAAGS as an important goal for this term. Heightened visibility for the organization and education about our genealogy mission are key elements of solidifying our base and potentially recruiting new members. Recruitment is added to the charge before the body and was previously announced at our January meeting as a friendly but competitive drive. We must bring our organization’s mission to the community.

There is no moment more critical for us to solidify our commitment to the genealogy quest. At a moment when federal supports for recordkeeping and of preserving vital aspects of African American history are under attack, our role as grassroots documenters of individual family journeys is all important.

To that end, February marked the kick-off of campaigning for accentuating VISIBILITY, RELEVANCE and LEGACY. In February, when Black History chronicles are accented, CAAGS was represented in the larger community in several examples.

Our 1st Vice President, Edna Briggs, gave a presentation to an audience at the AC Bilbrew Library, and Meshia Russell and I exhibited at the Los Angeles Public Library. To meet the overarching campaign we have kicked off, the Board is currently working with Steve Allen, Volunteer Coordinator, Edna Briggs, 1st Vice President, and the Education Committee (Ophelia Sanders, Gwendolyn Byrd and Gloria Wallace), on two presentations for the month of March, with assistance from our Technical Support Team. Jessie McClellan has agreed to join Paula Clagon as a member of that team. We thank her for exemplifying the volunteer spirit we want to encourage among others who have not yet selected a place in CAAGS to offer their talents.



*Dr. Edna F. Briggs*

The Board is looking ahead to activities for April, May, and June. Are you aware of any community events we can participate in? If on the other hand you wish to create an event, please do not hesitate. In either case, contact Steve or Edna so that we can assist you in planning or execution.

By promoting CAAGS, its mission, resources for research and our enthusiasm for this undertaking, we are strengthening our value to the genealogy-interested community and reinforcing the bonds that connect us to each other in a shared heritage.



*Meshia Russell*

Edna recently completed a video shown at the African American Family History Seminar. We intend to use this product as an introductory tool at future events. We are grateful to have this at our disposal and thank Edna for making it available. Let's share our personal research and discoveries and promote CAAGS as relevant, respected and welcoming to interested community members.

We have expanded our education program with the following series to begin in April. Entitled Ancestral Case Studies, the class is Part 3 of our educational program, and is a 7-week course, conducted by Gloria Wallace. **This course is offered to Members Only. Pre-registration will be required: contact Edna Briggs, CAAGS Education Coordinator, to register for this series.**



#### NEW SPRING COURSE

#### SPRING COURSE SESSION DATES

Session #	Date	Time (PST)	Pre-Registration Required
1	April 2, 2025	7PM to 8PM	Yes
2	April 9, 2025	7PM to 8PM	Yes
3	April 16, 2025	7PM to 8PM	Yes
4	May 6, 2025	7PM to 8PM	Yes
5	May 13, 2025	7PM to 8PM	Yes
6	May 20, 2025	7PM to 8PM	Yes
7	June 4, 2025	7PM to 8PM	Yes

We have an exciting program planned for our next meeting. I look forward to seeing you.

Warm regards,

*Muriel*

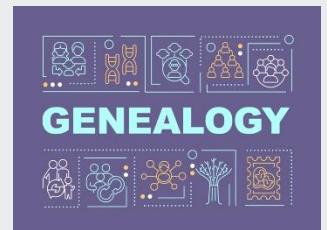
# MARCH REMINDERS

---

## HOLIDAYS

- March 1 - Zero Discrimination Day
- March 1 – First Day of Women’s History Month
- March 3 – World Wildfire Day
- March 4 – Mardi Gras, Fat Tuesday
- March 5 – Crispus Attucks Day
- March 8 – Genealogy Day
- March 9 – Daylight Savings
- March 10 – Harriet Tubman Day
- March 17 – St. Patrick’s Day
- March 20 – Spring Equinox, Start of Spring
- March 21 – International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- March 23 – First CAAGS Meeting Held in 1986
- March 30 – Last Day of Ramadan

---



## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 26 March – Dolores Green
- 27 March – Gwendolyn Byrd
- 28 March – Columbus Sanders
- 29 March – Michael Oliver Armstrong

---

## NEW MEMBERS

- Christie Baker
- Ramona Hendrix
- Olivia Jobe
- Sofia Smith

---



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**CAAGS Guest Speaker Bernice Bennette** will present “Roots of Resilience: African American Stories of Land, Legacy, and Liberation” at the next CAAGS meeting on March 15. This presentation will raise awareness about the history of African American land ownership under the Homestead Act of 1862, by encouraging African Americans to explore their family connections to homestead land. Please view the “Upcoming Events” for the meeting location or your email for the Zoom link.

## 19th Annual African American Genealogy Seminar

**Keynote Speaker Renate Yarborough Sanders** lectures on a variety of genealogy topics but specializes in teaching beginning to intermediate research methodology and sharing specific techniques for researching ancestors of color— both pre- and post- Emancipation. Please visit [aafhs.com](http://aafhs.com) to learn more.

**RootsTech 2025** is the world’s largest family discovery event taking place March 6-8, 2025 in Salt Lake City, Utah and online. Keynote Speakers include figures such as grandson of Nelson Mandela – Ndaba Mandela, comedian and Michael Jackson imitator – Marco Lui, and Olympic couple – Tara Davis-Woodhall and Hunter Woodhall.



## CAAGS SHIRTS



We’re happy to announce that we have CAAGS T-Shirts and Polo Shirts available for purchase. If you would like to order a shirt, please complete the form emailed to you on February 20 to place your order by March 15, 2025. Or send a message to [info@caags.org](mailto:info@caags.org)

## REPARATIONS NEWS



**California** – In February, reparations advocates found support in an unlikely campaigner, Bill Essayli (R-Corona), a Republican lawmaker, who just last year stated he does not support using taxpayer money to pay for reparations. With the support of CJEC, Essayli introduced AB 1315 on Feb. 21, legislation that would create the California American Freedmen Affairs Agency (CAFAA).<sup>1</sup>

**Massachusetts** – Boston reparations advocates are shifting their focus from government towards religious institutions, following Donald Trump’s anti-DEI position. They unveiled a docket of “demands”, which is a play on the Bible’s Old Testament and contains a set of actions for historically white churches to take in support of reparations. This includes a \$50 million fund for Boston’s black community by the end of the year. Faith leaders from Boston’s historically white churches met the group’s demands with warmth and caution.<sup>2</sup>

**New York** – The first female Governor of New York, Kathy Hochul approved the New York reparations commission in 2023. This was shortly after the California commission studied ways to compensate the decedents of slaves. After announcing the budget plan in January, Hochul is calling for a one-year extension on the reparations commission, which would add \$5 million to the controversial panel studying possible payouts to black New Yorkers. There were critics following this announcement, noting that New York has a smaller budget and 700,000 more black residents than California.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Observer. In Unexpected Move, Calif. Republican Lawmaker Bill Essayli Introduces Reparations Bill (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> WGBH. Boston reparations advocates pledge to keep fighting as Trump resumes office. (January 2025). [Link](#).

<sup>3</sup> NY Post. Hochul punts NY reparations commission in new budget, but adds \$5M to cost. (January 2025). [Link](#).



## ARTICLES

### **CAAGS 39th ANNIVERSARY**

In 1985, James Dent Walker (1928 – 1993), Edgar F. Love (1919 – 2009), and Lonnie G. Bunch III recognized the need for African American genealogists and family historians in Los Angeles to network with one another. James Dent Walker was the founder and served as president of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Edgar Love was a Southern California college/university educator. Dr. Lonnie Bunch was the first curator at the California African American Museum in Los Angeles and is currently the Director of the new Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. They collaborated and collectively, their vision led to the formation of the California African American Genealogical Society (CAAGS). The first meeting was held on March 23, 1986, at the California African American Museum.<sup>1</sup>

**Happy 39th Anniversary to the Founders and Members of CAAGS!**

### **NATIONAL GENEALOGY DAY**

National Genealogy Day officially began in 2013 during a celebration of the 200th anniversary of an Irish church. Christ Church in Limerick, Ireland, encouraged community members to seek their family history in archival records dating back to the 1800s. The day caught on in Ireland after the celebration in Limerick, and from there it spread around the world. In the United States the idea of a day dedicated to genealogy had unofficial “roots” as early as 1997, when American onomatology hobbyist Jerry Hill included a day dedicated to a study of personal genealogy in his “Celebrate Your Name Week.” Genealogy was a perfect complement to Hill’s hobby of onomatology—the study of proper names. Today, National Genealogy Day is celebrated internationally on the second Saturday in March. National Genealogy Day is a chance to celebrate your ancestors and begin the practice of preserving their stories for generations to come. It also is the perfect opportunity to begin researching your own family history.<sup>2</sup> Celebration of National Genealogy Day can come in many forms. The following are ways to celebrate and honor family history.

- Document what you know about your family and obtain documentation
- Meet with family members to discuss your family history
- Connect with a genealogy society or attend a genealogy workshop
- Contribute to your family’s history by writing stories on your immediate family’s history
- Pick an ancestor that interests you the most and make a life timeline
- Help with a transcription project
- Plan a family gathering or reunion

<sup>1</sup> CAAGS.org. About, Mission & History. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> Ancestry.com. Celebrating Genealogy Day: Discovering Your Family’s Rich History (2024). [Link](#).

## MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



### CHARLOTTA BASS



Upon the death of founder John J. Neimore, Charlotta Spears Bass became owner and publisher of the Los Angeles-based paper The California Owl (renamed The California Eagle) in 1912, making her likely the first female African American newspaper publisher in the U.S. She established an activist tradition with a crusade against D.W. Griffith's film "The Birth of a Nation." The Eagle also advocated for an end to segregation in housing, jobs, and transportation. She also made history by becoming the first African American woman nominated for Vice President on the national Progressive Party's ticket, alongside California attorney Vincent Hallinan. Their campaign promoted equality, civil rights, good jobs, and world peace.

Despite their efforts, Dwight D. Eisenhower eventually won the 1952 election.<sup>1</sup>

### GEORGIA ANN ROBINSON

Georgia Ann Hill Robinson was born May 12, 1879, in Opelousas, Louisiana. She was raised by her sister, then in a convent, followed by moving to Kansas and working as a governess. While in Kansas, she met Morgan Robinson and they wed after two weeks. The couple moved to Colorado and finally settled in Los Angeles, starting a family in 1906 with birth of their daughter Marian. Then in 1916, LAPD faced a shortage of officers after many enlisted to fight in World War I. Robinson was recruited to join LAPD as a volunteer, working as a jail matron for three years. She also was the first treasurers of the local LA National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). She also helped found the Sojourner Truth Home. She is said to have often brought underprivileged women and children home with her for dinner.

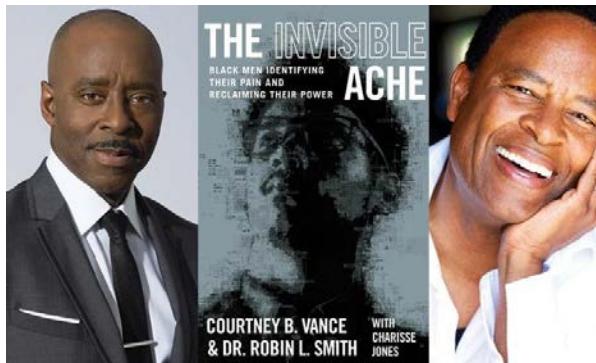
On 10 June 1919, Robinson was officially sworn in as a policewoman. She was the first Black woman to be sworn into the LAPD, and one of the first African American policewomen in the country. Robinson worked with the first white female policewoman, Alice Stebbins Wells. As an official policewoman, Robinson was paid for her work. However, she was not given a gun, handcuffs, or a police car. Nevertheless, she still succeeded in taking people to jail when the need arose. Robinson's police career was cut short in 1928, when a prisoner banged her head into jail bars, causing a head injury so severe that she permanently lost her sight. Twelve years after she began her career with the LAPD, Robinson retired.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Neiman Reports. Timeline: Milestones of the Black Press in the U.S. (2020). [Link, picture](#).

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia. Georgia Ann Robinson (2025). [Link](#). Photo from Public Domain, The Crisis, March 1917, page 231.

## COURTNEY B. VANCE



### **February 8, 2025 – The Invisible Ache: Black Men Identifying Their Pain and Reclaiming Their Power: In Conversation with Courtney B. Vance and William Allen Young**

Courtney B. Vance is an Emmy Award-winning artist, philanthropist, best-selling author and mental health advocate. He wrote “The Invisible Ache” with Dr. Robin L. Smith and spent the day at LA Public Library to discuss it with award-winning actor, director, writer, philanthropist and educational reformer, William Allen Young. Both were honored as 2025 Living Legend Honorees of the 75th Diamond Celebration of Black Heritage in Los Angeles. The honors were presented by the City of Los Angeles, the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) and Our Authors Study Club, Inc. (OASC). CAAGS attended this event during Black History Month and spoke with the community to inform and make them aware of the organization. Appearances were also made by Jacqueline Hamilton from the office of Mayor Karen Bass and the LA Public Library director John F. Szabo, that was awarded Librarian of the Year for 2025

Presented by Leimert Park Village Book Fair, the event continued to the main event. Vance spoke on how he came to write the book following a series of life events that led him to seek professional therapy. With mental health being historically a taboo topic in the Black community, Vance advocates to change the way we view those struggling with mental issues and provide avenues to seek help, as opposed to ignoring those issues. He is a positive voice representing Black men. The event concluded with an impactful audience Q&A, followed by a book signing. “The Invisible Ache” is available for purchase at major retailers and on the website: [click to view or purchase](#).

## NARA ARCHIVES

The Trump administration is forcing out senior leadership at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). President Trump has been highly critical of the archives since the agency asked the Department of Justice to investigate Trump’s mishandling of classified documents after his first term. Following the dismissal of National Archivist Colleen Shogan, the first woman to hold the position nominated by President Joe Biden in 2022, Trump officials made it clear that the White House wanted to remove the leadership team and replace top officials with Trump loyalists, according to a CNN source. The removal of senior staff is a huge loss for NARA, which is a nonpartisan organization, dedicated to the preservation of history and documents.<sup>1</sup> The Trump administration is making an attempt to change or perhaps erase history involving Donald Trump’s records and his mishandling of classified documents. With this, a call to action was sent out in the genealogy community to visit NARA and copy as all records involving slavery and Black history. If yet another attempt to rewrite and erase history is on the horizon, it is up to the community to take necessary steps to mitigate it.

<sup>1</sup> CNN. White House forcing out top leadership at National Archives in major shakeup. (2025). [Link](#).

## EBENEZER ROSENWALD SCHOOL – ANDERSON, SC

In late February 2020 my sister sent the family a news article about Rosenwald Schools. Prior to this I had never heard of these schools, or so I thought. Just a quick introduction, Booker T. Washington of the Tuskegee Institute and Julius Rosenwald, philanthropist and president of Sears Roebuck, built state-of-the art schools for African-American children all across the South. Their effort has since been called the most important initiative to advance black education in the early 20th century.

Attending a Rosenwald School put a student at the vanguard of education for southern African-American children. By 1928, one-third of the South's rural black school children and teachers were served by Rosenwald Schools. In 1954 the Supreme Court ruling declaring segregation in education unconstitutional caused Rosenwald Schools to become obsolete. Once the pride of their communities, many were abandoned or demolished. In 2002, the National Trust joined forces with grassroots activists, local officials, and preservationists to help raise awareness of this important but little-known segment of our nation's history, placing Rosenwald Schools on its 11 Most Endangered Historic Places list. Of the 5,357 schools, shops, and teacher homes constructed between 1917 and 1932, only 10–12 percent are estimated to survive today.

Soon after sending the email, my father responded, "I attended a Rosenwald school." Suddenly our interests were peaked, and I asked which one? He responded "Ebenezer School" which is in Anderson, SC and my mother soon added a photo to the email. I immediately recognized the photograph. I probably saw that building 2-3 times a month until the age of 10. My paternal grandparents attended Ebenezer Baptist Church, and my father had grown up attending that church. Every Easter my grandmother took us to Ebenezer for service and the Easter Egg hunt was held on the church grounds. The school building sat behind the church. The church was also along the route to Hartwell Lake, my father owned a boat, and our family spent lots of time at the lake. However, I feel disappointed to admit that I never knew that old building was a school. I always thought it was the remains of the original church building. I also vividly remember my parents and grandparents telling us kids to stay away from the building due to its dilapidated state in the late 1960s. It was almost like there was an imaginary line we couldn't cross or would be considered too close for their comfort. My father attended the school from 1939 – 1941 or first through third grade and it was a two-room school. The following are some photos taken of the school in what I believe are 1968 and 1972. The school was demolished in the 1970s but no one seems to remember the exact year. I was also pleasantly surprised to learn the Black community in Anderson contributed more money to the school construction than the Rosenwald foundation.

**Total Cost Notes \$2,863.00**

**Notes, Ins. \$2,000.00**

**Funding Sources**

» Negroes	\$625.00
» Public	\$1,838.00
» Rosenwald	\$400.00



Author: Monica Maurasse. Pictures from Author's personal collection, photographed by her dad.

# Ideas to Get the Younger Generation Interested in Genealogy

## Utilize Technology

Encourage the use of user-friendly genealogy apps that offer a fresh look and easy accessibility.

## Take a Field Trip

Select a location that holds importance to the family and incorporate interactive activities.

## Plan a Family Culture Day

Calendar a date for learning family culture which includes family foods, music, artwork, games, photos and books.

## Document Family History

Research together and develop a family documentation process. This will create continuity with family records.

## Celebrate Family Anniversaries

Celebrate as a family on holidays and important days, such as Father's Day or your grandmother's birthday.

## Share Discoveries on Social Media

Use social media platforms to share your discoveries with family and friends. This may spark participation.



## Coming May 8, Judy Blume's "Forever"

Set in 2018 in Los Angeles, Keisha and Justin are two Black teens navigating first love, heartbreak and self-discovery. It is not just a love story reimaged from the once banned 1975 novel, but has plenty of drama, looking at what it means to grow up today. The Netflix series has a diverse cast which includes stars such as Wood Harris, Regina King, Xosha Roquemore and Karen Pittman. Behind the scenes, "Forever" is in the hands of Compton born and creator of "Girlfriends", Mara Brock Akil as showrunner, with the legendary Judy Blume herself onboard as an executive producer. With powerhouses like these leading the charge, you can expect plenty of depth and heart alongside the drama series. And with Anthony Hemingway directing episodes, the show's visuals are going to be just as captivating as the story.<sup>1</sup>

[\*\*CLICK TO WATCH TRAILER\*\*](#)



<sup>1</sup> MSN.com. "Forever": First Look At Black Teen Drama Series From Judy Blume Novel. (2025). [Link](#), [picture](#).

## PLEDGES AND HALLELUJAHs

There once was a homeless man  
Sleeping where only the desperate can  
Beneath the bridge beside a freeway  
Where no one passed, 'til one Sunday  
He woke to a sweet, musical sound  
And hoped he might at last be found  
But though she held the Holy Book  
The singing lady spared him no look

Hey Sister,

Those pledges and hallelujahs made in a sacred place  
Don't mean a thing if you turn from your brother's face

The homeless man did cry in despair  
As he realized the lady did not care  
With spirit weak and footsteps slow  
He went to where the ragged people go  
He was taken in and given bread  
His soul was comforted; he was offered a bed  
Those humble deeds our brother saved  
And no hymn was sung or Holy Book waved

Hey Sister,

Those pledges and hallelujahs made in a sacred place  
Don't mean a thing if you turn from your brother's face

Hey Sister, don't turn from your brother's face

Hey Sister, don't turn from your brother

Hey Sister, don't turn

*By Annette James-Rogers*





## YouTube Channel

### Ancestry's NEW Network Feature - March 2025

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6z9Fg-9Wy9w>

### America's First Daily Black Newspaper

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouEPAMrMakU>

### J. Edgar Hoover's Family Confirms His Black Heritage

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koaZlZfHtAQ>

### Preserving Docs & Photos Found in Genealogy Research

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVWB5tXvh4>

### The Beyond Kin Project: Research Enslaved Ancestors

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ily986wH\\_8&t=2s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ily986wH_8&t=2s)

### The Great Migration: How 6 Million Afr. Am. Escaped Jim Crow

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQO4eAlka4E>



## Legacy Family Tree

### Upcoming Webinars

<https://familytreewebinars.com/upcoming-webinars/>

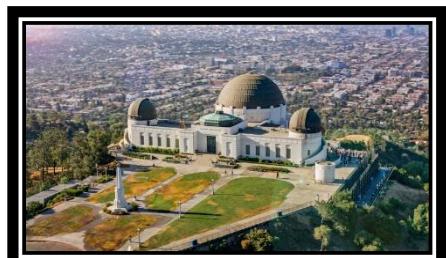
### Webinar Library

<https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar-library/>



## Quick Facts

**March 5, 1898** – Griffith Observatory, one of Los Angeles' most beloved tourist attractions did not begin as a perfect newsworthy story. Griffith J. Griffith was put on trial for attempted murder of his wife. His defense attorney argued that Griffith was the victim of “alcoholic insanity” and the jury convicted Griffith of the lesser charge of assault with a deadly weapon and he was sentenced to the maximum sentence possible; 2 years and a \$5,000 fine. His wife filed for divorce and a judge granted her request in less than 5 minutes, arguably the fastest divorce in LA history. Before his death, Griffith attempted to rehabilitate his image once again by giving to the city – this time money to build a public observatory and theater in Griffith Park. Some in the city wanted to turn down the money, not wanting to accept anything from a social pariah. But ultimately, the money went to the city after Griffith's death by way of a trust. The Colonel, his father-in-law, died in 1919. The Greek Theatre was completed in 1929. The Griffith Observatory was completed in 1935, ultimately rehabilitating the Griffith name.<sup>1</sup>



**March 10, 1933** – In the early evening hours on March 10, 1933, the treacherous Newport-Inglewood fault ruptured, jolting the local citizenry just as the evening meals were being prepared. The Magnitude 6.4 earthquake caused extensive damage (approximately \$50 million in 1933 dollars) throughout the City of Long Beach and surrounding communities. Sadly, the earthquake caused 120 fatalities. Within a few seconds, 120 schools in and around the Long Beach area were damaged, of which 70 were destroyed. Experts concluded that if children and their teachers were in school at the time of the earthquake, casualties would have been in the thousands. One month after the earthquake, the California State Legislature enacted the Field Act when it was determined that loose subsoil, shoddy workmanship, and substandard materials all contributed to the failure of the school structures. The Field Act authorizes the Division of the State Architect (DSA) to review and approve all public-school plans and specifications and to furnish general supervision of the construction work. The California Geological Survey assists the DSA by reviewing geologic hazards affecting schools subject to the Field Act. Since the enforcement of the Field Act, no school has collapsed because of a seismic event, and there has been no loss of life.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> LAist. Happy 120th Griffith Park, but your founder was a jerk. (2016). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> California Department of Conservation. The 1933 Long Beach Earthquake. (2025). [Link](#).



## UPCOMING EVENTS

March 6, 2025 – New Beginners Class,  
Genealogy 101 - Virtual, 6:00 pm

March 6-8, 2025 – RootsTech 2025

March 8, 2025 – 19th Annual African American  
Genealogy Seminar, 8:30 am – 1:30 pm PST

March 13, 2025 – CAAGS Writers Group-  
Virtual, 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

March 15, 2025 – CAAGS General Meeting-  
Hybrid, Los Angeles Family Search Library,  
1591 E. Temple Way, Los Angeles, CA 90024,  
10:30 am – 2:00 pm

March 15, 2025 – CJEC Community Town Hall Meeting:  
California Reparations, 12:30 – 4:00 pm, [TO REGISTER](#)

March 16, 2025 – Museums Free-for-All event,  
30+ Museums in Los Angeles are free to enter

*\*Schedule subject to change. Questions? Call (323) 806-5634*

## CAAGS FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Month Ending February 28, 2025

BEGINNING BALANCE	\$ 7,627.24
INCOME	639.93
DISBURSEMENTS	(30.61)
PETTY CASH	127.16
ENDING BALANCE	\$ 8,363.72

*\*Submitted by Jean Wright-Calhoun, CAAGS Treasurer, 3/2/2025*



## CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. BOX 8442  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90008-0442  
(323) 806-5634  
[CAAGS Facebook](#)

### General Membership Meetings

Third Saturday monthly (except July & August)

10:30 a.m.

Los Angeles Family Search Library  
1591 East Temple Way  
(Near 10741 Santa Monica Blvd.)  
Los Angeles, CA 90024



## 2025 CAAGS Annual Membership Dues

### Due Date Period: January 2025 – March 2025

\$5.00 Late Fee if Paid After March 31

<https://caags.org/join-caags/>



### *Letter from the Editor - Meshia Russell*

Please consider writing a review about any aspect of the content of this Newsletter and forward it to the Newsletter Editor at [newsletter@CAAGS.org](mailto:newsletter@CAAGS.org) or [CAAGSnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:CAAGSnewsletter@gmail.com)

Submissions are due by the third Saturday of each month. It will help to know if the effort to keep this publication going should be continued.

---

### 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ELECTED OFFICERS	APPOINTED OFFICERS
<p>Muriel Jones – President</p> <p>Dr. Edna F. Briggs – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President/Education</p> <p>Valerie Warrick-Durette – 2<sup>nd</sup> VP /Membership</p> <p>Christina Ashe – Recording Secretary</p> <p>Jean Wright-Calhoun – Treasurer</p> <p>Marie Bryant – Corresponding Secretary</p> <p>James (Jimmy) Murray – Parliamentarian</p> <p>Dr. Edna F. Briggs – Immediate Past President</p>	<p>Carolyn Conway – Librarian</p> <p>Steve Allen – Volunteer Coordinator</p> <p>Dr. Edna F. Briggs – Historian/NGS Delegate</p> <p>Web Site Admin – Vanessa McBride</p> <p>Meshia Russell – Newsletter Editor</p> <p>Monica Maurasse – Social Media Administrator</p>

# Heritage Newsletter

California African American Genealogical Society

**"Inspiring Family  
History Research**



**One Person  
At A Time."**

April 2025

Volume 37 Issue 4

## President's Message

By Muriel Jones

Greetings CAAGS Members,

Since our March membership meeting, we have moved ahead with our stated objective of continuing outreach and broadening awareness of CAAGS in the community. Our related activities included accepting the invitation to address the Urban League. On March 29th members of the Education Committee gave a virtual presentation about the CAAGS mission, history and an abbreviated introduction to genealogy. With some orientation to the value of family genealogy pursuits, we also livened the presentation with encouragement to not only consider doing their own family histories but also to explore the ways CAAGS could support them if they choose to become a member.

There will be an additional outreach opportunity on April 17th, an informal leafleting conducted at The Youth Summit Cultural Diversity Event at St John's Methodist Church, in South LA. We are neither part of the planning nor have any responsibility in sponsoring or hosting at the site. The community event is being held under other auspices, but CAAGS members plan to attend and will have with them materials to distribute to attendees as permitted by the sponsors.

As announced in the first months of the year, we began our Ancestral Case Studies series in April. CAAGS members who registered prior to that date have had two introductory sessions, guided by Gloria Wallace in demonstrations of processes, resources, and tools members can use. The design of this virtual series enables practical, hands-on-experience applying specific steps for members' projects in a group learning environment. These replicable steps will aid in sequencing, recording, and otherwise systematizing their genealogical hunt. After a break in the schedule at the end of this month, the series will resume in May.

This is the 40th anniversary year of CAAGS founding, as acknowledged during our membership meeting, but to little accompanying fanfare. Among the Board, work is afoot to devise a fitting observance of this occasion at an upcoming meeting.

I am posting below a March letter from Lonnie Bunch to associates of the Smithsonian Institution. Dr. Bunch, who is Secretary of the entire Smithsonian Institution superstructure, felt in this moment, the need to address this audience, to steady anxiety, especially after an Executive Order entitled Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History was signed into effect by the President.

The Executive Order addressed operations, governance and curatorial decisions within the Smithsonian's departments and affiliates, squarely targeting with harsh wording three of Smithsonian's affiliated museums, particularly and with the most detail and venom, the NMAAHC (National Museum of African American History and Culture). The flavor of the Order was already encoded in the anti-DEI and anti-woke prescriptions of Project 2025. In the Executive Order, VP Vance is charged with overseeing the dictates of the decree in his appointment as Regent, one of the 17 such members that constitute the Smithsonian Governing Board. Though the Smithsonian is nominally an independent institution, two-thirds of its \$1 billion-plus budget is underwritten by congressional appropriations and Federal government contracts.

As agent of the Executive and indirectly, of Congressional critics, the VP will wield extraordinary power within the Smithsonian superstructure, but especially over redirection of the NMAAHC, which has drawn the most scrutiny, the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM), and the National Museum of American Women (still being developed), the other two museums singled out in the Executive Order. The Order spells out significant authority to the VP. Much has been written about these developments and even over whether Dr. Bunch will remain at the helm. Small wonder that Lonnie Bunch felt the need to write this affirmation of the Smithsonian mission and to uphold the integrity of the scholarship and review processes under which he has maintained a solid record since being appointed Secretary by the Regents in 2019.

When we took on our family studies, we did not imagine or envision ourselves professional historians nor partisans in wars over historical interpretations. We are merely common folk interested in learning about our family stories and how our ancestors' struggles and achievements, their triumphs and heartbreaks, situated us where we are today. Many of us wanted simply to fill in blank spaces on family trees or get answers to long held mysteries; to find a lost ancestor, verify family lore, or correct lapsed or buried memories.

In an era where scholarship itself becomes the enemy and must be stricken if it demands a truer conception of our nation's founding and evolution; where libraries and books are enemies and need banning when the retelling of the past corrects omissions or whitewashing of facts; then our discoveries and excavations of our family stories and documentation of them, make our research significant. We transform into griots and preservationists when we document what we learn.

