

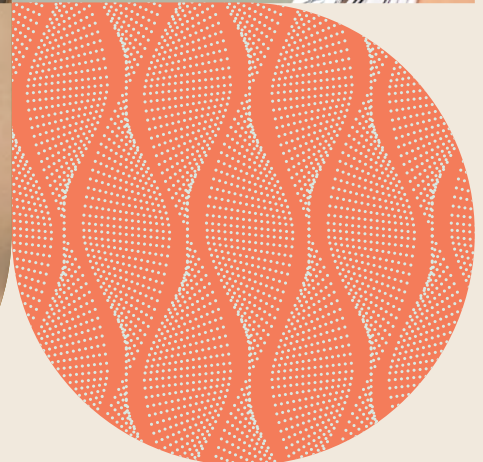
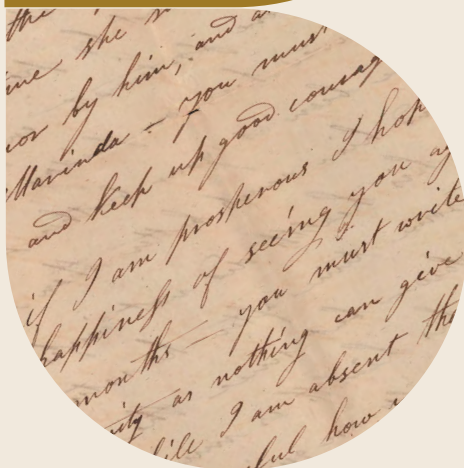


American
Ancestors®

A NATIONAL CENTER FOR
FAMILY HISTORY, HERITAGE & CULTURE

Annual Stakeholders Report

September 1, 2023–August 31, 2024



American Ancestors is a national center for family history, heritage & culture, and one of the world's top destinations for family history research, according to *USA Today*. American Ancestors is the country's oldest and largest genealogical society, founded in 1845, and today it serves more than 500,000 members and subscribers, and millions of online users engaged in family history nationally and around the world through its website AmericanAncestors.org. Its headquarters houses world-class spaces and resources dedicated to advancing family history, including the Brim-DeForest Library, the Family Heritage Experience, the R. Stanton Avery Special Collections, the Brue Family Learning Center, the 10 Million Names Project, and the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center.

Mission

To advance the study of family history in America and beyond, we educate, inspire, and connect people through our scholarship, collections, and expertise.

Values

Joy
Service
Leadership
Accuracy
Community
Innovation
Education
Scholarship
Stewardship



**American
Ancestors®**
A NATIONAL CENTER FOR
FAMILY HISTORY, HERITAGE & CULTURE

A Look at Fiscal Year 2024

Total revenue
\$15,170,819

**Total
membership
and subscribers**
501,226

**Members and
subscribers
across the
world**
All 50 states and
139 countries

**Brue Family
Learning
Center**
265 programs
39,687 attendee

Headquarters
28 million items in our
world-renowned library and archive
1,549 Ask-A-Genealogist
Live Chat Sessions

Social media
1,842,840 Facebook impressions
173,397 YouTube video views
JHC launched TikTok page
3,400 interactions

**Wyner Family
Jewish Heritage
Center**
More than 4 million
records and more
than 700,000
searchable digital
documents

**Published
scholarship**
9 new American
Ancestors and
Newbury Street
Press books
4 *American
Ancestors*
magazines, 4 issues
of the *Register*, and 2
issues of *Mayflower
Descendant*
52 issues of *The
Weekly Genealogist*

**Vita Brevis
blog**
Over 200,000
page views
61 new articles

AmericanAncestors.org
505 unique searchable databases
More than 10 billion total
searchable records
Over 4 million new searchable names

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Announcing the new

Family Heritage Experience

The Family Heritage Experience (FHE) is a unique series of exhibits and interactives designed to provoke thought and conversation about origins and identity. The experience leverages items from our collections to build curiosity and stir interest in the kind of questions most people have about their family tree.

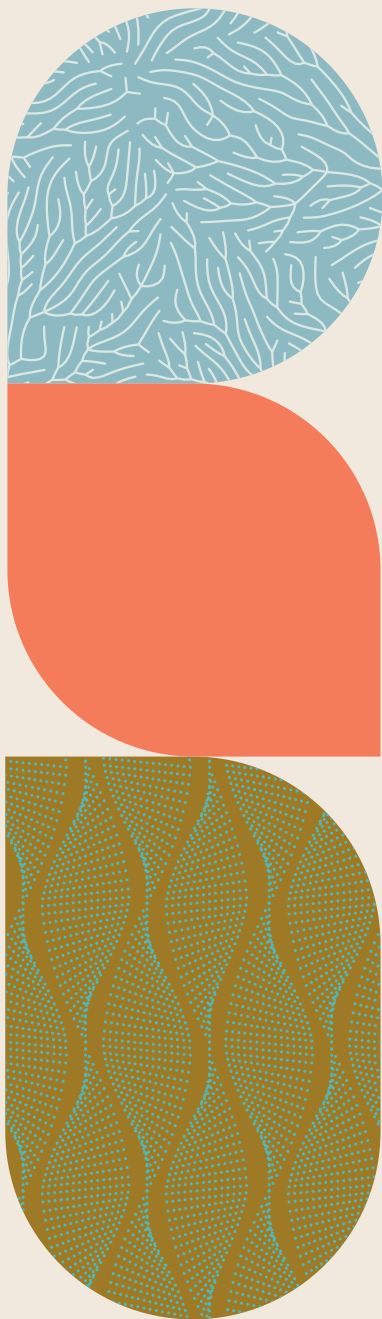
Located on the first floor of our building just inside the entrance at 97 Newbury Street, the FHE is a welcoming, visually exciting, and intellectually engaging introduction for visitors on their journey to other spaces in our building. These exhibits will offer visitors of all ages and backgrounds meaningful and engaging experiences that deepen their sense of identity, foster a sense of belonging, and highlight the transformative power of family history exploration.

Through our collections, visitors will perceive the historical significance and contemporary relevance that is the broader story of American Ancestors. Throughout the floors of our building, visitors will encounter the collection in specific, sometimes unexpected places, each encounter reinforcing American Ancestors as a vibrant, thoughtful, and inclusive institution.

As the nation's founding organization for genealogy, we believe every person and every family has a story worth telling. We are uniquely positioned to help individuals of all backgrounds uncover and celebrate their family histories.



Report of the President & CEO



Engaging in family history is more than just uncovering names and dates—it's about discovering the stories that shape who we are. It brings joy, education, inspiration, and a deep sense of connection. Family history can also be a source of healing, helping us make sense of the past while strengthening our ties to the present and future. Through this journey, we learn about our ancestors and gain a greater understanding of the historical and cultural forces that have shaped our world.

The words of an eighth-grade finalist in our 2024 American Ancestors Young Family Historians Essay Contest captured the essence of why our work matters:

Delving into the lives of our ancestors serves as a reminder to future generations that life's challenges are not insurmountable obstacles, but rather opportunities for growth and adaptability. [My great-grandmother's] unyielding determination in the face of adversity, her dedication in pursuit of a greater goal, and her love that knew no bounds are lessons that can be applied to any era. Her story lights a fire within us, encouraging us to embrace our agency, stand firm in the face of uncertainty, and extend a hand of love and compassion to those around us. In a world that often seems divided, her legacy serves as an important reminder of the power of unity and the strength that can be found in a common purpose.

This sentiment lies at the heart of our mission.

This past year has been one of growth, transformation, and historic milestones. After nearly two years of construction, we are thrilled to return to our newly renovated headquarters, a national center for family history, heritage & culture. This expansion has been a true labor of love, allowing us to create a space to educate, inspire, and connect people in new and meaningful ways.

Our Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting in April 2025 marks not just the completion of a building project but the beginning of an exciting new chapter. At the heart of this transformation is the Family Heritage Experience, a groundbreaking new space designed to make family history more interactive, accessible, and engaging for visitors of all backgrounds. Whether through hands-on exhibits, expert-led programs, or cutting-edge digital tools, we are bringing the power of family history to life like never before.

This incredible milestone is a testament to our mission-driven momentum and the generosity of our supporters. We are also honored to share that the Massachusetts Legislature and Governor have authorized \$5 million in capital improvement funding for our Cornerstone Project—a powerful endorsement of the impact and importance of our work. And, a national anonymous foundation proposed to match philanthropic donations to close the Cornerstone capital campaign by August 2025.

American Ancestors is uniquely positioned to preserve and share genealogical and historical knowledge in inclusive, multifaceted, and deeply personal ways. As we enter fiscal year 2025, we celebrate 180 years as America's oldest and largest genealogical society. This year, we regained a sense of normalcy after the disruptions of the past few years. Our library and archives are reopened to researchers, our team is once again able to collaborate in a shared space, and we are embarking on a new strategic plan to shape the future of our organization.

Most excitingly, we are launching the Family Heritage Experience, which will introduce new audiences to the transformative power of family history. Whether someone is just beginning their journey or has been researching for years, we want them to leave with a sense of wonder, curiosity, and connection.

None of this would be possible without you—our members, supporters, friends, and partners. Your generosity fuels our work, allowing us to preserve history, create new research tools, and make family history accessible to all. As you explore this annual report, I invite you to reflect on the incredible strides we have made together and the impact we are having on individuals and communities around the world.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Here's to another year of discovery, connection, and inspiration. Please take a moment to consider the accomplishments of our continued growth in fiscal year 2024 as we reached historic milestones in content, programming, engagement, and philanthropic support.

This year marked significant growth as we expanded our reach, strengthened educational initiatives, and enhanced genealogical resources. We hosted hundreds of programs, engaging tens of thousands of live attendees, with thousands more accessing archived content and online learning materials. Our commitment to genealogy education for young learners grew, with teacher workshops, expanded student programming, and a genealogy curriculum downloaded over 1,400 times. We provided professional development to over 150 teachers, with workshops in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Maine.

The Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center launched *Jewish Neighborhood Voices*, an oral history project that increased website traffic by 71% and was featured by ABC's WCVB-TV during Jewish American Heritage Month. Our publishing division released nine new books, four issues of the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, two issues of the *Mayflower Descendant*, and four issues of *American Ancestors* magazine.

We strengthened partnerships with lineage societies, reviewing applications for the General Society of Colonial Wars and the Colonial Dames of America. New digital resources included *American Offshore Whaling Crew Lists, 1799–1927*, expanded *Early Vermont Settlers, 1700–1784*, and more. These milestones reflect our dedication to preserving and expanding access to family history for future generations.

We made remarkable progress in 10 Million Names, our groundbreaking initiative to recover and restore the names of the estimated 10 million enslaved individuals in pre- and post-colonial America. The project recovered over 864,000 names across 15 databases spanning 21 states, with key record sets—including Freedmen's Bureau labor contracts, Black Loyalist emigration records (1783–1788), and Massachusetts biographical entries—now accessible or nearing completion. These invaluable resources help descendants reconnect with their family histories.

The project gained unprecedented media attention, with coverage from *ABC News*, *NPR*, and *NBC Chicago*, reaching millions of viewers. A feature on *ABC News Live* alone reached over 22 million people, amplifying awareness and engagement.

Our team of genealogists, archivists, and historians is among the most respected in the field, offering specialized expertise in DNA research, African American and Native American genealogy, Jewish history, and nineteenth- and twentieth-century immigration. With deep knowledge of regions spanning New England, the Mid-Atlantic, the South, the Midwest, Canada, and across Europe, our experts provide invaluable insights for family history research.





We conducted over 1,540 consultations, offering personalized guidance via phone, Zoom, and in-person sessions. These consultations help members break through research roadblocks, discover new resources, and develop effective research strategies. Beyond consultations, we offer Heritage Tours, blending travel with in-depth historical learning. This year's sold-out tours included exploring Vienna and Salzburg's palaces, Berlin's Christmas markets, and New Orleans' historic homes, cemeteries, and Mississippi River plantations.

Our Art & Architecture online lectures attracted thousands of viewers, offering beautifully illustrated programs that transported audiences through time, showcasing architectural wonders and fine art masterpieces. Our American Inspiration author series continues to spotlight powerful narratives on family and history. Since launching in 2019, more than 167,000 people have joined conversations with nearly 300 acclaimed authors.

Through these initiatives, we are preserving history and fostering connections, inspiring learning, and transforming how people engage with their past. Through a clear articulation and demonstration of our purpose and value as a leading cultural institution, we received extraordinary philanthropic support for our efforts. New philanthropy commitments exceeded \$9.2 million—thanks to our generous supporters.

As we embark on this new chapter of American Ancestors, we will keep our spirits high and efforts steadfast to meet our mission sustainably as excellent and responsive stewards of this venerable institution. The following detailed report captures the enduring power and promise of family history as we engage in groundbreaking work.

Educate

We produced 265 programs—many representing multiple days, multiple presentations, and numerous hours' worth of content—and engaged 39,687 live attendees. Many thousands more registered for our programs, viewed archived lectures online through our video library and YouTube channel, and utilized our online research guides, templates, and other materials on our website.

This past year was marked by significant strides in unlocking the transformative power of genealogy for young minds. We piloted teacher workshops, expanded programs for students, and laid the foundation for growth in the future. The result is a growing demand to incorporate genealogy into classroom curricula. Since its publication in the fall of 2022, our curriculum has been downloaded over 1,400 times, and we have provided professional development to over 150 teachers across the country and U.S. territories. Workshops were held in the U.S. Virgin Islands, along with two full-day workshops in Augusta, Maine, in partnership with the Maine State Department of Education. This marks the second year we have done workshops in Maine.

At the heart of the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center's accomplishments this year was our unveiling of *Jewish Neighborhood Voices* in fall 2023, the product of a transformative oral history project documenting Jewish life in four Greater Boston neighborhoods. Traffic to the JHC's website soared by 71%, and feedback demonstrated the exhibit's emotional resonance for Jewish and non-Jewish people alike. The JHC held a community celebration in Chelsea, Massachusetts, to launch the exhibit, which brought together attendees of all ages—from Gen Z to the Silent Generation—to honor their community history and share stories. And ABC's Boston affiliate station, WCVB-TV, chose *Jewish Neighborhood Voices* as its feature story for Jewish American Heritage Month.

Our Books & Journals team released nine new titles during the 2024 fiscal year. We published four issues of the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* and two issues of the *Mayflower Descendant* journal. American Ancestors books included *A British Country House Alphabet: A Historical & Pictorial Journey, Volume 1*, by Curt DiCamillo, *Ancestry of Ron Howard*, compiled by James A. Heffernan with Christopher Challenger Child, and *A Roll of Arms Registered by the Committee on Heraldry of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, Eleventh Part*, edited by Nathaniel Lane Taylor. Newbury Street Press books included *Ancestors of Thomas Trowbridge* and *Delinda Ratcliff Bryan*, by Kyle Hurst, and *Ancestors and Descendants of Daniel Goodwin*, by Nancy G. Bernard with Christopher C. Child.



We dedicated this year to preserving relationships with many partners, including lineage society organizations, universities, law firms, and media outlets. Our team continues to review applications for the General Society of Colonial Wars, Colonial Dames of America, Order of the Merovingian Dynasty, and the Boston Tea Party Descendants Program. Over the last year, we reviewed 160 applications for the General Society of Colonial Wars with an approval rating of 96% and 29 applications for Colonial Dames of America with an approval rating of 99%.

We expanded our core databases with new databases *American Offshore Whaling Crew Lists 1799-1927*, *Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Connecticut*, and *Shaker Records of the Fruitlands Museum*, with searchable record additions for *Early Vermont Settlers, 1700-1784*; *General Society of Colonial Wars Membership Applications, 1893-1949*; *Providence, RI: Old Stone Bank Records, 1844-1897*; and many more.

Inspire

We expanded 10 Million Names, a collaborative project dedicated to recovering and restoring the names of the estimated 10 million men, women, and children of African descent who were enslaved in pre- and post-colonial America. We made remarkable strides toward connecting their descendants to their family histories, demonstrating the transformative potential of family history across multiple domains, including research, fundraising, media outreach, and education. Our strides in this effort brought unprecedented media and public attention to our work and institution.

The project successfully processed and organized over 864,000 names across 15 databases that are either published or in progress. These databases span 21 states and several national record sets, making significant strides in recovering the

names of enslaved individuals. Key record sets, such as the Freedmen's Bureau labor contracts, emigration records like the *Black Loyalist Directory, 1783-1788*, and community-focused collections like the

Massachusetts: Biographical Entries of People of African Descent in New Bedford and Coastal Towns Also Once Part of Dartmouth (Westport, Dartmouth, and Fairhaven), were made accessible to the public or are nearing completion. These records, encompassing critical historical contexts, provide invaluable tools for genealogical research.

The initiative gained widespread media attention, with major outlets like ABC News, NPR, and NBC Chicago featuring stories on its work. These stories reached



millions, with highlights including an audience of over 22 million from a feature on ABC News Live. This visibility raised awareness of the project's mission and fostered connections with descendant communities and stakeholders.

Since launching our best-selling author lecture series, American Inspiration, in 2019, more than 167,000 have joined us to discover inspiring and thought-provoking stories of American families and the complex history that has shaped this country. In total, almost 300 authors, ranging from Nathaniel Philbrick to Annette Gordon-Reed, Stacy Schiff to Scott Simon, Margaret Atwood to Julie Satow, and Gail Collins to Ken Burns, have participated to present themes of personal identity, families, immigration, and social and cultural history. During fiscal year 2024 alone, American Inspiration drew over 24,000 live attendees and thousands of video views.

Connect

Our expert genealogists, archivists, and historians are the most respected and advanced in our profession, with specialized knowledge and skills in DNA, African American genealogy, Native American genealogy, Jewish history and genealogy, and nineteenth- and twentieth-century immigration. Location expertise includes New England, the Mid-Atlantic, the South, the Midwest, Canada, England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Italy, Poland, Austria, and Russia, among others.

One of the best ways to make progress in family history research is to connect with an expert. With over 1,540 consultations this past year, the genealogists at American Ancestors conducted phone, Zoom, or in-person conversations, offering members a chance to ask a question and get immediate feedback, gain practical strategies, and learn about new avenues of research.

We are also proud to provide other means of connection, such as Heritage Tours. These tours combine stimulating travel with lifelong learning. Our itineraries allow for both independent exploration and guided study, with participation from locals and area experts helping establish relationships and impressions that last a lifetime. Each tour explores the art, architecture, history, and landscape of our forebears. Sold-out tours included visiting the palaces, museums, and gardens of Vienna and Salzburg; Germany's capital for "Christmas in Berlin;" and New Orleans to view exceptional private homes, wistful museums and cemeteries, and historic Mississippi River plantations. Walking tours of Boston provided members and friends of American Ancestors with the opportunity to discover the expert scholarship of American Ancestors leaders and local guides, engage in dynamic learning experiences, and meet interesting travel companions.

Our online Art & Architecture lectures and seminars attracted hundreds of viewers. Lavishly illustrated, these online programs are designed to transport audiences to places and periods across history, revealing architectural delights and fine art masterpieces.

As we reflect on this year's achievements, we do so with deep gratitude for the past and a steadfast commitment to the future. Your support enables us to remain the nation's leading center for family history, heritage & culture—where we educate, inspire, and connect people through the power of genealogy and history.

Whether through heritage travel, archival research, engaging educational programs, or expanding our online resources, our mission remains clear: to support you on your journey of discovery and to enrich lives through the exploration of family history. **Thank you for being an essential part of this journey—your passion and generosity make everything we do possible.**

Respectfully submitted,



Ryan J. Woods
President & CEO



Records and Research

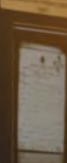
DID MY ANCESTORS SERVE IN THE MILITARY?

What type of resources or records might hold clues to answering your question?

US Census, 1950



Muster roll, 1941



What type of resources or records might hold clues to answering your question?

What can I learn about my family's "boom"?



Get Connected. Be Inspired.

American Ancestors is a national center for family history, heritage & culture based in Boston, Massachusetts, and one of the world's top destinations for family history research, according to *USA Today*. American Ancestors is the global brand of New England Historic Genealogical Society, America's oldest and largest genealogical society (founded in 1845). American Ancestors serves more than 500,000 members and subscribers and millions of online users engaged in family history nationally and around the world through its website AmericanAncestors.org with more than ten billion names in its databases.