Please take time to read the communication Dr. Bunch circulated to his Smithsonian colleagues.

Regards,

*Muriel*

Dear colleagues,

As an Institution, our commitment to scholarship and research is unwavering and will always serve as the guiding light for our content. Late yesterday, the White House issued a presidential Executive Order (EO) related to cultural institutions including the Smithsonian. The EO directs Vice President Vance, in his role as an ex-officio Smithsonian Regent, to work with our Board of Regents on issues related to content.

We remain steadfast in our mission to bring history, science, education, research, and the arts to all Americans. We will continue to showcase world-class exhibits, collections, and objects, rooted in expertise and accuracy. We will continue to employ our internal review processes which keep us accountable to the public. When we err, we adjust, pivot, and learn as needed. As always, our work will be shaped by the best scholarship, free of partisanship, to help the American public better understand our nation's history, challenges, and triumphs.

As we have done throughout our history, the Smithsonian will work with the Board of Regents, including the Chief Justice, Vice President, and our congressional and citizen Regents. The Smithsonian is fortunate to have a dedicated board that understands and appreciates the Institution's mission, as well as the importance of scholarship, expertise, and service to the American public.

For more than 175 years, the Smithsonian has been an educational institution devoted to continuous learning with the public in mind and driven by our most important mission – the increase and diffusion of knowledge. We remain committed to telling the multi-faceted stories of this country's extraordinary heritage. Thank you for all you do to carry our mission forward. I remain honored to be your colleague and in awe of your daily service to our nation.<sup>1</sup>

Sincerely,  
Lonnie Bunch  
Lonnie G. Bunch III | Secretary



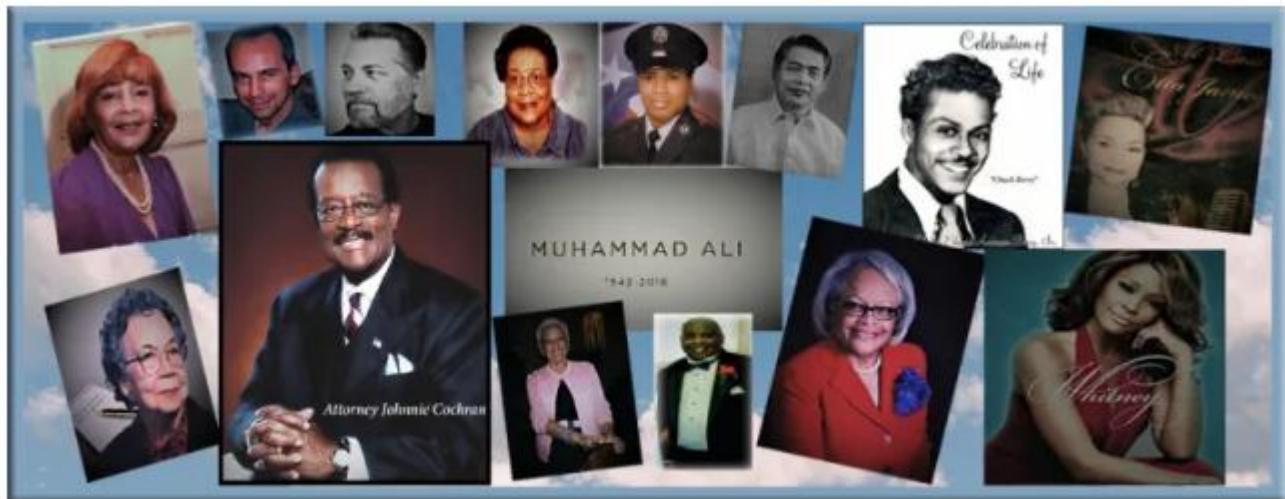
<sup>1</sup> Diverse Issues in Higher Education. Hudson, W. Smithsonian Faces New Executive Order on Content Review. (2025). [Link](#). [Picture](#).

## IN THIS ISSUE

- President's Message
- April Reminders
- Birthdays and New Members
- Announcements
- Reparations News
- DNA News
- New CAAGS Member
- Articles
- YouTube Channel
- Quick Facts
- Upcoming Events
- CAAGS Financial Summary
- CAAGS Member Spotlight
- Letter From Editor
- CAAGS Board of Directors



## CAAGS' FUNERAL PROGRAM COLLECTION



Graphic, Dr. Edna F. Briggs

This project represents the California African American Genealogical Society's (CAAGS) collection of funeral programs from its members and the public. The purpose is to provide information that can be used in researching one's genealogy/family history.

CAAGS' project consists of digitized online posting of extracted portions of the program that contain a photograph (if available), the obituary or biography, and the burial location. The project is ongoing. The funeral programs are those distributed, generally by the family, to the general public at services offered in remembrance of the deceased. These programs are generally arranged alphabetically by the names of the deceased people.

Available here: <https://caags.org/index-obituary/>

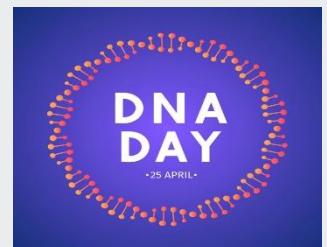
# APRIL REMINDERS

---

## HOLIDAYS

- April 1 – April Fools' Day
- April 4 – National School Librarian Day
- April 15 – Jackie Robinson Day
- April 15 – Tax Day
- April 16 – National Librarian Day
- April 16 – Emancipation Day
- April 18 – Good Friday
- April 20 – Easter
- April 22 – Earth Day
- April 25 – National DNA Day

---



## APRIL BIRTHDAYS

27 April – Vanessa McBride

## NEW MEMBERS

Dr. Lee Cenquizca

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## CAAGS Founder on PBS Finding Your Roots

Our very own CAAGS Founder Dr. Lonnie G. Bunch, III will be featured on Season 11 of Finding Your Roots, hosted by Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Dr. Lonnie G. Bunch, III is the 14th Secretary of the Smithsonian. He assumed his position June 16, 2019. As Secretary, he oversees 21 museums, 21 libraries, the National Zoo, numerous research centers and several education units and centers.

Previously, Bunch was the founding director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture. When he started as director in July 2005, he had one staff member, no collections, no funding and no site for a museum. Driven by optimism, determination and a commitment to build "a place that would make America better," Bunch transformed a vision into a bold reality. A widely published author, Bunch has written on topics ranging from the Black military experience, the American presidency and African American History in California. His most recent book, *A Fool's Errand: Creating the National Museum of African American History and Culture in the Age of Bush, Obama, and Trump*, chronicles the making of the museum that would become one of the most popular destinations in Washington.

In Los Angeles, he served as the curator of history for the California African American Museum from 1983 to 1989. While there, he organized several award-winning exhibitions, including "The Black Olympians, 1904–1950" and "Black Angelenos: The Afro-American in Los Angeles, 1850–1950." He also produced several historical documentaries for public television. Bunch is also a frequent guest on TV news programs such as Face the Nation, Meet the Press, 60 Minutes, CNN and PBS Newshour.<sup>1</sup>

**The episode "Moving On Up", is set to air on April 1, 2025.  
Be sure to tune in for this very special episode!**

[WATCH TRAILER](#)



<sup>1</sup> PBS. Meet the Season 11 Guests. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> NBC BLK. Moscufo, Michela. Reparations bill returns to Congress as Trump leads charge against racial equity in government. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>3</sup> CJEC Official Instagram. 3 facts on the new California American Freedmen Affairs Agency Bill. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>4</sup> New York State Community Commission on Reparations Remedies. Press Release. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>5</sup> City of Tulsa. Press Room. Mayor Nichols Announces First Step in Plan to Address Generational Impacts from 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. (2025). [Link](#).

Visit us at [www.caags.org](http://www.caags.org) and follow us on Facebook, California African American Genealogical Society.

## REPARATIONS NEWS



**United States** – Rep. Ayanna Pressley reintroduced H.R. 40, federal legislation to study reparations slavery and discrimination from 1619 to present, in February as the Trump administration lead a wide-scale rollback of diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. She said, "We have a hostile administration working actively to roll back decades of progress and more recent progress when it comes to our civil rights." The White House has not responded to a request for comment about the bill.<sup>2</sup>

**California** – 3 facts on the new Freedmen Affairs Agency Bill:

1. AB1315 creates CAFAA (California American Freedmen Affairs Agency).
2. AB1315 recognizes descendants of people freed from slavery in the U.S. as a foundational American population.
3. CAFAA will provide free genealogy services through a new office of American Freedmen Genealogy.<sup>3</sup>

**New York** – The next NYSCCRR Business Meeting and Public Hearing is set for April 10 at Co-op City in the Bronx. The theme of this hearing will explore the Great Migration and post-Reconstruction harms in the Bronx.<sup>4</sup>

**Oklahoma** – Tulsa's first Black Mayor, Monroe Nichols, is backing a plan that aims to pay reparations to the survivors and descendants of The 1921 Race Massacre, after other efforts to ensure compensation for victims have failed. On March 17, he announced the first step in his reparation's framework. He signed an Executive Order recognizing June 1 as Tulsa Race Massacre Observance Day in the City of Tulsa. The Mayor will make a larger announcement on April 6.<sup>5</sup>

## DNA NEWS



### 23ANDME FILES FOR BANKRUPTCY

23andMe, a California-based genetic testing and information company, filed for [bankruptcy](#) on March 23, after it could not find a buyer to rescue it from insolvency proceedings. 23andMe started DNA testing in 2007, with a focus on health and ancestry. In contrast, DNA testing giant Ancestry.com was founded in 1996 but first started DNA testing in 2012. Its focus being on genealogical ancestry, missing the health element that [23andMe](#) has and, presenting caution to customers.

California Attorney General Rob Bonta issued a [consumer alert](#) to customers of 23andMe. The company has publicly reported that it is in financial distress and stated in securities filings that there is substantial doubt about its ability to continue as a going concern. Due to the trove of sensitive consumer data 23andMe has amassed, Attorney General Bonta reminds Californians of their right to direct the deletion of their genetic data under the Genetic Information Privacy Act (GIPA) and California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA). Californians who want to invoke these rights can do so by going to 23andMe's [website](#). "California has robust privacy laws that allow consumers to take control and request that a company delete their genetic data," said Attorney General Bonta. He continues, "given 23andMe's reported financial distress, I remind Californians to consider invoking their rights and directing 23andMe to delete their data and destroy any samples of genetic material held by the company."<sup>1</sup>

### LA COUNTY INVESTIGATES FAULTY DNA KITS

Los Angeles County has been using potentially faulty DNA test kits in criminal investigations for months. According to the L.A. County Sheriff's Department, on Wednesday, a supervisor became aware on Monday of a notice from a DNA testing kit manufacturer indicating that a specific lot of kits were prone to poor performance with the potential to cause incomplete results. The maker of those kits recommended that the department stop using the kits. That letter was sent to the L.A. Sheriff's Department on August 28, 2024, but apparently went to an employee who was no longer employed there. Because nobody knew about the letter, the affected kits remained in use for eight months: from July 2024 until February 2025.

The L.A. Sheriff's Scientific Services Bureau is now assessing how many criminal cases may have been impacted by faulty DNA tests -- and to what degree. The discovery not only impacts the L.A. Sheriff's cases, but other law enforcement agencies that use the lab -- as well as the L.A. County District Attorney's Office. The Sheriff's Department said the use of the kits may have led to "incomplete or suboptimal results but is not likely to have falsely identified any individual." Around 4,000 samples will be retested. In some cases, samples may not be able to be retested because of their limited sample size -- which could potentially impact prosecutions. The L.A. Sheriff's Department has launched an internal administrative investigation to understand the oversight. It says it will examine protocols, identify potential gaps and implement corrective procedures.<sup>2</sup>

### READ STATEMENT BY L.A. COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER RICARDO D. GARCIA

<sup>1</sup> Office of Attorney General. Attorney General Bonta Urgently Issues Consumer Alert for 23andMe Customers. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> ABC News. LA County has been using potentially faulty DNA test kits for months. (2025). [Link](#).

## **WELCOME NEW CAAGS MEMBER**

Dr. Jessie Barbour is a special new CAAGS member that joined in January. However, she was not able to attend a meeting in-person until our last meeting in March. During the meeting, she spoke about her grandfather and family being one of the first Black families in Watts. Located in the community of Watts in South Central Los Angeles, The Watts Towers are a well-known attraction, consisting of 17 structures. It was created by Italian immigrant, Sabato "Sam" Rodia, and is the world's largest single construction created by one individual. The towers became Rodia's obsession over a 33 year period and he called it "Nuestro Pueblo" or "Our Town".<sup>1</sup> Dr. Barbour also spoke on a tour of [The Watts Towers](#) scheduled for [April 17](#) and May 23. Please click on the links for more details.

As a longtime Los Angeles resident, Dr. Barbour has served the community in philanthropic actions for the past 50 years. In 2021, she received the David Chow Humanitarian Award. She continues to use her success as a doctor and volunteers at Remote Area Medical clinics in Inglewood to offer free healthcare to those who are not able to afford it. She also founded her own foundation, Team Family Legacy. The foundation provides counseling to students and assistance to complete their education. Dr. Barbour improved her life with education and wants to ensure that she can help underprivileged kids do the same.<sup>2</sup> Please take a moment to click on the below link and watch Dr. Barbour's interview with *Living Your Life Without Limits*.

### **WATCH VIDEO**



<sup>1</sup> WattsTowers.org. Watts Towers Arts Center Campus, About Us. (2022). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> David Chow Foundation. Recipients' Gallery, Dr. Jessie Barbour (2025). [Link](#).



## ARTICLES

### BLACK EXCELLENCE

Rev. James William Charles Pennington (1807-1870) wrote what is believed to be the first history book on Black Excellence. *A Text Book of the Origin and History, Etc. Etc. of the Colored People* was published in 1841 and argued against the dominant pro-slavery discourse through reason, biblical passages, and historical facts. Born a slave, Pennington met Frederick Douglass in New York right after Douglass' 1838 escape from slavery in Maryland. They became good friends and Pennington even performed Douglass' marriage ceremony to Anne Murray. Prior to obtaining his reverend license, Pennington taught in Black schools. He felt strongly that education could improve the lives of free Blacks and dispel the charge of ignorance against them. He advised Black parents to take their kids' education beyond the minimum and not be content once they've attained basic math, reading writing skills.<sup>1</sup> This is a timeless principle that could be used current day to uplift the Black community. Be informed, practice continuous learning and go beyond the expected minimum.

### AZIE TAYLOR MORTON

In the small community of St. John Colony of Dale, Texas, Azie Taylor Morton was born to a deaf and mute mother, Fleta Hazel Taylor, in 1936. An unfortunate start to life, Taylor did not know her father and was raised with the help of her grandparents alongside 14 children on a farm. Growing up, she worked in the cotton fields and attended Texas Blind, Deaf, and Orphan School despite not being blind or deaf, because there were no high schools for African Americans in her town. Taylor completed this school at the top of her class at the early age of 16. Then in 1952, she enrolled in an all-Black college in Austin, Huston-Tillotson University. She pledged the Beta Kappa Chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) sorority and graduated cum laude. She then attempted to enroll in a graduate program at The University of Texas, only to be denied admission due to the state's segregationist educational policies. Following the denial, she took a job as a teacher for delinquent girls for a year, then was hired as the assistant to the President at Huston-Tillotson. Taylor only held that position for a few months before she was hired at the Texas AFL-CIO in Austin. In 1961, she moved to Washington D.C. and was invited by President John F. Kennedy to work for the Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity, which she remained for 20 years in various positions.<sup>2</sup>

History was made in 1977 when Taylor was appointed as the 36<sup>th</sup> Treasurer of the United States by President Jimmy Carter. This appointment made her the first and only African American to hold the position and have her signature on a Federal Reserve note from 1977 to 1981. The role of Treasurer has changed significantly over time. As the U.S. Department of the Treasury explains, the role of Treasurer is older than the Treasury Department itself. Today, the Treasurer oversees the U.S. Mint (which produces coins), oversees the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (which produces dollars), oversees Fort Knox (where the Treasury stores gold and other precious metals), oversees the Treasury's Office of Consumer Policy, serves as a liaison with the Federal Reserve, and advises the Treasury Secretary.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the U.S. Treasurer role, Taylor held an array of influential positions to include: member of the American Delegation to Rome, Italy, for the Enthronement of Pope John Paul II in 1978; Chair of the People to People Mission to the Soviet Union and China in 1986; and an Election Observer for Presidential elections in Haiti, Senegal, and the Dominican Republic. She also was a representative to the first African/African American Conference held in Africa. In 1999, she returned to Austin and served on the Austin Housing Board of Commissioners (HACA). A scholarship for low-income students at her alma mater was created in her honor. In 2003, her time on earth ended when she passed from a massive stroke at her home.



Azie Taylor Morton, Public Domain

<sup>1</sup> Colored Conventions. The Fight For Black Mobility: Traveling to Mid-Century Conventions. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> Blackpast.org. Azie Taylor Morton (1936-2003). (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>3</sup> National Foundation for Credit Counseling. Azie Taylor Morton and the Role of the U.S. Treasurer. (2022). [Link](#).

## NATIONAL DNA DAY

April 25 is National DNA Day, commemorating the completion of the Human Genome Project in 2003 and the discovery of DNA's double helix in 1953. The day is a global movement to mobilize, energize and empower communities, educators and students to innovate, collaborate and discover the promise of our shared humanity and connection to the natural world. The origin of the day was from a U.S. Senate resolution in 2003 that declared April to be "Human Genome Month". However, the resolution was never passed by the House of Representatives, meaning it is not a true "National" day. Despite this, people still refer to it as National DNA Day.<sup>1</sup>

## LOS ANGELES DNA

*Alta / A Human Atlas of a City of Angels* by Marcus Lyon



With approximately 10 million people living in Los Angeles County and over 100 neighborhoods in the city of Los Angeles alone with people that speak over 200 languages, the DNA of the city is like a kaleidoscope – colorful, changing. Because of this diversity, it is often debated on what it means to be "from LA" or what constitutes the "real LA." [Alta / A Human Atlas of a City of Angels](#) is a project developed by London-based artist Marcus Lyon in collaboration with Nicole Onishi and Tom Learner at the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI). Through ancestral genetic science, photographic portraits, and oral storytelling, Alta sheds light on 100 extraordinary Angelenos or Alteños/ñas, as they're called in the project, creating lasting positive change in their communities, and in doing so, paints a vivid portrait of LA in the 21st century.

"What does it mean to be an Angeleno?" was one of the questions Lyon and his team asked each of the nominees. In addition to sharing their stories in their own words, all 100 Alteños/ñas also dove deep into their DNA to tell the stories of their ancestors. To develop the ancestral genetic science behind Alta, the Human Atlas team worked with FamilyTreeDNA. The DNA analysis began with a cheek swab to collect cells, which the company then compared to samples from 90 different population groups in its database. These "reference populations" are groups of people who intermarried in isolation, making them genetically unique. The Alteños/ñas descend from 70 populations dispersed around the globe.

Beyond defying stereotypes, this project also enhances the accuracy of DNA analysis, providing a richer story of human existence over time. "Alta is very timely for what the GCI could and should be doing in terms of really broadening what we consider as conservation," Learner says. "This is a project that ultimately preserves a snapshot in time of Los Angeles. It's not preserving a painting, sculpture, photograph, or building. It's preserving intangible heritage across a broad group of people—it's preserving stories."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Human Genome Research Institute. National DNA Day. 2025. [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> Getty News & Stories. Garcia, Lilibeth. What Does It Mean to Be from LA? (2025). [Link](#). [Photos](#). (On display at LA Public Library through April 27).

## JAZZ APPRECIATION MONTH

April is National Jazz Appreciation Month (JAM), an annual celebration of the heritage and history of jazz. It was established by John Edward Hasse, curator of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History in 2001.<sup>1</sup> JAM became a national extension of the original Jazz Awareness Month created by the Louisiana Jazz Federation in New Orleans in 1980.<sup>2</sup> Before we had JAM, we had the sounds of Ella Fitzgerald. She was the first African American to win a Grammy Award, taking home 2 of only 28 awards for Best Jazz Performance and Best Vocal Performance, Female in 1958.<sup>3</sup>



Ella Fitzgerald, New York, ca. 1945, Getty Images

## NATIONAL ELLIS ISLAND DAY

The Statue of Liberty was gifted to the United States by French anti-slavery activist Édouard de Laboulaye in 1865 to honor the centennial of the U.S. Declaration of Independence and its friendship with France. Current day, with the history reversing Trump administration, France has deemed the United States unworthy and requested the statue's return. In its early days, "Lady Liberty" or "Liberty Enlightening the World" overlooked Ellis Island and was one of the first sights to nearly 2,000 immigrants a day<sup>4</sup> – a first sight of freedom. While National Ellis Island Family History Day is on April 17th, and Ellis Island was a major entry point for immigrants, there is no specific "National Ellis Island Day" focused on African Americans. It was an entry point for an estimated 12 million immigrants over a 60-year period, primarily European and Asian. However, failing in comparison, there were approximately 100,000 African Americans, including those from the Caribbean, who entered the United States through Ellis Island and other eastern ports. Ellis Island's records and the stories of African Americans who immigrated through it are recognized during Black History Month. These records are being highlighted and can be found in The Statue of Liberty Ellis Island Foundation ["Passenger Search"](#) database (limited viewing with a free account and full viewing with paid membership).

NAME	ARRIVED	LAST PLACE OF RESIDENCE / BIRTH PLACE	SHIP NAME	ACTION
Woodson, Carter Godwin	1907	N/A	Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse	 
Woodson, Carter G	1933	New Canton Va	Bremen	 
Woodson, Carter	1934	New Canton Va	Ile De France	 
Woodson, Carter	1935	New Canton Va	Bremen	 
Woodson, Carter G	1937	New Canton Va	Ile De France	  

### **Notable African Americans who passed through Ellis Island:**

- Louis Armstrong: Trumpeter that played a significant role in developing jazz
- James Baldwin: Celebrated author and civil rights activist
- Josephine Baker: First Black woman to star in a motion picture
- Shirley Chisholm: First Black woman to be elected to the US Congress
- Kenneth and Mamie Phipps Clark: Married psychologists and first Black president of Am. Psychological Assoc.
- Bessie Coleman: First Black woman to hold a pilot license
- Carter G. Woodson: Historian and scholar that established Black History Month

<sup>1</sup> JohnEdwardHasse.com. Jazz Appreciation Month. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> Night Is Alive. Blog, Jazz. (2023). [Link](#).

<sup>3</sup> Biography. Ella Fitzgerald. (2021). [Link](#).

<sup>4</sup> National Day Calendar. National Ellis Island Family History Day. (2025). [Link](#).

# Strategies for Finding Brick Wall Ancestors

- ✓ **Review What You Know**
- ✓ **Explore Name Variations**
- ✓ **Read the Papers**
- ✓ **Get Bookish**
- ✓ **Diversify**
- ✓ **Join Your Ancestor's FAN Club**
- ✓ **Map It Out**
- ✓ **Create a Timeline**
- ✓ **Test the DNA**
- ✓ **Get Social**

[Click Here for Full Detail](#)

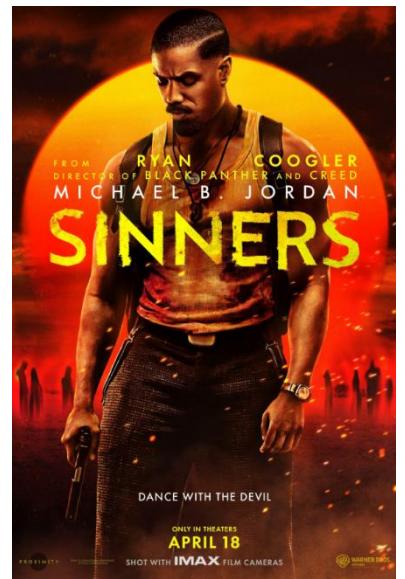


## Coming April 18, Ryan Coogler's "Sinners"

Set in the 1930s Jim Crow Era, and filmed in New Orleans, *Sinners* is a well-awaited horror film directed by *Black Panther* and *Creed*'s Ryan Coogler. Michael B. Jordan stars as two twin brothers, Smoke and Stack, that return to their hometown only to discover that an even greater evil is awaiting to welcome them back.<sup>1</sup> The film is a period piece that incorporates this evil in a time when the sale of alcohol was prohibited. The 1932 [Volstead Act](#) aimed at the Commissioner of the IRS to enforce the prohibition of alcohol. Despite its goals, it led to a rise in bootlegging and the creation of a black market for alcohol and increased organized crime.

Coogler called *Sinners* his most personal film to date. It allowed him to explore his [ancestral Mississippi family](#) history, talk to his nearly 100-year old grandmother, and pay tribute to his late uncle. "It's a world that my grandparents were a part of," he said of the setting, "A time that is overlooked in American history."<sup>2</sup> As promotion for the film, a game on *Fortnite* was created, called *Sinners, Survive the Night*. It is [available](#) to play through April 28. Also, Fandango partnered with WB on an exclusive offer within the game that grants players a buy-one-get-one-free ticket deal for *Sinners*, opening April 18.

[WATCH TRAILER](#)



<sup>1</sup> IMDB. Sinners. (2025). [Link](#), [picture](#).

<sup>2</sup> MSN. Kit, Borys. Ryan Coogler Talks 'Sinners' Secrets As He Unveils New Trailer. (2025). [Link](#).



## YouTube Channel

**S08 E16: A Call To Action: Protect Our History (NARA)**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Rp28kZ7fZU>

**Conquer Brick Walls in Your Family Tree**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfFIY36eo88>

**Which DNA test is best for African Americans?**  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-\\_1tgdRfHXA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-_1tgdRfHXA)

**Family History Fake News on TV? Spot Genealogy Errors**  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7\\_JgJU8t4I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7_JgJU8t4I)

**BlackProGen LIVE! Ep 51: Finding & Tracing Enslaved Ancestors**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzKEu71OZ0w>

**Researching the Enslaved on Ancestry® | Tips & Tricks**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AVRA58M92Q>

## Legacy Family Tree

**Upcoming Webinars**  
<https://familytreewebinars.com/upcoming-webinars/>

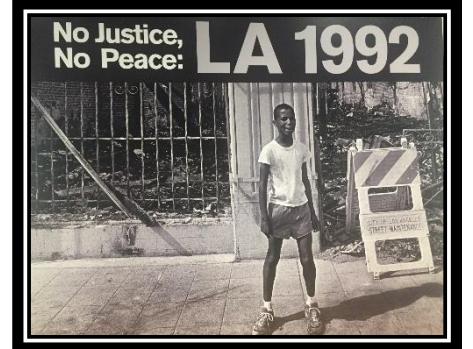
**Webinar Library**  
<https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar-library/>

## Quick Facts

**April 4, 1850** – Los Angeles was incorporated as a municipality on April 4, 1850, five months before California achieved statehood. The discovery of oil in the 1890s brought rapid growth to the city. The city was further expanded with the completion of the Los Angeles Aqueduct in 1913, which delivers water from Eastern California.<sup>1</sup> The original flag of the City of Los Angeles was designed in 1931. Ordinance 70,000 officially established the City's own flag, then known as the "Fiesta Flag" on July 22, 1931, designed for the City's 150th birthday (Sesqui-Centennial). The red represents the vineyards, the golden-yellow depicts the orange groves, and the green symbolizes the olive trees. The replica of the City Seal is shown in the center of the flag.<sup>2</sup>



**April 29, 1992** – The 1992 Los Angeles riots—also called the Los Angeles uprising—sprung from years of rising tensions between the LAPD and the city's African Americans, highlighted by the 1991 videotaped beating of motorist Rodney King. On April 29, 1992, anger boiled over after four LAPD officers were found not guilty of assaulting King, leading to several days of widespread violence, looting and arson throughout L.A. In a matter of hours, neighborhoods across South and Central Los Angeles were in flames. California Governor Pete Wilson declared a state of emergency and ordered the activation of reserve National Guard soldiers. On May 1, Rodney King pleaded with his now infamous quote, "Can we all get along?" By May 3, thousands of National Guardsmen and federal troops had largely curbed the uprising, which left more than 60 people dead and produced about \$1 billion in damage.<sup>3 4</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia. Los Angeles. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> LACity.gov. Meet Your Government, The Official Flag of Los Angeles. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>3</sup> History.com. Los Angeles Riots. (2021). [Link](#).

<sup>4</sup> Photograph by Meshia Russell, April 23, 2017 taken of photo in exhibit No Justice, No Peace: LA 1992 at CAAM Museum, curated by Tyree Boyd-Pates.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

April 3, 2025 – New Beginners Class,  
Genealogy 101 – Virtual, 7:00 pm

April 10, 2025 – CAAGS Writers Group-  
Virtual, 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

April 12, 2025 – 10<sup>th</sup> Los Angeles Black Film Festival,  
Let Live Theatre, 916 N. Formosa Ave, LA, CA 90046

April 17, 2025 – Tour of the Watts Towers,  
Watts Towers Arts Ctr Campus 1727 E. 107th St,  
Watts, CA 90002, 11:00 am – 3:00 pm

April 19, 2025 – CAAGS General Meeting-  
Hybrid, Los Angeles Family Search Library,  
1591 E. Temple Way, Los Angeles, CA 90024,  
10:30 am – 2:00 pm

April 26, 2025 – 6th Annual Dymally International Jazz  
& Arts Festival, Dignity Health Sports Park-Tennis  
Stadium, 18400 Avalon Boulevard, Carson, CA 90746

January 13 - April 27 – Alta / A Human Atlas of a City  
of Angels by Marcus Lyon in collaboration with the  
Getty Conservation Institute. On display at LA Public  
Library, 630 W. 5th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90071

*\*Schedule subject to change. Questions? Call (323) 806-5634*

## CAAGS FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Month Ending March 31, 2025

BEGINNING BALANCE	\$ 8,236.56
INCOME	1,137.47
DISBURSEMENTS	(725.63)
PETTY CASH	127.16
ENDING BALANCE	\$ 8,775.56

*\*Submitted by Jean Wright-Calhoun, CAAGS Treasurer, 4/2/2025*



## CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. BOX 8442  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90008-0442  
(323) 806-5634  
[CAAGS Facebook](#)

### General Membership Meetings

Third Saturday monthly (except July & August)

10:30 a.m.

Los Angeles Family Search Library  
1591 East Temple Way  
(Near 10741 Santa Monica Blvd.)  
Los Angeles, CA 90024



Visit us at [www.caags.org](http://www.caags.org) and follow us on Facebook, California African American Genealogical Society.



## CAAGS MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Would you like your family's story highlighted in the next CAAGS newsletter?  
Or do you have new family discoveries for "Show & Tell"?  
If so, please submit your story with any relevant pictures  
to the Newsletter Editor by April 25, 2025.



### *Letter from the Editor - Meshia Russell*

Please consider writing a review about any aspect of the content of this Newsletter and forward it to the Newsletter Editor at [newsletter@CAAGS.org](mailto:newsletter@CAAGS.org) or [CAAGSnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:CAAGSnewsletter@gmail.com). Submissions are due by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month. Please be aware there may be edits on submissions.

---

### 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ELECTED OFFICERS	APPOINTED OFFICERS
<p><b>Muriel Jones – President</b> <b>Dr. Edna F. Briggs – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President/Education</b> <b>Valerie Warrick-Durette – 2<sup>nd</sup> VP /Membership</b> <b>Christina Ashe – Recording Secretary</b> <b>Jean Wright-Calhoun – Treasurer</b> <b>Marie Bryant – Corresponding Secretary</b> <b>James (Jimmy) Murray – Parliamentarian</b> <b>Dr. Edna F. Briggs – Immediate Past President</b></p>	<p><b>Carolyn Conway – Librarian</b> <b>Steve Allen – Volunteer Coordinator</b> <b>Dr. Edna F. Briggs – Historian/NGS Delegate</b> <b>Web Site Admin – Vanessa McBride</b> <b>Meshia Russell – Newsletter Editor</b> <b>Monica Maurasse – Social Media Administrator</b></p>

# Heritage Newsletter

California African American Genealogical Society

**"Inspiring Family  
History Research**



**One Person  
At A Time."**

May 2025

Volume 37 Issue 5

## President's Message

By Muriel Jones

Greetings CAAGS Members,

As the calendar flips to the month of May, our organization continues its drive to promote the value of genealogy and highlight that. We strive to capture ways family history can come alive not only inside our group, but to others, specifically within the Southern California African American community and the diasporic communities with a stake in our history.

Mother's Day is a day not merely for the commercial urgings to gift the special women in our lives with this or that trinket. The day prompts remembrance of the woman who gave birth to us. There may also have been other female kin worthy of remembrance on such an observance—one who may have raised us in the absence of a biological mother or who added her attention or caring during our development to adulthood. These women may not even have had children themselves. That is not in itself a limiting attribute. Mother's Day reflects regard for the godmothers aunts, mentors of all varieties, who saw in a young person the chance to intercede with nurturing support.

In addition to those women alive in our memories, our dedication to genealogy means we also are linked to our foremothers writ large. We are connected to the women of past generations. Their determination and sacrifices were future oriented as well as aimed to their own survival. These women, related to us or not, held the hope that those yet unseen would have opportunity that they themselves did not enjoy. Without that, people once held in bondage and exposed to every possible deprivation would not have been able to achieve any strides.

Remembering my own mother, who imparted to us in countless anecdotes, her journey from a rural farm girl to her becoming a teacher. She had many challenges, from financial to medical, yet was able to become the first in her family to attend and graduate from college. She repaid a debt she felt she owed her mother for supporting her and to her home community by returning as a teacher. There were lessons in her storytelling, imparting her essential belief in education, and in service to others by sharing knowledge and skills. She later became an elementary school teacher in a big-city school, sharing her gifts with scores of inner-city youth while making a home for me and my siblings, and still later showering her knowledge and wisdom with grandchildren, nieces and nephews. I am sure you too have potent memories across your lifespan.

After our last membership meeting, I visited with one of our long-time members, Carolyn Conway. As most of you may know, Carolyn is convalescing away from her home until she is able to resume fully her care needs independently. I found her recovering well and slowly moving to that goal. It was a pleasure to spend time with her and show that we hold her in our thoughts. I am sure she would be happy to hear from others by phone, in cards or other correspondence, as she continues getting necessary rehabilitative care.

I am here making an official call out to the membership (again). This time with specific to fill some vacant positions within the board structure, and I am hoping you will respond to this need. I am sending this alert with confidence that someone not currently serving on the Board will make themselves available to take on the positions of the organization's Librarian and Phone Monitor.

These positions are designated in our bylaws and to abide by the requirements of that governing document, we need volunteers filling them. The librarian is responsible for receiving and keeping account by a listing of any printed materials donated to our book and periodical library, as well as recommending additions to our collection. While there is no written description for the Phone Monitor in the bylaws, it is important to have the function officially fulfilled. The Monitor would track, report, and refer to the Board calls coming onto the CAAGS phone line. In the recent past, the role has been assumed variously depending on existing arrangements for the phone line, but it is important at this time to make an official designation of that function.

Adding here, we are grappling with the realization we have no manual of practices and procedures that augments the official bylaws. The Board recognizes the critical need to have such a document in place. We are well advised to have such a record for operational consistency and to provide backup to our organization's constitution. We look forward to receiving names for a subgroup of volunteers with organization development, knowledge of the organization, and writing skills to help produce a manual. I am asking that members not currently serving Board positions take this opportunity to step forward to assume any of these duties.

I want to report that Steve Allen is moving ahead with assistance from his committee to plan a proposed CAAGS Juneteenth gathering. Undoubtedly, he will be ready with an update at the May membership meeting.

CAAGS will once again participate in the annual June Jubilee. This year it will happen on June 14, 10am-4pm, at the Los Angeles Central Branch Library, downtown. If you expect to attend and can fill any time during that day representing CAAGS, please let Steve Allen know.

Your support in any mentioned activities is greatly appreciated.

Until later,

*Muriel*

## IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message.....	1
May Reminders.....	4
Birthdays and New Members.....	4
Announcements.....	5
Reparations News.....	5
Library News.....	6
Articles.....	7
YouTube Channel.....	15
Quick Facts.....	15
Helpful Genealogy Tool.....	16
Social Security Tips.....	17
Upcoming Events.....	18
CAAGS Financial Summary.....	18
CAAGS Member Spotlight.....	19
Letter From Editor.....	19
CAAGS Board of Directors.....	19

## BROWN VS. BOARD OF EDUCATION

PBS SoCal



Watch

Local

Early Childhood

Giving



Schedule

Donate



### Black/White & Brown: Brown Versus the Board of Education of Topeka

History

Explore the stories of individuals, events, and circumstances involved in this historic legal battle, focusing mainly on Kansas. The film examines the broader national strategy of the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund, which consolidated cases from various states and addresses key questions about the participants' motivations, goals and the impact of their actions on the local community and the nation.



**May 17, 1954** – U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas*, declaring segregation in public schools unconstitutional, violating the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. This decision effectively overturned the "separate but equal" doctrine established in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case. May 17 marks the anniversary of the School Desegregation Ruling. [CLICK HERE TO WATCH ON PBS](#)

# MAY REMINDERS

---

## HOLIDAYS

- May 2 – National Brothers and Sisters Day
- May 5 – Cinco de Mayo
- May 6 – National Teachers Day
- May 11 – Mother's Day
- May 17 – National Reparations Rally
- May 17 – Armed Forces Day
- May 18 – Malcolm X Day
- May 18 – Visit Your Relatives Day
- May 25 – African Liberation Day
- May 25 – Missing Children's Day
- May 26 – Memorial Day

---



## MAY BIRTHDAYS

- 4 May – Carolyn Conway
- 18 May – Julia Holcomb
- 20 May – Meshia Russell
- 26 May – Romona Hendrix

---

## RENEWAL MEMBERS

- Charlotte Forte-Parnell
- Tommie Mallet

**HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!**



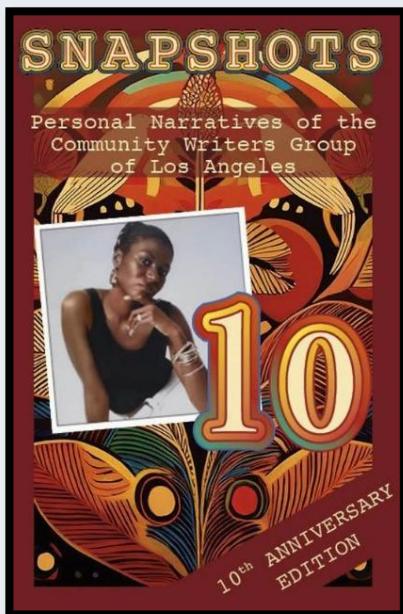
# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**June Jubilee.** Volunteers are needed for the Third Annual *June Jubilee: A Celebration of Black Excellence* at the [LA Public Library](#) on June 14 in celebration of Juneteenth. It is a day of joy and inspiration with speakers, workshops, entertainment, and family activities. Please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Steve Allen, if you would like to volunteer.

**CWGLA.** It's the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Community Writers Group of Los Angeles. Please show your support by purchasing a copy of the special Snapshots 10<sup>th</sup> edition book. Part of proceeds of book sales will go to writers' group.

[CLICK TO PURCHASE](#)

**VCGS Salt Lake Safari.** The Ventura Genealogy Society's 2026 Salt Lake Safari dates are March 15-21, 2026, with Saturday March 14 on a space-available basis, so those dates are your decision. Room rates are \$109.00 standard queen, or \$119.00 deluxe queen rooms, plus local taxes. To make reservations and get our special genealogy rate, please call Richard Williams, Plaza Hotel Marketing Manager directly at (801) 606-2410.



## REPARATIONS NEWS



**National Reparations Rally** – On Saturday, May 17, 2025, the National Reparations Network, in close collaboration with the Reparation Education Project, will host the [National Reparations Rally](#) in Lansburgh Park, Washington, DC (1098 Delaware Avenue S.W.) from 11 AM to 5 PM. Michael Eric Dyson will be the special keynote Headliner.<sup>1</sup>

**California** – A reparations bill aimed at giving at least 10% of funds from California Housing Finance Agency's home purchase assistance program to qualified individuals who are descendants of formerly enslaved people continued to move up in the Assembly Judiciary Committee in April. According to Assembly Bill 57, authored by Assemblywoman Tina McKinnor (D-Hawthorne), it requires, upon establishment of an agency to determine whether an applicant qualifies as a descendant of a formerly enslaved person. Several of this years reparations bills are second attempts of bills from last year. "AB 57 passed the Housing Committee. Thank you Tanecia Herring, California Hawaii State Conference NAACP for testifying," added McKinnor. AB 57 will next be heard in the Assembly Appropriations Committee, the last stop before an Assembly-wide vote on the bill.<sup>2</sup>

**New York** – There is a public hearing in Long Island on [May 6](#) that is centered around "Displacement, Removal, Land and Wealth Theft" and will begin with brief opening remarks and two educational presentations, followed by a public testimony period where attendees may share personal stories, historical insights, and proposals for reparative justice.<sup>3</sup> The next meeting is set for May 28, 10 AM - 12 PM EST.

<sup>1</sup> NBC BLK. Moscufo, Michela. Reparations bill returns to Congress as Trump leads charge against racial equity in government. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> California Globe. Symon, Evan. California Reparations Bill Passed in Assembly Judiciary Committee. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>3</sup> New York State Community Commission on Reparations Remedies. Press Release. (2025). [Link](#).

# LIBRARY NEWS



## California State Library Loses Funding

The California State Library was notified by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) that, effective April 1, 2025, the 2024-25 federal grant awarded under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) has been terminated. The State Library received \$15,705,702 in funding to assist local California libraries for the current 2024-2025 current fiscal year. Over 21% of that funding has yet to be sent to California. Rebecca Wendt, California Deputy State Librarian, stated "The California State Library remains committed to serving all of the people of California and will explore alternative means to ensure continued access to essential library services."<sup>1</sup>

## Institute of Museum and Library Staff Placed on Leave

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is a small federal agency, with around 70 employees, that awards grant funding to museums and libraries across the United States. In April, President Trump named the Deputy Secretary of Labor, Keith Sonderling, as the new acting IMLS director. This followed Trump's previous executive order shrinking seven federal agencies, including the Institute of Museum and Library Services. AFGE Local 3403, which represents IMLS workers made a statement that the staff were notified by email on being placed on paid administrative leave for up to 90 days. This notice was sent after a brief meeting between Elon Musk led DOGE staff and IMLS leadership. Employees had to turn in government property, and email accounts were disabled.<sup>2</sup> Fortunately, a federal judge agreed to [temporarily block](#) the Trump administration from taking any more steps to dismantle an agency that funds and promotes libraries across the country. U.S. District Judge Richard Leon ruled that plaintiffs who sued to preserve the IMLS are likely to show that the Republican administration does not have the legal authority to unilaterally shutter the agency, which Congress created.<sup>3</sup>

## Californians Now Have Access to 300,000 eBooks

If you're a Californian with an email address, you now have access to a whole new virtual bookshelf of 300,000 eBooks and audiobooks thanks to the California State Library. The project, California's Bookshelf, can be accessed via The Palace Project app. Patrons have access to 70,000 unique titles in 20 languages across many genres, including young adult fiction and nonfiction and children's books ranging from picture books to chapter books. There are 3,500 titles with no wait times.

Here are the steps to access California's Bookshelf (and [here's a video](#) to explain it):

1. Download the [free Palace app](#) on your iOS or Android device.
2. Inside the app, use the "find my library" search function to find "California's Bookshelf."
3. Browse the collection until you find a title you would like to read then either "get" or "reserve" that book.
4. Choose the option to create a virtual card and then complete the details in the form. You will need to enable the app's permission to use your specific location, just one time, for the creation of your library card.
5. Look in your email for your library card number. You can borrow items using that number and your new password.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> California State Library. California State Library Receives Notice of Termination of Federal Grant by IMLS. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> NPR.org. Limborg, Andrew. Entire staff at federal agency that funds libraries and museums put on leave. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>3</sup> AP News. Kunzelman, Michael. Judge temporarily blocks Trump administration from dismantling library services agency. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>4</sup> Long Beach Post. Gallegos, Emma. Californians now have access to 300,000 eBooks through California State Library. (2025). [Link](#).



### **SMITHSONIAN** *AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM*

On May 6, 1991 the Smithsonian approved creation of National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) or as most may know it as the African American Museum. It was completed and first opened in 2016. The museum has served as a tourist attraction and accessible vault for our history for the past 9 years. Today, the museum is at risk of losing this history because of the current Trump administration. With May being a time to celebrate and promote the importance of preserving our nation's and state's historical places and heritage recognized as both National Historic Preservation Month and California Preservation Month, the constant executive orders are counterproductive to preservation. An attempt to reduce or erase historical atrocities in America.

To combat and in support of preserving the museum, Black churches across the country are becoming members of the National Museum of African American History and Culture to defend it against Trump's accusations of pushing "divisive, race-centered ideology." Rev. Robert Turner of Empowerment Temple African Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore is encouraging his congregation to pay the \$25 membership fee to join the African American history museum, AP reports. He credits the move to Rev. Otis Moss III of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, who urged his church members to do the same. The churches' rising support for NMAAHC comes in response to Trump's March 27 executive order, which targets what he called "divisive" Smithsonian exhibits. The order also appoints Vice President JD Vance, who serves on the Smithsonian Board of Regents, to lead the charge in removing so-called "improper ideology" from these institutions. While Trump has pledged to "restore the Smithsonian Institution to its rightful place as a symbol of inspiration and American greatness," critics accuse him of attempting to whitewash American history by glossing over the horrific truths surrounding slavery and segregation. Turner, who regularly walks 43 miles from Baltimore to the White House each month to advocate for reparations, recalled a recent moment when a child saw his "REPARATIONS NOW" sign and turned to their mother to ask, "What are reparations?"

"That to me is a perfect manifestation about why we need to be teaching more true history of America, and not taking away certain subjects because they make people feel uncomfortable," Turner said. On April 18, House Democrats on the Administration Committee, responsible for overseeing the Smithsonian, sent a letter to JD Vance voicing their concerns about the executive order. "This flagrant attempt to erase Black history is unacceptable and must be stopped," the letter said. "The attempt to paper over elements of American history is both cowardly and unpatriotic."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Black Enterprise. JoVonn, Jeroslyn. Black Churches Pay \$25 Membership Fees To Support The NMAAHC After Trump Calls It 'Divisive'. (2025). [Link](#).

## **SMITHSONIAN DIRECTOR PLACED ON LEAVE**

Kevin Young, the director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), is currently on personal leave and not leading the museum, according to Smithsonian officials. The leave began on March 14 and will continue for an “undetermined period,” according to Kevin Gover, the Smithsonian’s under-secretary for museums and culture. Shanita Brackett, the museum’s associate director of operations, has stepped in as acting director. Young has served as director since January 2021, succeeding Lonnie G. Bunch III after Bunch became Secretary of the Smithsonian. Under Young’s leadership, the museum launched a digital “Searchable Museum” in the fall of 2021 and kicked off its \$350 million “Living History” campaign the following year.

His unexpected leave comes as President Donald Trump escalates efforts to reshape national cultural narratives. A recent executive order issued by Trump directs Vice President J.D. Vance to work with the Smithsonian Board of Regents on content oversight. That directive has alarmed museum officials, historians, and members of the Black community, who see it as a direct attempt to influence how history is presented, particularly Black history. The order has cast a spotlight on the NMAAHC, which opened in 2016 under Bunch’s leadership. Once praised for unearthing America’s untold Black stories, the museum is now facing political scrutiny for content Trump labeled as divisive and anti-patriotic. Bunch addressed the situation in a memo to Smithsonian staff, writing that the institution “will continue to showcase world-class exhibits, collections, and objects, rooted in expertise and accuracy.” He wrote that the Smithsonian “remains steadfast in our mission to bring history, science, education, research, and the arts to all Americans.”

Young’s museum career began in 2005 at Emory University, where he taught English and creative writing and served as a curator at the university’s rare books library. In 2016, he became director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture at the New York Public Library, one of the oldest Black cultural institutions in the United States. During his five-year tenure, he raised \$10 million in funding, launched a literary festival, boosted attendance by 40 percent, and acquired archives from cultural icons, including Harry Belafonte, Sonny Rollins, and James Baldwin. An author of 16 books of poetry and nonfiction, Young also serves as poetry editor for *The New Yorker*. The executive order follows Trump’s earlier efforts to dismantle racial equity initiatives, including his 2020 directive banning diversity training in federal agencies.

Historians say those efforts have evolved into a larger campaign targeting how race, power, and history are discussed nationwide. Dr. Jerry W. Washington, an education expert who has written extensively about the cultural and political battles over historical memory, described the Trump-led effort as part of “the fight over American memory.” In an article for *The Medium*, Washington wrote, “It highlights a fundamental divergence not just in policy but in how we interpret history,”<sup>1</sup>



Dr. Jerry W. Washington, an education expert who has written extensively about the cultural and political battles over historical memory, described the Trump-led effort as part of “the fight over American memory.” In an article for *The Medium*, Washington wrote, “It highlights a fundamental divergence not just in policy but in how we interpret history,”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Afro The Black Media Authority. Smithsonian African American Museum Director Placed on Leave. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> ArtNews.com. African American History Museum Director on Leave as Trump Targets Smithsonian. (2025). [Link](#). Photo by Nick Hunt/Getty Images for MVAFF

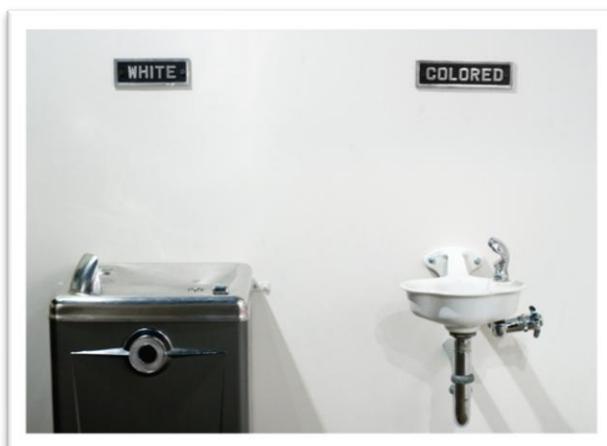
## **1965 SEGREGATION CLAUSE REPEALED**

After a recent change by the Trump administration, the federal government no longer explicitly prohibits contractors from having segregated restaurants, waiting rooms and drinking fountains. The segregation clause is one of several identified in a public memo issued by the General Services Administration, affecting all civil federal agencies. The memo explains that it is making changes prompted by President Trump's executive order on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), which repealed an executive order signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965 regarding federal contractors and nondiscrimination. The memo also addresses Trump's executive order on gender identity. While there are still state and federal laws that outlaw segregation and discrimination that companies need to comply with, legal experts say this change to contracts across the federal government is significant.

The clause in question is in the Federal Acquisition Regulation, known as the FAR — a huge document used by agencies to write contracts for anyone providing goods or services to the federal government. Clause 52.222-21 of the FAR is titled "Prohibition of Segregated Facilities" and reads: "The Contractor agrees that it does not and will not maintain or provide for its employees any segregated facilities at any of its establishments, and that it does not and will not permit its employees to perform their services at any location under its control where segregated facilities are maintained." That clause has been in government contracts for decades — at least as far back as President Reagan, according to this digitized 1983 issue of the Federal Register.

The current version of the clause, last updated in 2015, defines segregated facilities as work areas, restaurants, drinking fountains, transportation, housing and more — and it says you can't segregate based on "race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or national origin." Several federal agencies, including the departments of Defense, Commerce and Homeland Security, have notified staff who oversee federal contracts that they should start instituting these changes.

A recent notice from the National Institutes of Health shows that the change is already in effect. The notice, regarding a maintenance agreement for scientific freeze dryers, cites the GSA memo and reads, "FAR 52.222-21, Prohibition of Segregated Facilities and FAR 52.222-26 — Equal Opportunity will not be considered when making award decisions or enforce requirements." To be clear, all businesses — those that have government contracts and those that do not — still need to follow federal and state laws, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which makes segregated facilities illegal.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> NPR.org. Simmons-Duffin, Selena. Segregated facilities' are no longer explicitly banned in federal contracts. (2025). [Link](#).

## REPOSSESSIONS EXHIBIT AT CAAM

*Repossessions* is a group exhibition on display at the California African American Museum (CAAM) in Los Angeles. It is inspired by the concept of reparations: the effort to repair the economic and psychological devastation caused by slavery for descendants of enslaved African Americans. It presents the work of five Black artists commissioned to create artworks based on documents from the enslavement and sharecropping eras in the United States. Chelle Barbour, Marcus Brown, Rodney Ewing, Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle (Olomidara Yaya), and Curtis Patterson each offer insightful ways to understand the significance of the original documents, which were offered to the artists by white families working toward repair through an initiative of *The Reparations Project* in collaboration with *Reparations4Slavery* and date from the 1860s to the early 1900s. Using a variety of visual strategies, the newly produced artworks contribute to viewers' understanding of the long aftermath of enslavement and the need for reparations.

The title of the exhibition acknowledges the legally sanctioned possession of one human being by another as the foundation for wealth and power in this country. It also names the process of giving Black artists possession of historical objects and their facsimiles, allowing them to "repossess" them from the family archives of enslavement, and alter their existence.

Finally, *Repossessions* is an indictment of the history of human ownership and its violent multigenerational and international legacy that demand to be confronted and reckoned with to this day. *Repossessions* is curated by Bridget R. Cooks, independent curator, scholar, and professor of African American studies and art history at the University of California, Irvine.<sup>1</sup> *On display February 14 - August 3, 2025. Admission is free.*

**"Reparations would mean a revolution of the American consciousness, a reconciling of our self-image as the great democratizer with the facts of our history."**

— Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations," 2014

## AWOL ERIZKU: X EXHIBIT AT CAAM

In his first solo museum exhibition, Los Angeles-based conceptual artist Awol Erizku (b. 1988, Gondar, Ethiopia) focuses on pioneering American Muslim human rights activist El Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, more commonly known as *Malcolm X*, as a subject of personal inspiration and complex cultural significance. *Awol Erizku: X* is composed of new and recent works, including photographs, sculptures, works on paper, film, archival material, and a decades-spanning soundtrack. Together, they collectively convey the artist's view of Malcolm X as a metaphorical prism of faith, masculinity, and transformation, and a key figure connecting the United States and Africa.

Building on the exhibition's first iteration at the SCAD Museum of Art in Savannah, Georgia, the Los Angeles presentation includes the addition of Erizku's epic black Nefertiti disco ball. Erizku posits his singular Afrocentric aesthetic, something he refers to as "Afro-esotericism," as a means to link ancient mythology, diasporic tradition, and contemporary culture and to explore the expanded contours of Black spirituality, self-definition, and image making. *Awol Erizku: X* is organized by the SCAD Museum of Art and curated by Daniel S. Palmer, Chief Curator, SCAD. The CAAM presentation is organized by Cameron Shaw, Executive Director, CAAM.<sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> *On display March 26 - September 7, 2025. Admission is free.*

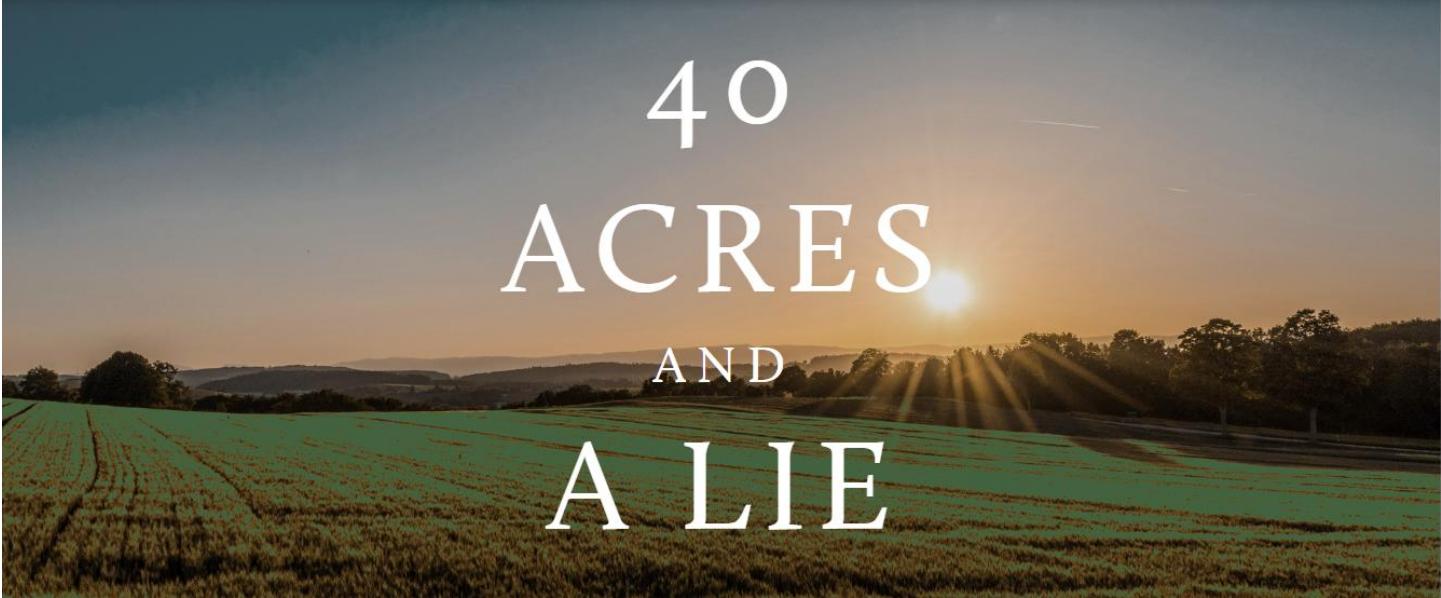


[CLICK FOR CAAM HOURS & DIRECTIONS](#)

<sup>1</sup> California African American Museum. Exhibitions, *Repossessions*. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> California African American Museum. Exhibitions, *Awol Erizku: X*. (2025) [Link](#).

<sup>3</sup> Photograph by Meshia Russell, March 28, 2025, taken of both exhibits at CAAM Museum.



# 40 ACRES AND A LIE

A government program gave formerly enslaved people land after the Civil War, only to take nearly all of it back a year and a half later. Artificial intelligence was used to track down the people, places, and stories that had long been misunderstood and forgotten, then asked their descendants about what's owed now. Black Americans have been demanding compensation and restitution for their suffering since the end of the Civil War.

40 Acres and a Mule remains the nation's most famous attempt to provide some form of reparations for American slavery. Today, it is largely remembered as a broken promise and an abandoned step toward multiracial democracy. Less known is that the federal government did issue hundreds, perhaps thousands, of titles to specific plots of land between 4 and 40 acres. Freedmen and women-built homes, established local governments, and farmed the land. But their utopia didn't last long. After President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, his successor, Andrew Johnson, stripped property from formerly enslaved Black residents across the South and returned it to their past enslavers.

Over the course of two and a half years, a team of Public Integrity reporters, editors, and researchers identified 1,250 Black men and women who had earned land as reparations after the Civil War. From there, the team conducted genealogical research to locate living descendants of many of those who had received and then lost the land. For the first time, these living Black Americans were made aware of the specific land that had been given to and then taken away from their ancestors.