Located in Boston's Back Bay, American Ancestors' headquarters houses world-class spaces and resources dedicated to advancing family history, including the Brim-DeForest Library, the Family Heritage Experience, the R. Stanton Avery Special Collections, the Brue Family Learning Center, the 10 Million Names Project, and the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center. American Ancestors also maintains a publishing division that produces original genealogical research, scholarship, and educational materials, including the *Register*, the flagship journal of American genealogy since 1847, and *American Ancestors*, its award-winning magazine.

With a mission to advance the study of family history in America and beyond, we educate, inspire, and connect people through our scholarship, collections, and expertise. We strive to connect with our members and the public in personally meaningful ways, serving as respected expert genealogists and historians who care deeply about helping people.

National Center for Family History, Heritage & Culture

Named by *USA Today* as a top 10 world destination for family history, all are invited to visit our eight-story headquarters, where the Brim-DeForest Library, R. Stanton Avery Special Collections, Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center, and Digital Archives are home to the largest collection of original family history research materials in the country. Our growing collection dates from the fourteenth century to the present and spans North America, Europe, and beyond. It includes more than 28 million diaries, letters, photographs, and other manuscripts, and more than 200,000 books and microforms.

Family Heritage Experience

The Family Heritage Experience (FHE) is a unique series of exhibits and interactives designed to provoke thought and conversation about origins and identity. The experience leverages items from our collections to build curiosity and stir interest in the kind of questions most people have about their family tree. Located on the first floor of our building just inside the entrance at 97 Newbury Street, the FHE is a welcoming, visually exciting, and intellectually engaging introduction for visitors on their journey to other spaces in our building.

Through our collections, visitors will perceive the historical significance and contemporary relevance that is the broader story of American Ancestors. Throughout the floors of our building, visitors will encounter the collection in specific, sometimes unexpected places, each encounter reinforcing American Ancestors as a vibrant, thoughtful, and inclusive institution.



Expert staff

Our expert staff of researchers and genealogists are among the most respected and advanced in the profession. Ask a Genealogist, our free online chat service, allows family historians to ask short research or history questions and get real-time answers from our experts. We also provide in-depth research assistance with our research-for-hire projects. With research specialties including DNA and genetics, early American, New England, New York, Irish, English, Italian, Scottish, Atlantic and French Canadian, African American, Native American, Chinese, Jewish genealogy, and more, our expert staff can assist family historians by providing research advice in person, over the phone, or in writing. Our expert staff can also conduct research on behalf of family historians, providing authoritative, documented research reports and family tree charts.

Databases

AmericanAncestors.org provides access to more than 10 billion names that span the United States, the British Isles, continental Europe, and beyond. The site features an extensive online collection of early American genealogical records, the largest searchable collection of published genealogical research journals and magazines, the only online source for records from Boston's Catholic Archdiocese, and 10 Million Names, which is dedicated to recovering the names of the estimated 10 million men, women, and children of African descent who were enslaved in pre- and post-colonial America between the 1500s and 1865.

Education opportunities

Family history research is, at its core, a pursuit of endless learning—encountering unfamiliar places, languages, and times; uncovering long forgotten family stories; and meeting the thousands of ancestors who came before you. We provide exclusive, in-depth learning opportunities online and in person, including more than 250 annual lectures, seminars, intensive research programs, Heritage Tours, American Inspiration book talks, and special events designed to benefit family history researchers of all levels and heritage and cultural enthusiasts. Through guided research tours to repositories around the world, we help you maximize your results and take your family tree to new heights.

Original scholarship

We produce significant original research and publications in genealogy, including the longest continually published academic journal in the field, the *Register*. We also publish the quarterly *American Ancestors* magazine, the biannual *Mayflower Descendant*, ten to twenty books per year, a weekly email newsletter, and landmark study projects in New England research.

As the leader in genealogical scholarship, our study projects include The Great Migration Study Project, an endeavor to create genealogical and biographical sketches of the some 20,000 individuals who arrived in New England between 1620 and 1640; the Early New England Families Study Project, 1641–1700, a successor study project to the Great Migration period; the Western Massachusetts Families in 1790 Study Project, which captures families heading west at the time of the 1790 census; and the Early Vermont Settlers to 1784 Study Project, which covers families that settled Vermont, the last frontier of New England.



Senior Leadership Team



Ryan J. Woods

President & Chief Executive Officer

An educator and historian, Ryan J. Woods is President & Chief Executive Officer of American Ancestors. For more than two decades, he has dedicated his professional life to developing experiences to educate, inspire, and connect people through the exploration of history, heritage, and culture.

Since joining the American Ancestors staff in 2007, he has played a key role in bringing the enduring power and promise of family

history to people across the country and around the globe, including serving as the lead creator of AmericanAncestors.org, which offers more than 10 billion searchable records, and leading the collaborative effort to establish our Jewish Heritage Center. Currently, Ryan is focused on partnerships, business planning for the expansion of our headquarters, the creation of a national visitor destination experience, and 10 Million Names.

Ryan serves in leadership roles for several nonprofit organizations including as chairman of the Committee on Heraldry, appointed commissioner of the Special Commission for the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, advisory board member for the 250th Anniversary of the Boston Tea Party, Secretary-General of the 36th International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences, member of the Committee on Pretensions of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Connecticut, Deputy Governor of the Society of Colonial Wars in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, partner representative on the Mayor of Boston's Green Ribbon Commission, and past-President of the Boston University School of Education Alumni Association.

He is a member of the Order of Saint John, the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, the Mayflower Society, the Sons of the Revolution, the Saint Nicholas Society of New York City, and the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society.

In 2022, Ryan was elected an Honorary Life Fellow of the Massachusetts Historical Society. He also was honored by the New England Society in the City of New York (founded 1805) with the Townsend Award "in recognition of outstanding achievement representing the finest attributes of the New England character." Prior to joining American Ancestors, he held several positions at other cultural and historical institutions, including the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). During his tenure with NARA, he received the Archivist of the United States' Award for Outstanding Public Service.

A dedicated researcher, Ryan has authored pedagogical articles about the use of historical biographies to teach character and ethics and contributed genealogical articles and several book forewords for historical and genealogical publications. Ryan holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in history education from Boston University.

Chairs of the Board, 1845-present*

2021-	David Martin Trebing
2017-2021	Nancy Sands Maulsby
2012-2017	David Henderson Burnham
2008-2012	Eric Baker Schultz
2002-2008	David Watson Kruger
1996-2002	John Godfrey Lowell Cabot
1991-1996	William Morgan Fowler, Jr.
1987-1991	Theodore Chase
1982-1987	Arthur A. Dunn
1977-1982	Rodney Armstrong
1974-1977	Richard Brigham Johnson
1971-1974	Robert Churchill Vose, Jr.
1963-1971	Walter Muir Whitehill
1961-1963	Charles Moorfield Storey
1954-1961	Thomas Temple Pond
1948-1954	Walter Merriam Pratt
1942-1948	Frederic Alonzo Turner
1936-1941	Frederick Silsbee Whitwell
1922-1936	John Carroll Chase
1901-1921	James Phinney Baxter
1899-1900	Edward Griffin Porter
1892-1898	William Claflin
1887-1892	Abner Cheney Goodell
1868-1886	Marshall Pinckney Wilder
1866-1867	John Albion Andrew
1861-1866	Winslow Lewis
1859-1861	Almon Danforth Hodges
1858-1859	Samuel Gardner Drake
1853-1858	William Whiting
1850-1853	Joseph Barlow Felt
1845-1850	Charles Ewer

*Prior to 2006, the Chair of the Board was titled "President."



Bruce Bernier | Chief Financial Officer

Bruce Bernier is responsible for the areas of finance, human resources, information technology, and facilities. Bruce is focused on the well-being of American Ancestors and serves as a resource to its management team and employees. Bruce has served in a senior capacity at Massachusetts and New England-based not-for-profits for over twenty years. He earned his BS at the University of Vermont and MBA at Northeastern University.



Lindsay Fulton | Chief Research Officer

Lindsay Fulton is a nationally recognized professional genealogist and lecturer who joined American Ancestors in 2012. She leads the Research, Library & Archives, and Database teams and oversees 10 Million Names. She was featured in the Emmy-winning program *Finding your Roots: The Seedlings*, a web series inspired by the PBS series *Finding Your Roots with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.* and the PBS series, *Samantha Brown's Places to Love*. She holds a BA from Merrimack College and an MA from the University of Massachusetts Boston.



Rachel King | Executive Director, Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center

Rachel King leads the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center and oversees the JHC's work to preserve, illuminate, and connect people to Jewish history and heritage through its archives, programming, community relations and partnerships, and fellowships. She brings deep experience in communications, fundraising, strategic planning, and operations to advance the JHC mission. Rachel is a magna cum laude graduate of Brown University and has an MA from Columbia University.



Edward G. MacMahon | Chief Advancement Officer

Before joining American Ancestors in 2008, Ted successfully led fundraising campaigns at various educational and social service organizations. He spearheaded American Ancestors' comprehensive campaign from 2009 to 2016, resulting in \$62 million in donations. Ted serves on multiple non-profit boards and was elected as the president of the Association of Fundraising Professionals in Massachusetts and Arizona. In addition to leading the Advancement team, Ted focuses his efforts on assisting our members with their legacy philanthropy objectives. Ted earned a BA from St. Lawrence University and a masters in non-profit management & fundraising from Lesley University.



Ginevra Morse | Chief Learning & Interpretation Officer

Ginevra Morse is responsible for genealogical programming, heritage & cultural programming, publications, and youth education. She joined the team in 2010 and developed the American Ancestors online learning center before leading all research tours and programs, seminars, workshops, online programs, conferences, group visits, offsite lectures, youth education, and community events. Ginevra holds a BA in anthropology from McGill University in Montréal.



Don Reagan | Chief Business Development & Marketing Officer

Don Reagan is responsible for analytics, communications, digital strategy, marketing, and member services activities that drive scalable financial growth and expand membership for American Ancestors. Don earned his BS and MBA from Clarkson University where his focus was business and technology management. Don also earned a BA in history from Clarkson.



D. Brenton Simons OBE | Chief Stewardship Officer & President Emeritus

Author of the award-winning *Witches, Rakes, and Rogues*, and other books, Brenton Simons is the former President and CEO of American Ancestors, a position he held since 2005. In 2024, he stepped into his new role of President Emeritus and Chief Stewardship Officer to provide strategic and tactical assistance for donor relations, content initiatives, and partnership relationships in support of annual budgets and strategic plans. Brenton has an ME in education and a BS in communications from Boston University. In 2023, he was awarded an OBE by HM King Charles III for services to Anglo-American history.

Officers, 2025–2026



David Martin Trebing | Chair

Director of External Affairs for the global commercial vehicle maker Daimler Truck, having previously served in a variety of executive positions at Chrysler Corporation, DaimlerChrysler Corporation, and Daimler AG for almost 40 years. Mr. Trebing was the 37th Governor General of the General Society of Colonial Wars, serving from 2016 to 2019. He is also a member of the General Society of Mayflower Descendants, the Society of the Cincinnati in New Hampshire, La Société des Filles du roi et soldats du Carignan, and other organizations. In addition, he is a member of the Church Club of New York, the Pilgrims of the United States, and is a Commander in the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem. He is currently a member of the Board of Directors of the American Independence Museum in Exeter, NH, the James Monroe Memorial Foundation, and serves on the advisory board of Enslaved.org. Previous nonprofit board positions include the Michigan State University Development Fund, the Detroit Historical Society, the Cultural Development Corporation, the Meadow Brook Theater and Festival, and the Historical Society of Michigan. He is a member of the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations. Education: Wake Forest and Michigan State Universities. American Ancestors: member since 2016; member of the Charles Ewer Society for Lifetime Giving; Benefactor Member.



M. David Sherrill | Vice Chair

Managing Director, Senior Portfolio Management Director, Private Wealth Management at Morgan Stanley; President, MD Sherrill Foundation; former Governor, Society of Colonial Wars (NY); former Treasurer, New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children; member, Society of the Cincinnati; former Board member and Treasurer of the NYGB. Former board member of the California Jazz Conservatory and jazz pianist; member of several other historic and hereditary societies; and champion backgammon player. Author, *The American Ancestry of Edward Mason Knight*; *The American Ancestry of Julia Hutchinson*; *The American Ancestry of Helen Christina Smith*; *The Ancestry of Mary Alice Hoyt, From Hoyt to Hoyt*; *Dice, Cubes & Gentlemen: The History of Backgammon at the Union Club and Elsewhere*; and *The American Ancestry of Albert Wesley Ferren*. Education: B.S. in Mathematics, University of California, Berkeley; CFA, CMT. Spouse: Mary Alice Sherrill. American Ancestors: member since 1999; current Vice Chair, past Trustee, Councilor, Treasurer, and Chair, Finance Committee; past member, Executive, Investment, Audit, and Nominating Committees; member, the Charles Ewer Society for Lifetime Giving; Life Benefactor.



Bonnie A. Reilly | Second Vice Chair

Current board member and member of Collections Council and Governance Committee, Eiteljorg Museum; current board member, Jordan YMCA; past President and currently an interviewer for Harvard Club of Indiana; past President and honorary board member, Indianapolis Opera; past Trustee, Indianapolis Museum of Art and Indiana Historical Society; past President and Registrar, the National Society of Colonial Dames of Indiana; past board member, Dumbarton House; past Regent, Gunston Hall; member of Daughters of Holland Dames; Daughters of the War of 1812; Associated Daughters of Early American Witches; past Regent, Cornelia Cole Fairbanks DAR; member of several other lineage societies. Education: A.B., Radcliffe College. Spouse: Thomas Reilly. American Ancestors: member since 1977; past Trustee and Councilor; past Chair and member, Development Committee; past member, Nominating Committee; member, the Henry Bond Society for Legacy Philanthropy; member, the Charles Ewer Society for Lifetime Giving; Life Member.



John E. Corcoran | Treasurer

Founder and past CEO of Trinity Life Sciences, a global life sciences advisory firm. Previously, founder and board member of Shyft Analytics, a provider of cloud-based analytics solutions for the pharmaceutical industry. John is the founder and chairman of Odyl, LLC, a technology platform developing AI-based solutions for the publishing industry focused on book discovery. John's board memberships include Catholic Leadership Institute, Concussion Legacy Foundation, iCatholic Media (chair), Catholic University (trustee), Pope St. John XXIII National Seminary, Saint John's Seminary and Mount Auburn Cemetery (trustee). John received an AB from Harvard College, an MA from Northeastern University, and a master's degree from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. John is married to Julie (Schneider) Corcoran. American Ancestors: member since 1995; Individual Member; and member of the Charles Ewer Society for Lifetime Giving.



Gerard A. Halpin, III | Secretary

Forty-year career in international finance; retired President and Chief Executive Officer of Siemens Capital Company LLC. Education: BA from The College of the Holy Cross; MBA from the University of Virginia; Certificates in Genealogical Research from Boston University and American Genealogical Studies from the National Genealogical Society. Continuing genealogical education courses from American Ancestors/NEHGS, Genealogical Research Institute of Pittsburgh, and Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy. Genealogical interests include Colonial and early America, New France and early Canada and Irish genealogy. Spouse: Mary Lee Halpin. American Ancestors: member since 2013; past Councilor and Trustee; Life Benefactor; and member of the Charles Ewer Society of Lifetime Giving.



Mark T. Cox, IV | Corresponding Secretary

President, Chalk Bluffs Foundation for Historic Preservation and Conservation, since 2001. Retired in 2000 from Dominion Resources, Inc. after eight years in various senior executive positions. Previously U.S. Alternate Executive Director, World Bank (1988-1991) after a 16-year financial career with First Chicago Corporation in domestic and international locations. Current board service at Cox Ranches LLC. Genealogical memberships: Mayflower Society (former Governor, Deputy Governor, and Captain of the Virginia Society, and Deputy Governor General from Virginia and trustee of the GSMD Endowment); The Alden Kindred of America; The Pilgrim John Howland Society; Soule Kindred of America; Society of Colonial Wars; Society of the War of 1812; and Sons of the Revolution. Education: MBA. (finance and banking) and B.A. (European history), Columbia University; Hispanic Studies, University of Madrid. Spouse: Emily Cox. American Ancestors: member since 2000; Associate Member, former Councilor and Trustee, and member of the Charles Ewer Society for Lifetime Giving.

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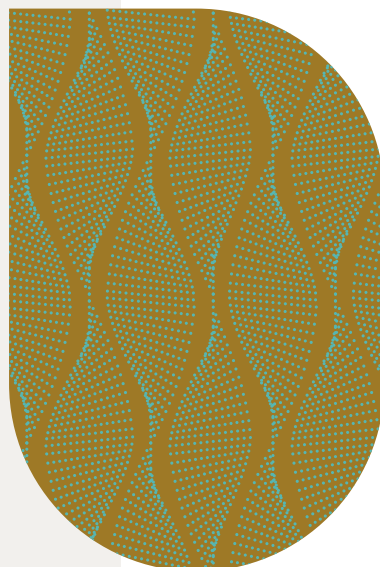
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In the News

American Ancestors attracted extensive media coverage of 10 Million Names throughout fiscal year 2024. Coverage ranged from nationally broadcast news shows to regional TV news, and also included national public radio, digital, and print publications. The combined coverage reached tens of millions of people.

9/19/23—News anchor Whitney Burney at WXYZ News, an ABC affiliate in Detroit, Michigan, interviewed members of the Fred Hart Genealogical Society in Ypsilanti, Michigan, as they work to uncover their family history. The six-minute segment drew parallels between the research being done by American Ancestors and 10 Million Names, which is making it possible for more Black Americans to find their ancestors.

2/19/24—Action News 5 in Memphis, Tennessee, aired a seven-minute segment featuring in-person interviews with 10 Million Names Chief Historian Dr. Kendra Field and Dr. Kerri Greenidge, both professors and historians at Tufts University, about the importance of 10 Million Names and its impact on millions of Americans.

2/23/24—Janet Roach, news anchor at 13 News Now, an ABC affiliate in Norfolk, Virginia, aired a feature-length documentary called *Roots Recovered: Reclaiming Our Names*, produced in partnership with the 10 Million Names Project. The documentary, which featured interviews with several members of the 10 Million Names Scholars Council, related African Americans' challenging genealogical journey to recover the names of their enslaved ancestors.

2/29/24—ABC News ran a powerful 9-minute segment in which ABC news correspondent Alex Presha sat down with 10 Million Names historians Dr. Kendra Field and Dr. Vincent Brown to discuss the impact of firsthand accounts, exploring the legacy of slavery through rare and historic audio interviews with formerly enslaved individuals that were recorded in the 1940s and 1970s.

3/8/24—Boston public radio station GBH's show *Under the Radar with Callie Crossley* interviewed 10 Million Names Chief Historian Dr. Kendra Field and Founding Director Richard Cellini about 10 Million Names

3/9/24—The *New England Weekend* podcast on iHeartRadio featured an interview with Ryan Woods, President & CEO, about the importance of 10 Million Names.

3/21/24—Boston.com featured 10 Million Names: "A Boston-based group is trying to track down the names of everyone who was ever enslaved in the U.S. American Ancestors' newest initiative, 10 Million Names, combines the work of historians and genealogists to bring the past to the present."

5/15/24—ABC News aired a six-minute segment featuring news anchor Linsey Davis as she uncovered a family story of enslavement to empowerment with the help of 10 Million Names. The story focused on her ancestor, who was one of the first people in Georgia to register to vote after being emancipated.

6/19/24—In honor of Juneteenth, ABC News interviewed Dr. Kendra Field and Dr. Kerri Greenidge about the mission of 10 Million Names.

7/24/24—In an interview with New Orleans TV station WWLTV, 10 Million Names Research Director Cynthia Evans discussed the mission and impact of the 10 Million Names project alongside members of the Louisiana chapter of the Afro American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS, a 10 MN partner), who make the important point that fascinating stories are just waiting to be found with some genealogical exploration.

7/26/24—CBS affiliate WJZ in Baltimore, Maryland, interviewed the local chapter of the African American Historic and Genealogical Society, a 10 Million Names partner, about their research findings and what those discoveries mean to them.

8/6/24—ABC *Prime Time Live News* featured a seven-minute segment on chief justice correspondent Pierre Thomas as he journeyed to Jenkins Plantation in West Virginia, where his ancestor was enslaved. The plantation is situated so that his ancestor would have been able to look across the river to Ohio, a free state. Pierre spoke with Dr. Vincent Brown, of the 10 Million Names Scholars' Council, about the lives of his ancestors and grappled with the harsh realities and legacy of slavery. This piece also aired on *Good Morning America*, and other ABC shows, reaching an audience of millions.