This project is an unprecedented and innovative use of Freedmen's Bureau records—an impossible task for most of American history, until recent advances in genealogical research and the digitization of thousands of pages of Reconstruction-era documents made it feasible.

Please click the link below for this three-part podcast and discover how genealogy was used to find the records and locate current day descendants. Listen and explore the legacy of America's broken promise to formerly enslaved Black people.<sup>1</sup>

Available here: <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2024/06/40-acres-and-a-lie/>

Submitted by Joyce Rucker

<sup>1</sup> Mother Jones. 40 Acres and a Lie. (2025). [Link](#).

## US Cities with Reparations Commissions

- Alameda County, California
- Asheville, North Carolina
- Boston, Massachusetts
- Detroit, Michigan
- Durham, North Carolina
- Evanston, Illinois (1<sup>st</sup> to pay reparations)
- Fulton County, Georgia
- Kansas City, Missouri
- Los Angeles, California
- New York, New York
- Northampton, Massachusetts
- Providence, Rhode Island
- San Francisco, California
- Shelby County, Tennessee
- St. Paul, Minnesota
- St. Petersburg, Florida



### Coming Soon to Redondo Beach, Montauk

Lavae McClinnahan is a New Jersey native with expansive work in the luxury lifestyle space working with Ralph Lauren, LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton SE, Sony, Honda and more. In the early 2000s, he relocated to Los Angeles and grew a love for fine dining. His next venture is Montauk, Redondo Beach's first fine-dining establishment. There will be a dress code, which hocked some of the local restaurant owners. "There was some pushback from people who thought the community would be excluded because this is a beach town with bar and grills and dive bars", McClinnahan said.<sup>1</sup> He also faced backlash from passive-aggressive skepticism to outright hostility, including people calling the police in attempts to shut him down before the doors even open.<sup>2</sup>

It is known that Redondo Beach does not have a huge population of Black residents. When asked why he chose the area to build his restaurant, McClinnahan said it was simple. The location was affordable, and he's doing it by himself, with no investors and \$1 million of his own funds. Montauk's menu, he said, is considered an affordable luxury and what he defined as "seafood with a flair" with a matching vibe. McClinnahan shared all staff are required to wear Ralph Lauren attire in unison, inspired by his time working for the beloved brand. "I think it's going to open the door for more minorities to come into this territory," he said. "And I want to remind everyone here that we're not trying to come here and change the area; we're just providing the offering."<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Blavity. Medley, B. Everything You Need To Know About The Black-Owned. (2025). [Link](#), [picture](#).

<sup>2</sup> BET. Venable, M. How One Restaurateur is Bringing Black Excellence. (2025). [Link](#).

## Issa Rae Joins SDFC as Club Owner

San Diego Football Club (SDFC) have added acclaimed actress, producer and entrepreneur Issa Rae to their ownership group as a club partner ahead of their 2025 launch. Known for her Emmy-nominated Inglewood-based HBO series *Insecure*, Rae has become a cultural icon. Beyond her success in entertainment, Rae champions fostering community connections and creating opportunities for diverse voices to thrive – values that align with SDFC's goal to unite and inspire through the global game of soccer. "Joining SDFC's ownership group is an incredible honor, and I am thrilled to be part of building something that represents and uplifts this vibrant community," said Rae. She joins a distinguished group of club partners who share a commitment to excellence, including World Cup winner Juan Mata, retired US Navy SEAL Jocko Willink, founding partner and San Diego Padres' perennial MLB All-Star Manny Machado and Nigerian singer Tems. Rae also joins San Diego FC in partnership with Pave Investments, a private African investment firm that was involved in leading an investment group to invest in NBA Africa's entity in 2021. As part of this commitment, Tunde Folawiyo, chairman of Pave Investments, founding director, Kwamena Afful, will also join the San Diego FC ownership group. "Issa Rae is a role model and inspiration to so many people around the world, and it is a great honor that she has joined our club as a partner," said SDFC chairman Sir Mohamed Mansour.<sup>1</sup>



## ReLiving Single Podcast Premieres May 7

Hartbeat, Kevin Hart's multi-platform entertainment company, just announced a nostalgic show coming to the airwaves hosted by hit 90's sitcom *Living Single* stars Erika Alexander and Kim Coles. Dubbed the "ultimate rewatch series" *ReLiving Single* will see the duo deep-dive into episodes and moments from the hit 90's series. "We've seen the massive impact that *Living Single* has had on The Culture," stated Eric Eddings, SVP of Digital & Platforms at Hartbeat. "It's one of those shows that inspired legions of journalists, lawyers, and changed the narrative of what it meant to be a Black woman in '90s America. *ReLiving Single* will highlight the intentional effort made by the cast and crew—many of whom we've never heard from before. And who better to guide us through this journey than Erika and Kim?"

Alexander and Coles are gearing up to take die-hard fans behind-the-scenes with stories, unforgettable moments, and unearthed details of episodes that viewers have long pondered on. Fans can also look forward to surprise guest appearances and exclusive insights from the stars themselves. New episodes of *ReLiving Single* will drop weekly, starting May 7 on The *ReLiving Single* YouTube channel. Listeners can also tune in to podcasts.<sup>2</sup>

[LISTEN HERE](#) or watch on [YOUTUBE](#)



<sup>1</sup> MLS Soccer. Issa Rae joins San Diego FC ownership as club partner. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> Vibe. Corrine, Amber. Erika Alexander, Kim Coles Are "ReLiving Single" In New Podcast On Iconic 90's Show. (2025). [Link](#).

## Coming June 6, Tyler Perry's *Straw*

As part of his content deal with the streamer, Tyler Perry is set to write and direct Netflix's upcoming drama *Straw*. The film follows a single mother as she faces a series of unfortunate events that leads her down an unexpected path. According to the logline, "she becomes entangled in a situation she never imagined and finds herself at the center of suspicion in a world that seems indifferent to her existence." The film will star Taraji P. Henson, Sherri Shepherd, Teyana Taylor, Glynn Turman, Sinbad, Rockmond Dunbar, and Mike Merrill. Angi Bones and Tony Strickland will also produce the film alongside Perry. *Straw* is the latest project resulting from Perry and Netflix's creative partnership, in which Perry will write, direct, and produce features and series under respective multi-year, first-look deals. Perry has several other projects that were released with Netflix, including the film "[Six Triple Eight](#)" and the drama series "[Beauty in Black](#)." One of his recent Netflix releases, "[Mea Culpa](#)" starring Kelly Rowland, premiered in 2024.<sup>1</sup>

### [WATCH TRAILER](#)



## Coming June 4, *Power Moves* with Shaquille O'Neal

Since former brand endorsers and NBA legends Shaquille O'Neal and Allen Iverson returned to Reebok to help rebuild their basketball business, there has been a massive shift in the industry. Now, the Boston-based brand's recent rise is being highlighted in a new series from Netflix. *Power Moves* premieres June 4 and showcases O'Neal as President of Reebok Basketball, teaming up with Vice President Iverson to revitalize the iconic brand through new athlete partnerships and product launches. From signing WNBA star Angel Reese as their first NIL athlete - prior to becoming a National Champion at LSU, O'Neal's alma mater - to [releasing](#) the brand's first performance basketball shoe in more than a decade, the series shows all sides of the sneaker industry.

"*Power Moves* isn't just about sneakers or titles," said O'Neal. "It's about showing the work behind building something meaningful. This series shows the strategy, setbacks, and wins of what it really takes to lead a brand you love. Reebok gave me my start, and now I get to help write its next chapter.<sup>2</sup>



### [WATCH TRAILER](#)

<sup>1</sup> TylerPerry.com. Tyler Perry To Write And Direct New Film "Straw" For Netflix. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> SportsIllustrated.com. Ehrlich, Michael. Shaq Revives Reebok Basketball in Netflix Series "Power Moves". (2025). [Link](#).



## YouTube Channel

The Photo That Inspired Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5EiibLF-OtM>

Afr. Am. Genealogical Records at the California State

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CU4d6rxas1l>

Creating Your Family Photo Archive

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtToAJs78I8>

Reparations for Everyone... Except Black Americans?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBaE3RTsCBs&t=1439s>

Roberta Estes Explains the NEW UPDATES for mtDNA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=essG5JYMERw>

Genealogy Master Plan (2025)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0CysLAr9dS0>



## Legacy Family Tree

Upcoming Webinars

<https://familytreewebinars.com/upcoming-webinars/>

Webinar Library

<https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar-library/>

## Quick Facts

**May 17, 1875** – Oliver Lewis was an African American jockey who rode the colt Aristides and won the first Kentucky Derby on May 17, 1875, at 19 years old. His time of two minutes 37.75 seconds set an American record over the mile and a half distance. The winning thoroughbred was trained by renowned African American trainer Ansel Williamson. Very little is known about Lewis' life, but according to the Black Athlete Web site, Lewis was "A family man, a husband and father of six children." The race known as the "The Most Exciting Two Minutes in Sports" was held on the newly opened Louisville Jockey Club racetrack, now known as Churchill Downs. Lewis never rode in another Kentucky Derby, but it is known that he attended the 33rd race, in 1907. Despite his role in the history of one of America's most famous sporting events, Lewis has been neglected by sportswriters for well over a century and his life beyond the famous race is practically undocumented. Oliver Lewis died in 1924, in Lexington, Ky., and is buried in the Lexington No. 2 Cemetery along with several other black jockeys of the period, including Isaac Murphy, who won the Derby three times.<sup>1</sup>

[CLICK TO WATCH 2025 KENTUCKY DERBY](#)



**May 1, 1950** – Gwendolyn Brooks is one of the most influential and widely read 20th-century American poets. The author of more than 20 books, she was highly regarded even during her lifetime and had the distinction of being the first Black poet to win the Pulitzer Prize in 1950 for her book [Annie Allen](#). She was also the first Black woman to hold the role of Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress, a position now referred to as the Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry and served as the Illinois poet laureate for 32 years. Her body of work gave her, according to critic George E. Kent, "a unique position in American letters. Not only has she combined a strong commitment to racial identity and equality with a mastery of poetic techniques, but she has also managed to bridge the gap between the academic poets of her generation in the 1940s and the young Black militant writers of the 1960s."<sup>2</sup>



Follow on Facebook

<sup>1</sup> KY.gov. Kentucky Commission on Human Rights. Hall of Fame, Oliver Lewis. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> PoetryFoundation.org. Gwendolyn Brooks (2025). [Link](#)

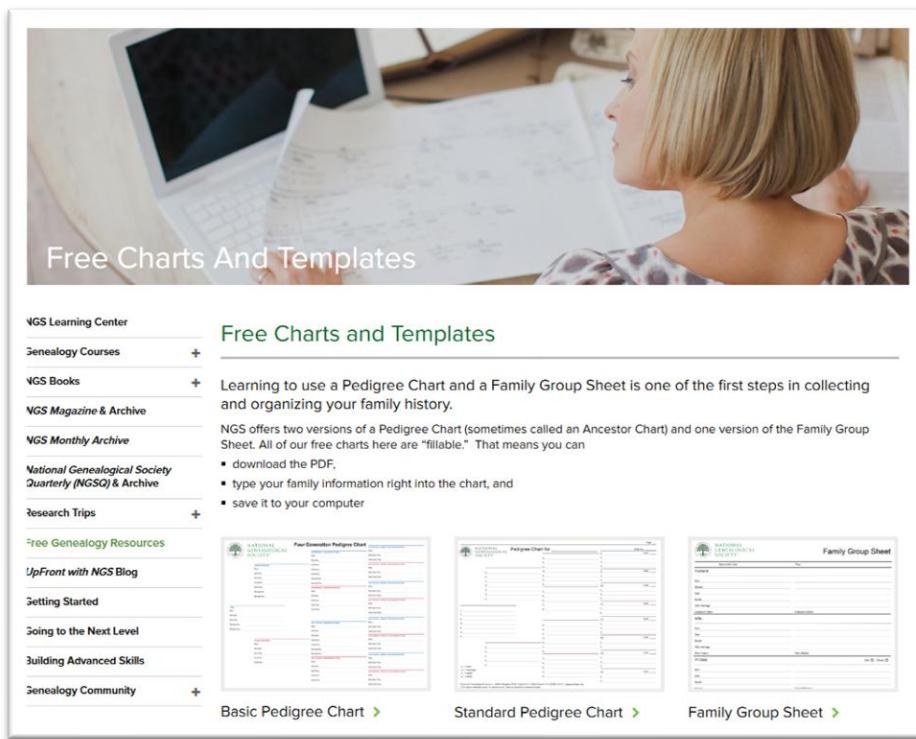
## HELPFUL GENEALOGY TOOLS

It seems that it is difficult to find a decent pedigree chart in Word or Excel. So, I have included instructions to access the following sheets that I've found helpful.

- NARA Family Group in excel format – [Click Here](#)
- NGS has online fillable forms with free membership – Pedigree Chart
- NGS has online fillable forms with free membership – Family Group Sheet

The National Genealogical Society was the first national genealogical organization and is more than a century old. CAAGS is currently an NGS member and endorses individual membership. [NGS](#) offers two versions of a Pedigree Chart (sometimes called an Ancestor Chart) and one version of the Family Group Sheet. You must join for free to access the forms. All of their free charts are “fillable.” Here’s the instructions to get started:

- 1) Go to <https://www.ngsgenealogy.org/free-resources/>
- 2) Click on green “Join NGS Today” button on the left of the screen (if you do not have an account)
- 3) Create login and password (if you do not have an account)
- 4) Click on “Free Fillable Pedigree Charts and Templates” to download the PDFs
- 5) Type your family information into the chart
- 6) Save to your computer
- 7) Instructions on filling out the charts are near the bottom of the page



The screenshot shows a woman with blonde hair working at a desk, looking at a computer screen. The screen displays the NGS website with a section titled "Free Charts and Templates". The sidebar on the left includes links for NGS Learning Center, Genealogy Courses, NGS Books, NGS Magazine & Archive, NGS Monthly Archive, National Genealogical Society Quarterly (NGSQ) & Archive, Research Trips, and Free Genealogy Resources. The main content area features a heading "Free Charts and Templates" and a sub-section about using Pedigree Charts and Family Group Sheets. It includes a list of steps: download the PDF, type family information, and save it to your computer. Three sample charts are shown: "Basic Pedigree Chart", "Standard Pedigree Chart", and "Family Group Sheet".

*TIP: Often, you may not have a computer when filling out the forms. Completing a form while you are interviewing or just chatting with family members will help to jog their memory. Always have forms with you at family functions.*

**Submitted by Gwendolyn Byrd**



Visit us at [www.caags.org](http://www.caags.org) and follow us on Facebook, California African American Genealogical Society.

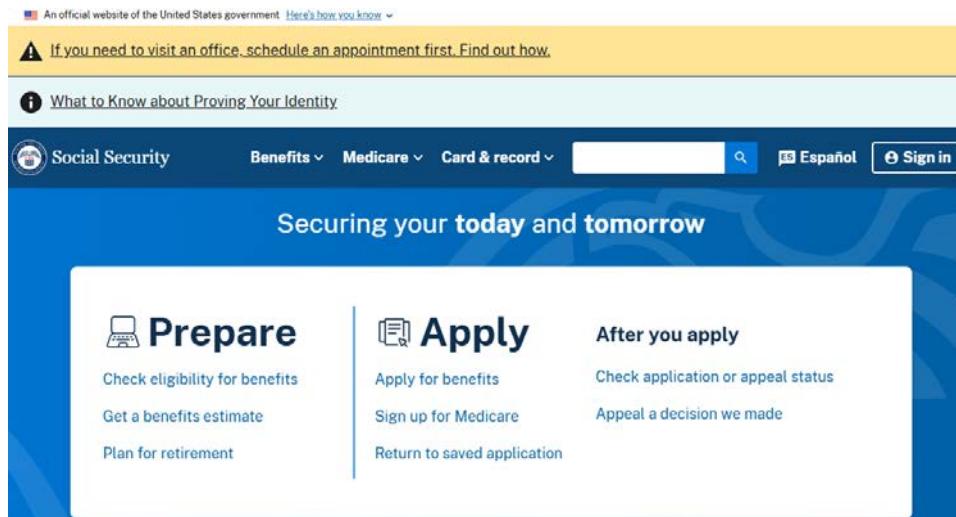
# SOCIAL SECURITY TIPS

The Trump administration funding cuts continues with yet another important agency, Social Security. Effective March 31, the Social Security Administration no longer verifies identity over the phone. This includes changes to direct deposit information and applying for benefits. This means if you cannot verify your identity online, you will need to visit an office in person. However, this was followed by notice on some in-person services being suspended and lease closures to offices, effectively reducing the resources needed to accommodate the new influx of people visiting field offices in person. With the longer wait times and possibility of more services being suspended to include online access, it will be useful to download your entire work history and any other info for safekeeping.

To download your Social Security work history, you can either access it online through your My Social Security account or request a paper statement by mail. The online method is free and provides immediate access to your earnings record and future benefit estimates. The paper statement option requires filling out a form and mailing it to the Social Security Administration.

## ONLINE ACCESS (FREE)

1. Go to my Social Security account @ <https://www.ssa.gov> : You can access your account either by logging in or creating one if you don't have one already (*verify creating new account option is still available and please do not get discouraged if setting up the Login.gov or ID.me is a bit difficult*).
2. View your earnings record: Once logged in, navigate to the section that displays your earnings history. You can typically find this information by searching for "View Earnings Record" or a similar term.
3. Download or print: You can then download or print the information for your records.



## PAPER STATEMENT (FREE)

1. Download the Request for Social Security Statement form (SSA-7004) <https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-7004.pdf>: You can find this form on the Social Security Administration's website.
2. Fill out the form: Complete all the required information, including your name, address, and Social Security number.
3. Mail the form: Mail the completed form to the address provided on the form.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**May 1, 2025** – New Member Orientation and New Beginners Class, Genealogy 101 – Virtual, 6:00 pm PST

**May 8, 2025** – CAAGS Writers Group- Virtual, 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm PST

**May 17, 2025** – CAAGS General Meeting- Hybrid, Los Angeles Family Search Library, 1591 E. Temple Way, Los Angeles, CA 90024, 10:30 am – 2:00 pm PST

**May 19, 2025** – NAACP California-Hawaii State Conference Day at the Capitol

**April 17 – May 4** - Alice Coltrane, Monument Eternal, Hammer Museum

**April 17 – June 15** - Luther Vandross: Artistry and Elegance Exhibit, GRAMMY Museum L.A. Live, 800 West Olympic Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA

**May 23-26, 2025** – National Genealogical Society Tales and Trails Family History Conference - Nashville, Tennessee [CLICK TO REGISTER](#)

*\*Schedule subject to change. Questions? Call (323) 806-5634*

## CAAGS FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Month Ending April 30, 2025

BEGINNING BALANCE	\$ 8,648.40
INCOME	581.37
DISBURSEMENTS	(1,001.86)
PETTY CASH	127.16
RESTRICTED FUNDS	(30.00)
ENDING BALANCE	\$ 8,325.07

*\*Submitted by Jean Wright-Calhoun, CAAGS Treasurer, 5/2/2025*



## CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. BOX 8442  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90008-0442  
(323) 806-5634

 [CAAGS Facebook](#)

### General Membership Meetings

Third Saturday monthly (except July & August)

10:30 a.m.

Los Angeles Family Search Library  
1591 East Temple Way  
(Near 10741 Santa Monica Blvd.)  
Los Angeles, CA 90024



Visit us at [www.caags.org](http://www.caags.org) and follow us on Facebook, California African American Genealogical Society.



### *Letter from the Editor - Meshia Russell*

Please consider writing a review about any aspect of the content of this Newsletter or if you would like to be featured in the CAAGS Member Spotlight.

Send to the Newsletter Editor at [newsletter@CAAGS.org](mailto:newsletter@CAAGS.org) or [CAAGSnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:CAAGSnewsletter@gmail.com)

Submissions are due by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month.

*\*Please be aware there may be edits needed on submissions.*

## 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ELECTED OFFICERS	APPOINTED OFFICERS
<p><b>Muriel Jones – President</b> <b>Dr. Edna F. Briggs – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President/Education</b> <b>Valerie Warrick-Durette – 2<sup>nd</sup> VP /Membership</b> <b>Christina Ashe – Recording Secretary</b> <b>Jean Wright-Calhoun – Treasurer</b> <b>Marie Bryant – Corresponding Secretary</b> <b>James (Jimmy) Murray – Parliamentarian</b> <b>Dr. Edna F. Briggs – Immediate Past President</b></p>	<p><b>Carolyn Conway-VACANT – Librarian</b> <b>Steve Allen – Volunteer Coordinator</b> <b>Dr. Edna F. Briggs – Historian/NGS Delegate</b> <b>Vanessa McBride – Web Site Admin</b> <b>Meshia Russell – Newsletter Editor</b> <b>Monica Maurasse – Social Media Administrator</b></p>

# Heritage Newsletter

California African American Genealogical Society

**“Inspiring Family  
History Research**



**One Person  
At A Time.”**

June-July 2025

Volume 37 Issue 6-7

## President's Message

By Muriel Jones

Greetings CAAGS Members,

Each day that passes brings us closer to our seasonal transition. This means not only longer daylight hours, summer heat and the accompanying activities of summer, but a break from our monthly meetings until fall 2025. The last meeting to be held on June 21, 2025, before we begin our summer hiatus, will be a ZOOM ONLY meeting.

As we anticipated the close of the current season, we planned a June calendar brimming with several activities for the organization. One such activity was a social gathering for CAAGS members. We have canceled the plans for a social gathering at the end of the month. The Board deliberated the matter and judged it prudent to pause on our projected date and to allow more lead time. In so doing we will be able to make and communicate a plan that takes overall demands on the organization and membership into consideration.

On June 4, we held the concluding session of our case study series, utilizing the expertise of Gloria Wallace and at times, the input of other members. The series was a successful expansion of CAAGS-designed instruction, measured by solid registrations and positive feedback from engaged participants. This course addressed requests from members for greater guided instruction in strategies for conducting their individual projects. Over the summer we will be looking at ways we can tweak this program and design additional instruction to meet the requests of the membership. We will stay attuned to the ways we can assist members in their research projects and urge you to let us know if you have suggestions. Please do not hesitate to let someone on the Board know or drop a note to me at [President@CAAGS.ORG](mailto:President@CAAGS.ORG)

Rounding out the calendar were several other activities, starting with our planned participation in the annual Jamboree at the Los Angeles Public Library. That event was scheduled for June 14 at the downtown location, 630 W. Sixth St, LA 90071. As you know by now, the development of unanticipated safety concerns led to a decision we should bow out of the Jamboree. However, the library later decided to close for the day, effectively canceling that date. We have since been informed that this event will be rescheduled. The date, expected to be sometime in July, has yet to be announced.

Juneteenth, with its recent adoption as a federal holiday, is an occasion I don't want to gloss over. CAAGS will not have an official presence at the Leimert Park celebration on the holiday, I am certain some members will participate there and in other Juneteenth venues that will recognize the significant historical import of the holiday. I feel enriched in this season by the array of public forums and popular media accounts that are spreading awareness of Juneteenth and will incorporate information gained to further inspire my family history quest.

Though July and August bring our organization's formal operations to a halt, this is not necessarily a hiatus to your ongoing personal investigations. Wishing you luck in those endeavors, with jewels of discovery in library work, field visits or family reunion meetups, presentations, and interview opportunities.

The Board and I look forward to seeing you back on the 3rd Saturday of September, but in the meantime, join me here [Legacy Family Tree for Complete Beginners - Legacy Family Tree Webinars](#) on June 25, 11am.

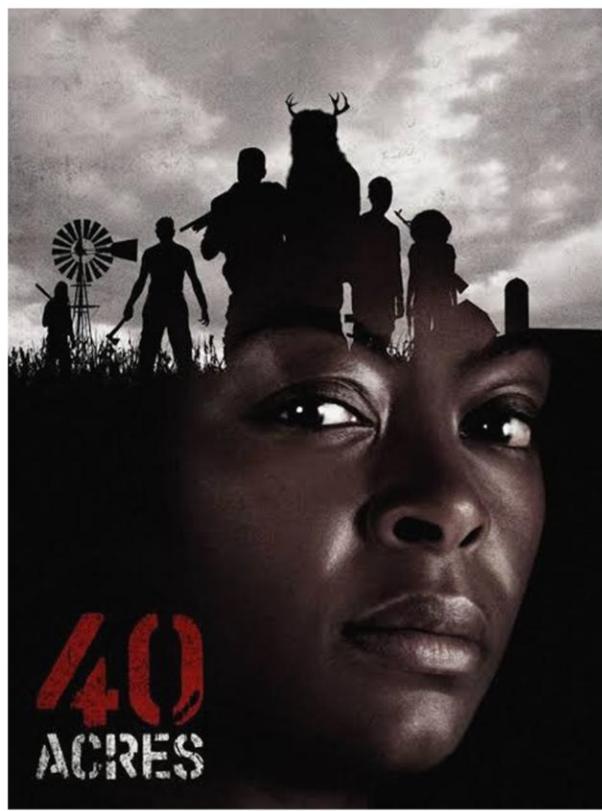
Best regards,

*Muriel Jones*

## IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message.....	1-2
June & July Reminders.....	4-5
Birthdays and New Members.....	4-5
Announcements.....	6
Reparations News.....	6
Articles.....	7-10
YouTube Channel.....	11
Quick Facts.....	11
Upcoming Events.....	12
CAAGS Financial Summary.....	12
CAAGS Member Spotlight.....	13
Letter From Editor.....	13
CAAGS Board of Directors.....	13

## COMING JULY 2, 40 ACRES



**Storyline.** Former soldier, Hailey Freeman and her family are the last descendants of African American farmers who settled in 1875 in rural Canada after the first Civil War. In a famine-decimated future they struggle to make their last stand against those intent on taking their home.<sup>1</sup>

**Movie Background.** 40 Acres is a 2024 Canadian post-apocalyptic thriller film written and directed by R. T. Thorne. The film stars [Danielle Deadwyler](#) as a matriarch of descendants of African American farmers who settled in 1875 in rural Canada after the first Civil War. Two hundred years later, food is scarce and they are trying to survive in a decimated future. Writer-director R.T. placed Black and Indigenous characters at the centre of a story about people defending their land from those who would kill them for it without a second thought. The film premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival on September 6, 2024. It is set to be released in the United States July 2, 2025.<sup>2</sup>

[WATCH TRAILER](#)

<sup>1</sup> IMDb. 40 Acres (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> TIFF. 40 Acres with R.T. Thorne. (2024). [Link](#).

# JUNE REMINDERS

---

## HOLIDAYS

June – Men's Mental Health Awareness – *Check on your Loved Ones*  
June – African American Music Appreciation Month  
June 1 - Nick Gabaldón Day  
June 1 – National Cancer Survivors Day  
June 7 – National Family Recreation Day  
June 12 – Loving Day  
June 14 – Flag Day  
June 14 – No Kings Day  
June 15 – Father's Day  
June 19 - Juneteenth  
June 20 – First Day of Summer

---



# HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!



## JUNE BIRTHDAYS

3 June – Annette James-Rogers  
6 June – Christina Ashe  
6 June – Leroy McKinney  
10 June – C. McIntyre-Michel  
10 June – Ellen Snead  
23 June – Jeanie Price  
24 June – Monika Hall  
26 June – Lanetta Lyons  
29 June – Raymond Marshall  
29 June – Tommie Mallet



## NEW MEMBERS

Brandi Carter



# JULY REMINDERS

---

## HOLIDAYS

- July 4 – Independence Day
- July 18 – Nelson Mandela International Day
- July 23 – Gorgeous Grandma Day
- July 24 – Cousins Day
- July 26 – National Aunt and Uncle Day
- July 27 – Parents Day
- July 28 – Buffalo Soldiers Day
- July 30 – National Father-in-Law Day

---



## JULY BIRTHDAYS

- 2 July – Asbury Ellis
- 3 July – Steve Allen
- 4 July – Lynette Allen
- 11 July – Naomi Miller-McCoy

---

---



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**June Jubilee.** Volunteers are needed for the Third Annual *June Jubilee: A Celebration of Black Excellence* at the [LA Public Library](#) on June 14. It is a day of joy and inspiration with speakers, workshops, entertainment, and family activities. Please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Steve Allen, if you would like to volunteer. \*To Be Rescheduled\*

**Free Surf Lesson.** Join Black Surfers Collective, The Bay Foundation, Heal the Bay, Surf Bus Foundation, One With The Ocean, Supervisor Holly Mitchell's Office, Dr. Alison Jefferson, and Santa Monica Conservancy as we celebrate Nick Gabaldón Day on Saturday, June 7, 2025, from 9 AM – 1 PM. There will also be celebrity guest story time, documentary screenings and special art activities. [DETAILS HERE](#)

**VCGS Salt Lake Safari.** The Ventura Genealogy Society's 2026 Salt Lake Safari dates are March 15-21, 2026, with Saturday March 14 on a space-available basis, so those dates are your decision. Room rates are \$109.00 standard queen, or \$119.00 deluxe queen rooms, plus local taxes. To make reservations and get our special genealogy rate, please call Richard Williams, Plaza Hotel Marketing Manager directly at (801) 606-2410.

[Events - Black Surfers Collective](#)



## REPARATIONS NEWS



**California** – [SB 437](#) and [SB 518](#) were authored by Senator Akilah Weber Pierson, M.D. (D-San Diego). SB 437 tasks the California State University system with establishing a process for verifying genealogical eligibility for reparative claims. SB 518, establishes the Bureau for Descendants of American Slavery, a state agency dedicated to implementing policies that address the historical injustices faced by Californians who are descendants of enslaved people. The Bureau would oversee reparative justice efforts, facilitate restitution programs, and ensure the state follows through on key recommendations from the California Reparations Task Force. SB 518 is also expected to be heard in the Assembly on June 24.<sup>1</sup>

**New York** – The New York Reparations Commission continues to meet regularly. The May 28 meeting featured writer and activist Brea Baker, author of [The American Legacy of Land Theft and the Modern Movement for Black Land Ownership](#). The recent June 11 meeting was a presentation on [Drs. Ned Benton and Judy-Lynne Peters: Northeast Slavery Records Index](#). The next NYSCCRR meeting is set for June 26.<sup>2</sup>

**Oklahoma** – This year marks 104 years since the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. Mayor Monroe Nichols announced a \$105 million reparations plans for restorative justice. The plan will be privately raised for a trust fund that is going towards housing, homeownership, cultural preservation, and a legacy fund to help the generations to come, and the release of historical records to the public. Nichols plans to have the trust full up and operational with trustees by June 1st, 2026. To read the public records, click [here](#).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fox5 San Diego. Catlin, Veronica. Two California bills that could make it possible for Black reparations from slavery move forward. [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> New York State Community Commission on Reparations Remedies. Past Meetings. (2025). [Link](#).

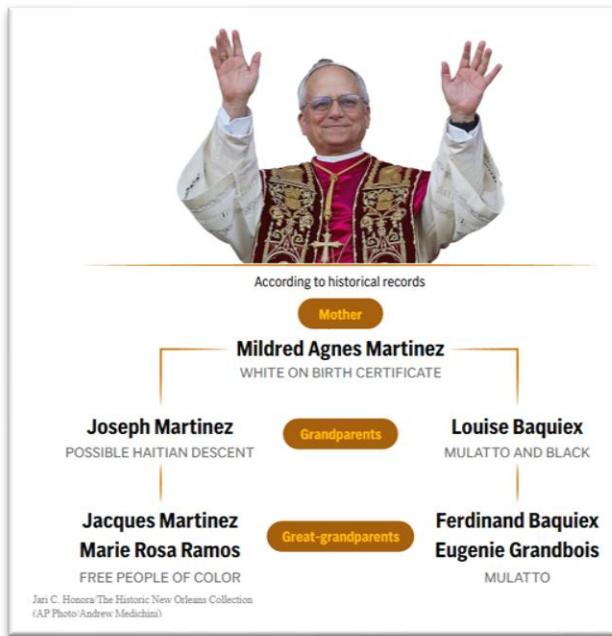
<sup>4</sup> KTulsa. Modersitzki, Tanya. Press Room. Mayor Nichols announces \$105M trust fund for Tulsa Race Massacre descendants. [Link](#).



## ARTICLES

### THE FIRST AMERICAN POPE WITH CREOLE ANCESTRY

Pope Leo XIV, whose birth name is Robert Francis Prevost, was born in Chicago Illinois, marking the first time in the Catholic Church's history that an American Pope was elected. In addition to this mark in history, there is also Creole history. Pope Leo has ancestry. His maternal Martinez and Louise Baquié, or "Black" in historical Seventh Ward of New Orleans, suggest that Joseph Martinez. Historically, most Creoles Rev. Ajani Gibson, who heads congregation at St. Peter Orleans, said he sees the reaffirmation of African Catholicism in his city. This multi-racial history of the of Black Catholics in the



both Creole and Haitian grandparents, Joseph were identified as "mulatto" records and lived in the Orleans, an area known for Genealogical records may have been born in Haiti. were and still are Catholic. the predominantly Black Claver Church in New pope's roots as a American influence on discovery highlights the rich, United States and the role Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup>

### FATHER'S DAY ORIGIN

Father's Day as a widely celebrated holiday on the third Sunday in June in the United States and is credited to Sonora Smart Dodd of Spokane, Washington, who proposed the idea in 1909. She was inspired by a Mother's Day sermon and wanted to create a similar day to honor fathers, particularly her own widower father, William Jackson Smart. He was a Civil War veteran who raised six children alone, after their mother died in childbirth. She is said to have had the idea in 1909 while listening to a sermon on Mother's Day, which was newly established as a holiday at the time. Local religious leaders supported the idea, and the first Father's Day was celebrated on June 19, 1910. The month of June was chosen because it is the birthday month of Dodd's father.

In 1924 U.S. President Calvin Coolidge gave his support to the observance, and in 1966 President Lyndon B. Johnson issued a proclamation that recognized the day. Then in 1972, it became a national holiday when President Richard Nixon signed legislation designating the third Sunday of June as Father's Day. Although it was originally largely a religious holiday, Father's Day has been commercialized with the sending of greeting cards and the giving of gifts. Other father figures such as grandfathers, uncles and men that took on parental roles, are often honored on the day as well. The first Father's Day event was held in Spokane on June 19, 1910, and continues to be celebrated each year.<sup>2</sup>



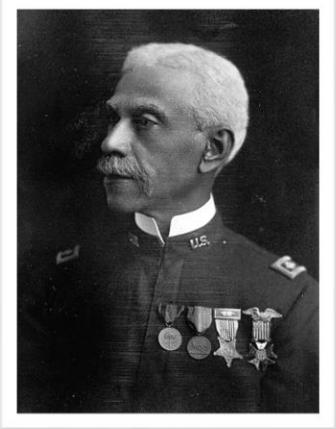
<sup>1</sup> AP News. Pope Leo XIV's Creole heritage highlights complex history of racism and the church in America. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> Britannica. Father's Day. (2025). [Link](#).

## ALLENSWORTH, CA

### *FIRST ALL BLACK TOWN IN CALIFORNIA*

Allensworth, California was a unique and historically significant town established June 30, 1908, by African Americans, making it the first town in California to be founded, financed, and governed by African Americans. Established by Lt. Colonel Allen Allensworth, that was a former slave that escaped and became a prominent Black officer in the military. Additionally, it was established with four other settlers and was envisioned as a haven for Black families seeking to build a better life and escape the oppressive conditions of the South. While Allensworth experienced a brief period of prosperity, it eventually faced challenges and declined in the 1940s. Today, it is preserved as Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park, a testament to the dreams of its founders and the resilience of the community.<sup>1</sup>



Col. Allen Allensworth, Public Domain

## GRANDMOTHER OF JUNETEENTH



Opal Lee, Public Domain

making June 19th a national holiday. Opal Lee is indeed often referred to as the "grandmother of Juneteenth".<sup>2</sup>

Texas native Opal Lee has seen a lot of history in her 96 years. She lived through the Great Depression, World War II and the U.S. Civil Rights Movement. In this century, she voted for the first African American president of the United States. She is a retired teacher, community activist, and a key figure in the movement to recognize Juneteenth as a federal holiday. Her tireless work advocating for Juneteenth led to the passage of the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act, which President Biden signed into law in 2021,

## ADVANCE DIRECTIVE ADVICE

It's important to review your Advance Health Care Directive regularly. Consider using the five D's:

- Every Decade - when you start each new decade of your life
- Divorce - when you experience a divorce or major family change
- Diagnosis - when you are diagnosed with a new health condition
- Decline - if you experience a decline in your health, especially if you are not able to live on your own
- Death - whenever you experience the death of a loved one.<sup>3</sup>

**Submitted by Dr. Edna Briggs**

<sup>1</sup> California State Parks. Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park. Authority. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> US Embassy in Israel. Meet Opal Lee, 'grandmother of Juneteenth'. (2023). [Link](#).

<sup>3</sup> KP.org. Advance Healthcare Directive. (2025). [Link](#).



## FOURTH OF JULY

Independence Day, in the United States, the annual celebration of nationhood held on July 4. It commemorates the passage of the Declaration of Independence by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776. This document announced the separation of the 13 North American colonies from Great Britain. In 1870 the U.S. Congress made Independence Day an unpaid holiday for federal workers, and in 1938 it became a paid federal holiday. Also called the Fourth of July, the holiday is celebrated across the United States with parades, fireworks shows, picnics, concerts, and other festivities. Independence Day is also notable for its displays of patriotism, as many Americans commemorate the day by flying the American flag and dressing in the flag's colors of red, white, and blue.<sup>1</sup>

## GRACE WISHER

Historically, everyone has looked at Betsey Ross as the sole person that stitched the US flag. However, Ross sewed the first flag. The second flag that we know as our flag today, was stitched by a free-born Black girl from Baltimore, Maryland, named Grace Wisher. At the age of 13, she helped stitch the flag during a six-year apprenticeship (also known as [indentured servant](#)) with white flag-maker Mary Pickersgill around 1810. Her mother, Jenny Wisher, received \$20 at the signing of the contract and \$12 at the end of the six years. Three years apprenticeship, commissioned to Spangled Banner United States' Britain in the War flag, Americans in showcase of the Daina Berry and "Black girls and have literally into our nation's mainstream continuously contributions.<sup>2</sup>



into her  
Pickersgill was  
create the Star-  
in celebration of the  
victory against Great  
of 1812. Prior to this  
did not hang the flag  
pride. Historians  
Kali Gross assert that,  
women like Grace  
stitched themselves  
history," but  
historical accounts  
overlook their

"Envision a world where all humans are free and equal – where we prize each other over material things – we stand against tyranny and oppression, hatred and fear"  
Photograph: Jameelah Nuriddin and Erin Hammond

[\*\*CLICK TO WATCH CROSS VISIONX SHORT FILM\*\*](#)

<sup>1</sup> Britannica. Independence Day. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> OSU.edu. Phillips, S. Grace Wisher: The Black Girl Who Helped Stitch the Star-Spangled Banner. (2023). [Link](#). [Photograph](#).

# NARA Online Search Tools

## ▪ [National Archives Catalog](#)

An online portal that provides access to data, digitized records, selected series [AAD](#), records from [ERA](#), all web pages from Archives.gov and Presidential Libraries.

## ▪ [History Hub](#)

A crowdsourcing platform sponsored by the National Archives. Help from the NARA, experts, history enthusiasts, and citizen archivists.

## ▪ [Microfilm Catalog](#)

A searchable database of more than 3,400 numbered microfilm, created by or purchased by NARA.

## ▪ [Access to Archival Databases \(AAD\)](#)

A search engine into some of NARA's holdings of electronic records.

## ▪ [Archives Library Information Center \(ALIC\)](#)

Provides sources for research about American history and government, archival administration, information management, and government documents.

## ▪ [Guide to Federal Records](#)

Search NARA's holdings of federal records at a very high level, to identify which may be material relevant



## CEDRIC THE ENTERTAINER & ANTHONY ANDERSON BBQ

Comedians Cedric The Entertainer and Compton native Anthony Anderson have partnered to create and launch AC Barbeque in Los Angeles. It is a lifestyle brand focused on grilling, [barbecue seasoning](#), and tools, with the tagline "Husky and Handsome". They have developed a line of [seasonings](#), tools, and accessories, and are expanding into restaurant and food service areas, including a campus kitchen at Jackson State University and a food truck at Howard University, according to AC Barbeque. Their partnership also includes a TV show on A&E called "Kings of BBQ" where they document their journey to perfect their grilling skills. In addition, they have a partnership with [Arby's](#).<sup>2</sup> The duo has two barbecue sauces on the Arby's menu: Cedric's Sweet BBQ Sauce and Anthony's Spicy BBQ Sauce.

[CLICK TO VIEW LA MENU](#) or watch [A&E KINGS OF BBQ](#)



<sup>1</sup> NARA.gov. Online Research Tools and Aids . (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> AC Barbeque. Meet AC Barbeque. (2025). [Link](#).



Follow on Instagram

10



## YouTube Channel

### Juneteenth

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBU3NdEwdrU>

### Best Free Online Genealogy Resources for 2025

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xPsE9UmxHw>

### Death Certificates for Genealogy & Family History

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bie5KfrjtHM>

### Allensworth: The Only California Town Founded & Financed

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UoD4neINtXE>

### This EASY Step Levels Up Your Genealogy FOREVER

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHpl67t7rAM&t=41s>

### Can't Find An Ancestor's Birth Record? 8 Places To Look!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhCBJEAdzkM>



## Legacy Family Tree

### Upcoming Webinars

<https://familytreewebinars.com/upcoming-webinars/>

### Webinar Library

<https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar-library/>



## Quick Facts

**June 1, 2012** – Nicolas Rolando “Nick” Gabaldón, Jr. was documented as the first Black and Mexican surfer in Los Angeles the 1940s and the end of the Jim Crow era, when most beaches were still segregated. He was born 1927 in Los Angeles to an African American mother and Mexican father, Cecilia and Nicolas Gabaldon Sr. He graduated from Santa Monica High in 1945 and was one of the few African American students matriculating at the school during this era. As a teenager, Gabaldon began surfing at the Bay Street beach, which was derogatorily called the “Inkwell” by Anglos referencing the skin color of the beachgoers who visited the area. Gabaldon and other African Americans in SoCal, however, transformed the hateful moniker into a badge of pride. Gabaldon taught himself to surf using the 13-foot rescue surfboard of a white lifeguard he befriended at the Inkwell in the World War II years. He tried to hitchhike to Malibu, but no one would pick him up, so he often paddled 12 miles so he could surf at Malibu Pier. Gabaldon died in a surfing accident at the Malibu Pier in 1951, when he was 24. On February 7, 2008, the City of Santa Monica officially recognized surfer Nick Gabaldon and the “Inkwell” with a landmark monument at Bay Street and Oceanfront Walk.<sup>1</sup>



**July 1927** – Miriam Matthews became the first black credentialed librarian in California, and the first hired by Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL). She would remain the only African American librarian employed by the LAPL for the next twenty years. Born in Pensacola, Florida in 1905, her parents moved the family to California when she was two years old, because they did not want to raise their three children in a “segregated atmosphere.” Matthews graduated from Los Angeles High School in 1922, at the age of 16. She started college at the University of California, Southern Branch (renamed UCLA in 1927) but transferred to Berkeley after two years because she wanted to live away from home; graduating with a degree in Spanish. Though nearly everyone who knew her thought Matthews should be a teacher, which did not appeal to her. After hearing that a friend was considering librarianship, Miriam thought, “Oh librarian, that’s a nice idea.” Matthews completed the year-long librarianship certificate program at Berkeley in May of 1927 and returned to Los Angeles to begin her career.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Blackpast.org. Jefferson, Alison Rose. Nicolas Rolando [“Nick”] Gabaldon (1927-1951). (2012). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> Los Angeles Public Library. The Incomparable Miriam Matthews (2021). [Link](#). Picture: LA Public Library Shades of LA Collection.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

June 5, 2025 – New Beginners Class, Genealogy 101  
Virtual, 6:00 pm PST

June 14, 2025 – Long Beach Juneteenth with Lalah Hathaway, 10:30 am – 8:00 pm Rainbow Lagoon Park, 400 E. Shoreline Drive, Long Beach, CA 90802

June 21, 2025 – CAAGS General Meeting  
ZOOM ONLY, 10:30 am – 2:00 pm PST

June 22, 2025 – Juneteenth at Bruce's Beach Park

June 29, 2025 – Fowler in the City: Day of the Ancestors, Leimert Park, 12:00 pm – 6:00 pm [CLICK FOR INFO](#)

July 12, 2025 – Black Surfers Collective, Pan African Beach Day [CLICK FOR INFO](#)

July 19, 2025 – LA Afrobeats Block Party & Jollof Cook-Off 1000 E 60th Street LA, CA 90001, 3:00 pm – 10:00 pm

July 19, 2025 – Afro-Latino Culture Fest, 501 North Main Street Los Angeles, CA 90012, 3:00 pm – 10:00 pm

July 19-20, 2025 – Soul Country Rodeo Weekend [CLICK FOR INFO](#) (Bill Pickett Rodeo is Sold Out)

\* No CAAGS General Meetings July and August

\*Schedule subject to change. Questions? Call (323) 806-5634

## CAAGS FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Month Ending May 31, 2025

BEGINNING BALANCE	\$ 8,227.91
INCOME	133.91
DISBURSEMENTS	(1,311.81)
PETTY CASH	127.16
RESTRICTED FUNDS	(30.00)
ENDING BALANCE	\$ 7,147.17

*\*Submitted by Jean Wright-Calhoun, CAAGS Treasurer, 6/4/2025*



[LAX/Metro Transit Center Opened June 6, 2025](#)

## CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. BOX 8442  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90008-0442  
(323) 806-5634

 [CAAGS Facebook](#)

### General Membership Meetings

Third Saturday monthly (except July & August)

10:30 a.m. PST

Los Angeles Family Search Library  
1591 East Temple Way  
(Near 10741 Santa Monica Blvd.)  
Los Angeles, CA 90024





What do you want your ancestors to know 100 years from now? A thought, a message, a warning?



### *Letter from the Editor - Meshia Russell*

Please consider writing a review about any aspect of the content of this Newsletter or if you would like to be featured in the CAAGS Member Spotlight.

Send to the Newsletter Editor at [newsletter@CAAGS.org](mailto:newsletter@CAAGS.org) or [CAAGSnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:CAAGSnewsletter@gmail.com)

Submissions are due by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month.

*\*Please be aware there may be edits needed on submissions.*

## 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ELECTED OFFICERS	APPOINTED OFFICERS
<p>Muriel Jones – President          Dr. Edna F. Briggs – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President/Education          Valerie Warrick-Durette – 2<sup>nd</sup> VP /Membership          Christina Ashe – Recording Secretary          Jean Wright-Calhoun – Treasurer          Marie Bryant – Corresponding Secretary          James (Jimmy) Murray – Parliamentarian          Dr. Edna F. Briggs – Immediate Past President</p>	<p>Carolyn Conway-VACANT – Librarian          Steve Allen – Volunteer Coordinator          Dr. Edna F. Briggs – Historian/NGS Delegate          Vanessa McBride – Web Site Admin          Meshia Russell – Newsletter Editor          Monica Maurasse – Social Media Administrator</p>

# Heritage Newsletter

California African American Genealogical Society

**“Inspiring Family  
History Research**



**One Person  
At A Time.”**

**August-September 2025**

**Volume 37 Issue 8-9**

## **President’s Message**

**By Muriel Jones**

Greetings CAAGS Members,

Summer has passed swiftly, and as this newsletter is released, we are getting ready to launch the CAAGS 2025-26 calendar. Our first membership meeting will take place on Saturday, September 20, 2025, at 10:30 am. The meeting will be held in a hybrid format, allowing participants to attend either in-person or via Zoom.

At our opening session, we are pleased to welcome Adrian Foushee as our in-person speaker. Adrian, a long-standing friend and member of CAAGS, will share insights on the closeout of 23 and Me and what this means for those who have used it in their genealogical research. Additionally, we will set aside time for one of our most cherished traditions: Show-and-Tell.

During the break, the broader genealogy calendar continued to unfold. Of particular note, the Jubilee sponsored by the Los Angeles Public Library—usually held in June, was rescheduled due to significant protests and anticipated congestion. The event was successfully conducted in July, thanks in large part to the members who volunteered and represented CAAGS. Your dedication is greatly appreciated.

I want to emphasize the importance of our ongoing membership drive. As both a Board and as an organization, it is vital that we renew and grow our membership to ensure CAAGS’s continued impact. Please continue to share information about CAAGS with friends, acquaintances, and those you meet during our outreach activities. Inviting someone to attend a meeting can serve as an excellent introduction to the many benefits of membership.

We continue to keep in our thoughts those members currently undergoing medical treatment and send our warmest wishes for their recovery.

I hope you are all ready to embark on another year of shared learning and collective growth. September 20 marks the beginning of our renewed efforts together.

Sincerely,

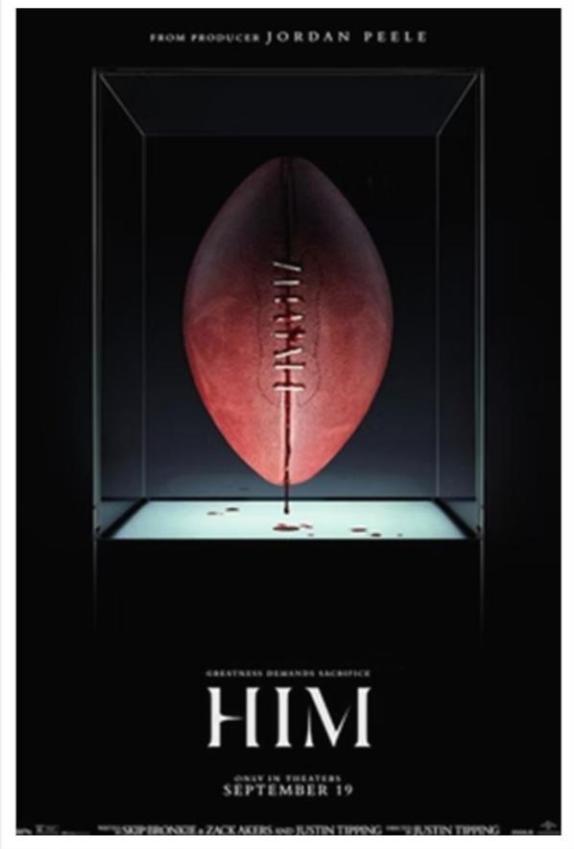
*Muriel Jones*

Muriel Jones, President

## IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message.....	1
August & September Reminders.....	3-4
Birthdays and New Members.....	3-4
Announcements.....	5
Reparations News.....	5
Articles.....	6-8
YouTube Channel.....	9
Quick Facts.....	9
Upcoming Events.....	10
CAAGS Financial Summary.....	10
California Museums.....	11
CAAGS Vacant Positions.....	12
CAAGS Member Spotlight.....	13
Letter From Editor.....	13
CAAGS Board of Directors.....	13

## COMING SEPTEMBER 19, *HIM*



**Storyline.** *HIM* is a horror film produced by Jordan Peele's Monkeypaw Productions and directed by Justin Tipping. It is set to be released in theaters in wide screen, Aspect Ratio: Digital 2.39:1 on September 19, 2025. The story centers on college quarterback Cameron Cade, who suffers a career-threatening injury and is invited to train at the isolated compound of his idol, aging star Isaiah White. As Cade's training progresses, his mentor's charisma turns dark, leading him down a dangerous path for fame and success. The film stars comedic veteran, Marlon Wayans as Isaiah White and Tyriq Withers as Cameron Cade, exploring themes of fame, idolatry, and sacrifice within the world of professional sports.<sup>1</sup> The overall theme is "sports horror", blending the world of competitive sports with psychological horror elements, asking if one is willing to sacrifice everything to be the best.

**Director Background.** Director and California native, Justin Tipping said, "I was an athlete my entire life. My first word was 'ball,'" Tipping explains in the latest issue of *Empire*. "About halfway through playing soccer in college, I gave up and started pursuing film. That was my new love. So, I have this love of sports as well as the inner-workings of the psychology of athletes, and I'm a [cinephile](#). I thought it was exciting to take on a film that was giving the promise of a sports drama, but at the same time delivering horror."<sup>2</sup> The film was initially titled GOAT before being changed to *HIM*.

[WATCH TRAILER](#)

<sup>1</sup> IMDb. 40 Acres (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> SyFy. *HIM: Everything to Know About Jordan Peele-Produced Horror Film Starring Marlon Wayans*. (2025). [Link](#).

# AUGUST REMINDERS

---

## HOLIDAYS

August 3 – Sisters Day

August 11 – Son and Daughter Day

August 12 – Middle Child's Day

August 14 – National Navajo Code Talkers Day

August 17 – Marcus Garvey Day

August 19 – World Humanitarian Day

August 19 – Aviation Day

August 21 – Senior Citizens Day

August 21 – Poet's Day

August 21 – International Day for Remembrance of the Slave Trade

August 26 – Women's Equality Day

---



## AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

- 6 August – Sherrilyne Headley
- 12 August – Lonnie Bunkley
- 13 August – Gwendolyn Hills
- 18 August – Lloydine Outten
- 25 August – Marilyn Mitchell
- 30 August – Barbara Thomas
- 25 June – Carolyn Norman\*



## NEW & RENEWAL MEMBERS

- Trenton Whetstone – NEW
- Velma Anderson – RENEWAL
- Michael Armstrong – RENEWAL
- Carolyn Norman – RENEWAL

*\*Prior month birthday*

HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY!



# SEPTEMBER REMINDERS

---

## HOLIDAYS

- September 1 – Labor Day
- September 4 – Los Angeles's Birthday
- September 7 – National Grandparents' Day
- September 10 – International Suicide Prevention Day
- September 20 – World Marrow Donor Day
- September 21 – Wife Appreciation Day
- September 22 – First Day of Fall
- September 25 – National Daughter Day
- September 26 – Native American Day
- September 27 – Ancestor Appreciation Day

---



## SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 3 September – Ron Batiste
- 3 September – Twain Abdur-Rahman Wilson
- 4 September – Frankye Charles
- 4 September – Ophelia Sanders
- 16 September – Carolyn Connor
- 17 September – Francine Perry
- 22 September – Norma Bates
- 24 September – James Murray
- 25 September – Jessie Barbour
- 28 September – Colette Deverge'
- 29 September – Dolores Cruse-Kemp
- 29 September – Marjorie Sholes
- 30 September – Velma Blue

---

---

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Vacant CAAGS Positions.** We have one vacant CAAGS volunteer position. Please see Page 12 for more details.

**VCGS Salt Lake Safari.** The Ventura Genealogy Society's 2026 Salt Lake Safari dates are March 15-21, 2026, with Saturday March 14 on a space-available basis, so those dates are your decision. Room rates are \$109.00 standard queen, or \$119.00 deluxe queen rooms, plus local taxes. To make reservations and get our special genealogy rate, please call Richard Williams, Plaza Hotel Marketing Manager directly at (801) 606-2410.

**Bisa Butler, Los Angeles Exhibit.** Bisa Butler is a fiber artist, born Mailissa Yamba Butler, that created a new genre of quilting, where her quilts resemble paintings. *Hold Me Close* is a new exhibit where Butler presents a powerful new series of quilted portraits that speak to the urgency of empathy, the weight of history, and the need for tenderness in times of crisis. In a statement, Butler states, her body of work is "a visual response to how I am feeling as an African American woman living in 2025." The exhibit premieres with an opening reception on September 13 at Jeffrey Deitch in Los Angeles and ends November 1. No RSVP or tickets required for the event.<sup>1,2</sup>

[CLICK FOR DETAILS](#)



<sup>1</sup> Chicago Magazine. Bisa Butler Reimagines Textile Portraiture. (2020). [Link](#). Photo: John Butler, courtesy of Claire Oliver Gallery

<sup>2</sup> Deitch. Upcoming Show Bisa Butler: Hold Me Close (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>3</sup> CalMatters. SB 515: Local government: collection of demographic data.. [Link](#).

<sup>4</sup> Anabaptist World. Andre', Fiona. New York's Episcopal Diocese launches \$1M racial reparations fund. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>5</sup> The Wichita Eagle. Cameron, Kylie. Civil rights activist sues Wichita over stalled proposal for reparations. [Link](#).

## REPARATIONS NEWS



**California** – [SB-515](#) mandates that, beginning January 1, 2027, cities, charter cities, and counties must include specific, additional collection categories for Black or African American groups when collecting demographic data on employee ancestry and ethnic origin. This extends the existing data collection standards to local governments, requiring updates to employment forms and data management systems to capture detailed information, particularly for descendants of formerly enslaved people.<sup>3</sup>

**New York** – The Episcopal Diocese of New York will dedicate \$1 million to racial reparations efforts within and outside the church. The fund, announced on Juneteenth, will be overseen by the diocese's newly formed [Moses Commission](#). The aim of the commission, chaired by Marisa Sifontes, associate rector at St. James' Church in Manhattan, is to fund grants and loan forgiveness programs for congregations of color. The commission will also consider direct payments to descendants of slaves, inspired by projects advanced by other dioceses.<sup>4</sup>

**Kansas** – Civil rights activist Mary Dean is suing the city of Wichita over her years-long efforts requesting the city consider a reparations ordinance. Dean has been advocating for a reparations ordinance for Black Wichita residents for years but hit a roadblock when the city suspended its DEI and Civil Rights Advisory Board per federal guidelines. In her lawsuit, filed in federal court, Dean said the city violated her civil rights and the Fourteenth Amendment by not allowing the ordinance to be considered by the council. Recently, she was removed from a city council meeting.<sup>5</sup>



## NATIONAL GRANDPARENTS' DAY

National Grandparents Day falls each year on the first Sunday after Labor Day. There are three purposes for this day: To honor grandparents, To give grandparents an opportunity to show love for their children's children, and To help children become aware of the strength, information and guidance older people can offer. It is a holiday that was initiated at the grassroots level by West Virginian Marian Lucille Herndon McQuade, with the behind-the-scenes support of her husband Joseph L. McQuade. They had 15 children, 43 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren, and one great-great grandchild.