8/20/24—FY24's media coverage ended on a triumphant note. On Elizabeth Freeman Day in Massachusetts, we secured several prominent media placements, including an A1 story in the *Boston Globe*. 10 Million Names tracked the first descendent of Freeman ever found, a woman named Lisa Shepperson, and brought her to the Berkshires, where Freeman fought for—and

won—her freedom. Coverage included the front page feature story in the *Boston Globe*, a feature story in the *Berkshire Eagle*, and segments on public radio stations NPR and New England Public Media.



Lisa Shepperson at the Elizabeth Freeman Monument, Sheffield, Massachusetts.

UNLOCKING THE PAST

Erik LaPrade

My relationship with American Ancestors mirrors a similar path to other members: starting slowly and building continuously, I became aware of and took advantage of the breadth of resources available. I knew my father was 100% French Canadian from Western Massachusetts, and there were many extended family members throughout New England.

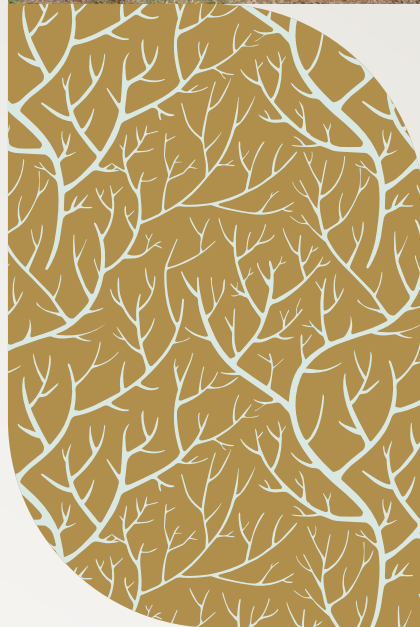
Inheriting a photo album and manila folder with assorted documents, I became determined to make sense of it. I started listening to webinars and podcasts and purchased guidebooks, all of which led me to American Ancestors and its databases. Joining as a Guest Member, I learned to navigate their online databases. While on vacation in Boston, I took my two sons to the library on Newbury Street, and we were all impressed by how many of our ancestors appeared in the historical books. I realized that becoming an Individual Member opened up many more resources.

After I developed a family tree on two websites, I hit pause. Using the Hire a Researcher program to commission a custom project, I wanted a professional to review and validate my tree, confirm people and dates, and add any documents to personalize the historical names on the tree. Genealogist Sheilagh Doerfler provided me with these services and found many documents already translated. My next step was to attend a Research Getaway in Boston for further research and to continue adding detail to the family tree.

I upgraded to a Supporter Member when I reached the point where it became apparent that I needed to pursue a two-pronged strategy: self-inquiry and discovery, and engage with expert researchers to answer questions I couldn't resolve and unravel unexpected problems. Sheilagh assisted with a second Hire a Researcher project to expand my research. One vexing challenge on the second project was acquiring a copy of a book at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Quebec. Two attempts using interlibrary loans were declined, including one via the local Midwest Genealogy Center. Sheilagh was successful in borrowing a copy and sent me PDFs regarding my 4th great grandfather. It was a success, and I believe only American Ancestors could have accomplished it.

As a Supporter Member, I utilized annual consultations to discuss roadblocks and try to solve problems. I created a running challenge list to be discussed during my consultations. As I expanded research beyond my paternal line, I widened the scope to include my maternal lines and have been doing work on my wife's family. I took a long list of tasks and questions to Salt Lake City participating in the Fall Research Tour. There were both pleasant surprises and disappointments that drive further research activities. I expanded my family history research including travel to Bergen, Norway, to visit the church where my parents were married, cemeteries across Massachusetts to view grave sites of relatives, and homes of great-grandparents where families were born and raised.

I participate in Ask a Genealogist Live Chat and occasionally the Request Photocopies feature. As part of my ongoing activity, I regularly attend both current and archived webinars. As an example of the value contained in these webinars, at Senior Genealogist Rhonda McClure's recent webinar, she suggested the *Genealogist's Handbook for New England Research*. I used it to validate a long-standing family story. Accessing archived title deeds, I confirmed indeed that my maternal great-grandparents bought and later transferred the title of their home to my grandparents in Easthampton, Mass., and that is the home where my father was raised.



Erik LaPrade is retired from a career in corporate marketing and advertising. He joined American Ancestors as an Individual Member in 2018 and is currently a Supporter Member. He lives in Kansas City, Kansas.

New Databases

New Databases

American Offshore Whaling Crew Lists 1799–1927

This database is comprised of 6,082 names and records and is searchable for given names and surnames and includes port and voyage information.

This database includes information about all known American offshore (or “pelagic”) whaling voyages from the 1700s to the 1920s. The voyages included in the database sailed from, or were under the registry of, what is now the United States. A voyage was defined to be complete when the vessel returned to its port of departure or registry. This database includes crew lists from four New England ports: Fall River, MA, New Bedford, MA, Salem, MA, and New London, CT.

This database is the result of a partnership with the New Bedford Whaling Museum, Mystic Seaport Museum, and the Nantucket Historical Association. Their joint work on whaling history can be found at whalinghistory.org.

Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Connecticut

This database, which was created from the three-volume *Biographies of Original Members and Qualifying Officers – Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Connecticut*, edited by J. Michael Phelps, contains 715 fully cited genealogical and biographical sketches of all qualified propoiti of the Connecticut Society of the Cincinnati, including renowned heroes such as Capt. Nathan Hale, Gen. Jedediah Huntington, Gen. Samuel Holden Parsons, Gen. Israel Putnam Sr., Maj. Benjamin Tallmadge, and Gen. David Wooster. These sketches contain 36,049 records and 35,831 names.

In May 1783, as the Revolutionary War was nearing its end, the Society of the Cincinnati was formed by its officers, some of whom had served together for as long as eight years, as a way for them to maintain their friendships and provide for their widows and orphans. The society was named for Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, a Roman general who had left his farm and family to fight for his country, as did George Washington centuries later. It includes all Original Members and all who qualify under some other basis of the original or amended Institution, including, but not limited to, Died in Service, Rule of 1854, Deranged (retired by consolidation), or Served to End of War.

Shaker Records of the Fruitlands Museum

The database features over 14,000 records from five volumes kept by the Harvard and Shirley Shaker communities. These archives are part of the Trustees of Reservations’ Fruitlands Shaker Manuscript Collection.

These records can be a valuable resource into understanding life in the Massachusetts’ Shaker communities and can supply tremendous genealogical value in terms of dates and names of vital and church records for the community that are not reflected in state-held records.

This online database is a collaboration between the Trustees’ Archives & Research Center (ARC) and American Ancestors. In 2016, Fruitlands Museum became the Trustees’ 116th reservation, and the Shaker manuscript materials were relocated to the ARC in Sharon, Massachusetts. Currently, this online database is index-only. The original materials, as well as high-resolution digital scans, can be accessed by contacting the ARC (arc@thetrustees.org).

Top 10 Databases of 2024

New England Historical and Genealogical Register

Mayflower Families Fifth Generation Descendants, 1700–1880

General Society of Mayflower Descendants Membership Applications, 1620–1920

Mayflower Descendant

Massachusetts: Vital Records, 1620–1850

Boston Tea Party Participant Biographies

Early New England Families, 1641–1700

Massachusetts: Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston Records, 1789–1920

The American Genealogist

Rhode Island: Vital Records, 1636–1850

Database Additions and Updates

Early Vermont Settlers, 1700–1784

Boston Tea Party Participant Biographies

Providence, Rhode Island: Old Stone Bank Records, 1844–1897

American Ancestors magazine, Vol. 23

The Maine Genealogist, Vols. 39–41

Rhode Island Roots, Vols. 43–45

Mayflower Descendant, Vol. 70

New England Historical and Genealogical Register, Vol. 176

General Society of Colonial Wars Membership Applications, 1893–1949

Portsmouth, NH: School Records, 1846–1958

Early New England Families, 1641–1700

Vita Brevis

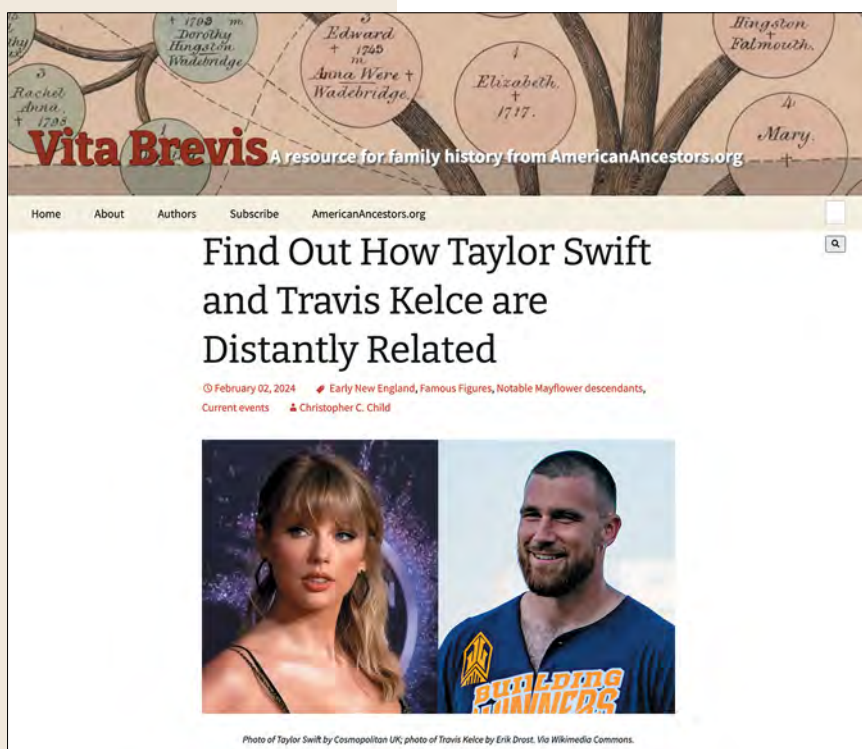
Vita Brevis celebrated its 11th birthday in 2024! With over 200,000 page views and 61 new articles added this year, our blog continues to be a pivotal resource for genealogists and family historians.

During the last year, *Vita Brevis* authors explored a variety of topics, including shipping logs, Quaker marriage records, utilizing DNA in family history research, researching ancestors in poverty, exploring the genealogies of high-profile athletes, and uncovering family mysteries.

Vita Brevis is more than just a blog; it's a unique, searchable content repository that educates, entertains, and inspires our audience. Our authors do not simply report their findings; they share their journey of discovery, engaging readers the whole way through. They explain their thought processes, questions, assumptions, frustrations, and successes. This detailed sharing of the research process is often as compelling as the discoveries themselves, making our readers feel part of the story. Oftentimes, our readers see their own research experiences reflected in these narratives.

One reader shared their personal experience with becoming interested in genealogy at a young age: "As a preschooler, rainy days spent at my grandparents' often turned into days of discovery when they brought out old photo albums with pictures of relatives from as far back as the late 1800s. By the time I was about 10, I was ready to dive into microfilm and paper trails. Genealogy has been a passion throughout my life!"

Vita Brevis fosters a strong sense of community among readers, who are drawn together by their shared passion and curiosity for family history.



Top Five *Vita Brevis* Articles This Year

"Find Out How Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce are Distantly Related" by Christopher Child

"Where did Little Joe go?" by Aidan Walsh

"The Unsolved 19th-Century Mystery in the Parking Lot" by Jonathan Hill

"The Baby Found on the Doorstep" by Danielle Rose

"Divided Loyalties: The Davenport Brothers" by Christopher Child

VitaBrevis.AmericanAncestors.org

Digital Library & Archives

This website contains digitized materials from the three repositories at American Ancestors. The repositories include the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center, R. Stanton Avery Special Collections, and the Brim-DeForest Library. The site features almost 30,000 digitized archival and published materials such as letters, diaries, photographs, newspapers, business records, genealogies, city directories, organizational records, and other sources for historians and genealogists. The contents focus on the study of family history in America and on the Jewish community in New England.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Digital Library & Archives website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'American Ancestors.' on the left and 'Join Visit Give About' on the right. Below this is a large header with 'Digital Library & Archives' in the center, a search bar on the right, and 'Search Log in' below it. A secondary navigation bar has 'BROWSE', 'HOW TO', and 'ABOUT' with dropdown arrows. Below that is a search bar with 'Search the Digital Library & Archives' and buttons for 'Search', 'Advanced Search', and 'Browse All'. The main content area features a large image of a group of women, with a caption about Ella (Davis) Isaacs and the University of Cincinnati basketball players. Below this is a section titled 'About Our Digital Library & Archives' with a paragraph describing the website's content and a link 'New to the site? Start here.' Below this are three repository logos: 'American Ancestors.', 'The Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center', and 'Brim-DeForest Library'. At the bottom, there's a 'Browse' section with three icons: 'DATES' (calendar), 'ACCESS' (lock), and 'REPOSITORIES' (building).

The Five Largest Collections in the Digital Library & Archives*

Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society,
Boston, Massachusetts

Family and Individual Papers
(R. Stanton Avery
Special Collections)

The Jewish Times, Boston,
Massachusetts

Jewish Community
Relations Council, Boston,
Massachusetts

Combined Jewish
Philanthropies, Boston,
Massachusetts

*Based on the number of
compound objects.

Top Five Collections Used This Year*

Local History Books
(The Brim-DeForest Library)

Family History Books
(The Brim-DeForest Library)

Jewish Community
Relations Council, Boston,
Massachusetts

Winer, Kane, Snider Family
Collections and Records of Elm
Farms

Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society,
Boston, Massachusetts

*Based on page views.

digital.AmericanAncestors.org



250th Anniversary of the American Revolution

The 250th anniversary of the American Revolution provides a unique opportunity to honor the pivotal events that defined our nation's birth, while also connecting us to the generations that lived through this transformative period. This milestone allows us to reflect on the courage and resilience of those who served on both sides of the conflict, as well as the enduring impact of their actions. To commemorate this important occasion, American Ancestors will offer a range of educational programming, special events, publications, and resources that not only explore the Revolution's historical significance but also help individuals connect to their own ancestors who lived during this era. By uncovering stories from the past, we aim to inspire a deeper understanding of how those who came before us shaped the nation we live in today. Through these efforts, we hope to foster a sense of pride, continuity, and dialogue about our shared history and its relevance to the present day. Recently released and upcoming initiatives include the following.

Databases on AmericanAncestors.org

Boston Tea Party Participant Biographies Presented in collaboration with the Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum, this database contains full biographical sketches for participants in the Boston Tea Party and shorter *ahnentafel*-style reports for their children and children's spouses.

Connecticut: Society of the Cincinnati This database, drawn from *Biographies of Original Members and Qualifying Officers—Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Connecticut* (New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2023) contains 715 fully cited genealogical and biographical sketches of all qualified propoiti of the Connecticut Society of the Cincinnati, referencing 36,049 records and 35,831 names.

Daughters of the American Revolution: Patriots of Color, 1712–1888 This database features more than 6,500 names of individuals of African, Native American, Iberian, Latin American, and multiracial descent who played significant roles in the American Revolution.

Index of Revolutionary War Pensioners, 1800–1900 This collection, taken from NARA microfilm publication M804, includes an estimated 80,000 pension and bounty-land warrant application files based on the participation of American military, naval, and marine officers and enlisted men in the Revolutionary War. The files are part of Record Group 15, Records of the Veterans Administration.

Massachusetts: Revolutionary War Pensioners' Receipts, 1799–1807 & Massachusetts: Revolutionary War Pensioners' Receipts, 1827–1836 Many Revolutionary War soldiers were given pensions from the federal government for their service. This searchable database, drawn from the manuscript collection at American Ancestors, contains images of receipts for pension funds, including original signatures and marks of pensioners.

Massachusetts: List of Pensioners This is a list of Revolutionary War veterans and invalid pensioners residing in Massachusetts who were eligible for pensions under specific Acts of Congress. The full title of this volume is *A List of Pensioners in the State of Massachusetts, Comprising Invalid Pensioners and Revolutionary Pensioners Under the Acts of Congress Passed March 18, 1818, May 15, 1828, and June 7, 1832*.

Massachusetts: Society of the Cincinnati This database includes information on Massachusetts officers eligible for membership in the Society of the Cincinnati.

Weymouth, MA: Revolutionary War Soldiers and Sailors, 1775–1783 This collection provides names and descriptive text for 324 veterans from Weymouth, Massachusetts.

Education programs and special events

American Ancestors will offer a robust schedule of education programs, literary events, seminars, walking tours, and more that will focus on Revolutionary War topics and scholarship, including tracing Patriot and Loyalist ancestors, researching colonial ancestors, and understanding Revolutionary War collections. Some recent and upcoming programs include:

ONLINE LECTURE Friend or Foe: Researching Colonial Ancestors During the American Revolution, presented by David Allen Lambert, March 13, 2025

ONLINE LECTURE Revolutionary War Collections at the Concord Museum, part of our Art & Architecture series, March 14, 2025

Left: Detail from Amos Doolittle, engraver, "Plate II. A view of the town of Concord," 1775. New York Public Library Digital Collections.

ONLINE SEMINAR Revolutionary War Research: Tracing Patriot and Loyalist Ancestors, five-weeks, presented by David Allen Lambert, Melanie McComb, and Sheilagh Doerfler, April 2–30, 2025

ONLINE AUTHOR EVENT *This Fierce People: The Untold Story of America's Revolutionary War in the South* with author Alan Pell Crawford and moderated by Joseph Ellis, part of our American Inspiration series, April 17, 2025

AMERICAN STORIES, AMERICAN LIVES GALA

April 23, 2026. More details coming in fiscal year 2025.

WALKING TOURS OF REVOLUTIONARY LEXINGTON AND CONCORD

Sixteen miles outside of Boston, the American Revolution began with “The shot heard around the world.” Visit Lexington and Concord along “Battle Road” to learn about the beginning of the Revolutionary War with tour guides and reenactors. We will begin in Lexington, where we will visit Lexington Green where 77 minutemen stood against 700 British redcoats in the first battle of the Revolutionary War. We will also view colonial homes originating from the 1700s along our route.

WALKING TOURS OF REVOLUTIONARY BOSTON

Boston is known as the City on a Hill, the Hub, the Olde Towne, and the Cradle of Liberty. Its role in the beginning of America's Revolutionary War cannot be overstated. Meeting at City Hall Plaza and following the Freedom Trail, this daylong excursion will explore the historical landmarks that led to the birth of the United States. Some of the sites we will visit include Faneuil Hall, the North End, the Old State House, Old North Church, Boston Harbor, King's Chapel, Old South Meeting House, Paul Revere's House, and Granary Burial Ground.

YOUNG FAMILY HISTORIANS ESSAY CONTEST

For students in grades 4–12, our annual contest in 2026 will ask students to: share a “revolutionary” ancestor's story; what did they do that was so revolutionary at the time?