Mrs. McQuade modestly referred to herself as "just a housewife," but her unending work to establish and publicize the holiday marks her as a true community leader. She spent much of her life advocating for older adults. In 1971 she was elected Vice-Chair of the West Virginia Committee on Aging and appointed as a delegate to the White House Conference on Aging. In 1972, Mrs. McQuade's efforts resulted in President Richard Nixon proclaiming a National Shut-in Day. She served as President of the Vocational Rehabilitation Foundation, Vice-President of the West Virginia Health Systems Agency, and was appointed to the Nursing Home Licensing Board, among many other involvements. Mrs. McQuade started her campaign for a day to honor grandparents in 1970. She worked with civic, business, church, and political leaders to first launch the day in her home state in 1973. Then, after many years, much persuasion, and unending persistence, she finally achieved her bigger goal. It was in 1979 that President Jimmy Carter proclaimed the first Sunday after Labor Day each year as National Grandparents Day (September was chosen to signify the "autumn" years of life).<sup>1</sup>

## HOW MANY ANCESTORS DO YOU HAVE?

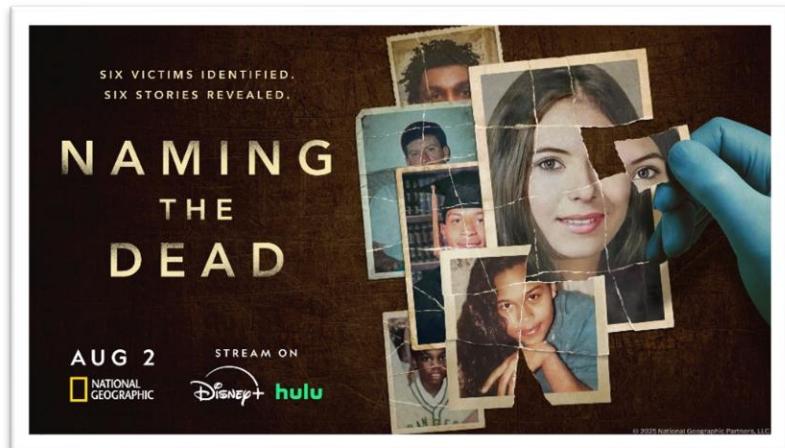
Parents	2
Grandparents	4
Great-Grandparents	8
2nd Great-Grandparents	16
3rd Great-Grandparents	32
4th Great-Grandparents	64
5th Great-Grandparents	128
6th Great-Grandparents	256
7th Great-Grandparents	512
8th Great-Grandparents	1,024
9th Great-Grandparents	2,048
10th Great-Grandparents	4,096
11th Great-Grandparents	8,192
12th Great-Grandparents	16,384
13th Great-Grandparents	32,768
14th Great-Grandparents	65,536
15th Great-Grandparents	131,072
16th Great-Grandparents	262,144
17th Great-Grandparents	524,288
18th Great-Grandparents	1,048,576
Etc.	



<sup>1</sup> Legacy Project. The History of Grandparents Day. (2025). [Link](#).

## DNA DOE PROJECT, NAMING THE DEAD

The DNA Doe Project is a trailblazing non-profit, founded by Los Angeles native, [Margaret Press, PhD.](#), that utilizes forensic genealogy to help law enforcement solve the country's more than 50,000 unidentified bodies from cold cases. In partnership with National Geographic and Hulu, *Naming the Dead* is a new six-part investigative series, bringing the untold stories to light. The series gives unprecedented access to active investigations, capturing the relentless pursuit of truth by a dedicated team of genealogists, detectives, coroners, and journalists. Through distant DNA matches, fragile paper trails, and sheer determination, these forgotten victims are finally given what they deserve: a name, a history, and a chance of justice. Blending cutting-edge science with deep human storytelling, *Naming the Dead* is a gripping testament to the power of identity—and the people who refuse to let the lost be forgotten.<sup>1</sup>



To preview, Episode 3, The Body in the Sand investigates "[Apache Junction Jane Does](#)." A DNA connection was found through a biological uncle, which was an adopted "brown baby" born 1956 in Darmstadt, Germany. During World War II, thousands of German women had babies with Black soldiers. After the war, to stop shame in Germany, an estimated 7,000 of these babies were sent to black families for adoption in the US in the 50s and 60s. This was known as the Brown Babies Adoption Scheme. The DNA match was Patrick Smith, Jr., unaware of any of his biological family because of the "brown baby" adoption. Even in tragedy, a beautiful story of DNA and genealogy helping reunite a family emerges. Tune in to watch this DNA cold case unfold in identifying the victim.

[WATCH TRAILER](#)

## WHO INVENTED THE ALARM CLOCK?

The Greek philosopher Plato invented an ingenious water clock, as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. The water clock accurately measured the passage of time by using a controlled flow of water to trigger a whistling sound, waking him for his morning lectures. Buddhist monk, Yixing, built the first water-driven mechanical clock around A.D. 700 and Chinese tower clocks may have inspired the first European mechanical clocks, which appeared in the 13th century. The classic tabletop alarm clock with a clattering bell did not emerge until the 19th century, introduced by French and American clockmakers. Mechanical clocks were exclusively for the rich through at least the 17th century. Only churches, royal palaces and the very wealthiest households could afford these intricate, hand-made machines. The first snooze button did not arrive until 1956.<sup>2</sup>

Where does this fit into your research? In 1876, what did your ancestors think, or did they use what was available then? What would they think now about our cell phones and other gadgets we use today? Write a letter to the Editor and share your thoughts.

Submitted by Dr. Edna Briggs



Photo: Plato Flip Clock, 20<sup>th</sup> century

<sup>1</sup> DNA Doe Project. Naming the Dead (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> History.com. Roos, D. Who Invented the Alarm Clock? (2025). [Link](#). [Picture](#).

# Cyndi's List, Search Tool For African Americans

Cyndi's list is a "one-stop shop" to finding genealogy sources. Do not get overwhelmed by the amount of resource links and multiple subcategories within the header categories. You can select an area of interest and focus solely on that for a predetermined amount of time. Then select a new focus area to research.

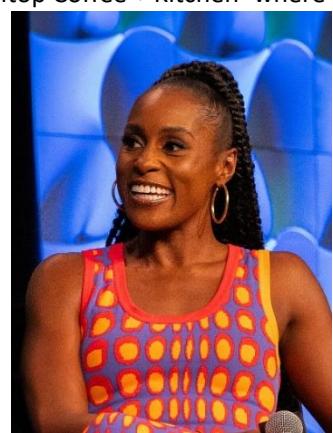
Start [HERE](#) and work your way through the below links.

- [Birth, Marriage, Death](#)
- [Cemeteries & Funerals](#)
- [Census](#)
- [Free People of Color](#)
- [Freedman's Bank](#)
- [Freedman's Bureau](#)
- [Land](#)
- [Military](#)
- [Newspapers](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Photographs & Memories](#)
- [Plantations](#)
- [Slavery](#)
- [Taxes](#)
- [Wills & Probate](#)



## ISSA RAE – NEW LA PIZZA SPOT, DOWNTOWN DOUGH

Los Angeles native and actress Issa Rae has partnered with Good Vibes Only Hospitality (GVO) founders Yonnie Hagos and Ajay Relan to debut pizzeria Downtown Dough. It operates inside the downtown location of Hilltop Coffee + Kitchen—where you can indulge in a sweet potato latte—after the cafe closes at 3 p.m. Rae is also a partner of [Hilltop Coffee](#) and collaborator with Somerville, a role that she'll continue at Downtown Dough with GVO. Chef Geter Atienza will use an almond wood-fire open grill and pizza oven to churn out blistered Neapolitan-style pies and fiery grilled vegetables. The restaurant seats 179 plus a private 22-person room. A funky 1970s playlist and Atienza's playful menu will set the mood for the restaurant's evening transformation. Beverage director Steen Bojsen Moller developed drinks for a full cocktail bar and a spritz bar. Look out for the elderflower and pear spritz standout called Sweet Thang (a nod to Chaka Khan) with St. Germain, pear juice puree, prosecco, and soda at the spritz bar. As for the cocktails, all bear tribute names to 1970s soul and funk artists. Diners can try the Black Moses (Isaac Hayes's fifth album title) with coffee-infused gin, sweet vermouth, and Campari.<sup>2</sup>



[CLICK TO VIEW LA MENU](#)



Follow on Instagram

<sup>1</sup> NARA.gov. Online Research Tools and Aids. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> LA Eater. Insecure' Creator Issa Rae Is Bringing Wood-Fired Pizzas to Downtown LA (2025). [Link](#).



## YouTube Channel

**BREAKING NEWS** Ancestry Released NEW Image  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_P0vNfLC9K8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_P0vNfLC9K8)

**Who's Related To Rustie Lee? | Fame In The Family**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BL3f1MraezA>

**Top 20 Most Common Black Last Names**  
<https://youtu.be/AsrM2LfJreY?feature=shared>

**Black Creeks WIN Citizenship Battle After Generations**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTaNYE1jDxU>

**AncestryDNA: Making the Cousin Connection**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OF9BfcTZl08&t=358s>

**Freedman Town's History Comes to Life in New Documentary**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dbQd-P-8e60>

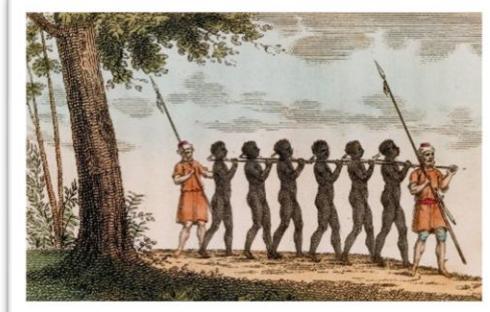
## Legacy Family Tree

**Upcoming Webinars**  
<https://familytreewebinars.com/upcoming-webinars/>

**Webinar Library**  
<https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar-library/>

## Quick Facts

**August 20, 1619** – On August 20, 1619, approximately twenty Africans arrived in Jamestown, Virginia, aboard a Dutch ship named the White Lion (see its symbolism referenced in *Leave the World Behind* [here](#)). They were the first blacks to be forcibly settled as involuntary laborers in the North American British Colonies. Several days later, a second ship, the Treasures, arrived in Virginia with additional enslaved Africans. Their arrival marked a pivotal moment in the history of both Virginia and the United States, as it is considered the beginning of race-based, hereditary slavery in the region. The year 1619 marks the beginning bondage based solely on race, which has defined the African American experience to current day.<sup>1</sup>



**September 13, 1663** – The first documented attempt at a rebellion by slaves took place in Gloucester County, Virginia. On September 13, 1663, the first documented attempt at a rebellion by slaves in the English colonies took place in Gloucester County, Virginia. This event, known as the Gloucester County Conspiracy or the Servants' Plot, involved both enslaved Africans and white indentured servants who planned to overthrow their masters. The plot was ultimately betrayed by a servant named John Berkenhead, leading to the arrest and execution of several leaders.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Hampton.gov. The 1619 Landing — Virginia's First Africans Report & FAQs. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> Encyclopedia Virginia. Rucker, Walter C. Westmoreland Slave Plot (1687). (2025). [Link](#).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

August 5, 2025 – LAPD Block Party, National Night Out at Baldwin Hills Crenshaw – 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm PST

August 15, 2025 – Black August Film Festival [DETAILS](#)

August 23, 2025 – Special Interest DNA Group  
Los Angeles Family Search Library  
1591 E. Temple Way, Los Angeles, CA 90024,  
In-Person – 10:00 am PST

September 11, 2025 – CAAGS Writers Group  
Virtual – 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm PST

September 13 – November 1 – Bisa Butler “Hold Me Close”, 7000 Santa Monica Blvd, Los Angeles, CA

September 20, 2025 – CAAGS General Meeting  
Los Angeles Family Search Library, Guest: Adrian Foushee  
1591 E. Temple Way, Los Angeles, CA 90024,  
Hybrid – 10:30 am – 2:00 pm PST

September 29, 2025 – LA Public Library ALOUD – The Wilderness: Angela Flournoy & Issa Rae in Conversation with Ashley Nicole Black – 7:00 pm PST [DETAILS](#)

\* No CAAGS General Meeting in August

\*Schedule subject to change. Questions? Call (323) 806-5634

## CAAGS FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Month Ending August 29, 2025

BEGINNING BALANCE	\$ 6,914.31
INCOME	30.00
DISBURSEMENTS	(70.29)
PETTY CASH	127.16
RESTRICTED FUNDS	(30.00)
ENDING BALANCE	\$ 6,971.18

*\*Submitted by Jean Wright-Calhoun, CAAGS Treasurer, 9/7/2025*



STARRING DENZEL WASHINGTON AND A\$AP ROCKY

[CLICK TO WATCH TRAILER](#)

## CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. BOX 8442  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90008-0442  
(323) 806-5634

 [CAAGS Facebook](#)

### General Membership Meetings

Third Saturday monthly (except July & August)

10:30 a.m. PST

Los Angeles Family Search Library  
1591 East Temple Way  
(Near 10741 Santa Monica Blvd.)  
Los Angeles, CA 90024



## **AUTRY MUSEUM, BLACK COWBOYS: AN AMERICAN STORY**

*Black Cowboys: An American Story* was conceived and organized by the [Witte Museum](#) in San Antonio, Texas. The Autry in Los Angeles, joins the Witte Museum in celebrating the stories of Black cowboys, adding a companion exhibition that showcases the history and impact of the Black cowboy spirit in California. “The individual stories of Black cowboys—from histories of discrimination to legacies of excellence—illustrate the strength and persistence of the men, women, and children who raised and roped cattle for generations,” said Michelle Everidge, CEO and President of the Witte Museum. The Autry Museum of the American West and the Witte Museum were privileged to collaborate closely with community leaders, scholars, cowboys, and ranchers to create this exhibition. While the original show focuses on Texas, the Autry’s presentation features important contributions by the Buffalo Soldiers, World Champion Bull Rider Charlie Sampson, and Sharon Braxton, one of the first female African American barrel racers in the Women’s Professional Rodeo Association. Highlighting Hollywood’s influence on the Black cowboy image, this exhibition also includes movie memorabilia, from early film posters of Bill Pickett’s *The Bull-Dogger* (1922) to the costumes used in the 2021 Netflix film *The Harder They Fall*.<sup>1</sup>

**On Exhibit at the Autry Museum June 14, 2025 – January 4, 2026**

**Marilyn and Calvin Gross Gallery**

[\*\*CLICK FOR TICKETS AND LOCATION\*\*](#)



<sup>1</sup> The Autry. Exhibitions. Black Cowboys: An American Story (2025). [Link](#). Photo: Marilyn and Calvin Gross Gallery.

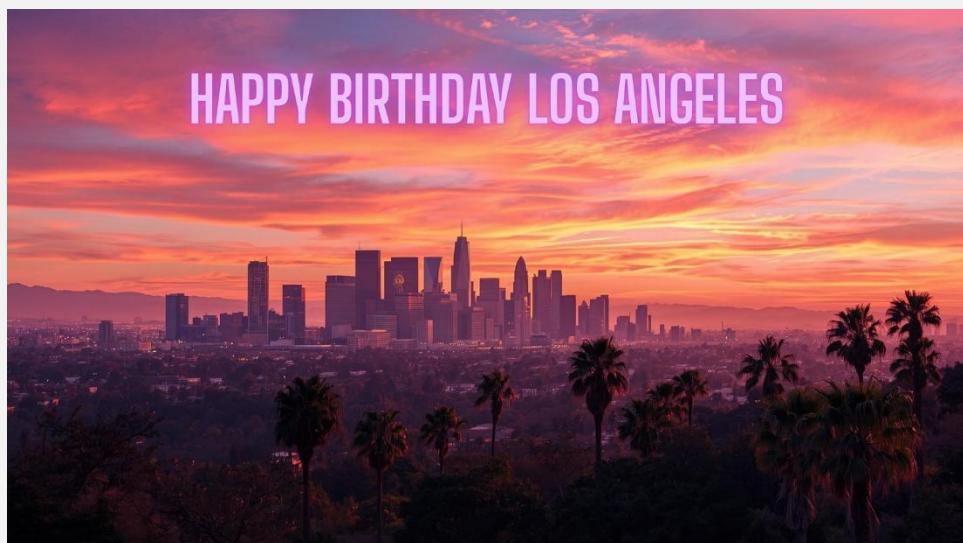
# Please Consider Volunteering



## VACANT – Librarian/Phong Log

### Summary of Duties:

- ① Receive all materials (books, periodicals) donated to the society's book collection.
- ② Maintain an inventory of the collection.
- ③ Evaluate and make recommendations to the Board regarding acquisition of new books/library material.
- ④ Monitor the phones and reports call log to the Board.



Los Angeles was founded on September 4, 1781, which is its official birthday and is celebrated annually. The city's history is rich, but its official establishment as a pueblo is on this date.



## *Letter from the Editor - Meshia Russell*

Please consider writing a review about any aspect of the content of this Newsletter or if you would like to be featured in the CAAGS Member Spotlight. Send to the Newsletter Editor at [newsletter@CAAGS.org](mailto:newsletter@CAAGS.org) or [CAAGSnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:CAAGSnewsletter@gmail.com) Submissions are due by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month.

*\*Please be aware there may be edits needed on submissions.*

## 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ELECTED OFFICERS	APPOINTED OFFICERS
<p>Muriel Jones – President          Dr. Edna F. Briggs – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President/Education          Valerie Warrick-Durette – 2<sup>nd</sup> VP /Membership          Christina Ashe – Recording Secretary          Jean Wright-Calhoun – Treasurer          Marie Bryant – Corresponding Secretary          James (Jimmy) Murray – Parliamentarian          Dr. Edna F. Briggs – Immediate Past President</p>	<p>Steve Allen – Volunteer Coordinator          Dr. Edna F. Briggs – Historian/NGS Delegate          Vanessa McBride – Web Site Admin          Meshia Russell – Newsletter Editor          Monica Maurasse – Social Media Administrator          VACANT – Librarian/Phong Log</p>

# Heritage Newsletter

California African American Genealogical Society



October 2025

Volume 37 Issue 10

## President's Message

By Muriel Jones

Greetings CAAGS Members,

I want to thank everyone who attended the opening meeting on September 20, 2025, whether in person or virtually. In addition to our enrolled members, we welcomed more than casual interest visitors, who ventured to the Center. It was exciting to learn the genesis of their interest in genealogy and to learn that a number of them came at the behest of CAAGS members. We hope they found inspiration that day sufficient to continue participating and ultimately make a commitment to CAAGS by becoming members themselves.

During our September meeting, Adrian Foushee presented an informational session entitled, "23andMe Update – What's Ahead?" During his presentation, Adrian reminded users to regularly download their DNA information from testing companies to ensure they have personal backups and access to their data even if company policies change. Adrian will be conducting a how-to session on November 22, 2025, at our regularly scheduled DNA Meeting. Participants have the flexibility to join the DNA meetings either in person at the Center or virtually via Zoom. This dual participation option is designed to accommodate varying preferences and schedules, ensuring that everyone can engage and contribute to the discussions regardless of their location.

Our October 18th meeting promises to be fruitful. Please be aware that this meeting will take place exclusively on Zoom. We made the decision to avert obstacles for travel to and from the Center on the day crowds amass for another round of NO KINGS Day. Our guest presenter will be Ron Graham, who will share knowledge of "Freedmen and Native Americans in Oklahoma".

Sincerely,

*Muriel Jones*

Muriel Jones, President

## IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message.....	1
October Reminders, Birthdays, New Members.....	3
Announcements, Reparations News.....	4
Charles G. Meigs, Jr Resolution, Cherokee Nation.....	5-6
Articles.....	7-9
CAAGS Member Poetry, Annette James-Rogers.....	10
YouTube Channel, Quick Facts.....	11
Upcoming Events, CAAGS Financial Summary.....	12
California Landmarks & Exhibits.....	13
CAAGS Vacant Position, Book Share.....	14
CAAGS Member Spotlight.....	15
Letter From Editor.....	15
CAAGS Board of Directors.....	15

## COMING NOVEMBER 7, SARAH'S OIL



**Storyline.** Sarah's Oil is inspired by the remarkable true story of Sarah Rector, an African American girl born in Oklahoma Indian Territory in the early 1900s, who believes there is oil beneath the barren land she's allotted and whose faith is proven right. As greedy oil sharks close in, Sarah turns to her family, friends, and some Texas wildcatters to maintain control of her oil-rich land, eventually becoming among the nation's first female African American millionaires-at eleven years old.<sup>1</sup>

**Trivia.** The interior shots of Sarah's guardianship hearing were filmed inside the House Building in Bristow, OK. The building was built in 1927-1928. It is currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion of significance as a commerce department store. The location was formerly occupied by J.C. Penney and Montgomery Ward.

**Movie Background.** New York Giant's Russell Wilson and singer Ciara are bringing the incredible story of Sarah Rector to the big screen. Inspired by Tonya Bolden's book *Searching for Sarah Rector: The Richest Black Girl in America*. Alongside Ciara and Russell, Wyldwood's Sherry Kang, Kingdom Story Company's Tony Young and Katelyn Botsch, and Robert Scott Fort are also credited as executive producers. Despite facing racism and hardships, she built generational wealth and defied the odds. Ciara shared the film's official trailer on her Instagram, writing in the caption, "Remember her name..Sarah. Let's share her faith-based story with the world!"<sup>2</sup>

[\*\*WATCH TRAILER\*\*](#)

<sup>1</sup> IMDb. Sarah's Oil (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> Hot97. Oatman, Alexis. Ciara and Russell Wilson-Produced Project, 'Sarah's Oil (2025). [Link](#).

# OCTOBER REMINDERS

---

## HOLIDAYS

October – Family History Month  
October – National Archives Month  
October – Creole Heritage Month  
October – Breast Cancer Awareness Month  
October 5 – World Teacher's Day  
October 12 – National Gumbo Day  
October 13 – Indigenous Peoples' Day  
October 14 – Black Entrepreneur's Day  
October 17 – Black Poetry Day  
October 18 – Taste of Soul  
October 24 – United Nations Day  
October 31 – Halloween

---



World Teacher's Day



## OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

- 10 October – SeElcy Caldwell
- 16 October – Carolyn Williamson-Hughes
- 17 October – Marilyn White
- 20 October – Lulla Denson
- 23 October – Fenella Williams
- 28 October – Peggy Powell

## NEW MEMBERS

Cheryl Gonder

---

## CELEBRATE FAMILY HISTORY MONTH

---

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**October 18 Meeting.** General Meeting in October will be Zoom Only. Please make sure you do not drive to the Family Center.

**Vacant CAAGS Positions.** We have two vacant CAAGS volunteer positions. Please see Page 14 for more details.

**CAAGS Speaker.** Ron Graham, Sr., is a native of Okmulgee, Oklahoma and attended HBCU Langston University. He is very passionate and has a great desire to educate others on the genealogy and history of the Dawes Commission in the Five Civilized Tribes, especially the Muscogee (Creek) Nation (MCN). Mr. Graham is a direct descendant of: Hutton / Grayson, Corbray, and McGilbray. All were Muscogee (Creek) Nation citizens. He was a litigant in pursuit of recapturing his tribal citizenship with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation: *Ron Graham vs. Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma Citizenship Board (CV-2003-53)*, and also in the Supreme Court of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation: *Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma Citizenship Board vs. Ron Graham (SC 2006-03)*. And again in 2019: *Ron Graham v MCN Citizenship Board, (CV 2019-138)* and also MCN Supreme Court (SC 2020-01). Also, Mr. Graham has an ancestor of an All-Black Town of Oklahoma, Huttonville, located in Eufaula, OK - McIntosh County. Mr. Graham currently serves as: the Muscogee Creek Freedmen Coalition of Okmulgee, OK - Chairman; Genealogy Chairman for the Descendants of Freedmen of the Five Civilized Tribes Association and Vice President for the Black Genealogy Research Group of Oklahoma. Also, he was formerly the President & the Co-Founder of the Muscogee Creek Indian Freedmen Band and past President for the NAACP, Okmulgee, OK County branch. As well as being fully engaged with the genealogy and history of the descendants of Freedmen / Black Indians of Indian Territory / Oklahoma for over 39 years.



## REPARATIONS NEWS



**California** – AB-766 mandates state agencies to perform a “racial equity analysis” on new regulations and budget requests. On Sept. 11, it passed the Assembly with a 48-14 vote.

AB-742 requires state licensing boards to expedite applications for individuals who are certified as descendants of American slaves. On Sept. 10, it passed the Assembly 59-16.

SB-437 authorizes the California State University (CSU) to receive up to \$6 million in state funds to research and establish a methodology for verifying the lineage of individuals as descendants of enslaved people in America. It is genealogy related and controversial, passing with a 29-10 vote.<sup>1</sup>

**Illinois** – The State of Illinois African Descent-Citizens Reparations Commission hosted a public hearing on the University of Illinois campus October 4. Professors, researchers and local government officials went to the Krannert Performing Arts Center to discuss the history of slavery and the effects it has on current descendants of enslaved people. The hearing in Urbana is one of many stops they’re making before they write a report outlining the impacts of slavery in Illinois and present recommendations to state legislators next year.<sup>2</sup>

**New York** – Join the New York State Community Commission on Reparations Remedies for a Public Hearing in Brooklyn. This is a chance for community members to come together, be heard, and share experiences that will help shape recommendations on reparations remedies in New York State.

Tuesday, October 28, 2025, 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm  
Bethany Baptist Church  
460 Marcus Garvey Blvd. Brooklyn, NY 11216.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Observer. Legislature Approves Five Black Caucus Reparations Bills, Sending Them to Newsom. [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> WCIA. Hanson, Peter. Reparations committee hosts public hearing event in Urbana (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>5</sup> The Wichita Eagle. Cameron, Kylie. Civil rights activist sues Wichita over stalled proposal for reparations. [Link](#).



*California African American Genealogical Society, Inc.*  
**Resolution of Honor and Respect**  
**For**  
***Charles G. Meigs, Jr.***

**WHEREAS**, in the providence of God, He has brought to a close the life of Charles G. Meigs. The Officers and Members of the California African American Genealogical Society, Inc., in Los Angeles, California, feel that expressing their sympathy to the family and friends is befitting. We commend the family to *“Him who can keep us above all that we can think or ask.”* You have our sincere prayers.

**WHEREAS**, Charles Meigs joined the Society during the early 1990s. He became an active member and educator for the California African American Genealogical Society, Inc.

**WHEREAS**, let it be known that Charles Meigs was born in Arkansas during World War II, grew up in South Central Los Angeles, and began researching his personal genealogy in December 1990. He became motivated to start tracing his roots after reading a book written by Dorothy Spruill Redford during the 1700s in North Carolina. Her book, *“The Somerset Homecoming,”* motivated Charles to believe that he could trace his ancestors back to the era of slavery. He began his quest to walk on the land where each of his slave ancestors lived at the outbreak of the Civil War. His efforts led him to discover African American ancestors in the Cherokee Tribe and slave ancestors in Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, Georgia, and South Carolina. As a result of his personal research and knowledge that he gained in the process, he conducted monthly workshops at the Los Angeles Family Search Library for more than twenty (20) years. In addition, he was a featured speaker on various aspects of African American and Native American genealogical and historical research at several genealogical and historical institutions in Southern California, including the U.S. National Archives, now located in Perris, CA.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that we bow in humble submission to Him who never makes a mistake and remind the family to be encouraged by remembering this poem:

*There he sits in the midst of them all,  
All of his ancestors, both great and small.  
And from his lips comes that familiar sound,  
“Who are my kin? Please tell me now.”  
Then, from every corner of Heaven’s gates  
Comes a chorus of joy, a litany of names.  
Generations of people in his direct line  
Stating relationships one at a time.  
Grands and greats with welcoming smiles,  
Saying, “It’s time we tell you,  
You’ve been searching for a while.”  
So on and on goes the heavenly roll call  
And there he sits in the midst of them all.*  
~ Anonymous ~

To the family, the California African American Genealogical Society, Inc., wants you to know that we share in your sorrow. Still, more importantly, we recognize that this loss is heaven's gain. Further, we are instructed in scripture, "Do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope."

This Resolution of Honor and Respect is humbly submitted on this 26<sup>th</sup> day of September 2025.

The Board, Members, and Friends of the California African American Genealogical Society, Inc., Los Angeles, California

Muriel Jones

President

September 26, 2025

Date



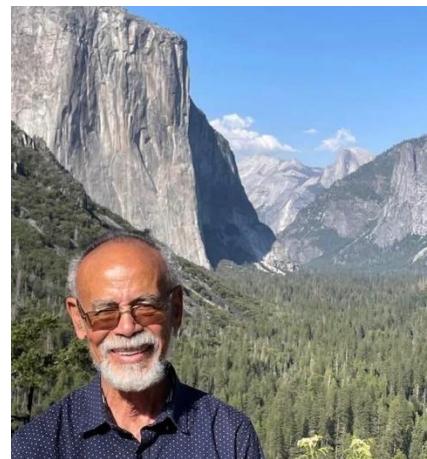
## CHEROKEE NATION AND MEIGS FAMILY HISTORY

The Cherokee Nation's history spans centuries in the American Southeast, from their arrival to their forced removal to present-day Oklahoma, marked by adaptation to European contact, periods of conflict with settlers, and the tragic Trail of Tears. Despite land loss and forced relocation, the Cherokee people preserved their culture and language, and today the Cherokee Nation continues to thrive in Oklahoma and the Southeast, representing one of the largest and most important American Indian tribes.<sup>1</sup>

The Meigs family history with the Cherokee Nation includes Charles Meigs' grandfather, Johnson Meigs, listed on the Dawes Indian Roll and his great grandfather, Samuel Meigs, enslaved by the Cherokee; a [Cherokee Freedmen](#) possibly within the Bird Clan. It is noteworthy to mention, the Cherokee became the first tribe to welcome the [Freedmen](#) back as full citizens of the Nation in 2021. The slave master of Samuel Meigs was John Ross Meigs, the son of an Indian agent for the Cherokee in Tennessee and colonel in the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War – Return Jonathan Meigs, Sr. John Ross Meigs' mother was Jane Ross. She was the daughter of the historic [Cherokee Chief John Ross](#), who led the Cherokees on the Trail of Tears.<sup>2</sup> The beginning of the Meigs family history is rich. Another more recent notable fact is that of Charles Meigs, Sr. In 2011, the Mead Valley Community Center was renamed the [Charles Meigs Community Center](#) in honor of Charles Meigs Sr, which was active with many civic and charitable organizations.