Other education resources

FREE DOWNLOAD *Getting Started with Revolutionary War Records* hubs.AmericanAncestors.org/guide_to_revolutionary_war

ARCHIVED ONLINE LECTURE *Applying to Revolutionary War Lineage Societies*, presented by Chief Research Officer Lindsay Fulton AmericanAncestors.org/video-library/applying-revolutionary-war-lineage-societies

ARCHIVED ONLINE LECTURE *Researching Black Patriots and Loyalists During the Revolutionary Era*, presented by Researcher Danielle Rose AmericanAncestors.org/video-library/researching-black-patriots-and-loyalists-during-revolutionary-era

ARCHIVED ONLINE LECTURE *Spilling the Tea: Researching Boston Tea Party Patriots*, presented by Chief Research Officer Lindsay Fulton AmericanAncestors.org/video-library/spilling-tea-researching-boston-tea-party-patriots

ARCHIVED ONLINE LECTURE *Come Join the Revolution: Applying to the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution*, presented by Genealogist Kathy Kaldis AmericanAncestors.org/video-library/come-join-revolution-applying-national-society-daughters-america

Publications

Biographies of Original Members and Qualifying Officers—Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Connecticut (New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2023)

The Loyalists of Massachusetts and the Other Side of the American Revolution (Experts' Choice reprint) by James H. Stark, to be published 2025

Massachusetts Privateers of the Revolution (Experts' Choice reprint) by Gardner W. Allen, to be published 2025

Portable Genealogist: Getting Started with Revolutionary War Records by Ann G. Lawthers (American Ancestors, 2025)

Rhode Island Town Meeting Records During the American Revolution, Volume I and II by Jolene Roberts Mullen, to be published 2025

American Ancestors magazine, Fall 2023, vol. 24, no. 3
The theme of the issue was “Marking the 250th Anniversary of the Boston Tea Party.” Related articles included:

- The Boston Tea Party: A Pivotal Act of American Defiance
- ‘A Box Worth Keeping’: The Story of the Robinson Tea Chest
- Documenting Family Connections to the Boston Tea Party
- Researching for the Boston Tea Party Descendants Program
- Discipline and Justice in the Continental Army: Records about Revolutionary War Courts-Martial

American Ancestors magazine, Fall 2024, vol. 25, no. 3
The theme of the issue was “Researching & Remembering Revolutionary War Patriots.” Related articles included:

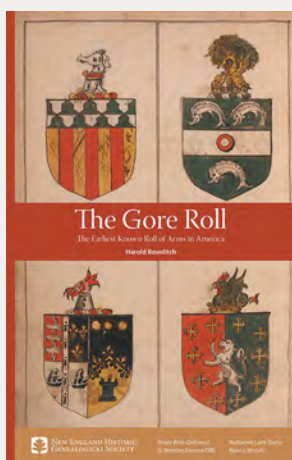
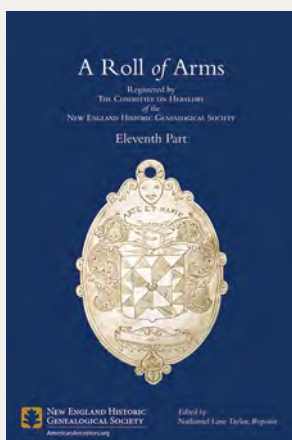
- Finding Revolutionary War Patriots in Your Family Tree
- Revolutionary War Lineage Societies: Connecting with the Founding Generation
- The Last Soldier and Widow to Receive Revolutionary War Pensions
- Pennsylvania's Revolutionary Pacifism

American Ancestors magazine, Fall 2025, vol. 26, no. 3
The theme of the issue will be “Commemorating the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution.” Related articles will include:

- The importance of Revolutionary War-era manuscripts featuring items in our collections and other organizations
- A focus on Loyalists that includes historical background and research advice
- Researching Black Patriots and Loyalists, including genealogical guidance and resources
- An examination of the impact of weather and climate on the lives of individuals and families during the Revolutionary War years.
- A preview of American Ancestors anniversary events

New Publications

Our Books & Journals team released nine new book titles during fiscal year 2024. In addition, we published four issues of *American Ancestors* magazine, four issues of the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, and two issues of the *Mayflower Descendant* journal.



2024 American Ancestors Books

The Great Migration: Immigrants to New England, 1636-1638, Volume 1, A-Be, by Ian Watson

A Roll of Arms Registered by the Committee on Heraldry of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, Eleventh Part, edited by Nathaniel Lane Taylor

The Gore Roll: The Earliest Known Roll of Arms in America, foreword by Brady Brim-DeForest, preface by Ryan J. Woods, introduction by D. Brenton Simons OBE, "The Gore Roll and the Committee on Heraldry's Roll of Arms" by Nathaniel Lane Taylor

A British Country House Alphabet: A Historical & Pictorial Journey, Volume 1, by Curt DiCamillo

Plymouth County Massachusetts: Freeperson Families in 1790, by Mary Blauss Edwards, foreword by Kerri Greenidge

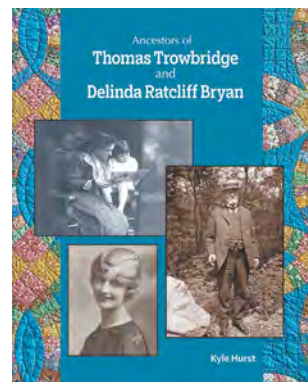
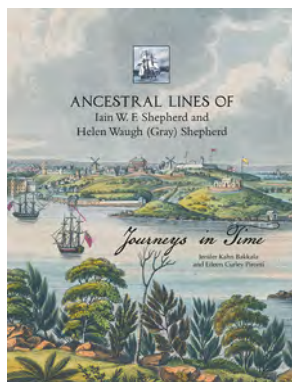
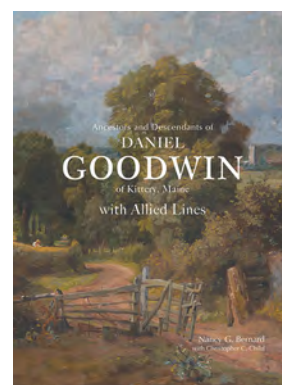
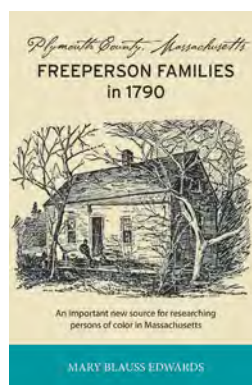
Ancestry of Ron Howard (April 2024 dinner honoree), compiled by James A. Heffernan with Christopher Challenger Child

2024 Newbury Street Press Books

Ancestral Lines of Iain W.F. Shepherd and Helen (Gray) Shepherd — Journeys in Time, by Jenifer Kahn Bakkala and Eileen Curley Pironti

Ancestors and Descendants of Daniel Goodwin, by Nancy G. Bernard with Christopher C. Child

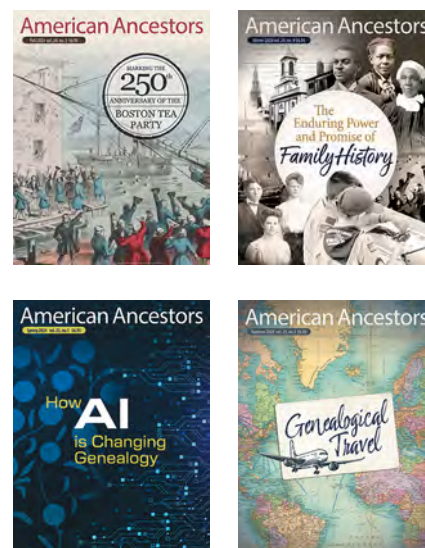
Ancestors of Thomas Trowbridge and Delinda Ratcliff Bryan, by Kyle Hurst



Periodicals

American Ancestors magazine

The four issues of *American Ancestors* magazine (fall 2023 through summer 2024) published in this fiscal year presented engaging content and themes, including the 250th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party, how AI is changing genealogy, and genealogical travel. Our winter 2024 issue, which marked the transition from the leadership of D. Brenton Simons to Ryan J. Woods, reviewed past accomplishments and set out a vision for the future of *American Ancestors*. Columns on Louisiana, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, genetics, the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center, and our manuscripts and collections offered readers a variety of genealogical and historical topics. Readers were also kept up to date on *American Ancestors* member benefits, education programs and tours, events, our Cornerstone Project, our 10 Million Names initiative, and other news.



The Register

In Fall 2023, we treated the Slye family of Warwickshire and Ulster Scots William and Ann Dunn of Natick, Mass. We learned of Jeffrey Ferris's ties to Essex before immigrating, identified the wife of William¹ Freeborn who arrived on the *Francis*, and established the English origin of Elizabeth¹ Hubbard of Boston. This issue contained the third part of our New Bedford Quakerism series, which concluded in Winter 2024 with an every-name index to Parts 1–4.



The Winter 2024 issue also covered the English origin of William¹ Briscoe of Boston and the Brisko and Wilson families of Cumberland, R.I.; the identification of the wife of Dr. Richard¹ Palgrave of Charlestown, Mass.; a study of the later life of John Humfrey, deputy governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony; the discovery of the maiden name of the second woman named Mary who married Joseph³ Tidd of Lexington, Mass.; and the whereabouts of Gabriel¹ Meade in England before he emigrated to Dorchester, Mass.



In Spring 2024, we covered a Townsend family that had so far escaped notice in the literature and described the process of identifying the wife of Benjamin Wilson (1670–1750), the wife of Reynold¹ Marvin, and the parents of Lydia P.⁵ (Hunt) Hardy. Notably, we resolved a nearly 100-year-old misstatement of the relation of two Twitchell immigrants to Massachusetts as brothers by proving that they were in fact father and son. We also began an article (concluded in Summer 2024) on two Connecticut women named Wood who were double first cousins of each other.

The Summer issue also traced the ancestry of Joyce Cornish; confirmed a supposition made by Donald Lines Jacobus in 1935 about the identity of immigrant Thomas¹ Osbourne's father and corrected his identification of the immigrant's mother; dismantled some fantastical ideas about the ancestry of Ann (Borodell) Denison and Margaret (Borodell) (Shepard) Mitchell; and traced a Sewell family from 18th-century Massachusetts to their dispersal into New York, Canada, and West Virginia.



Mayflower Descendant

The year 2024 marked our ninth year of publishing the *Mayflower Descendant* journal under the editorship of Christopher C. Child. The Winter issue contained an article on the ancestry of Star Trek creator Gene Roddenberry, continuations of the Rickard and Curtis families of Plymouth, and genealogical sketches of later *Mayflower* descendants in Maine, New York, and Michigan. The Summer issue included updates on the origins of Dr. Matthew Fuller, additional lines of 30 notable figures treated in Gary Boyd Roberts's *The Mayflower 500*, and details about the life of Kenelm² Winslow (nephew of Gov. Edward Winslow) outside of Plymouth Colony.



The Wyner Family
Jewish Heritage Center™
at AMERICAN ANCESTORS

Community Events

The Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center (JHC) at American Ancestors opened and closed fiscal year 2024 with two events that brought people together in warm celebration of community and a shared Jewish past.

On October 15, 2023, the JHC celebrated the launch of the *Jewish Neighborhood Voices* exhibit with a special event in Chelsea, Massachusetts. The event featured a speaking program and panel discussion, along with a reception styled like a mid-century deli, displays and photographs from the exhibit, an audio station to listen to the stories in the exhibit, and a recording booth for people to add their own stories. The program began with remarks about the power of oral history from project advisor and director of the Housatonic Oral History Center, Dr. Judith Monachina. She was followed by a panel of three individuals who had given oral histories for the *Jewish Neighborhood Voices* project, and who shared their memories and stories of Jewish family and community life in their youth. During the Q&A session, we opened the floor to the audience, who were eager to share their own stories. Described by one attendee as “hamish,” (Hebrew for warm or down to earth), the event was a welcome opportunity for people to come together a week after the traumatic events in Israel on October 7.

In September 2024, the JHC once again brought people together to hear and tell stories of a cherished place. “Jewish Stories of Nantasket Beach and Ice Cream Social” spotlighted the history of a small seaside community in Hull, Massachusetts, which, beginning in the 1910s and for decades thereafter, drew Jewish families from Greater Boston during the summers. During the lively Sunday afternoon program at Temple Israel in Hull, nearly 200 people attended a panel conversation about the Jewish history of Nantasket, the synagogues and community center established there, and the multigenerational families who felt deeply connected to the community. As with the “Jewish Neighborhood Voices” event nearly a year earlier, the audience enthusiastically shared their own stories following the panel. They also enjoyed an ice cream social, a recording booth for people to share their stories and memories, and a digitization station for attendees to digitize and share their photos and documents.

One audience member posted on social media following the event: “A capacity crowd of people with personal or family ties to this often-overlooked pocket of Jewish life jammed Temple Israel to hear stories of the Jewish experience in Hull. ... I’ve often been frustrated that this shtetl-like pocket of Jewish life has lacked a footprint in the broader Jewish story. I completely appreciate [the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center] for helping it to become better known.”

As the bookends of the JHC’s year, the Chelsea and Nantasket Beach events demonstrated the strong bonds formed by shared experiences of place. The JHC looks forward to continuing such educational and community-building events focused on Jewish life in the region.



Top: Two photos from the “Jewish Neighborhood Voices” community reception in Chelsea. Bottom: Scenes from the “Jewish Stories of Nantasket Beach and Ice Cream Social”; photos by Sarah Dauer.

GUIDED BY EXPERTS

Sally MacKenzie

Professional Resources Help To Verify the Facts

Trust, but verify. Those three words helped to launch my personal interest in genealogy eleven years ago when my husband and I purchased an 1856 rowhouse in Center City, Philadelphia. It was claimed that the house was built for a Civil War widow and that only four families occupied the home over a period of 157 years. My curiosity was piqued about the histories of the people who occupied the home before me, but the math didn't add up. The Civil War hadn't even begun in 1856.

How could I verify the facts? I attended a local historical society lecture and learned the basics of house research. A path led me from deeds to death records, visits to the city archives, several museums, churches, and historical repositories in Philadelphia. I pieced together the ownership history of my new home and verified the facts with solid research: there was no Civil War widow, and eight families had lived in the home before us.

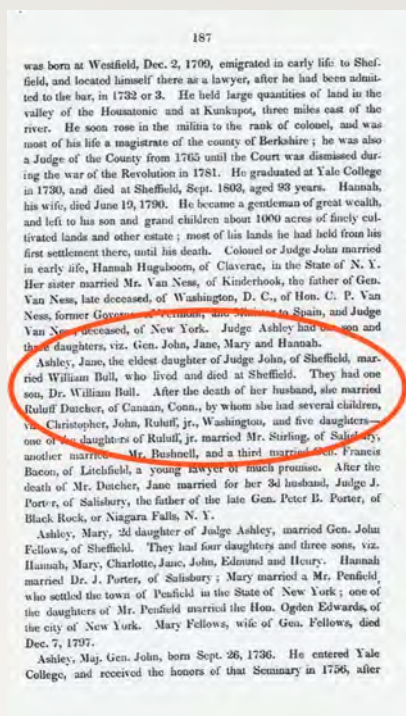
After that experience, you'd think we'd be a bit wary of realtor marketing when we set out to buy a home in the Berkshires, but we're fools for a good story. The realtor claimed the house was built in 1758 for the daughter of a prominent colonel of the French & Indian War, who was also a founding father of the town. Again, I wanted to know more about the occupants of the home, and I wanted to confirm when the house was built. Trust, but verify.

It was about this time that I discovered the resources available at American Ancestors to genealogists and the simply curious. I didn't really feel I was skilled enough to call myself a genealogist, but I certainly was curious. I love a good mystery and fitting together the pieces of a puzzle.

I attended online classes at American Ancestors during the pandemic and quickly found course offerings that taught me how to dig deeper to uncover the facts. I started out with probate records, land records, and court records. "The Basics of NE Research" was invaluable. Each virtual program I attended was well organized and full of usable information and techniques for a rookie genealogist like me. The one-on-one consultations with the professional staff were a great opportunity to get personalized answers to my most burning questions. I had great success in learning more about my home and its lineage, but then I hit a wall and it was time to call in the pros.

I contacted American Ancestors and described the research work I had completed and the questions that I hadn't been able to answer. I was paired up with a professional genealogist and she got to work on my behalf. Over the course of several months, she investigated leads I hadn't considered and ultimately pulled many loose threads together for me. She even suggested other methodology techniques, like dendrochronology, that might provide answers.

While the dendrochronology study proved inconclusive, I've recently learned about diary entries from the colonel that suggest it was not his daughter, but his grandson, for whom the house was built in 1790. I'll keep digging and I know the online, in-person, and professional resources at American Ancestors will help me verify the facts.



Sally MacKenzie is a former marketing and public relations professional. She is a Friend Member and a Councilor. She resides in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, as well as the Berkshires in Massachusetts.



THE BRUE FAMILY LEARNING CENTER

This past fiscal year was a remarkable success for Education & Programming. Our team developed an engaging calendar of in-person and online events that was popular among our audience. We produced a total of 265 programs—many programs representing multiple days, multiple presentations, and multiple hours' worth of content—and attracted 39,687 LIVE attendees. Many thousands more registered for our programs, viewed archived online lectures through our video library and YouTube channel, and utilized our online research guides, templates, and other materials in the online learning center. Below is a listing of our education programs from September 2023 through August 2024. For a full picture of our offerings, review the sections on the American Inspiration series, Heritage Tours, Youth Education, and special events in this report.

Programs and Family History Education

September 2023

ONLINE LECTURE New Member Orientation

ONLINE SEMINAR Law & Order: Using Court Records in Your Family History Research (four week course)

ONLINE LECTURE Basics of Scandinavian Research

JEWISH HERITAGE CENTER EVENT Jewish Vinyl Records Swap

RESEARCH TOUR Day Trip to Congregational Library and Archives,

PRIVATE LECTURE Understanding Calendar Systems in Family History Research

ONLINE LECTURE Heraldry for Genealogists

PRIVATE LECTURE Getting Started in Lithuanian Research

PRIVATE LECTURE Dual Citizenship

PRIVATE LECTURE Getting Started in Irish Family History Research

PRIVATE LECTURE Using the U.S. Federal Census

PRIVATE LECTURE Researching New Hampshire War of 1812 Soldiers

PRIVATE LECTURE Using DNA in Family History Research

PRIVATE LECTURE Getting Started in Native American Genealogical Research for Massachusetts

PRIVATE LECTURE Researching Civil War Ancestors

ONLINE LECTURE What's New at American Ancestors

October 2023

ONLINE SEMINAR Beyond the Grave: Uncovering Life Stories from Death Records (four week course)

ONLINE SEMINAR The Odyssey of Isaac Allerton: Rebel Pilgrim

PRIVATE LECTURE Getting Started in Irish Family History Research

PRIVATE LECTURE Introducing NARA

PRIVATE LECTURE Federal Land Records

JEWISH HERITAGE CENTER EVENT

Jewish Neighborhood Voices Oral History Project Launch

PRIVATE LECTURE Know Your Neighbor

ONLINE SEMINAR New Jersey Research: Go-To Published Resources

PRIVATE LECTURE Introducing 10 Million Names

ONLINE LECTURE Self-Publish Your Genealogy: A Panel Discussion with Authors

"Kathleen, David, and Rhonda were incredible leaders and guides!... I learned a lot from my [fellow tour participants] about their favorite podcasts, software, scanners, tips, etc. and enjoyed them all! These tours provide a community to fuel my interests in learning and doing more (and better) genealogy."

—Participant from the National Archives Research Tour



National Archives Research Tour participant Debbie Gunderman researching at Archives II.

Claire Clemens
browses publications
at the Military History
Research Centre.



"I want to thank you for this excellent series. I inherited nothing from my Civil War ancestor, and being a Yankee growing up in the South, the War was never, ever mentioned in my family...You have quite literally given me back my family and I thank you for it, most whole heartedly."

— Participant from Civil War
Research: Tracing Union &
Confederate Ancestors

ONLINE LECTURE Stories from the
Archives: Scrapbooks

PRIVATE LECTURE Getting Started in
Italian Genealogy

November 2023

ONLINE LECTURE New Member
Orientation

ONLINE SEMINAR Verifying Your
Mayflower Ancestry (three week
course)

PRIVATE LECTURE Preserving Your
Family Treasures

RESEARCH TOUR Salt Lake City
Research Tour

ONLINE LECTURE Researching Black
Soldiers in the Civil War

PRIVATE LECTURE Using DNA in Family
History Research

ONLINE LECTURE Settlement House
Movement

PRIVATE LECTURE Tracing Ancestors on
the Move

PRIVATE LECTURE Verifying Descent
from Salem's Accused Witches

ONLINE SEMINAR New Jersey
Research: Four Centuries of History
and Genealogy (four week course)

ONLINE LECTURE Introducing *Jewish
Neighborhood Voices*

December 2023

ONLINE LECTURE Applying to
Revolutionary War Lineage Societies

ONLINE SEMINAR Fall Stay-at-Home
Research Program

ONLINE LECTURE The Chelsea Carol
Incident of 1949

ONLINE LECTURE Family History
Roundtable: Getting Family Involved in
Your Research

ONLINE LECTURE What's New at
American Ancestors

January 2024

PRIVATE LECTURE Introduction to
American Ancestors

ONLINE SEMINAR Researching
American Revolutionary War Patriots
(five week course)

ONLINE LECTURE Using AI in Family
History Research

ONLINE LECTURE New Member
Orientation

ONLINE LECTURE Lithuanian
Research: Back to the Old Country

PRIVATE LECTURE Early Records of
New England, Where to Find, What's
Available, How to Navigate

ONLINE LECTURE Dos and Don'ts of
Creating a Coat of Arms

ONLINE SEMINAR Virtual Genealogical
Skills Boot Camp

PRIVATE LECTURE Researching
Colonial Ancestors

ONLINE LECTURE Writing a *Register*
Style Sketch

ONLINE SEMINAR Virtual Preservation
Roadshow

PRIVATE LECTURE Adopting the
Regiment: Researching and Recreating
Your Ancestor's Revolutionary War Unit

PRIVATE LECTURE Death Records,

PRIVATE LECTURE Getting Started in
Italian Research

February 2024

ONLINE LECTURE Finding Enslaved
Ancestors in New England

PRIVATE LECTURE Using Colonial
Massachusetts Records

ONLINE LECTURE The Great Migration
Study Project Continues

ONLINE SEMINAR Jamestown
Research (three week course)

ONLINE LECTURE Family History
Roundtable: Travelling for Genealogy

PRIVATE LECTURE Getting Started in
Genealogy

PRIVATE LECTURE Introducing
10 Million Names

ONLINE SEMINAR Writing and
Publishing Your Family History

PRIVATE LECTURE Federal Military
Records

PRIVATE LECTURE Federal Immigration
and Naturalization Records

PRIVATE LECTURE Getting Started in
African American Genealogy

PRIVATE LECTURE Introduction
to 10 Million Names

"On behalf of myself and my wife, we want to thank you for the opportunity to research with you at the Congregational Library & Archives, as well as the kindness of all the people involved. It was a pleasant experience for both of us. We both thank you for the help, time, and mentorship you spent on us, and we hope to be able to interact with you again on other genealogy experiences."

— Congregational Library &
Archives Day Trip Participant

Right: Day trip researchers at Maine Historical Society. Bottom: Day trip participants receiving an orientation from Massachusetts State Archives staff.

“My wife and I attended the event and were extremely pleased with the range of learning opportunities and the depth of materials available for exploring our family history. In addition, the entire trip was flawlessly planned and delivered, the food was great, and the group’s comradery was wonderful. We will be back!”

—Salt Lake City Research Tour Participant



PRIVATE LECTURE Getting Started in African American Genealogy

ONLINE LECTURE Canadian Resources at American Ancestors

PRIVATE LECTURE Getting Started in Family History Research

PRIVATE LECTURE Organizing Your Family Papers

PRIVATE LECTURE Getting Started in Family History Research

PRIVATE LECTURE Introduction to American Ancestors

ONLINE SEMINAR Getting Started in African American Family History

PRIVATE LECTURE Introducing 10 Million Names

PRIVATE LECTURE Introduction to American Ancestors

ONLINE SEMINAR Using Irish Land Records (five week course)

March 2024

ONLINE LECTURE Jews, Freemasons, and a Nineteenth-Century Debate on University

ONLINE SEMINAR Basics of Early New England Research

PRIVATE LECTURE Introduction to 10 Million Names

PRIVATE LECTURE Researching Women in Archives

ONLINE LECTURE The Scots-Irish in America: Origins and Migrations

PRIVATE LECTURE Introducing American Ancestors

PRIVATE LECTURE Getting Started in Genealogy

ONLINE LECTURE What’s New at American Ancestors

RESEARCH TOUR NARA Research Tour in Washington, DC

PRIVATE LECTURE Roll Call: Researching Veteran Ancestors

April 2024

ONLINE LECTURE Jewish Languages: Commonality and Diversity

ONLINE SEMINAR Ohio Research (four week course)

ONLINE LECTURE Tracing Tartans: Researching Scottish Clans

PRIVATE LECTURE Using American Ancestors

PRIVATE LECTURE New Member Orientation

ONLINE LECTURE Planning a Trip to Ancestral Homelands

PRIVATE LECTURE Using DNA in Family History Research

PRIVATE LECTURE Getting Started in African American Genealogy

ONLINE LECTURE Using Tax Records in Your Family History Research

ONLINE SEMINAR Researching Catholic Ancestors

PRIVATE LECTURE Ten Steps to Writing Your Family History

PRIVATE LECTURE 18th-Century Family History Research in New England

May 2024

ONLINE SEMINAR 17th-Century English Research (four week course)

PRIVATE LECTURE Getting Started in Family History Research

ONLINE LECTURE The Counterfeit Countess: The Jewish Woman Who Rescued Thousands of Poles During the Holocaust

RESEARCH TOUR Canadian Research Tour in Ottawa, Ontario

PRIVATE LECTURE 18th-Century Pennsylvania Genealogy

PRIVATE LECTURE Getting Started in Family History



“It was a once in a lifetime experience. I now feel like I know what I am doing and how to prepare for my next trip.”

— Participant from Northern Irish Research Tour



Senior Genealogist Melanie McComb presenting at the Southern California Roadshow.

“Thanks for this excellent free service. At age 81 & living on a limited income these free webinars let me continue doing what I truly love. My life is much richer because of it.”

—Using Voting Records in Family History Research participant

PRIVATE LECTURE Using AmericanAncestors.org

ONLINE LECTURE Heraldic Resources at FamilySearch.org

PRIVATE LECTURE Dual Citizenship

PRIVATE LECTURE Using DNA in Family History Research

ONLINE SEMINAR Connecticut Research: Four Centuries of History and Genealogy

PRIVATE LECTURE Verifying Descent from Salem’s Accused Witches

PRIVATE LECTURE Roll Call: Researching Veteran Ancestors

ONLINE LECTURE Closing the Golden Door: The Immigration Act of 1924

PRIVATE LECTURE Using AmericanAncestors.org

ONLINE SEMINAR Freedmen’s Bureau Records (three week course)

ONLINE LECTURE Louisiana Research: Go-To Resources

June 2024

RESEARCH TOUR Day Trip to Maine Historical Society

ONLINE LECTURE Paths to Freedom: Tracing Enslaved Ancestors to Emancipation

SEMINAR Northern California Roadshow

SEMINAR Southern California Roadshow

ONLINE SEMINAR Spring Stay-at-Home Research Program

ONLINE LECTURE American Ancestors Virtual Open House

ONLINE SEMINAR Civil War Research: Tracing Union & Confederate Ancestors

PRIVATE LECTURE Introducing 10 Million Names

RESEARCH TOUR Northern Irish Research Tour in Belfast

July 2024

ONLINE SEMINAR Coming to America: Researching Immigrant Ancestors (five week course)

ONLINE LECTURE New Member Orientation

ONLINE LECTURE An Introduction to California Research

ONLINE LECTURE Understanding Different Indexing Systems

PRIVATE LECTURE Federal Land Records

ONLINE LECTURE Locating Jewish Women in the Archives

RESEARCH TOUR Day Trip to the Connecticut State Library

August 2024

ONLINE LECTURE Using Voting Records in Your Family History Research

ONLINE SEMINAR Louisiana Research: Four Centuries of History and Genealogy (four week course)

RESEARCH TOUR American Ancestors Comes to the Midwest Genealogy Center

PRIVATE LECTURE Using AmericanAncestors.org

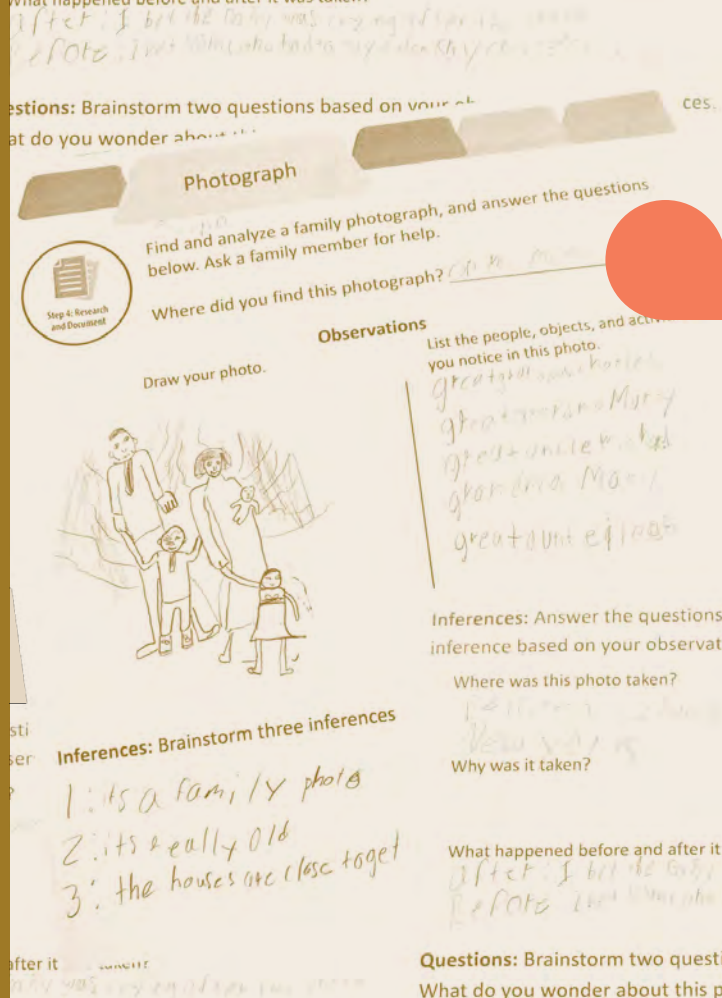
PRIVATE LECTURE Introduction to American Ancestors

ONLINE LECTURE Setting Yourself Up for Success: Organizational Tools and Tips to Break Down Brick Walls

RESEARCH TOUR Day Trip to the Massachusetts State Archives



Barb Francis researching at the Midwest Genealogy Center.



Youth Education

American Ancestors is bringing genealogy to the classroom and inspiring the next generation of family historians. We are empowering teachers to incorporate genealogy into their curriculum and equipping students with critical skills to discover a deeper understanding of themselves, their families, and the world around them. This past year, we expanded our programs to reach more students and teachers while addressing critical challenges in social studies education.

Teaching social studies presents significant challenges for educators. A major challenge is the wide variation in the quality of state standards, many of which are inadequate and subject to frequent revisions. This is compounded by evolving educational policies and intense debates surrounding historical content, leaving educators uncertain about what to teach and how to teach it. This uncertainty, combined with limited evaluation, professional development, and classroom materials, results in inconsistent teaching practices and students learning different historical content from state to state.

Additionally, social studies takes a backseat to core subjects like math and reading, particularly in resource-constrained schools. As a result, teachers struggle to navigate a constantly evolving environment with limited support, and students are less prepared for their role as citizens.

American Ancestors is helping to address these challenges with our first-of-its-kind family history curriculum, along with our teacher professional development program. Since its publication in the fall of 2022, our curriculum has been downloaded over 1,400 times, and we have provided professional development to over 150 teachers across the country and U.S. territories.

Our curriculum has lesson plans, editable student worksheets, and case studies of historical figures. It goes beyond family trees by helping students develop research and historical thinking skills, while they learn how to plan and carry out research, analyze primary sources, and make personal connections to history.

By researching and analyzing primary sources, students can develop media literacy skills, crucial in an increasingly fragmented and uncertain information landscape, where misinformation spreads rapidly through social media and



From top to bottom: Worksheets from a student in Angela Wheeler's fourth grade class in Bowdoin, Maine; teacher workshop in the U.S. Virgin Islands; two participants at a teacher workshop in Augusta, Maine.

Top: Workshop participants in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Bottom: Teacher workshop in Maine through the Department of Education.

artificial intelligence. By conducting family history research, students can learn to access and evaluate information effectively, including questioning the origin, purpose, and potential bias of sources, and verifying information with multiple sources.

In addition to our curriculum, we offer teacher workshops that equip teachers with strategies and resources to bring genealogy into the classroom. We help teachers improve their teaching strategies with in-person workshops, and we offer individual follow-up coaching and monthly group meetings when possible. This includes workshops in the U.S. Virgin Islands for classroom teachers and informal educators, along with two full-day workshops in Augusta, Maine, in partnership with the Maine State Department of Education. This marks the second year we have done workshops in Maine.

Angela Wheeler, a fourth-grade teacher in Bowdoin, Maine, and Carolyn Nadeau, an English and social studies teacher in Machias, Maine, stood out for their exceptional work integrating genealogy into their classrooms. Wheeler used historic town photos to help her students connect with their own family histories, while Nadeau guided her sixth graders in creating presentations showcasing their family stories. Nadeau's class culminated with a student-led gallery walk to showcase their presentations.

Last year we reported that our curriculum was endorsed by Dr. Marshall Duke, Professor Emeritus of Psychology at Emory University. This year, we are delighted to announce that we have received an endorsement by Duke's colleague, Dr. Robyn Fivush, Professor Emerita of Psychology at Emory University. Their research reveals the psychological and emotional benefits for students who do family history research. Doing genealogy can lead to lower levels of anxiety and more resilience in the face of challenges.

We are happy to receive these endorsements given the growing rates of anxiety and mental illness among children and adolescents. Here is what Dr. Robyn Fivush had to say about our curriculum:

Research from The Family Narratives Lab indicates that knowledge of family stories and history is linked to positive youth development. This innovative curriculum from American Ancestors empowers students to explore their personal connection to history, develop a sense of identity through time, and build stronger relationships with their families and communities. The benefits of this curriculum are applicable to students of all ages.



Finally, we were proud to announce the winners of our 2024 Young Family Historians essay contest, which received submissions from 22 different states. Semifinalist Amelia Baker, a sixth grader from Truro, Massachusetts, wrote about losing her biological parents. "[We] don't know what's going to happen in a year from now, a week from now, or even a day from now. So take every opportunity there is in life to tell someone you love them because you don't know if it will be the last time saying those three words to that person."

We are grateful for all the support we receive. We look forward to expanding our reach and welcoming students and teachers to our newly expanded American Ancestors headquarters. Together, we can transform social studies education.

THE BRUE FAMILY LEARNING CENTER

Heritage Tours by American Ancestors



“My trip last March to New Orleans led by Curt DiCamillo reminded me why I only travel with American Ancestors. The tour was faultlessly organized and totally fascinating, with visits to private homes, great music, and fabulous restaurants, all topped by breathtaking learning about the history and architecture of this amazing city.”

—Elizabeth Chapin



Heritage Tours

American Ancestors’ Heritage Tours continued to build on a strong reputation for providing exceptional learning, luxury accommodation, and sparkling companionship with tours in Europe and America led by the finest experts in their fields.

In September 2023 a tour to the palaces, museums, and gardens of Vienna and Salzburg was led by Curt DiCamillo, American Ancestors’ Curator of Fine Art. Staying in Vienna’s historic Hotel Imperial, the group had exclusive access to the Hofburg Palace, the primary city residence of Austria’s royal family, the Belvedere Palace, and the never-open-to-the-public Liechtenstein City Palace. The highlight for many participants was visiting the filming locations of 1965’s iconic *The Sound of Music* in and around Salzburg.

Early December 2023 found our enthusiastic travelers in Germany’s capital for “Christmas in Berlin,” a museum and palace-filled salute to the country that created modern Christmas. From Berlin’s famous Christmas markets to an astonishing dinner on the top of the Reichstag to a visit to Frederick the Great’s snow-covered Sanssouci, this tour, co-led by Stefan Albrecht, a leading German architectural historian, and Curt DiCamillo, created once-in-a-lifetime memories for everyone.

In March of 2024 we visited New Orleans, a city like no other. Here influences from France, Spain, Africa, and the Caribbean come together to form unique architecture, music, literature, and food, all of which our group experienced in dazzling abundance. There were memorable visits to exceptional private homes, wistful museums and cemeteries, and historic Mississippi River plantations.

Throughout the fiscal year, Curt DiCamillo led several in-person day events including the Annual DiCamillo Rendezvous in New York City (January), this year focusing on Lynnewood Hall, the American Versailles; our *first* Annual DiCamillo Rendezvous in Boston (May) with a new lecture, “From Plinth to Pen: How the English Country House Inspired the Writings of Jane Austen”; and a sold-out walking tour of Boston’s Back Bay (August).

Beyond in-person events, we attracted hundreds of viewers to our online lectures and seminars. Lavishly illustrated, these online programs are designed to transport audiences to places and periods across history, revealing architectural delights and fine art masterpieces—all without leaving home! Across these programs, Curt DiCamillo was joined by curators, authors, historians, and other expert guides.

**Top: Palazzo Gondi, Florence; Santa Croce in Florence; Castello di Celsa, outside Siena.
Opposite page: Walking tour of Boston’s Back Bay outside the Boston Public Library.**



Art & Architecture events | September 1, 2023–August 31, 2024

HERITAGE TOUR Vienna & Salzburg: Palaces, Villas, and Gardens, September 6–13, 2023

ONLINE LECTURE Bagatelle: A Princely Residence in Paris, September 29, 2023

ONLINE LECTURE Ablaze! A History of the English Country House on Fire, October 20, 2023

ONLINE SEMINAR Classical Architecture in Europe and America, three weeks starting November 7, 2023

HERITAGE TOUR Christmas in Berlin, December 4–10, 2023

We thank 2024 Art & Architecture
webinar series sponsors Joseph
and Robert Cornell Memorial
Foundation and other donors.



ONLINE LECTURE Imagine: Rock ‘n Roll, Movie Stars & the British Country House, January 12, 2024

LECTURE Annual DiCamillo Rendezvous (NYC): American Versailles, January 18, 2024

ONLINE LECTURE Classical Shindig: Amateur Artistry From Two New Orleans Gentlemen, January 26, 2024

ONLINE LECTURE Revival of the British Country House, February 9, 2024

ONLINE LECTURE American Versailles, February 23, 2024

HERITAGE TOUR Historic New Orleans: An Insider’s Look, March 7–12, 2024

ONLINE LECTURE Knowsley Hall and the Earls of Derby, April 5, 2024

ONLINE LECTURE Once a King: The Lost Memoir of Edward VIII, April 12, 2024

ONLINE LECTURE Women of Castle Howard, April 19, 2024

LECTURE Annual DiCamillo Rendezvous (Boston): From Plinth to Pen: How the English Country House Inspired the Writings of Jane Austen, May 3, 2024

ONLINE LECTURE Heraldry in the Decorative Arts in Colonial and Revolutionary America, May 16, 2024

ONLINE LECTURE The Cock & Lion: French Design in British Historic Houses, May 28, 2024

ONLINE LECTURE From Plinth to Pen: How the English Country House Inspired the Writings of Jane Austen, June 21, 2024

ONLINE LECTURE A British Country House Alphabet: A Historical & Pictorial Journey, July 9, 2024

ONLINE LECTURE Sandstone & the Blue Whale: Stories from One of the World’s Oldest Botanic Gardens, July 12, 2024

HERITAGE TOUR Walking Tour of Boston’s Back Bay, August 17, 2024



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JUNE 9–16 Splendors of Saxony:

The Architectural Heritage of Leipzig, Meissen & Dresden

DECEMBER 3–9 An English Country Christmas at Knowsley Hall

For more information, please contact us at

HeritageTours@americanancestors.org or 617-226-1215 or

AmericanAncestors.org/events.



AMERICAN INSPIRATION

A BEST-SELLING AUTHOR SERIES
BY AMERICAN ANCESTORS®

Through 30 American Inspiration events in fiscal year 2024—virtual and in-person book talks, free events, and ticketed webinars—we connected with readers, researchers, and history-lovers nationwide and around the globe. These 27,000 live participants and video viewers brought our total audience to 167,000 since the series launched in 2019. Produced by Margaret M. Talcott, American Inspiration focuses on our country's history and its diverse peoples and families.

Cultural organizations across New England partnered with us to present these American stories and lives, including GBH Forum Network, the Boston Public Library, Massachusetts Historical Society, the Leventhal Map and Education Center at Boston Public Library, the Cook's Cook, and the Peabody Essex Museum. Books were provided by Porter Square Books in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

We thank American
Inspiration series sponsors
Susan K. and John D.
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and other donors.

"How important it is to have programs like this to fill in the holes of my knowledge, which leads me to a greater understanding of America's history."

"Being far away from Boston now, I'm so grateful for the virtual options."

"The presenter brought to life her relationship with her cousins and the discovery of their shared ancestors. Simply beautiful."