### [WATCH UCLA ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH CHARLES MEIGS, JR.](#)

RESIDENCE: <i>Tablegual</i>		DISTRICT: <i>Tablegual, GA</i>		Cherokee Nation. Freedmen Roll.					
Dawes' Roll No.	NAME.	Relationship to Person first named.	AGE.	SEX	Year:	TRIBAL ENROLLMENT.	District	No.	SLAVE OF—
1134	Meigs, Samuel	X	50	M	1890	Tablegual		1456	John Meigs
1135	Sda	Wife	42	F	1880			2657	CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATE ISSUED FOR NO. 1456 MAY 20, 1903
1136	Robert	X Son	19	M	1896			323	
1137	Anna	X Daw	18	F	1896			324	CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATE ISSUED FOR NO. 1456 JUL 23 1903
1138	Christine	Daw	15	F	1896			325	
1139	Johnson	Son	13	M	1896			327	CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATE ISSUED FOR NO. 1456 AUG 5 1903
1140	Ellen	Daw	12	F	1896			326	
1141	Cora	Daw	10	F	1896			328	
1142	Minnie	Daw	9	F	1896			329	
1143	Rebecca	Daw	8	F	1896			330	
1144	Seroy	Son	5	M	1896			331	CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATE ISSUED FOR NO. 1456 JAN 17 1903
1145	James	Son	3	M					
1146	Stephan	Son	1	M					



<sup>1</sup> Cherokee.org. The History of the Cherokee Nation. (2023). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> YS News. Marion S. "Marty" Meigs. (2010). [Link](#).



## ARTICLES

### GENEALOGIST FRAZINE TAYLOR

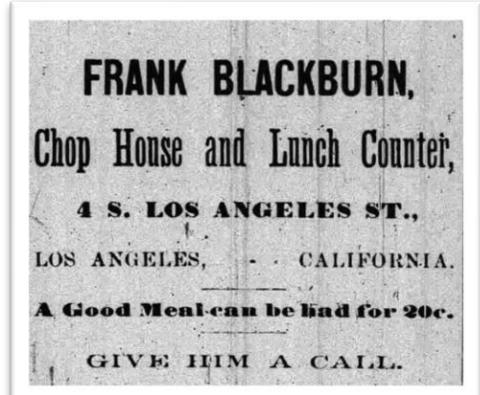
Frazine K. Taylor was a trailblazer in the field of genealogy education for researchers of African American family history, most notably through her work as the first coordinator of the Researching African American Ancestry track at IGHR, a role she embraced from 2004 to 2018. She selflessly shared her knowledge, experience and her enthusiasm with everyone she met, whether in her career, her church or any one of the numerous community organizations in which she participated. Always leading with a gracious smile, her impact is immeasurable as she literally touched the lives of family historians, librarians, archivists and genealogists throughout the country and even the world. She will be missed on earth but her work will continue to inspire the generations to follow because they will know their history...thanks to Frazine.<sup>1</sup> [WATCH FRAZINE TAYLOR INTERVIEW](#)



### ORIGIN OF BLACK-OWNED RESTAURANTS IN LA

Though early records are murky due to a lack of primary source historical records, a legacy of Black-owned restaurants in Los Angeles stretching back to 1888 can be pieced together. According to historian Douglas Flaming, in the excellent *Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America*, in October 1888, an early Black paper called *The Weekly Observer* mentioned a man named Frank Blackburn's new "coffee and chop house" at 1st Street and Los Angeles Street. In 1889 the *Western News* advertised a restaurant owned by J.R. Walker on San Pedro Street between 1st and 2nd, the Victorian hub of Black commerce in L.A. These eateries catered to the many Black men who worked as porters, laborers and chefs for the railroad companies — men such as Rufus Estes, a celebrated Pullman chef who retired in Los Angeles. There were also smaller, independent operations. In the invaluable 1909 collection, *The Federation Cook Book: A Collection of Tested Recipes, Contributed By The Colored Women of the State of California*, there are advertisements for Black-owned or Black friendly grocers, restaurants and small businesses such as "Daughtery's Homemade Relishes," which offered a variety of olives, horseradish, chili sauce and pickles. Mrs. R.H. Hunter of Pasadena advertises herself as a cateress, who specializes in "lunches prepared on short notice," serving "fresh eggs and chickens dressed to order."

Black-owned restaurants and clubs were often harassed by the LAPD, frequently raided and falsely accused of liquor violations and disturbing the peace. According to Flaming, these restaurants also faced discrimination within their community.<sup>2</sup> Today, Black-owned restaurants like Dulan's on Crenshaw, serving the community for over 30 years, have become a staple of Los Angeles Black culture. However, recently, the restaurant's owner has experienced business struggles and called upon the community for support by coming in for a meal or booking catering. [WATCH ABC7 VIDEO FOR DETAILS](#)



<sup>1</sup> IGHR. In Memory of Frazine K. Taylor. (2024). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> Laist. Meares, Hadley. The Legacy Of LA's Black-Owned Restaurants. (2022). [Link](#).

## ANCESTRY-GETTY IMAGES HBCU PRESERVATION

Getty Images a global visual content creator and marketplace, has announced a first-of-its-kind genealogy-focused partnership with Ancestry, the global leader in family history. As part of Getty Images' HBCU Grants Program, this initiative will focus on the digital preservation and accessibility of historical documents, records and the photographic archives of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Once digitized, these invaluable archives will become searchable on the Ancestry website, helping millions of people discover and connect with the rich legacy of HBCUs. Through the program, HBCUs retain full copyright ownership to their print and digitized assets and data. Ancestry will contract directly with each HBCU and work collaboratively to digitize selected materials on-site. All digital files will be delivered to the HBCUs, and complimentary, campus-wide access to Ancestry's platform will be provided, allowing students and faculty to explore and share their family histories and search millions of primary sources available on Ancestry. This partnership was initiated with Lincoln University, the nation's first degree-granting HBCU, in Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup> *The HBCU collection is now available for viewing on Ancestry.com.*



## DIFFERENT WORLD REBOOT

Netflix's *A Different World* spinoff pilot has cast 6 in leading roles. They are Chibukem Uche as Kojo, Maleah Joi Moon as Deborah, Cornell Young IV as Shaquille, Jordan Aaron Hall as Amir, Aljah Kai as Rashida, and Kennedi McClure as Hazel. Netflix declined to comment to Deadline. However, as previously reported, the streamer will shoot a pilot for *A Different World*, a sequel to the 1987 sitcom. It will chronicle Dwayne and Whitley's daughter's time at an HBCU. The project had been in development at the streamer since last year, and the commissioning of the pilot is part of that process. The pilot is a one-off and not part of a strategy shift, sources said. The pilot model in general is more often employed in comedy as a proof of concept for tone, chemistry among the ensemble cast, comedic timing and other key ingredients of a successful series. The *Different World* sequel comes from writer/executive producer Felicia Pride and executive producers Debbie Allen, Mandy Summers, Tom Werner, Gina Prince-Bythewood and Reggie Bythewood. Allen, Werner, Prince-Bythewood all worked on multi-camera of *The Cosby Show* on NBC for six seasons with Carsey-Werner. The pilot started production in June in Atlanta, sources said.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Getty Images Newsroom. Getty Images and Ancestry Partner to Digitally Preserve Historic Archives of HBCUs. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> Deadline. Cordero, Rosy. Netflix's 'A Different World' Spinoff Pilot Sets 6 Series Regulars (2025). [Link](#).

# National Genealogical Society Resources

- **EXPLORE** "[How You Can Help Support Records Preservation and Access](#)" with the RPAC session from the 2025 Family History Conference.
- **VIEW** the [2025 SLAM! Idea Showcase](#) and explore past SLAM! videos in the [YouTube playlists](#) for 2021-2024.
- **CHECK OUT** the [OrgConnects! event recordings on YouTube](#).
- **WATCH** the 22 May 2025 [Symposium on Healthy Aging and the Role of the Family History Community](#).
- **VISIT** the [Partnerships page](#) on the NGS website to learn about support for education and outreach from The Family History Guide and Vivid-Pix.
- **DOWNLOAD** [Family History is America's Story: An America250 Toolkit for Genealogy and Family History Organizations](#).

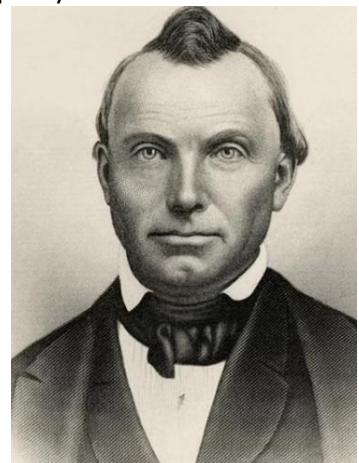
Submitted by Muriel Jones



## BLACK ANCESTRY DISCOVERED WITH LATTER-DAY PIONEER

While researching a book on her family tree, Latter-day Saint historian Jenny Hale Pulsipher discovered that one of her most prominent pioneer ancestors, who first settled Ogden and had long identified as white, had Black grandparents. Many modern Americans are finding mixed races among their progenitors, but it can be especially complicated in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which, for 126 years, had a policy — now discarded — of racial discrimination against Black members. From 1852 until 1978, the church barred Latter-day Saint men with African blood from entering the all-male priesthood and Black women and men from participating in temple rites.

Pulsipher's relative, Capt. James Brown, was "an ardent convert" who joined the church in Illinois in 1839, served several missions for his newfound faith, and, the historian wrote in a new "Century of Black Mormons" profile, "most famously" captained a company of the Mormon Battalion that arrived in the Salt Lake Valley five days after Brigham Young's vanguard company. James Jr. later became "the founder of Ogden, Utah (initially called Brownsville), where he and his family settled," added Pulsipher. "A polygamist, James Jr. had 13 wives and 28 children, and his descendants today number in the thousands."<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> NARA.gov. Online Research Tools and Aids . (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> The Salt Lake Tribune. Stack, Peggy Fletcher. New research discovers the first known Latter-Day Saint..(2025). [Link](#).

## **RASCAL HEART**

You said, "Come dance, sweet thing  
And I thought you were my dream  
But your intentions were only a scheme  
I wanted a lifetime, you wanted a fling

Now I can't deny you're sexy  
And I can't deny you're smart  
And Baby, you can't deny  
You've got a rascal heart

I need commitment and a loving touch  
Yet you say I'm asking too much  
Our love is just a horizontal bop  
With me on the bottom and you on top

The true reason you have to go  
Is something I learned long ago  
Sweetheart, I'm a one man woman  
And you're an every woman man

You live life from the outside in  
Waltz through days wearing only a grin  
But when this old world takes its last spin  
You won't know where you are or where you've been

It's true you're sexy  
And charming and smart  
But in the end all you'll possess  
Is that rascal heart

*By Annette James-Rogers*





## YouTube Channel

### Beginner's Guide to Genealogy - Avoid Mistakes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8IBRROYhVMw>

### Black and White families in the South Discover Their Shared Roots

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBWI1wnCBGk>

### BIG Changes for Ethnicity at AncestryDNA

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGB\\_4hGdpVs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGB_4hGdpVs)

### Jane Elliott's "Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes" Anti-Racism Exercise

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebPoSMULi5U>

### Oklahoma: Ep 73 with Nicka Sewell Smith

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eiTiu-RfjzA>

### The One Sentence That Disarms People's Defenses On Race

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PE0orUGAf4>



## Legacy Family Tree

### Upcoming Webinars

<https://familytreewebinars.com/upcoming-webinars/>

### Webinar Library

<https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar-library/>



## Quick Facts

**October 1, 1851** – On October 4, 1850, a meeting called by Thomas G. White, of Geddes, to discuss the methods by which the citizens of Syracuse could resist the new Fugitive Slave Act. Passed by Congress and signed into law by Buffalo native, President Millard Fillmore, on September 18, 1850, the act expanded the ability of slave owners to recover purported runaways by allowing federal marshals to deputize civilians and enlist local law enforcement. It also deprived the enslaved of a trial by jury, as the decision on their status was decided by a Federal Commissioner. In many northern states, the law was seen as immoral and (some argued rather erroneously) unconstitutional. On October 1, 1851, abolitionists in Syracuse, New York broke into the city's police station and freed escaped slave William "Jerry" Henry. This marked the day as Jerry Rescue Day.<sup>1</sup>



**October 21, 1955** – Mary Louise Smith (Ware) was a civil rights activist who was arrested for refusing to give up her bus seat in Montgomery, Alabama, in October 1955, weeks before the more widely known arrest of Rosa Parks. On October 21, at age 18, Smith was on a city bus when she was told to give her seat to a white passenger. A white man had already given his seat to a white woman, and a bus driver asked Smith to stand so the man could sit. Smith refused, stating, "I am not going to move out of my seat. I am not going to move anywhere. I got the privilege to sit here like anybody else". The bus driver pulled over and called the police, who arrested Smith and took her to jail. She was fined \$9 for violating segregation laws, which her father paid. She was later one of the key plaintiffs in the landmark federal lawsuit *Browder v. Gayle*, which successfully challenged the constitutionality of bus segregation.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Syracuse.com. Searing, Robert. Syracuse's 'Jerry Rescue' sent an 'earthquake voice. (2024). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> BOTW. McGarvey, Natalie. Meet the Black Women Who Refused to Give Up Their Seats. (2022). [Link](#).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

October 2, 2025 – New Member Orientation & Genealogy 101, 6:00 pm PST

October 4, 2025 – 2025 Sacramento Archives Crawl  
[DETAILS HERE](#)

October 9, 2025 – CAAGS Writers Group  
Virtual – 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm PST

October 18, 2025 – CAAGS General Meeting  
Zoom Only – 10:30 am – 2:00 pm PST

October 25, 2025 – Harvest Festival, Rose of Sharon  
Missionary Baptist Church – 11:00 am – 5:00 pm

November 6, 2025 – New Member Orientation & Genealogy 101 with Gwendolyn Byrd, 6:00 pm PST

November 15, 2025 – CAAGS Guest Speaker –  
Drum Barracks Civil War Museum-Julia Della Puppa

November 22, 2025 – Special Interest DNA Group  
Los Angeles Family Search Library  
1591 E. Temple Way, Los Angeles, CA 90024,  
In-Person – 10:00 am PST

*\*Schedule subject to change. Questions? Call (323) 806-5634*

## CAAGS FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Month Ending September 30, 2025

BEGINNING BALANCE	\$ 6,874.02
INCOME	988.91
DISBURSEMENTS	(1,213.99)
PETTY CASH	127.16
RESTRICTED FUNDS	(30.00)
ENDING BALANCE	\$ 6,746.10

*\*Submitted by Jean Wright-Calhoun, CAAGS Treasurer, 10/6/2025*



UPCOMING OCT 10, AFTER THE HUNT  
STARRING JULIA ROBERTS AND AYO EDEBIRI

[CLICK TO WATCH TRAILER](#)

## CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. BOX 8442  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90008-0442  
(323) 806-5634

 [CAAGS Facebook](#)

### General Membership Meetings

Third Saturday monthly (except July & August)

10:30 a.m. PST

Los Angeles Family Search Library  
1591 East Temple Way  
(Near 10741 Santa Monica Blvd.)  
Los Angeles, CA 90024

*\*October 18 Meeting is Zoom Only\**



## THE GETTY, LOS ANGELES LANDMARKS

Protecting and celebrating Los Angeles' Black heritage, the city of Los Angeles' Office of Historic Resources and The Getty is leading a project that gives landmark status to six LA buildings. The designations are the result of the ongoing work of African American Historic Places (AAHPLA), Los Angeles, launched by the city and Getty in 2022 to identify, protect and celebrate the city's Black heritage. The AAHPLA project's kickoff event was held at St. Elmo Village in 2023, where Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, in conversation with his longtime business partner and friend Deborah Morales, encouraged attendees to raise awareness about overlooked narratives of Black history.

Each site represents a unique piece of Los Angeles' Black history. Designated sites include St. Elmo Village, the Tom and Ethel Bradley Residence, Jewel's Catch One, StylesVille Barbershop & Beauty Salon, the California Eagle offices and New Bethel Baptist Church. Historic plaques were installed at some of the sites over the past few months, with celebrations to be held on Aug. 14 at the Tom and Ethel Bradley Residence, St. Elmo Village and Jewel's Catch One. A celebration for StylesVille Barbershop & Beauty Salon will be announced at a later date. An advisory committee comprised of civic, community and cultural leaders selected each site from the existing African American History of L.A. context document based on theme, geographic location and gender diversity that reflect various aspects of African American heritage throughout the city of Los Angeles. Sites went before the city's Cultural Heritage Commission for nomination and were approved by the full City Council in 2024 and 2025. "The adoption of these historic designations represents an exciting first step of the African American Historic Places, Los Angeles partnership between the city and Getty," said Ken Bernstein, principal city planner for Los Angeles City Planning's Office of Historic Resources. "Each of these six sites are not only significant places of history and meaning individually, but collectively they also encapsulate broader themes that give our communities insight into the rich and layered story of African Americans in Los Angeles."<sup>1</sup> [READ GETTY NEWS PRESS RELEASE](#)

## MESA COLLEGE, CLOTHES STORY

San Diego Mesa College Art Gallery opened *Clothes Story*, a stunning collection of African American women's fashion, spanning the years 1890 – 1963. Curated by Atlanta-based Kenneth Green, the exhibit honors contributions of Black women, both well-known and lesser-known, highlighting their roles as agents of history and change. Dresses featured in the exhibit were lovingly replicated from historical photographs by tailors and seamstresses working with Green. A self-described museum nerd, Green, collected archival photographs over decades and researched each piece so that each fashion is crafted with historical authenticity. One of his most difficult projects was an eye-catching pink gown worn by Coretta Scott King, who, he points out, was an opera singer before she married Dr. King. It was one of the most difficult to make because of the intricate ruching. Others featured in the collection include garments worn by Mahalia Jackson, Dorothy Dandridge, Betty Shabazz, and Raven Wilkinson, a Black ballerina in the 1940s who danced with the Ballerinas de Monte Carlo.

The exhibition involved students in Mesa College's Museum Studies program, according to Alessandra Moctezuma, Gallery Director and Professor of Museum Studies. "This has been a wonderful opportunity for our students," she said, "providing them with real-life experience in exhibition setup and design. The hands-on involvement is key preparation for careers by teaching practical skills and teamwork beyond academic theory."<sup>2</sup>

*Clothes Story* invites guests to connect and reminisce as they experience the evolution of women's clothing through the perspective of a fashion enthusiast. The exhibition is presented in collaboration with the San Diego African American Museum of Fine Art and concludes on October 16. [DETAILS HERE](#)



AUGUST 25 – OCTOBER 16, 2025

<sup>1</sup> The Autry. Exhibitions. Black Cowboys: An American Story (2025). [Link](#). Photo: Marilyn and Calvin Gross Gallery.

<sup>2</sup> SD Voice. Smith, Barbara. Clothes Story at Mesa College Highlights African American Women's Stories. (2025). [Link](#).

## Please Consider Volunteering



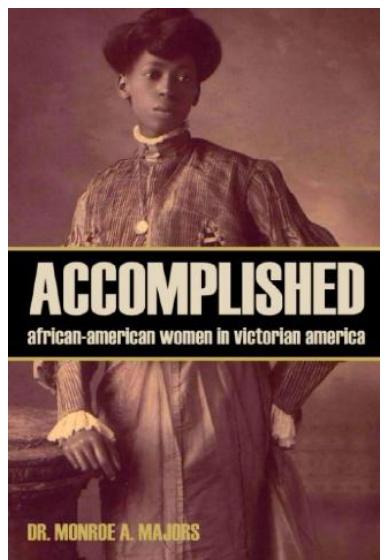
### VACANT – Librarian/Phone Log

#### Summary of Duties:

- ① Receive all materials (books, periodicals) donated to the society's book collection.
- ② Maintain an inventory of the collection.
- ③ Evaluate and make recommendations to the Board regarding acquisition of new books/library material.
- ④ Monitor the phones and reports call log to the Board.

### Book Share from CAAGS Member Renee Cochee

Accomplished African American women in Victorian America excelled in activism, arts, and entrepreneurship, including Sojourner Truth, a powerful abolitionist and women's rights speaker; Mary Church Terrell, a leading suffragist and author; Madam C.J. Walker, a self-made millionaire and philanthropist; and Edmonia Lewis, an internationally renowned sculptor. Other notable figures include Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, a poet and activist; and Georgia E. Patton Washington, the first Black woman to graduate from Meharry Medical College. These women, despite facing extreme racial and gender discrimination, achieved significant milestones like founding businesses, becoming accomplished artists and writers, and advocating for civil rights and educational advancement.





What do you want your ancestors to know 100 years from now? A thought, a message, a warning?



### *Letter from the Editor - Meshia Russell*

Please consider writing a review about any aspect of the content of this Newsletter or if you would like to be featured in the CAAGS Member Spotlight. Send to the Newsletter Editor at [newsletter@CAAGS.org](mailto:newsletter@CAAGS.org) or [CAAGSnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:CAAGSnewsletter@gmail.com) Submissions are due by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month.

*\*Please be aware there may be edits needed on submissions.*

## 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ELECTED OFFICERS	APPOINTED OFFICERS
<p>Muriel Jones – President Dr. Edna F. Briggs – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President/Education Valerie Warrick-Durette – 2<sup>nd</sup> VP /Membership Christina Ashe – Recording Secretary Jean Wright-Calhoun – Treasurer Marie Bryant – Corresponding Secretary James (Jimmy) Murray – Parliamentarian Dr. Edna F. Briggs – Immediate Past President</p>	<p>Steve Allen – Volunteer Coordinator Dr. Edna F. Briggs – Historian/NGS Delegate Vanessa McBride – Web Site Admin Meshia Russell – Newsletter Editor Monica Maurasse – Social Media Administrator VACANT – Librarian/Phone Log</p>

# Heritage Newsletter

California African American Genealogical Society



November 2025

Volume 37 Issue 11

## President's Message

By Muriel Jones

Greetings CAAGS Members,

I want to start this month's letter by turning a spotlight on the activism and outreach aspect of our 2025-26

agenda. Recently, thanks to the urging of member Ron Higgins we participated in the Harvest Festival sponsored by the Rose of Sharon Missionary Baptist Church, his home congregation. Those of us who showed up to help with this visibility opportunity witnessed the excitement lit in attendees we spoke with about discovering their family stories. A bonus was encountering CAAGS charter member Betty Smith. Ron's suggestion of this event created an opportunity for CAAGS to engage with an audience previously unfamiliar with our organization. Ron went the extra mile in ensuring benefits of participating in the Harvest Festival by paying the vendor's fee, purchasing 12 raffle gifts, and working with Steve Allen (CAAGS Volunteer Coordinator) to set up our vendor booth. He also went over and above by contributing two Ancestry DNA kits for our 40th Anniversary event currently in the planning stage.



Pictured CAAGS Members Ron Higgins & Betty Smith

Accolades are due to Steve Allen and the CAAGS members recruited to assist curious attendees by shepherding them in demonstrating effective steps to research and document their family history. We acknowledge and thank the members who gave their time in a spirit of volunteerism and contributed significantly that day to manifest our goal of spreading the word about CAAGS. Norma Bates, Gloria Wallace, Lynette Allen and Steve Allen ignited expressions of revelation and excitement over tidbits of family history revealed with their help.

This is but one example of the kind of initiative other members has shown on many earlier occasions, but our current calendar has no upcoming visibility and outreach activities listed. We need members to scan available events prime for our participation that will allow us to make the community aware of CAAGS and the rewards of pursuing genealogic research with us.

Please follow up with the satisfaction we in attendance felt, knowing we were furthering our outreach goals, and do as Ron did by bringing forth other suggestions for outreach opportunities. If you know of a church or organization having an event suitable for our participation, please let the Board know. We realize that

demographics and residential patterns of our target audience have shifted over time. No longer are the confines of our traditional turf applicable. We must consider events in the wider metro area. We must consider communities such as Victorville, Moreno Valley, Lancaster, Rancho Cucamonga, and other outlying areas when exploring possibilities for CAAGS participation. Let those in your family, social and professional networks know of our openness to venture to a wider array of locations to share the rewards and resources for doing family history research.

Last month we kicked off our campaign to purchase a CAAGS exhibitor canopy. CAAGS Board Member Jimmy Murray (CAAGS Parliamentarian) is spearheading this campaign, and we are actively soliciting contributions for the purchase. Such a promotional tool will identify the organization at external events. Please contact Jimmy Murray if you have any questions regarding this campaign. Contributions made by check for this campaign should be denoted specifically on the check memo line as follows: *CAAGS CANOPY CAMPAIGN* and forwarded to CAAGS Treasurer (Jean Wright-Calhoun: [treasurer@caags.org](mailto:treasurer@caags.org)).

In addition to the canopy drive, we will launch a campaign for name badges identifying the wearer with a standardized research marker for members who wish to purchase. The Name Badge Campaign will kick off at the CAAGS' November General Meeting, on November 15, 2025. The deadline for paying for your name badge order will be at the Holiday Celebration on December 6, 2025, also the date for the CAAGS Holiday Celebration. Any questions regarding this campaign should be addressed to Edna Briggs (CAAGS 1st Vice President). Members unable to attend the meetings, please note the following regarding the NAME BADGE Campaign as with the Canopy Campaign, checks for this purpose should be duly recorded on the memo line at the bottom of your check and forwarded to CAAGS Treasurer (Jean Wright-Calhoun).

Checks for either of the campaigns may be mailed to the address here:

California African American Genealogical Society, Inc (CAAGS)  
ATTN: CAAGS Treasurer  
P.O. Box 8442  
Los Angeles, CA 90008-0442

As previously mentioned on Saturday, December 6, 2025, CAAGS will be celebrating with a Holiday Luncheon. Additional information will be published in a flyer within this newsletter. I mention it at this time so that you have ample opportunity before holiday shoppers swarm the malls and retail outlets to begin their shopping. We are continuing the recent tradition of asking all participants to bring unwrapped presents or gift cards of \$25.00 MINIMUM VALUE and suitable for ages 18 years and under. Last year, we donated all presents to the Los Angeles Stentorians for their annual toy distribution. Please contact Steve Allen (CAAGS Volunteer Coordinator), with any questions regarding our holiday festivities or gift contribution. Members unable to attend the festivities should direct their gift card or check donation to CAAGS Treasurer (Jean Wright-Calhoun). Make sure to note that the funds are a Holiday Gift Donation. To mail the donation, please use the same address as for the Canopy and Name Badge Campaigns.

During our CAAGS September General Meeting's presentation by Adrian Foushee, it was announced that the November 22, 2025, DNA meeting will be a hybrid interest group, on Zoom and at the Family Search Library. The session will be dedicated to instruction on downloading one's personal DNA profile from a test site. Again, Adrian will offer his expertise and understanding of this process, so please make plans to join this important instructional session.

Best Regards,

*Muriel Jones*

Muriel Jones, President

# CAAGS UNIVERSITY



• CAAGS Volunteer Coordinator Steve Allen (R)



CAAGS Member Gloria Wallace (R)



CAAGS Member Lynette Allen (L)



CAAGS Member Norma Bates

## IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message.....	1-3
November Reminders, Birthdays, New Members.....	5
Announcements, Reparations News.....	6
Articles.....	7-8
YouTube Channel, Quick Facts.....	9
Upcoming Events, CAAGS Financial Summary.....	10
CAAGS Vacant Position, CAAGS Christmas Celebration.....	11
CAAGS Member Spotlight.....	12
Letter From Editor.....	12
CAAGS Board of Directors.....	12

## COMING NOVEMBER 20, *HIGH HORSE: THE BLACK COWBOY*

**Documentary.** "High Horse: The Black Cowboy" is a three-part doc that "confronts and reclaims the Wild West while revealing the story of the Black cowboy — a history that has largely been untold." Peele said in a statement,

"I'm grateful to Monkeypaw for amplifying the powerful voices and long-standing culture of Black Cowboys and Cowgirls through High Horse: The Black Cowboy, on Peacock. Their history is inseparable from the story of our country — and this project aims to honor and celebrate their lasting legacy." Interviews in the doc include Peele, Bun B, Blanco Brown, Pam Grier, Lori Harvey, INK, Tina Knowles, Rick Ross, Glynn Turman, Lynae Vanee and The Compton Cowboys. The project also has an original score by



Raphael Saadiq. Jason Perez is the director, and it is produced by Monkeypaw Productions and Universal Television Alternative Studio, a division of Universal Studio Group. Other executive producers are Win Rosenfeld, Keisha Senter, Jamal Watson from Monkeypaw Productions, Mari Keiko Gonzalez, Liz Yale Marsh, Kadine Anckle, Tom Casciato, Sacha Jenkins and Keith McQuirter.<sup>1</sup>

[\*\*WATCH TRAILER\*\*](#)

<sup>1</sup> Blavity. Mangum, Trey. Jordan Peele-Exec Produced 'High Horse: The Black Cowboy' Drops Trailer (2025). [Link](#).