Authors and books presented in fiscal year 2024 (all virtual broadcasts unless noted otherwise)

Emily Franklin with **The Lioness of Boston**,
September 11, 2023

Peter Moore and **Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness: Britain and the American Dream**, September 18, 2023

Tiya Miles with **Wild Girls: How the Outdoors Shaped the Women Who Challenged a Nation**, September 21, 2023

Scott W. Berg with **The Burning of the World: The Great Chicago Fire and the War for a City's Soul**, October 10, 2023

NPR host Steve Inskeep with **Writing History** and **Differ We Must: How Lincoln Succeeded in a Divided America**, October 17, 2023

"**Stories from War and Wartime, 1918–1945: Researching Veterans and Your Family's Experience of the World War**," with genealogist David Allen Lambert, historian Matthew F. Delmont, writer Adam Hochschild, and moderator-historian Brooke Blower, November 2, 2023

Rebecca Clarren at our Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center with **The Cost of Free Land: Jews, Lakota, and an American Inheritance**, November 2, 2023

Margaret Atwood at the Charleston Literary Festival with **Old Babes in the Wood**, November 7, 2023

Sarah Lohman with **Endangered Eating: America's Vanishing Foods**, November 20, 2023

Neil King Jr. with **American Ramble: A Walk of Memory and Renewal**, December 12, 2023

Benjamin Taylor with **Chasing Bright Medusas: A Life of Willa Cather**, January 9, 2024

Charlotte Gray with **Passionate Mothers, Powerful Sons: The Lives of Jennie Jerome Churchill and Sara Delano Roosevelt**, January 11, 2024

Rachel L. Swarns with **The 272: The Families Who Were Enslaved and Sold to Build the American Catholic Church**, January 30, 2024

Lisa Belkin with **Genealogy of a Murder: Four Generations, Three Families, One Fateful Night**, February 6, 2024

Cassandra A. Good with **First Family: George Washington's Heirs and the Making of America**, February 15, 2024

Brooke Kroeger with **Undaunted: How Women Changed American Journalism**, March 7, 2024

James L. Swanson with **The Deerfield Massacre: A Surprise Attack, a Forced March, and the Fight for Survival in Early America**, March 11, 2024

Ilyon Woo with **Master Slave Husband Wife: An Epic Journey from Slavery to Freedom**, February 26, 2024

Greg Steinmetz with **American Rascal: How Jay Gould Built Wall Street's Biggest Fortune**, March 21, 2024

Rachel Jamison Webster with **Benjamin Banneker and Us: Eleven Generations of an American Family**, April 2, 2024

Natalie Dykstra with **Chasing Beauty: The Life of Isabella Stewart Gardner**, May 2, 2024

Stephen Puleo with **The Great Abolitionist: Charles Sumner and the Fight for a More Perfect Union**, May 9, 2024

Larry Tye with **The Jazzmen: How Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, and Count Basie Transformed America**, May 14, 2024 (hybrid program hosted by Boston Public Library)

Tyler Anbinder with **Plentiful Country: The Great Potato Famine and the Making of Irish New York**, May 30, 2024

Joseph McGill Jr. and Herb Frazier with **Sleeping with the Ancestors: How I Followed the Footprints of Slavery**, June 11, 2024

Matthew J. Davenport with **The Longest Minute**, June 24, 2024

Jeffrey Rosen with **The Pursuit of Happiness: How Classical Writers on Virtue Inspired the Lives of the Founders and Defined America**, July 8, 2024

Robert Sullivan with **Double Exposure: Resurveying the West with Timothy O'Sullivan, America's Most Mysterious War Photographer**, July 15, 2024

Julie Satow with **When Women Ran Fifth Avenue: Glamour and Power at the Dawn of American Fashion**, August 6, 2024

Evan Friss (*The Bookshop*) and panelist-bookstore owners David Sandberg, Dan Chartrand, and Ann Patchett with **The History of the American Bookstore**, August 19, 2024

WALKING IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS

Julia Schmolke

“We’re a family and we’re a tree. Our roots go deep down in history. From my great-great-granddaddy reaching up to me, we’re a green and growing family tree.”

The above quote, the chorus of the song “Family Tree” by Tom Chapin, expresses my feelings about the importance of family and family history. I feel a strong sense of connection to my ancestors and down to my grandchildren.

My first knowledge of genealogy came when I was about nine, and my mother went off every week to the Minnesota Historical Society to do research. We had some turn-of-the-century genealogies, and I used to pore over them and write stories about my ancestors. I learned that my father researched his family back in the 1940s. I have all the letters he sent and received from relatives.

My parents were charter members of the Minnesota Genealogical Society. They started a project recording inscriptions in our county cemeteries. Helping them, I developed a real love of old cemeteries which has lasted until this day. Find a Grave is a great resource, but it doesn’t compare with standing at the base of one’s 6th great grandparent’s grave.

In about 1968, my mother joined the New England Historic Genealogical Society and later became a Life Member. In 1999, she and I went together to Boston for a “Come Home to New England” educational program. I’ve loved sharing a common interest with my parents. My father and I would go to the local Family History Center together, where he traced our ancestors in the Norwegian parish records.

I’ve attended five research tours to Salt Lake City with American Ancestors and definitely recommend them to others. I’ve also attended many webinars and classes offered by American Ancestors, always of the highest quality. My husband and I have attended two trips, with Robert Charles Anderson to Leiden and Plymouth, learning about the Pilgrims. We went on several Heritage Tours with Curt DiCamillo to England, Italy, Austria, Germany, Bermuda, and New Orleans. Not only have I learned a lot, but we have made many friends!

In 2018, I made the commitment to become a Life Member and have been a Councilor since 2020. I felt it was important to give back to an organization which had helped me in my journey.

My genealogical journey has been very rewarding. I have many colonial New England lines, including *Mayflower* and royal ones. I’m half Norwegian and one eighth Irish. I have extended my research to include my husband’s family and those of my children’s spouses. I have significant material for my research efforts since I have seven children-in-law. Recently I was thrilled when my 15-year-old granddaughter told me she was fascinated by genealogy. Now I know who will carry my torch!

Top to bottom: The American Ancestors group in the Vatican Library; Julie and her husband Tim having dinner at the Nante-Eck Restaurant in Berlin; Julie at the Pilgrim Fathers' Church in Delftshaven, Netherlands.



Julia Schmolke joined American Ancestors in 1999 and is a Life Member and Councilor. She has been a genealogical researcher for over forty years, and speaks on genealogical topics to various local groups. Julia resides in Stillwater, Minnesota.

Special Events



Ron Howard honored at our annual “American Stories, American Lives” Gala

On April 25, 2024, more than 130 guests attended our annual “American Stories, American Lives” Gala at the Four Seasons Hotel, Boston, honoring Academy Award-winning filmmaker Ron Howard. The evening began with a reception that included musical entertainment provided by Pianist Tom Hojnacki. Our guests were then invited to follow our “walk of fame”—a line of stars naming our benefactors—into the ballroom for dinner and the program.

Ron Howard engaged in conversation with film critic Ty Burr, discussing Howard’s films and sharing stories about filming. Howard also talked about his family and his family history. A short film about Howard’s genealogy was shown, after which Howard was presented with the American Ancestors Lifetime Achievement Award in American Arts and Culture by President and CEO Ryan J. Woods. We ended the night with Howard providing signed copies of his and his brother Clint’s new book, *The Boys: A Memoir of Hollywood and Family*.

Left, top to bottom: Ron Howard; film critic Ty Burr; attendee Valerie Moffitt and Trustee Thomas Bailey Hagen; Second Vice Chair Bonnie A. Reilly, Board Chair David M. Trebing, Councilor Cheryl L. Edwards, and Councilor Prudence S. Crozier. ©Pierce Harman 2024.

Thank you to all our benefit sponsor

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Jonathan Buck Treat and Leslie Aitken
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Tawny Godin Welch

A special evening honoring The Rt Hon Sir John Major KG CH

On June 5, 2024, more than eighty guests attended a special evening at Boston's Somerset Club honoring The Rt Hon Sir John Major KG CH. The evening began with a reception, followed by a dinner and a conversation between Sir John and British Consul General Dr. Peter Abbott OBE. Sir John shared stories from his time serving as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (1990–1997), and anecdotes about fellow world leaders. Sir John was presented with a gift from American Ancestors Trustee Brady Brim-DeForest, as well as an award from Councilors Tawny Godin Welch and Brantley C. Bolling Knowles on behalf of the American Patrons of St. George's and the Descendants of the Knights of the Garter.



Above, clockwise from top left: Sir John Major with Trustee Brady Brim-DeForest; Trustee Helen E. R. Sayles CBE, Sir John Major, and Colette Phillips; Chief Research Officer Lindsay Fulton, Dr. Donna Curtin, and Terah Harootunian.

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Recent Keynote Speakers and Honorees

- 2024** Ron Howard
Lucy Worsley
- 2023** Nina Totenberg
Lonnie G. Bunch III
Alan Taylor
Drew Gilpin Faust
- 2022** David M. Rubenstein
Governor Charlie Baker
Julian Fellowes
Rick Atkinson
- 2021** Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham
The Rt Hon Sir John Major KG CH
Anthony Amore
Mary Beth Norton
- 2020** Jill Lepore
Scott Simon
- 2019** Joseph J. Ellis
Douglas Brinkley
Dan Rather
- 2018** David Hackett Fischer
David McCullough
William M. Fowler, Jr.
- 2017** Winston Groom
Stacy Schiff
- 2016** Cokie Roberts
Bob Schieffer
David Hartman
- 2015** Nathaniel Philbrick
James Carville and Mary Matalin
HRH Princess Michael of Kent



36th International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences

Boston | 2024

Hosted by American Ancestors



During the week of September 24 to 28, 2024, American Ancestors hosted the 36th International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences in Boston. This was the first Congress in the event's ninety-three-year history to be held in the United States. Two hundred and twenty-four guests from twenty-one countries—including Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, and the United Kingdom—joined us for a week of lectures, receptions, and camaraderie with the genealogical and heraldic community.

An opening ceremony at Old South Church on Tuesday, September 24, began with a welcome by 36th Congress President D. Brenton Simons OBE. He was followed by Paul Fox, previous Congress Secretary General; Congress Patron Brady Brim-DeForest of Balvaire; and former President of Permanent Bureau ICGHS Elizabeth Roads. Ryan J. Woods, 36th Congress Secretary General and American Ancestors President and CEO, welcomed the keynote speaker, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., who discussed the importance of genealogical knowledge and the preservation of family stories.

At the opening reception at the Lenox Hotel, Ryan Woods announced that the American Ancestors research collection would be named the Brim-DeForest Library. Brady Brim-DeForest of Balvaire and his wife, Jessica Eriksen, both spoke and reflected on their love for education and libraries.

Over the next three days, fifty-three lectures were presented on the conference theme of "Origins, Journeys, Destinations."



Participants were also able to view an exhibit of rare heraldry-related items from the American Ancestors collections.

Guests then enjoyed a dinner at the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel and visited with colonial reenactors from the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum. The Congress ended with a closing ceremony that included awards presented to Sarah Dery, David Allen Lambert, David Rencher, and others, and an official announcement that the 2026 Congress will be held in the country of San Marino.

Top left: President & CEO Ryan J. Woods, Honorary Trustee Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Trustee Brady Brim-DeForest. Top right: Assistant Archivist Shalley Marshall, Committee on Heraldry Registrar Nathaniel Lane Taylor, and his wife, Julie Taylor. Bottom: Heraldic artists Dimitri Prica and Björn Fridén.

Opening remarks from the 36th International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences

Genealogy and heraldry are, in essence, the pursuit of personal truth and collective memory. They speak to the human need to understand not only where we come from but also how the complexities of our past echo through time, shaping the world we live in today. For each of us, the study of ancestry is not a matter of curiosity alone, but a deeply personal quest—whether we’re unraveling the mysteries of forgotten branches of a family tree or uncovering the stories behind coats of arms that have been passed down for centuries.

But genealogy and heraldry are more than academic sciences. They are also living, breathing expressions of the human journey brought to life by the brushes and pen strokes of the scribes, heraldic artists, and scriveners who continue to practice their ancient crafts.

Our fields, while steeped in history, carry an almost sacred responsibility. You are not merely historians or researchers, you are custodians of memory. Every pedigree you record, every coat of arms you paint, represents a fragment of a larger story—the story of human connection across time. Your work safeguards legacies and ensures that future generations will understand their place within that great human continuum.

I encourage each of you to approach this Congress not just as a platform to share knowledge, but as a moment to connect with the spirit of discovery that drives all of us in this room. Let us reflect on the responsibility we bear: to ensure that history, in all its forms—whether carved in a granite lintel or recorded in forgotten parish registers—remains alive and accessible. In a world that increasingly values the fleeting and the ephemeral, our work offers depth, continuity, and meaning.



Brady Brim-DeForest of Balvaird, the Patron of the first International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences in the United States

Thank you to all our event sponsors

Patron Sponsor

Brady Brim-DeForest of Balvaird

Diamond Benefactors

Howard E. Cox

(Mr. Cox’s sponsorship gift was made in honor of Susan Donnelly, Ryan Woods, and the Committee on Heraldry for their contributions to genealogy and heraldry education and the forthcoming publication, *Heraldry in the Ancestry of Howard Cox*.)

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Top: Reenactors from the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum and heraldic artists Tania Crossingham (third from left) and Neil Bromley (fourth from left). **Bottom:** Ethan MacDonald, Ross M. McEwen, Kevin Logan, D. Brenton Simons OBE, Brady Brim-DeForest of Balvaird, Martin Goldstraw, and Darin Yawn.

UNCOVERING MY LEGACY

Beatrice Nessen

Donating Family Collections for Preservation, Research, and Remembrance

My husband, Peter, and I were first referred to American Ancestors through a friend of Irish descent who has archived her family material at the organization. She suggested I explore the resources, even though I didn't know that American Ancestors had resources for families of Jewish heritage or who had come here as recently as World War II.

We were pleased to learn about the archive of New England Jewish families at the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center (JHC), and we eventually decided to donate materials from both of our families to the center in 2018. Peter and his two brothers donated documentation about their grandparents' immigration from Russia to Canada, where Peter's father was born, and the family's subsequent life in the United States. Peter's maternal grandfather immigrated from Russia to the United States but would never talk about life and pogroms in Russia under the czar—so Peter and his family learned not to discuss those family stories. Through my encouragement, he and his brothers welcomed the idea of archiving this history in The Nessen Family Papers at the JHC.

My family story is represented in The Jews of Tachau Papers. Both my maternal and paternal sides come from a small rural town in Bohemia, Tachau (now Tachov, located in the Czech Republic), which had a thriving Jewish community over several centuries. Family members began to migrate to other parts of Europe and North and South America in the 19th and early 20th century. My immediate family immigrated here from France, where my father was employed by a French firm in 1940, after the French surrender to the Nazis. Many of my parents' generation with origins in Tachau also fled Europe for the U.S. to escape the Nazis. Tachau continued to be the glue that kept all these families connected.

My generation of the children of World War II refugees grew up hearing stories of Tachau and the lives of our parents and grandparents. It has been important to me to pass on the rich story of this community from a distant time, location, and culture, and make it available to descendants and anyone who wants to study it. I inherited materials from my family and have been collecting a great deal of information about other Tachau families, and I recognized the importance of archiving this historical trove so it wouldn't be lost. The Jews of Tachau collection includes materials ranging from family histories and genealogical research to personal papers and memoirs to cookbooks and family film reels. Both I and other relatives have used the collection for research, including a distant relative who was able to fill in a genealogical gap in her family's history. We appreciate the JHC's archivists' care with the collection and their assistance in accessing it.

Because our family's story might otherwise be lost, it is so meaningful to know that it is preserved and available at the JHC. It's also important that both Peter's and my family history is part of the wider history of the Boston and New England Jewish community preserved at the JHC. Jewish immigrants and their descendants have contributed so much to this region, and we are fortunate that that history is preserved and accessible for all to learn from.



Top to bottom: Beatrice Nessen reviewing materials from the Jews of Tachau collection with a JHC staff member, ca. 2020; Beatrice Wolfman Nessen's family in January 1941 on a ship from Morocco to Mexico; Peter and Beatrice Nessen.



Beatrice Nessen spent her career in urban planning and public policy. She is a Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center supporter. She and her husband, Peter, reside in Boston, Massachusetts.



We worked tirelessly to further connections between our patrons and their ancestors through daily genealogical research, our “Ask a Genealogist” online chat, and reference phone calls. Despite the ongoing renovation of our headquarters, these daily interactions have allowed us to maintain a personal connection with our constituents virtually. Over the past year, we have responded to more than 1,166 genealogical and historical inquiries via our chat service on AmericanAncestors.org. This virtual service has grown exponentially since its inception in 2018 when we began offering the service for one hour on Tuesdays only.

We dedicated this year to preserving relationships with many partners, including lineage society organizations, universities, law firms, and media outlets. Our team continues to review applications for the General Society of Colonial Wars, Colonial Dames of America, Order of the Merovingian Dynasty, and the Boston Tea Party Descendants Program. Over the last year, we reviewed 160 applications for the General Society of Colonial Wars with an approval rating of 96% and 29 applications for Colonial Dames of America with an approval rating of 99%.

Reflecting on the past year, our department has made significant progress in genealogical research for many of our constituents, while also strengthening business relationships with two major ongoing programs: the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative and PBS’ Finding Your Roots with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

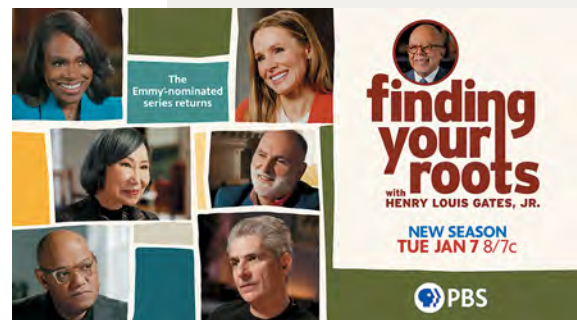
Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative

Harvard University’s Legacy of Slavery Initiative has hired American Ancestors’ Research Services team to conduct the research for its Slavery Remembrance Program, which is responsible for identifying members of Harvard leadership who enslaved people, and for identifying those enslaved people and their descendants. American Ancestors has been providing expert advice on the scope of the project and most importantly, aided in identifying living descendants of those enslaved by Harvard officials since 2022, but will now expand its role. Throughout fiscal year 2024, our team of Researchers worked alongside Harvard Research Fellows to comb through historic records, visit repositories in and around Massachusetts, and to help restore the names of people enslaved in the United States. Our research dates to Harvard’s founding in 1636, when it was the first college in the American colonies. We have located over 538 enslaved ancestors and 834 direct descendants (both living and deceased) of these individuals.

Harvard has agreed to add all research findings from its Slavery Remembrance Program to our 10 Million Names Project, our initiative to recover and restore the names of the estimated ten million men, women, and children of African descent who were enslaved in pre- and post-colonial America.

Finding Your Roots with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Our longest collaboration thus far is our relationship with Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and the team at PBS’s Finding Your Roots. Since season 4, the Research Services department has aided in fact-checking for each episode airing on the hit TV show. Our partnership encourages accurate genealogical family history which is then delivered to each guest by Professor Gates. This engaging relationship also encourages our own experts to learn from others in the field of genealogy and DNA. We are exposed to different geographic areas that may not be prevalent in our own for-hire hourly research projects, which always leads to exciting conversations and an eagerness to learn more. Each American Ancestors expert assigned to this project is willing to dive right in and we will support Professor Gates for many seasons to come!



Research Projects

The dedicated group of experts in our Research Services department spent fiscal year 2024 fostering relationships with existing partners, expanding our expertise into new geographic areas, and broadening our research methodologies, all while continuing to surpass revenue goals. Our team of professionals completed over 8,000 hours of genealogical and historical research for our constituency, while simultaneously showing their enthusiasm and knowledge by helping our members daily through our services. At the conclusion of the year, we collected \$1,261,295 through for-hire research projects.



10 Million Names

In fiscal year 2024, the 10 Million Names initiative made remarkable strides toward its mission to recover, restore, and remember the names of enslaved African Americans, connecting their descendants to their family histories. Spearheaded by American Ancestors, the project demonstrated its transformative potential across multiple domains, including research, fundraising, media outreach, and education.

Records and research

The project successfully processed and organized over 864,000 names across 15 databases that are either published or in progress. These databases span 21 states and several national record sets, making significant strides in recovering the names of enslaved individuals. Key record sets, such as the Freedmen's Bureau labor contracts, emigration records like the Black Loyalist Directory, 1783-1788, and community-focused collections like the Massachusetts: Biographical Entries of People of African Descent in New Bedford and Coastal Towns Also Once Part of Dartmouth (Westport, Dartmouth, and Fairhaven), were made accessible to the public or are nearing completion. These records, encompassing critical historical contexts, provide invaluable tools for genealogical research.

Additionally, the project is poised to process an additional one million names across 17 databases in the upcoming phase, ensuring sustained progress. These efforts reflect a deliberate commitment to making these records widely accessible and useful for researchers and descendants alike, establishing 10 Million Names as a leader in historical recovery and preservation.

Fundraising milestones

We witnessed substantial philanthropic support for 10 Million Names, with over \$4 million in gifts and pledges from over 100 donors since its inception. These funds have been critical in advancing the project's technological, research, and outreach goals, with 65% of committed support collected and actively deployed. Plans are being made to build a pipeline of annual donors for 10 Million Names through a national grassroots fundraising campaign for additional philanthropy to sustain and expand the initiative's impact.

We gratefully acknowledge the following donors who donated \$50,000 or more to make it possible for us to find the names of the estimated ten million men, women, and children of African descent who were enslaved in pre- and post-colonial America before 1865.



Robb Aley Allan
American Broadcasting Companies, Inc.
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Marc E. Chardon
Kenneth Chenault
Community Foundation
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Fidelity Charitable
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Gerry and MaryLee Halpin
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Herman J. Russell Foundation
Steven and Jane Hoch
Brenda L. Johnson
National Society Daughters
Of The American Revolution
Jonathan Nelson
Helen and DuWayne Sayles
Gwill E. York and Paul Maeder

Media and public awareness

The initiative gained widespread media attention, with major outlets like *ABC News*, *NPR*, and *NBC Chicago* featuring stories on its work. These stories reached millions, with highlights including an audience of over 22 million from a feature on *ABC News Live*. This visibility not only raised awareness of the project's mission but also fostered connections with descendant communities and stakeholders.

Education and engagement

10 Million Names educational programs flourished in FY24, with 18 programs engaging over 36,000 attendees through live events and on-demand viewing. Notable highlights included workshops at the RootsTech conference and sessions on tracing African American genealogy, hosted in collaboration with universities and libraries. These events provided participants with the tools and knowledge to embark on their genealogical journeys, furthering the project's goal of empowering descendants through historical discovery.

Partnerships and collaborative innovations

The 10 Million Names project embraced a collaborative approach to achieve its ambitious goals of addressing historical erasure and connecting descendant communities with their ancestry. Leveraging cutting-edge technologies, including artificial intelligence for indexing, the project also developed a centralized research hub, 10MillionNames.org, which drew nearly 100,000 users. The platform's most visited pages offered invaluable research guidance, showcasing its importance as a cornerstone for genealogical exploration.

Key partnerships played a pivotal role in expanding the project's scope and impact. Collaborations with esteemed organizations such as FamilySearch, the International African American Museum, and numerous other institutions highlighted on its collaborators page allowed the project to integrate diverse resources and expertise. These alliances enriched the research process and extended the initiative's reach to broader audiences.

These collaborations have positioned 10 Million Names as a vital resource in addressing the historical erasure of enslaved individuals. By providing essential research guidance and creating connections for descendant communities, the project demonstrated the power of partnership in driving transformative impact. We have established a strong foundation for continued growth, ensuring the initiative's lasting contribution to historical recovery and community empowerment.



'10 Million Names': Michael Strahan traces roots to small Texas town

Michael Strahan returns to the community of Shankleville, where formerly enslaved people once freed established a freedom colony.

Aug 19, 2023

[Share to Facebook](#) [Share to Twitter](#)



Top: Executive Director & CEO Ryan Woods on stage at RootsTech. Bottom: 10 Million Names Research Director Cynthia Evans with a RootsTech attendee.



The Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center™ at AMERICAN ANCESTORS

In fiscal year 2024, the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center (JHC) reaffirmed its mission to preserve New England Jewish history, explore Jewish heritage, and advance understanding of the American Jewish experience. Through new initiatives, partnerships, and expanded access to historical treasures, the JHC strengthened its role as an archive, educational hub, and community resource. In a challenging year for the Jewish community, we stayed grounded in work that offers context and insight for our world today, counters intolerance and antisemitism, and connects generations and communities.

Celebrating and preserving Jewish community stories

At the heart of the JHC's accomplishments this year was our unveiling of an online exhibit, *Jewish Neighborhood Voices*, the outcome of a transformative oral history project documenting Jewish life in four Greater Boston neighborhoods. This two-year initiative, funded by Mass Humanities and Combined Jewish Philanthropies, gave voice to Jewish individuals who grew up in Chelsea, Dorchester, Roxbury, and Lynn during the 1920s to the 1950s. The exhibit combines stories from the oral histories, evocative images from the JHC's archival collections, and historical context to bring alive the family and community life of first- and second-generation Jewish Americans. The impact of this project was immediate: traffic to the JHC's website increased by 71%, and audience feedback demonstrated the exhibit's emotional resonance for Jewish and non-Jewish people alike. Following an online program introducing the exhibit, one gentleman from Canada commented, "What you are doing is very beautiful. And it can be replicated across Jewish [and] other communities. ... You are pioneering this work." JHC held a community celebration in Chelsea to launch the exhibit, which brought together attendees of all ages—from Gen Z to centenarians—to honor their community history and share stories. (See p. 20.) In May, ABC's Boston affiliate station, WCVB-TV chose *Jewish Neighborhood Voices* as its feature story for Jewish American Heritage Month. The Cambridge Health Alliance also discovered the exhibit and invited us to give a presentation to their employees about it and Boston's historical Jewish neighborhoods. The presentation generated lively conversations and engagement; one attendee said, "Thank you for preserving and sharing this history. It's so valuable."

Increasing access to archival treasures

Ensuring and expanding the accessibility of our collections and resources remains a cornerstone of JHC's mission. We accessioned dozens of new collections this year, including the papers of Ruth Fein, a trailblazing community leader in Washington, DC, and Boston, who served as the first woman chair of the American Jewish Historical Society and Combined Jewish Philanthropies. Another significant new collection was the membership ledger books of Congregation Agudas Sholom (known as the Walnut Street Shul) in Chelsea, Mass., one of Greater Boston's most important immigrant-era synagogues. We were quickly able to make these ledgers available through an important collaboration with the Internet Archive, which digitized the ledgers and hosted them online. This vital resource now offers an online trove of information about the immigrant generation in turn-of-the century Boston. Further enriching our resources for genealogists and historians, we added nearly 25,000 digitized archival documents to the Digital Library and Archives (DLA), including immigration records in the HIAS-Boston collection and the large collection of the Arthur S. Obermayer Papers. The JHC further expanded discoverability and cross-referencing capabilities for researchers worldwide through a partnership with the Documentation of Jewish Records Worldwide project, as well as by adding a host of new collections to the American Ancestors catalogue. Through loan arrangements with the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the West End Museum, and a planned Boston Holocaust Museum, the JHC expanded the reach of its collections in public exhibits and learning.



JHC archivist Gabrielle Roth studies the Walnut Street Shul ledger books with synagogue president Ed Medros



Promoting education and community engagement

Following the launch of *Jewish Neighborhood Voices*, we began introducing the project to local schools and inviting teachers and students to explore themes of immigration and of personal, family, and cultural identity. The JHC received a Community Impact Grant from Combined Jewish Philanthropies to develop educational resources that bring oral history storytellers and the vibrant history in *Jewish Neighborhood Voices* into classrooms to engage young audiences in meaningful ways. Designed for students in grades 4–12, these resources will highlight intergenerational storytelling and Jewish family and community history to inspire connections between past and present.

Our education and engagement efforts extended beyond the classroom. We hosted an in-person event about Jewish music at Lehrhaus, a meeting place for Jewish learning. Over the course of the year, the JHC hosted several online programs about American Jewish family and community history. Two programs, “The Chelsea Carol Incident of 1949” and “The Counterfeit Countess,” illuminated historical themes of antisemitism, heroism, and Jewish identity. Other programs spotlighted little-known facets of Jewish life in America, such as “The Cost of Free Land: Jews, Lakota, and an American Inheritance” and “Jews, Freemasons, and a 19th-century Debate on Universality.” A spring webinar, “Jewish Languages: Commonality and Diversity,” gave an overview of the surprising number of Jewish languages across time and place, while “Finding Jewish Women in the Archives” offered tips for uncovering information about women in archival repositories. In all, nearly 5,500 people attended JHC’s FY2024 programs.

The JHC continues to pursue strategic partnerships with other Jewish, historical, and community organizations to expand the field of Jewish history and to reach new audiences. We created new partnerships with organizations such as the Yiddish Book Center, L’dor V’dor Foundation, Repair the World, Teen Beit Midrash, Chelsea Opportunity Academy, and the Epstein Hillel School. Along with existing partnerships like the New England Jewish History Collaborative, these further amplify the reach of JHC’s work and inspire collaborative programming and resources.

JHC staff also attended conferences over the course of the year that enabled us to reach strategic audiences. These included the Association for Jewish Studies annual conference in San Francisco, the Council for American Jewish Museums

annual conference in Washington D.C., and the International Association for Jewish Genealogical Societies in Philadelphia. All three convenings enabled us to introduce ourselves to scholars, genealogists, and other cultural organizations and connect with future audience members and partners.

Engagement on the JHC’s social media platforms skyrocketed in 2024: our Facebook and Instagram accounts saw dramatic increases in reach and interaction, and our new TikTok account rapidly gained followers, thanks to our staff’s creative use of archival materials to educate and entertain.

Advancing scholarship and research

The JHC continued to demonstrate its commitment to scholarship through support for researchers and academics.

We awarded the 2024 Genevieve Geller Wyner Research Fellowship to Laurel Leff, Professor



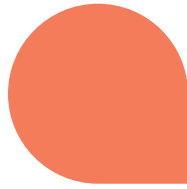
Emerita of Journalism and former director of the Jewish Studies Program at Northeastern University, for her research into the role of the American Catholic Church during World War II. At the recommendation of our Fellowship Review Committee, we also awarded a

one-time research fellowship to scholar Samuel Gruber for his groundbreaking work on synagogue architecture and the early 20th century ark builder Samuel Katz.

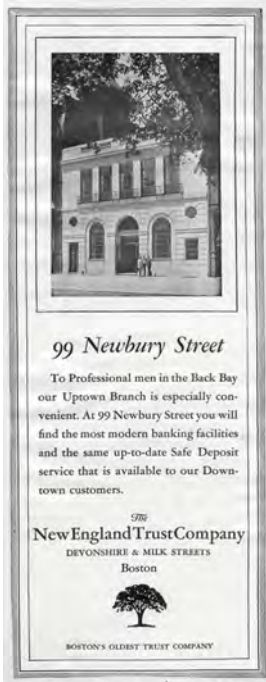
We selected the JHC’s 2024–25 Historian in Residence, Hannah Zaves-Greene, PhD, a scholar of American Jewish history who studies the intersection of the American Jewish community with disability, gender, and legal history. She started her position as Historian in Residence in September 2024, and is providing scholarly expertise to the JHC while also developing articles and talks using JHC collections.

Illuminating the past, inspiring the future

From preserving stories that connect generations and deepen identity and belonging, to forging partnerships that expand our reach, the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center is committed to illuminating the past and inspiring current and future generations. We are grateful to our supporters, who make this work possible and honor the tradition of *l’dor v’dor*—transmitting knowledge and stories “from generation to generation.”



The Expansion of American Ancestors



On December 14, 1964, we welcomed members to our new headquarters at 99–101 Newbury Street, marking a significant milestone after previously occupying various locations around Beacon Hill between 1846 and 1964. This was our organization’s seventh home since its founding in 1845. When we arrived on Newbury Street, our membership stood at around 3,000 people, our library print collections totaled around 30,000 volumes, and our endowment was approximately \$1 million.

Our reach has expanded exponentially since moving to Boston’s Back Bay neighborhood sixty years ago. We now serve an active constituency of more than 500,000 members and subscribers; our library collections have grown to over 250,000 volumes; our Digital Library and Archives house more than 28,000 electronic objects; social media provides for new kinds of engagement, with our Facebook page receiving 1.9 million impressions in the last year, and our website, AmericanAncestors.org, is the portal to more than 10 billion searchable records. Additionally, our endowment has strengthened to more than \$38 million. Our headquarters now proudly houses the Brim-DeForest Library, the R. Stanton Avery Special Collections, the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center, the 10 Million Names project, and as of April 2025, the new Family Heritage Experience.

The original building at 99–101 Newbury Street was designed by Ralph Coolidge Henry and Henry P. Richmond, successors to the renowned architect Guy Lowell. Completed in 1928, it served for over three decades as a bank branch of the New England Trust Company. In April 1963, we purchased the three-story building for \$175,000 and expanded it by adding five additional floors to accommodate the library, and increase our workspace and services.

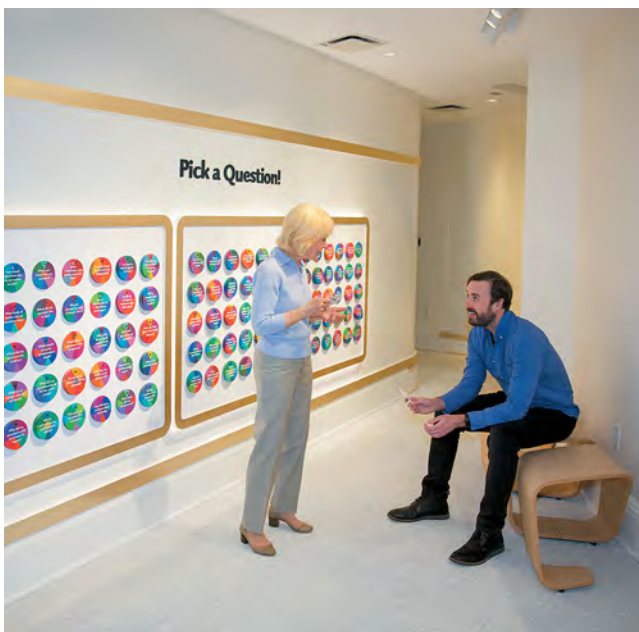
The history of American Ancestors headquarters

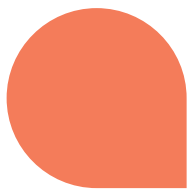
- 1846–1847** City Building, Room 9, Court Square
- 1847–1851** The Massachusetts Block, First Floor, Court Square
- 1851–1858** 5 Tremont Street, Third Floor
- 1858–1871** 13 (later 17) Bromfield Street, Third Floor
- 1871–1913** 18 Somerset Street
- 1913–1964** 9 Ashburton Place
- 1964–2024** 99–101 Newbury Street
- 2025–present** 97 Newbury Street



In late 2012, we took another bold step, acquiring the adjacent four-story nineteenth century brownstone at 97 Newbury Street. Funded through the final stages of an earlier philanthropic campaign, this acquisition set the stage for the Cornerstone Project—a \$40 million comprehensive campaign aimed at expanding our headquarters and related

programming. Construction to integrate the two buildings began in April 2023 and concluded in March 2025. Staff officially moved into the expanded space on January 6, 2025 and we welcomed members on January 21, 2025. The Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting event is scheduled for April 24, 2025, coinciding with the public opening.





The Cornerstone Project and Family Heritage Experience

The Cornerstone Project is a transformative initiative designed to inspire individuals and families to explore their personal histories, expand educational opportunities, and enhance our headquarters through essential capital improvements.

The opening of our expanded headquarters marks a historic milestone for our institution. In our new building complex, we will offer unparalleled learning experiences, featuring the expertise of genealogists, historians, educators, curators, and museum professionals. By blending in-person engagement with cutting-edge virtual access, we will reach audiences around the globe through innovative digital platforms.

At the heart of the Cornerstone Project is **inspiration**—a fundamental aspect of our connection with members and the public. The new center features a state-of-the-art museum equipped with immersive, interactive exhibits that engage visitors of all ages. These experiences foster a deeper sense of identity, a feeling of belonging, and an appreciation for the transformative power of family history.

As the nation's founding organization for genealogy, we believe that every individual and every family has a story worth telling. We are uniquely positioned to help people of all backgrounds uncover and celebrate their personal histories.

Through the collection, preservation, and interpretation of historical and genealogical materials, we strive to reflect the diverse stories of America. Our efforts not only enrich lives and preserve legacies but also demonstrate the profound connections between the past and the future—showing how understanding family history ties us all to a shared human experience.

Visitors to the Family Heritage Experience will be immersed in exhibits that highlight the universal significance of family history. They will be encouraged to reflect on their own family narratives, ask meaningful questions, recall cherished stories, and discover the excitement of uncovering their heritage. Guests will also have opportunities to interact with American Ancestors staff, explore membership options, and conduct research both onsite and online using our vast resources and expertise.

Family Heritage Experience

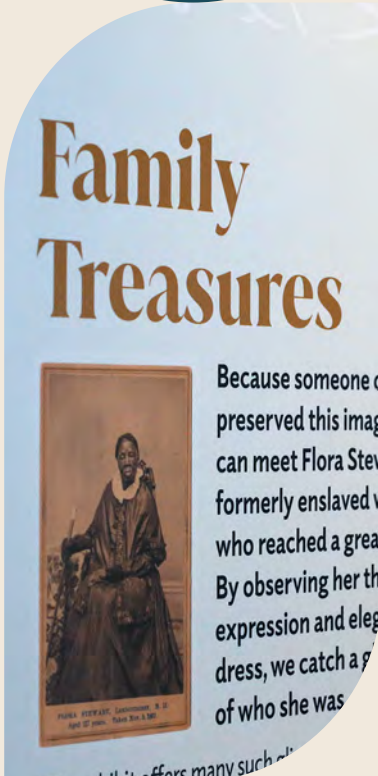
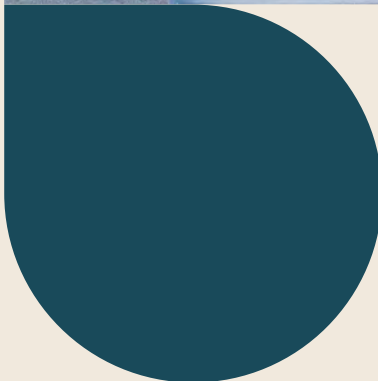


American Ancestors.



Put together
the pieces of
your past





The Cornerstone Society

We gratefully acknowledge the following donors who donated \$100,000 or more to make it possible for us to expand our headquarters and create the Family Heritage Experience.