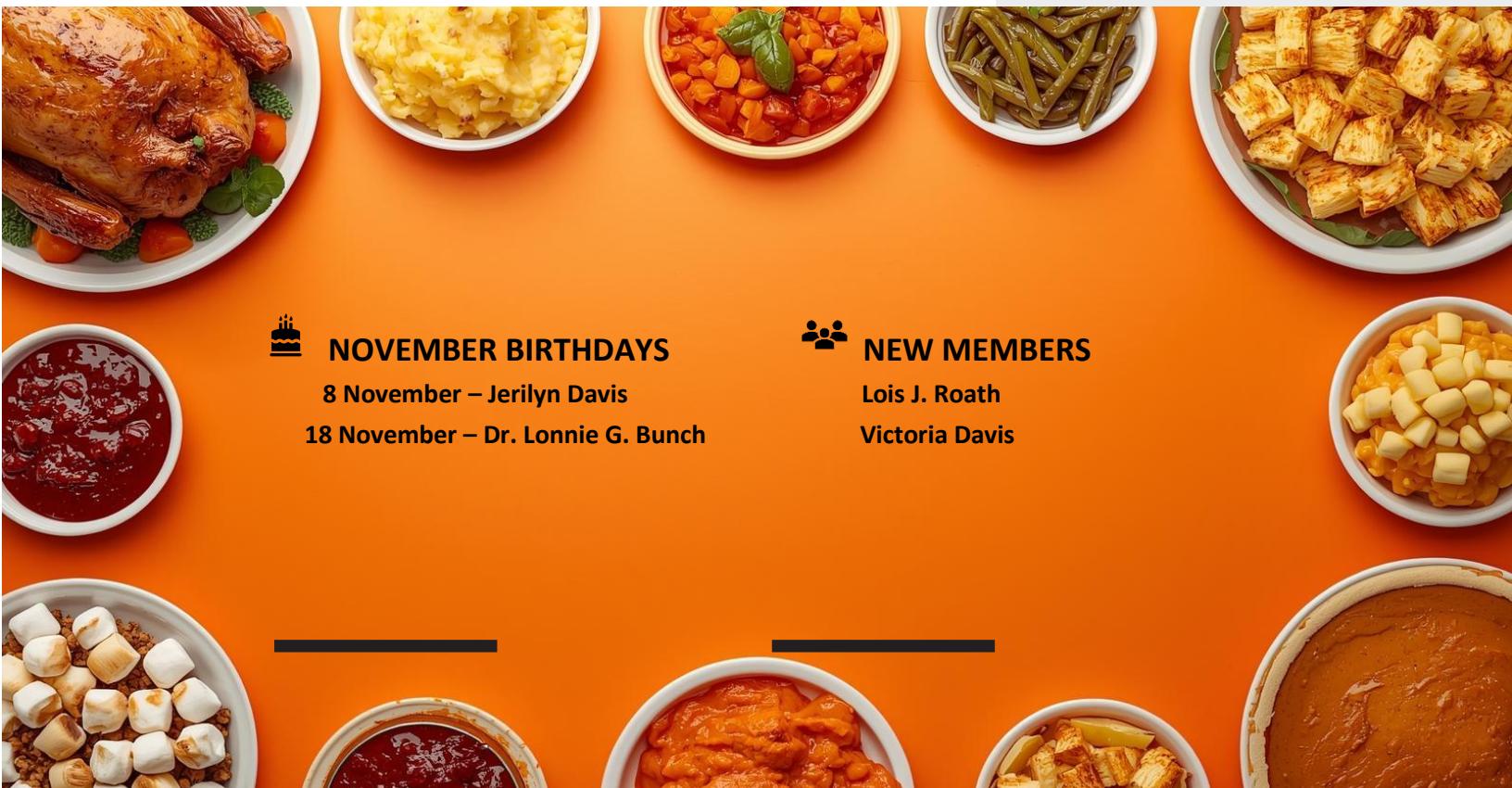
# NOVEMBER REMINDERS

---

## HOLIDAYS

- November – World Communications Week
- November – Family Stories Month
- November – Library & Information Services Month
- November – Aviation History Month
- November 1 – National Author's Day
- November 2 – Daylight Savings Time Ends
- November 4 – California Election Day
- November 9 – World Freedom Day
- November 11 – Veterans Day
- November 15 – CAAGS General Meeting
- November 18 – Entrepreneur's Day
- November 27 – National Day of Mourning
- November 27 – Thanksgiving

---



### NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 8 November – Jerilyn Davis
- 18 November – Dr. Lonnie G. Bunch



### NEW MEMBERS

- Lois J. Roath
- Victoria Davis

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**CAAGS Autobiography Project.** To commemorate CAAGS' 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, a book is in work to include members autobiographies, stories, photos and more. If you would like to participate, please submit your autobiography to Edna Briggs: [ednafbriggs@att.net](mailto:ednafbriggs@att.net) by December 13, 2025. Writing guides and instructions have been provided.

**CAAGS Vacant Positions.** We have one vacant CAAGS volunteer position. Please consider volunteering to support the organization's operations. See Page 11 for more details.

**CAAGS Writers Group.** The CAAGS Writers Group has moved to the 2nd Saturday of each month at 9:00 AM. The change is effective October through December 2025. The meeting date and time will be reevaluated to determine if there is a need to return to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursdays. The next meeting is scheduled for December 13, 2025 @ 9:00 AM. Please contact [ednafbriggs@att.net](mailto:ednafbriggs@att.net) for the Zoom link.

**VCGS Salt Lake Safari.** The Ventura Genealogy Society's 2026 Salt Lake Safari dates are April 12 – 18, 2026. The room block is at the Little America Hotel @ 500 Main Street, Salt Lake City, UT. Room rates are \$159.00 + tax. To make reservations and get our special genealogy rate, please call (801) 596-5700 or [click here](#). Be sure to copy and paste the link into your browser, as the address updates once the page loads. For questions, please contact Patricia Thomas [Thomas.Genealogical@gmail.com](mailto:Thomas.Genealogical@gmail.com)



## REPARATIONS NEWS



**California** – California Gov. Gavin Newsom delivered a mixed bag for proponents of bills aimed at addressing the state's legacy of racist and discriminatory policies against Black Americans. He signed a law authorizing \$6 million for California State University to study how to confirm an individual's status as a descendant of an enslaved person. But he vetoed other bills the California Legislative Black Caucus championed as tools to atone for the state's history.<sup>1</sup>

**Illinois** – Evanston's Reparations Committee met for a 45-minute meeting to discuss opening a third cannabis dispensary and spotlight local businesses. "We're not here to promote cannabis consumption, but I do want to remind the community that the sales revenue from the dispensaries in Evanston do support the reparations fund," she said. Simmons urged any community members with suggestions on how to increase Evanston's cannabis sales to email the city of Evanston.<sup>2</sup>

**New York** – The Nov. 4 mayoral win by Democrat Zohran Mamdani, a reparations proponent, could propel the issue, making New York one of the first cities in the U.S. to atone for its original sin of slavery. That victory could inspire the dozen-plus smaller cities seeking to rectify other historic racial injustices, creating a domino effect that expands the movement. Mamdani was the only candidate who signed a pledge in May to champion reparations policies as mayor, and he has repeatedly defended that pledge publicly. Last month, he said that he would follow the recommendations of the city authorities tasked with studying this issue to decide whether that would entail a payout or a program.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> AP News. Austin, Sophie. California's Newsom signs a reparations study law but vetoes other racial justice proposals. [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> Daily Northwestern. Dong, Ashley. Reparations Committee discusses third dispensary, platforms Black-owned local businesses. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>3</sup> Capital B News. Mock, Brentin, Will Zohran Mamdani Make New York the First City to Confront Its Debt to Slavery? (2025). [Link](#).



## ARTICLES

### **CAAGS CO-FOUNDER, EBONY HUMANITARIAN OF THE YEAR**

Recognized for his stewardship in persevering history and his lifelong commitment to education, culture, and humanitarian service, the 14th Secretary of the Smithsonian, Lonnie G. Bunch III. He is honored on Ebony's Power 100 as Humanitarian of the Year. Bunch is also a CAAGS Co-Founder, reminding us that history isn't just in the past, and it repeats itself. As the 14th Secretary of the Smithsonian, he's confronting challenging political headwinds head-on, including an unprecedented White House review of the Institution's exhibits. Despite a broad mandate to remove "divisive" content, Bunch remains committed to defending the Smithsonian's mission of thorough, inclusive storytelling and scholarly integrity. A trained historian and the first African American to lead the Institution, he was the founding director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, where he transformed public understanding of the American story. Through cultural and political challenges, Bunch continues to steer the Smithsonian toward a future grounded in truth.<sup>1</sup>



### **ORIGIN OF BLACK-OWNED ALTADENA**

Over the past 50 years, 92% of Los Angeles' majority-Black neighborhoods that experienced gentrification are no longer majority Black — a greater percentage of Black neighborhood loss than any other metro area in the nation. The trend accelerated dramatically in January when the Eaton Fire destroyed nearly half of Black-owned homes in Altadena, where the Black population had already declined from two-thirds in the 1980s to 18% today. Against this backdrop of displacement and demographic shift arrives a new book chronicling the man who first urged Black Americans to migrate to Southern California: Jefferson Lewis Edmonds, publisher of "The Liberator" newspaper from 1900 to 1914. The timing of "We Now Belong to Ourselves," written by Edmonds' great-great-granddaughter Arianne Edmonds, feels particularly urgent. As corporate investors snap up fire-damaged Altadena properties — with nearly half of post-fire sales going to corporations compared to just 5% the previous year — the book serves as both historical record and rallying cry for a community fighting to maintain its foothold in Los Angeles. "There are moments that have been echoed in history where folks had to stand up. It's our responsibility to see how they handled it. What were the lessons learned?" asks Edmonds. "Black history is American history. Our biggest failing is looking at it as something separate. Whether it's being erased or hidden, it remains the truth. Jefferson (Edmonds) has a great quote: 'If you erase the significance of Black people in the pages of the history of America, there would be no history, no story to tell.'"<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Ebony. Ebony Power 100. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> LA Public Press. Riefe, Jordan. As Altadena's Black community faces displacement. (2025). [Link](#).

## Family Stories Month: Ideas to Preserve Your History

- Share oral stories: Tell stories from your childhood, your parents' or grandparents' lives, or your family's history.
- Watch old home movies: Gather around to watch old videos of family events or members from the past.
- Create new traditions: Start a new tradition with your children that can be repeated every year and will become a story for future generations.
- Document your history: Write down your family's stories, create a family tree, or even create a family-themed board game based on your history.
- Read and learn: Explore books, memoirs, and biographies to learn about other families' stories and dynamics.
- Submit your story: Participate in local initiatives, like those by the Family Resource Center Inc. [Facebook](#)



### DEBBIE ALLEN BARBIE TRIBUTE

Debbie Allen, renowned actress, producer, director, dancer, and entrepreneur is being honored with a Barbie Tribute doll to commemorate her accomplishments in shaping the world of entertainment. "This is such excitement for me and my whole family," Allen told Blavity in a recent interview. "I mean, people were excited about me getting the Kennedy Center Honor, the Emmy Award, the Governor's Award, but when I said 'Barbie,' people started screaming. They were falling out and wondering, 'Where can I get it? When can I get it? I'm like, 'Honey, calm down. It's going to be on sale through Mattel. I don't know what date, but it's coming out soon.' She added, "This is truly putting me in a class of women whom I so love and admire. From Shonda Rhimes to Ava DuVernay, [and] Misty Copeland, who I'm going to join next week on stage with her when she retires. Mariah Carey. I mean, this is a long list of women who have been trailblazers and have done work that is inspirational to young women all over the world, and with dolls. It really allows them to get hands-on with someone and start to play with their imagination. I love that."<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Blavity. Yates, Shanique. Debbie Allen On Her Barbie Honor. (2025). Link.



## YouTube Channel

### Hidden Hands: The Black Artisans

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PW1rzOG\\_Yhg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PW1rzOG_Yhg)

### Ancestry's Custom Clusters Just Dropped

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFQzMWgEsUk>

### Inspired Candyman? Ruthie Mae McCoy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0kpJUiUI0OM>

### Honoring The History & Legacy of Black Veterans

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5D4RfmW3Pw>

### AncestryDNA Origins Update w/ live Q&A

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHWdZHagtU8>

### Chef Keith Corbin's journey from the street to the kitchen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmbBhUstjCQ>



## Legacy Family Tree

### Upcoming Webinars

<https://familytreewebinars.com/upcoming-webinars/>

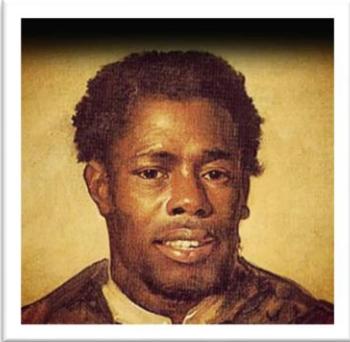
### Webinar Library

<https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar-library/>



## Quick Facts

**November 11, 1831** – On November 11, 1831, an enslaved Black man named Nat Turner was hanged in Jerusalem, Virginia, after being convicted of leading a revolt against his enslavers. On August 21, 1831, Turner led a group of Blacks in a revolt against slavery. Other enslaved Blacks joined the uprising, and Turner's troops grew to 60 to 70 people who fought white enslavers before being defeated by a militia. Many of Turner's followers were killed or captured immediately, but he escaped and evaded searchers for weeks before being captured on October 30, 1831. Enslavers and defenders of slavery throughout Virginia wanted Turner and all who participated in the revolt harshly punished as an example to others who might be inspired by his efforts. At least 18 Black participants in the uprising were executed along with Nat Turner. In response to Turner's revolt, at least nine states—Virginia, Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee—passed laws targeting enslaved and free Black people and limiting their mobility.<sup>1</sup>



**November 12, 1941** – Annie Lillian Evans, who would later become the famed classical singer Lillian Evanti, was by many accounts the first African American to sing grand opera professionally anywhere in the world. She was born in Washington, D.C. into a prominent, historically significant family. The Evans family claimed a Revolutionary War soldier, two abolitionists who took part in the Harper's Ferry Raid, and the first African-American United States Senator among their ancestors. On Nov. 12, 1941, Madame Lillian Evanti founded the National Negro Opera Company. Evanti was not only one of the founders, but also one of its most popular performers. When she sang La Traviata with the company in New York, the interest was so great that additional shows had to be arranged to accommodate the demand for tickets. For this occasion, Evanti translated the opera, which she had performed many times in French and Italian, into English.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Calendar. Nat Turner Hanged and White Mobs Killed Hundreds of Black People. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> North Dallas Gazette. Black History Spotlight. (2012). [Link](#).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

November 6, 2025 – New Member Orientation & Genealogy 101 with Gwendolyn Byrd, 5:00 pm PST

November 15, 2025 – CAAGS General Meeting

Los Angeles Family Search Library

1591 E. Temple Way, Los Angeles, CA 90024

Hybrid – 10:30 am – 2:00 pm PST

Guest Speaker: Julia Della Puppa, Drum Barracks

Civil War Museum

November 15, 2025 – Name Badge Campaign Kick-Off

November 22, 2025 – Special Interest DNA Group

Los Angeles Family Search Library, Hybrid – 10:15 am PST

1591 E. Temple Way, Los Angeles, CA 90024

December 6, 2025 – CAAGS Christmas Celebration

\*See Flyer on Page 11\*

December 6, 2025 – Deadline for Name Badge Campaign

December 13, 2025 – Deadline for CAAGS Autobiography Project submissions

December 13, 2025 – CAAGS Writers Group

Virtual – 9:00 am PST,

Please contact [ednafbriggs@att.net](mailto:ednafbriggs@att.net) for the Zoom link

\*Schedule subject to change. Questions? Call (323) 806-5634

## CAAGS FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Month Ending October 31, 2025

BEGINNING BALANCE	\$ 6,648.94
INCOME	70.00
DISBURSEMENTS	(549.46)
PETTY CASH	127.16
RESTRICTED FUNDS	(30.00)
ENDING BALANCE	\$ 6,266.64

*\*Submitted by Jean Wright-Calhoun, CAAGS Treasurer, 11/5/2025*



UPCOMING NOV 21, WICKED: FOR GOOD  
STARRING CYNTHIA ERIVO & ARIANA GRANDE

[CLICK TO WATCH TRAILER](#)

## CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. BOX 8442

LOS ANGELES, CA 90008-0442

(323) 806-5634



[CAAGS Facebook](#)

### General Membership Meetings

Third Saturday monthly (except July & August)

10:30 a.m. PST

Los Angeles Family Search Library

1591 East Temple Way

(Near 10741 Santa Monica Blvd.)

Los Angeles, CA 90024





## VACANT – Volunteer Librarian/Phong Log

### Summary of Duties:

- ① Receive all materials (books, periodicals) donated to the society's book collection.
- ② Maintain an inventory of the collection.
- ③ Evaluate and make recommendations to the Board regarding acquisition of new books/library material.
- ④ Monitor the phones and reports call log to the Board.





What do you want your ancestors to know 100 years from now? A thought, a message, a warning?



### *Letter from the Editor - Meshia Russell*

Please consider writing a review about any aspect of the content of this Newsletter or if you would like to be featured in the CAAGS Member Spotlight. Send to the Newsletter Editor at [newsletter@CAAGS.org](mailto:newsletter@CAAGS.org) or [CAAGSnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:CAAGSnewsletter@gmail.com) Submissions are due by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month.

*\*Please be aware there may be edits needed on submissions.*

## 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ELECTED OFFICERS	APPOINTED OFFICERS
<p>Muriel Jones – President Dr. Edna F. Briggs – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President/Education Valerie Warrick-Durette – 2<sup>nd</sup> VP /Membership Christina Ashe – Recording Secretary Jean Wright-Calhoun – Treasurer Marie Bryant – Corresponding Secretary James (Jimmy) Murray – Parliamentarian Dr. Edna F. Briggs – Immediate Past President</p>	<p>Steve Allen – Volunteer Coordinator Dr. Edna F. Briggs – Historian/NGS Delegate Vanessa McBride – Web Site Admin Meshia Russell – Newsletter Editor Monica Maurasse – Social Media Administrator VACANT – Librarian/Phone Log</p>

# Heritage Newsletter

California African American Genealogical Society



December 2025

Volume 37 Issue 12

## President's Message

By Muriel Jones

Greetings CAAGS Members,

As we prepare for the 2025 year's closing gathering this month, I am recounting the highlights of 2025. We have enjoyed the largely unobstructed benefit of regular and special meetings amongst each other, with few health or safety obstacles to our health or public safety. For committing to CAAGS and continuing to pursue family and community histories, we have been rewarded with presentations from historians and DNA experts to aid our efforts. We learned more and more that enables us to delve deeper into our family stories and discover previously unexplored or little understood history of our AA ancestors. For these gifts, I am grateful.

Planning continues for our upcoming 40th anniversary celebration. With pride and excitement, I acknowledge the March 2026 milestone, and the work to celebrate this organization's four decades of community impact with a series of special events. Our vision is programming that ranges from engaging guest speakers to lively community gatherings, all designed to invite broad participation. The Anniversary Planning Committee meets bimonthly and welcomes your suggestions and help in ensuring our 40th year will be memorable. Please don't hold back with your input. A separate flyer herein will remind members to "Save-the-Date" of March 21, 2026, on your calendar. Please, let's do all we can to make this anniversary one for the annals of CAAGS and the community.

I am including a note about our member Peggy Powell, who, as many of you know, has relocated from Los Angeles. Although she will no longer be here, she continues her CAAGS membership and will join us remotely from her new home in the Midwest. We will miss having her present in person but look forward to her participation on Zoom.

Consider this a friendly but strong reminder that NOW is the time for annual membership dues payments. In addition, I ask that you consider making a charitable contribution to CAAGS before the deadline of December 31, 2025. Your contribution would be invaluable and is eligible for tax credit submitted with your 2025 filing. If you make a charitable contribution, the required documentation will be provided by our CAAGS Treasurer.

Strains of the traditional end-of-year song stream in my head as I close this newsletter submission. I am grateful for the diligence and participation of CAAGS members in the organization's 2025 activities. As I mentally recount all the efforts that sustain CAAGS operationally and of our larger mission, I grow sentimental. I think of its legacy and our ancestors. You are the vital ingredient in carrying the work of bringing their stories forward and providing encouragement and assistance to others in discovering and celebrating the perseverance of their forefathers and foremothers. Let's keep CAAGS a vital resource and let's help it flourish through our committed learning, research, and volunteerism.

As I close this year, I am reminded of the song Auld Lang Syne and the memory of my mom singing it to me exuberantly when I was in college, far from our home. I hope you treasure the lyrics and memories of family and friends as much as I. I invite you to join me and sing a few bars of this very sentimental song:

*Should old acquaintance be forgot  
and never brought to mind?  
Should old acquaintance be forgot  
and old lang syne?...  
For auld lang syne, my dear  
for auld lang syne we'll take a cup  
of kindness yet for auld lang syne.*

***Wishing you a Happy New Year!***

With warmth and appreciation,

*Muriel Jones*

Muriel Jones, President

# DECEMBER REMINDERS

---

## HOLIDAYS

December 2 – National Day of Abolition of Slavery  
December 2 – Giving Tuesday  
December 4 – Santa's List Day  
December 5 – International Volunteer Day  
December 6 – CAAGS Christmas Celebration  
December 7 – National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day  
December 10 – Human Rights Day  
December 14 – Hanukkah  
December 19 – Ugly Christmas Sweater Day  
December 23 – National Roots Day  
December 25 – Christmas  
December 26 – Kwanzaa  
December 31 – New Year's Eve

---



## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

6 December – Velma Anderson      26 December – Dr. Lee Cenquizca  
17 December – Ron Fairley  
20 December – Linda Rush  
23 December – Jessie McClellan  
26 December – Glenda McKay  
26 December – Valerie Warrick-Durette

---



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**CAAGS Autobiography Project.** To commemorate CAAGS' 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, a book is in work to include members autobiographies, stories, photos and more. If you would like to participate, please submit your autobiography to Edna Briggs: [ednafbriggs@att.net](mailto:ednafbriggs@att.net) by December 13, 2025. Writing guides and instructions have been provided.

**VCGS Salt Lake Safari.** The Ventura Genealogy Society's 2026 Salt Lake Safari dates are April 12 – 18, 2026. The room block is at the Little America Hotel @ 500 Main Street, Salt Lake City, UT. Room rates are \$159.00 + tax. To make reservations and get our special genealogy rate, please call (801) 596-5700 or [click here](#). Be sure to copy and paste the link into your browser, as the address updates once the page loads. For questions, please contact Patricia Thomas:

[Thomas.Genealogical@gmail.com](mailto:Thomas.Genealogical@gmail.com)

**CAAGS Christmas Celebration.** Please join CAAGS to celebrate the holidays, this Saturday December 6 at the Sizzler in Culver City!

**Sizzler Restaurant**  
**5801 Sepulveda Boulevard**  
**12:00 pm – 2:00 pm**  
**Culver City, CA 90230**

*\*Please bring \$25 unwrapped toy or gift card for donation.*

[CLICK TO VIEW MENU](#)



## REPARATIONS NEWS



**California** – The Santa Monica City Council agreed in November to pay a settlement to the family of a Black entrepreneur whose land the city acknowledged was unfairly taken through eminent domain during the 1950s. The City Council unanimously approved in closed session a \$350,000 settlement for the family of Silas White, a Black businessman who leased a building on Ocean Avenue with the intention of buying it to open an exclusively Black hotel and beach club. Instead, the city took the property under the guise of building an auditorium nearby. The mediation that led to settling a claim filed by White's family was finalized in October. Mayor Pro Tempore Caroline Torosis, who worked closely on the case, said Santa Monica is working to set up other meaningful reparations for Black residents harmed by its racist past.<sup>1</sup>

**California** – San Francisco faces a serious deficit but that isn't stopping lawmakers from putting in motion a process to hand out costly reparations payments to black residents. The city's board of supervisors will debate an ordinance establishing a reparations fund after the board's rules committee voted unanimously on December 1 in favor of it, the Voice of San Francisco reports. The bill would set up a fund that could receive both city funds or private donations. The bill is sponsored by supervisor Shamann Walton. At the hearing, he said "Now is the time we make good on some of the promises."<sup>2</sup>

**New York** – The next New York reparations meeting is set for December 9. The theme is "The War on Drugs: Racially Discriminatory Criminal Justice Policies and Practices."<sup>3</sup>

[CLICK FOR MEETING DETAILS](#)

<sup>1</sup> AOL. Mendez, Jasmine. Santa Monica to pay \$350,000 to family of displaced Black entrepreneur as part of larger reparations effort. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> The New York Sun. Funk, Luke. Cash-Strapped San Francisco Considers Plan for Paying Out Slavery Reparations . (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>3</sup> Capital B News. Mock, Brentin. Will Zohran Mamdani Make New York the First City to Confront Its Debt to Slavery? (2025). [Link](#).



## ARTICLES

### ILLINOIS HELPING AFRICAN AMERICANS TRACE ANCESTRY TO AFRICA

Launched on Aug. 4, the state-funded Illinois Family Roots Pilot Program offers free DNA testing and genomic analysis through The African Kinship Reunion (TAKiR) research project. Led by principal investigator LaKisha David at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and backed by a \$500,000 bill sponsored by Rep. Carol Ammons of Urbana, the initiative aims to uncover and restore family ties broken by the legacy of slavery and human trafficking. With a goal to give African Americans “the opportunity to trace their roots back to their ancestral homelands, to reconnect with their ancestral heritage,” the Illinois project plans to distribute a total of 1,600 DNA kits around the state.

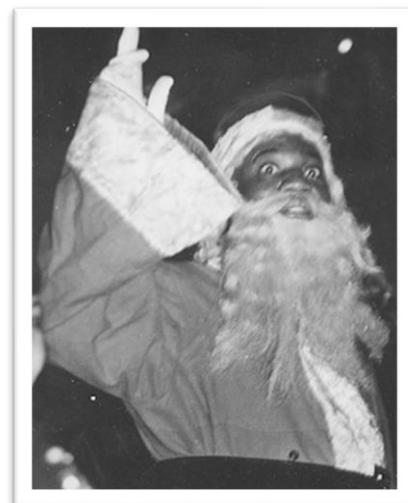
“My vision for this program is that it strengthens the Black community and it increases our leadership, our vision, our pride, and our ability to reach our full potential and be fully repaired,” Robin Rue Simmons, chairwoman of the Evanston Reparations Committee and founder and executive director of FirstRepair, a nonprofit reparations support organization, told the Chicago Tribune. “This program gives us an assist in repairing ourselves, at least by giving us access to understanding our lineage. From there, we can explore, self-educate, embrace, and uplift our culture.”<sup>1</sup>



### THE FIRST NOTABLE BLACK SANTA

Bill “Bojangles” Robinson was an American tap dancer and actor, the best known black American entertainer in America during the first half of the twentieth century. His long career mirrored changes in American entertainment tastes and technology. In 1928, the many talents of Robinson landed him in New York City, NY and on Broadway. During the Great Depression in the mid-1930s he saw many underprivileged and disadvantaged children in and around the city.

At Christmas he saw the need for some “Christmas Spirit” for all children. In 1936, Robinson donned a Santa Claus Suit for the very first time to entertain the impoverished children of Harlem. He was by no means the first black Santa, as the Volunteers of America put a black Santa on the streets of Pittsburgh, PA years earlier. But with the name recognition of Robinson, the door opened and soon black Santas could be found in New York City, NY and Chicago, IL.”<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Black Enterprise. JoVonn, Jeroslyn. Illinois Launches Program to Help African Americans. (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> Santa Clause Hall of Fame. Bill Robinson, “Keeping Children Happy” (2025). [Link](#).



## UPCOMING EVENTS

December 6, 2025 – CAAGS Christmas Celebration  
Sizzler Restaurant – 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm  
5801 Sepulveda Blvd, Culver City, CA 90230

December 6, 2025 – Deadline for Name Badge Campaign

December 13, 2025 – Deadline for CAAGS Autobiography Project submissions

December 13, 2025 – CAAGS Writers Group  
Virtual – 9:00 am PST,  
Please contact [ednafbriggs@att.net](mailto:ednafbriggs@att.net) for the Zoom link

January 17, 2025 – CAAGS General Meeting  
Los Angeles Family Search Library  
1591 E. Temple Way, Los Angeles, CA 90024  
Hybrid – 10:30 am – 2:00 pm PST

*\*Schedule subject to change. Questions? Call (323) 806-5634*

## CAAGS FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Month Ending November 30, 2025

BEGINNING BALANCE	\$ 6,169.48
INCOME	358.52
DISBURSEMENTS	(1,090.48)
PETTY CASH	127.16
RESTRICTED FUNDS	(80.00)
ENDING BALANCE	\$ 5,484.68

*\*Submitted by Jean Wright-Calhoun, CAAGS Treasurer, 12/3/2025*



NOW ON LIFETIME, THE CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN  
STARRING VIVICA A. FOX & JACKÉE HARRY  
[CLICK TO WATCH TRAILER](#)

## CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. BOX 8442, LOS ANGELES, CA 90008-0442  
(323) 806-5634



[CAAGS Facebook](#)



[NGS Member](#)

### General Membership Meetings

Third Saturday monthly (except July & August)  
Los Angeles Family Search Library, 10:30 a.m. PST  
1591 East Temple Way, Los Angeles, CA 90024  
(Near 10741 Santa Monica Blvd.)



2026  
MEMBERSHIP

## 2026 CAAGS Annual Membership Dues

Due Date Period: January 2026 – March 2026

\$5.00 Late Fee if Paid After March 31

SCAN THE BELOW QR CODE



### Online Instructions to Join or Renew:

1. Complete Membership Application: <https://caags.org/join-caags/>
2. Submit Membership Application to: [membership@caags.org](mailto:membership@caags.org)
3. Add Membership type to cart and click pay: <https://caags.org/shop-caags/>



### *Letter from the Editor - Meshia Russell*

Please consider writing a review about any aspect of the content of this Newsletter or if you would like to be featured in the CAAGS Member Spotlight. Send to the Newsletter Editor at [newsletter@CAAGS.org](mailto:newsletter@CAAGS.org) or [CAAGSnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:CAAGSnewsletter@gmail.com) Submissions are due by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month.

\*Please be aware there may be edits needed on submissions.

## 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ELECTED OFFICERS	APPOINTED OFFICERS
<p>Muriel Jones – President Dr. Edna F. Briggs – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President/Education Valerie Warrick-Durette – 2<sup>nd</sup> VP /Membership Christina Ashe – Recording Secretary Jean Wright-Calhoun – Treasurer Marie Bryant – Corresponding Secretary James (Jimmy) Murray – Parliamentarian Dr. Edna F. Briggs – Immediate Past President</p>	<p>Steve Allen – Volunteer Coordinator Dr. Edna F. Briggs – Historian/NGS Delegate Vanessa McBride – Web Site Admin Meshia Russell – Newsletter Editor Monica Maurasse – Social Media Administrator Betty Whitson – Librarian/Phone Log</p>