\$5 million or more

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Brenda L. Johnson
Anonymous

\$1,000,000-\$4,999,999

Brady Brim-DeForest of Balvaire Castle
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Thomas Bailey Hagen
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The Arnold Garrison Foundation
The Lynch Foundation
Kathleen* and Peter Van Demark
Nancy Clay Webster*
Justin and Genevieve* Wyner
Anonymous (4)

*Deceased



Financial Report

Summary Balance Sheet as of fiscal year end August 31, 2024

BALANCE SHEET	FY24	FY23	Increase (decrease)	% Increase (decrease)
Total Assets	\$85,102,082	\$66,422,648	\$18,679,434	28%
Liabilities	\$24,727,133	\$10,895,809	\$13,831,324	127%
Net Assets	\$60,374,949	\$55,526,839	\$4,848,110	9%
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$85,102,082	\$66,422,648	\$18,679,434	28%

Consolidated Income Statement, September 1, 2023–August 31, 2024

REVENUE	FY24	FY23	% Increase (decrease)	% of total
Earned Revenue	\$4,736,024	\$5,064,451	-6%	31%
Contributed Revenue	\$9,241,045	\$11,101,243	-17%	61%
Investment Return Designated for Current Operations (a)	\$1,193,750	\$1,181,000	1%	8%
Total Revenue	\$15,170,819	\$17,346,694	-13%	100%

EXPENSES	FY24	FY23	% Increase (decrease)	% of total
Member Services	\$360,086	\$391,493	-8%	2%
Research Library	\$2,678,182	\$2,564,972	4%	17%
Tours and Seminars	\$1,816,569	\$1,687,644	8%	12%
Retail Store	\$86,438	\$67,804	27%	1%
Publications	\$1,927,311	\$2,015,781	-4%	12%
Website	\$1,610,356	\$1,650,019	-2%	10%
General and Administrative	\$2,904,748	\$2,542,391	14%	19%
Fundraising	\$4,271,180	\$3,995,220	7%	27%
Total Expenses	\$15,654,870	\$14,915,324	5%	100%

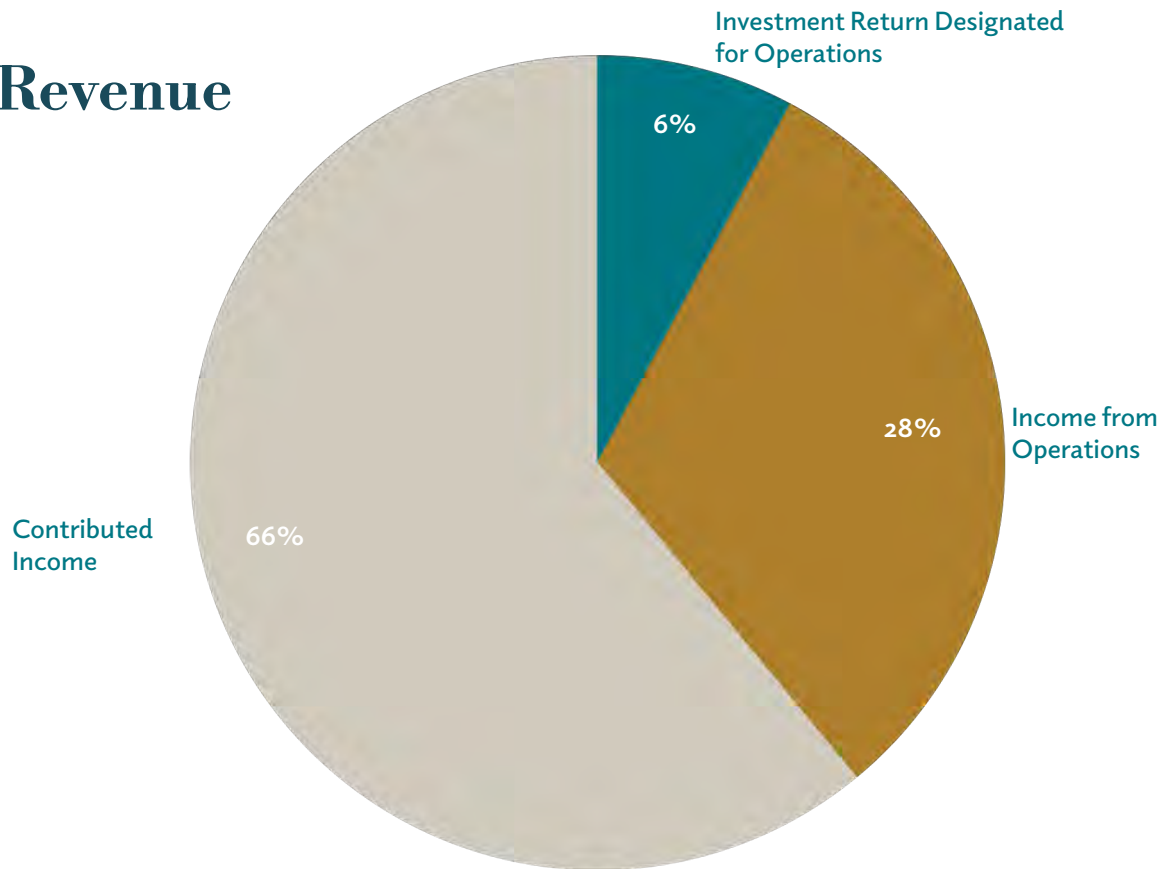
Consolidated Net Income from Operations	(\$484,051)	\$2,431,370
Non-Operating revenue, including investment return (b)	\$5,332,161	\$191,375
Consolidated Net Income	\$4,848,110	\$2,622,745
Endowment Net Assets (c)	\$21,119,864	\$24,928,210

(a) Investment Return Designated for Current Operations represents the release of the annual draw, which is based on appropriating 4% of the average of the prior twelve quarters of fair market value of the investments.

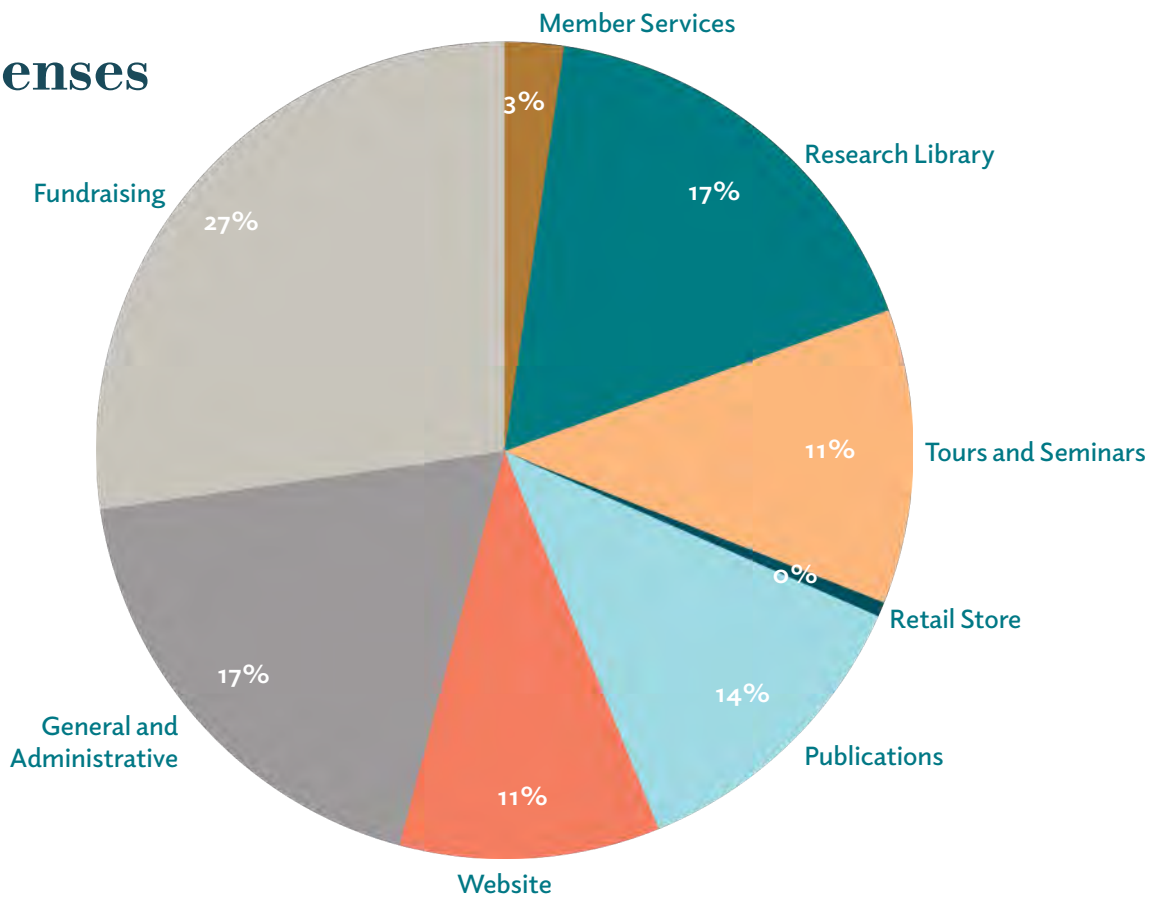
(b) Includes: (1) Interest and Dividends, Realized and Unrealized Gains, net of Investment Management Fees; and (2) Appropriation of Investment Return Designated for Operations.

(c) Includes: (1) Board Designated Endowment, (2) Appreciation on Endowment and (3) Permanently Restricted Endowment.

Revenue



Expenses



Giving Societies

We gratefully acknowledge the following members and donors for making it possible for us to advance the study of family history in America and beyond.

The President's Society

The President's Society recognizes the generosity of individuals who have given cumulative gifts of \$5,000,000 or more.

Judith Avery
BayTree Fund
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Fidelity Charitable

Thomas Bailey Hagen
Brenda L. Johnson
Anonymous (1)

Bold indicates new members to the President's Society.
***Deceased**

The Founders' Society

The Founders' Society recognizes the generosity of individuals who have given cumulative gifts between \$1,000,000 and \$4,999,999.

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Bold indicates new members to the Founders' Society.
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The John Quincy Adams Society

This society is named in honor of John Quincy Adams, a member of New England Historic Genealogical Society in 1845. It recognizes the generosity of individuals who have made cumulative gifts of \$500,000 to \$999,999.

Robert O. F. Bixby*
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Anonymous (2)
Bold indicates new members to the John Quincy Adams Society.
***Deceased**

WHY I GIVE

Helen E. R. Sayles

When my husband DuWayne and I joined Ancestry.com, I jumped into the captivating world of genealogy. I was enthralled by the stories of my ancestors and eager to devote more time to unearthing my family's past.

I was particularly drawn to my paternal grandmother, whose life seemed rich with mystery. However, differing family narratives about her ancestry left me facing a brick wall. In a serendipitous meeting with Brenton Simons, the then-President & CEO of American Ancestors, I shared my challenge. He reassured me that their team of researchers could assist, and they did—European ancestry often comes with accessible records if you have the right support.

My passion for history is deep. However, my understanding of African American history and the legacy of slavery was limited. I resolved to change that. In a time when misinformation can blur the lines of truth, I believe it's vital for everyone to engage with historical realities. I immersed myself in well over 20 books—one of which, nearly 900 pages long and dense with detail, took me almost a year to complete. This journey was enlightening, yet it was infuriating to recognize that the disenfranchisement of Black Americans continues into the 21st century.

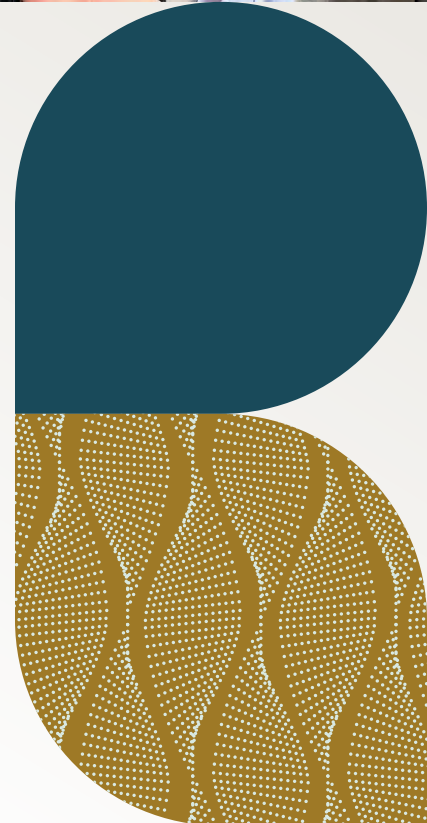
In 2021, we embarked on an in-depth exploration of DuWayne's family history, fully aware that his genealogical path would be more challenging. We started with his father's lineage, and with the help of our genealogist at American Ancestors, we found the plantation where DuWayne's great grandfather, Reuben (1858-1891), had been enslaved and discovered that the family name was not Sayles. Reuben had taken the surname of Young and married Celia Wells, with whom he had three children. After Reuben's death, Celia married Robert Sayles, whose name Reuben's children took. We have since found so much more—even white ancestors whose DNA DuWayne shares—suggesting tragic and, unfortunately, not uncommon circumstances of birth.

African American genealogy is often fraught with obstacles, yet stories uncovered are a testament to resilience and strength. When I learned about 10 Million Names, I thought how wonderful it would be if everyone experienced the same opportunity that we had to research their family because there's a great joy and sense of grounding when you can learn that history. It's a gift to generations in the future.

10 Million Names is a substantive way that people can make a meaningful difference in the lives of others, either financially or by introducing 10 Million Names to others. This is not a short-term project; it will go on for decades. It has such incredible value that if you want to make a difference, you can. The pursuit of knowledge enriches our understanding of ourselves and connects us to the broader tapestry of history.

Let us all take the plunge into our own genealogical journeys. Together, we can ensure that every voice is heard and every story is told.

Above: Helen and DuWayne Sayles at Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone.



Helen E. R. Sayles is a Life Member and a Trustee. She resides in Concord, Massachusetts.



The Charles Ewer Society

The Charles Ewer Society is named in honor of our founding president, Charles Ewer, and recognizes the generosity of individuals who have made cumulative gifts of \$100,000 to \$499,999.

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The Benjamin Franklin Society recognizes the generosity of individuals who donated materials to our archives, including the R. Stanton Avery Collection, and made a gift of \$10,000 or more to support its long-term care. In 1856, American Ancestors participated in the construction of a statue in Boston commemorating Benjamin Franklin, who recounted his family history in his famous autobiography.

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Preserving Our Shared History

On the eve of the Bicentennial in 1976, I first discovered the stories of my ancestors who fought for American independence. Inspired by the groundbreaking late-70s series *Roots*, I was driven to delve deeper into my family's history. Before long, I had begun documenting my own genealogical journey.

As a teenager, I spent countless hours poring over courthouse records, determined to uncover as much as possible about my lineage. My search eventually led me to the New England Historic Genealogical Society, where I became its youngest student member in 1986. Since 1993, I've had the privilege of working at American Ancestors, where I share my passion for genealogy and history with members like you.

Everyone has a story worth telling and preserving for future generations. That's why American Ancestors has long supported our members in making our organization part of their lasting philanthropic legacy. Since 1859, when Dr. Henry Bond made our first recorded legacy gift, thousands have followed in his footsteps, ensuring that the history we cherish today will be safeguarded for generations to come.

In my own will, I have chosen to leave my manuscripts, along with a financial gift, to safeguard my family's genealogical treasures for the next fifty years. **Will you join me in preserving our shared history for generations to come?** A planned gift costs you nothing today but ensures that our ancestors' stories live on forever.

Thank you for considering this meaningful way to support American Ancestors.

With gratitude,
David Allen Lambert
Chief Genealogist



David Allen Lambert, age 13, reviewing family history artifacts.



For more information, please contact
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The Henry Bond Society

The Henry Bond Society recognizes those donors who have invested in the future of American Ancestors through their estate plans. It is named for Dr. Henry Bond, a preeminent genealogist known for his work on the history of Watertown, Massachusetts, and who left American Ancestors its first bequest in 1859.

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The Legacy Society

Dr. Henry Bond led the way for hundreds of estate gifts since his bequest was received in 1859. The Legacy Society memorializes the past members of the Henry Bond Society whose thoughtful estate planning has resulted in generous contributions. American Ancestors continues to grow and thrive as it has since 1845 thanks in large part to those who ultimately made their final and most significant act of generosity. These investments into our future will ensure that family history is preserved, advanced, and made accessible for future generations of genealogists.

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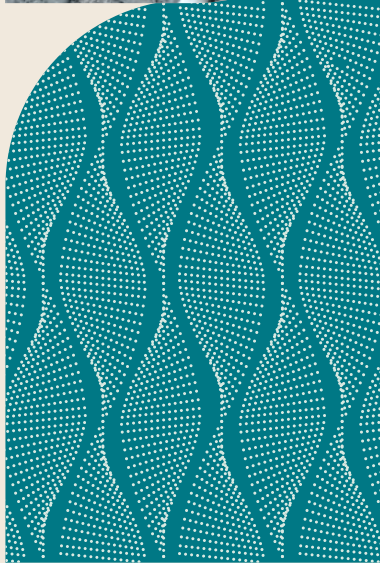
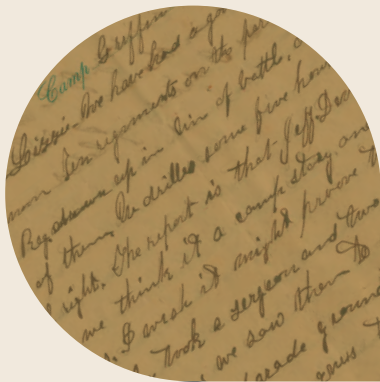
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Lorraine Clair Dickinson Bydalek

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Milo Velimirovic

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Michael Sean Dunn

Ruth Fein

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Rabbi Avraham and Hannah Freedman, and

Kadimah Michelson

Anonymous

George E. Hubbard

Edward G. Hubbard

Jacob Sumner Jaffe

Alison Poorvu Jaffe and Daniel Jaffe

**The Grandchildren and Great-
grandchildren of Harris Poorvu**

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Carol Jansons

Elizabeth MacLeod (Raymond) Jennerson

Kathleen MacLeod Hanzeli

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Gifts herein were made between September 1, 2023, and August 31, 2024, unless otherwise specified. We have made every effort to ensure accuracy in this Annual Report. We apologize for any inadvertent error. Please notify Stacie Madden at 617-226-1217 or stacie.madden@americanancestors.org to report any corrections.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Tamsen Munger

A Family History Tale

When I was asked to write a story about my family history, the challenge was which one to choose. Beginning in 2010, with the assistance of the Research Services staff at American Ancestors, I began researching my mother's family history. Their skilled staff of genealogists helped me find significant new information about the McCrory family. With their assistance, we found my mother, Kathryn McCrory, and her descendants going all the way back to the Revolutionary War in North Carolina. This story, and the many others we found, has enriched my life and that of my family, for which we are forever grateful to American Ancestors. The following story is an example of the McCrory family's colorful history.

Noted Desperado, James Greenville McCrory

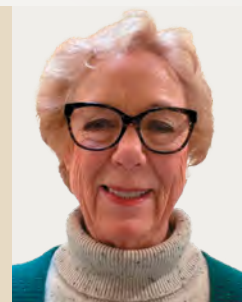
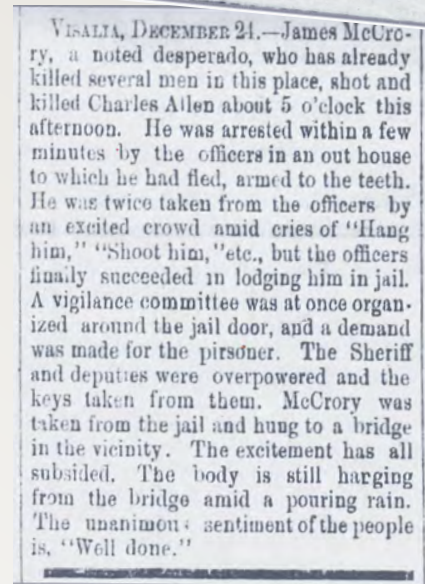
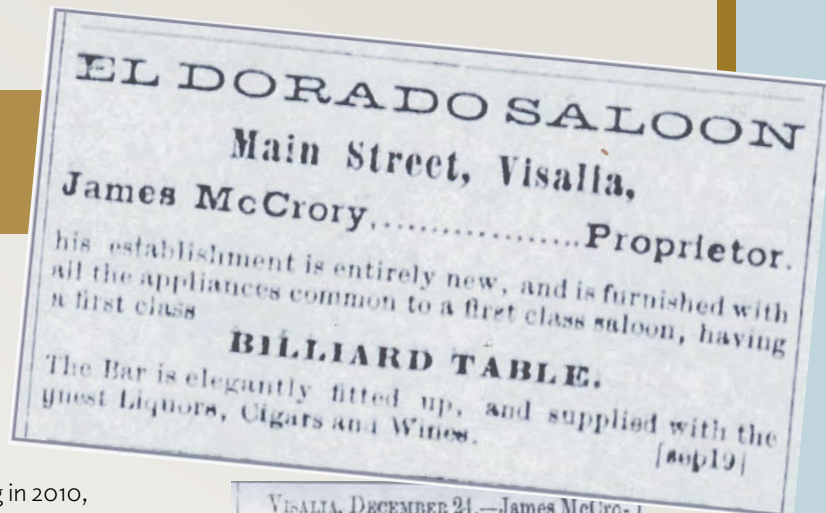
By the end of the 1860s, James and Julia had four living children, one was Charles, my mother's grandfather. Life was not easy for James and Julia. In about 1869, their lives began to unravel. James gave up gold mining and moved to Visalia, California, to become a saloon keeper and Deputy Marshal of the town.

Becoming a marshal and saloon-keeper were two occupations that were not good for a man like James. In October 1869, the *San Francisco Examiner* stated that James McCrory had killed Mexican Manuel Barales with a shotgun while standing at the door of his saloon. In May 1871, James was sentenced to 15 years for second degree murder and was sent to San Quentin State Penitentiary. He petitioned the Supreme Court for a new trial because of "irregularity and informality" in court proceedings and was awarded a new trial at which he was acquitted.

James was free, but not for long! On Christmas Eve, 1872, he killed his best friend, Charles Allen. James went to the El Dorado Saloon saying he would shoot the first man who darkened the door. Allen was in the back

room but came out when he heard the commotion. McCrory turned and cursed Allen and said, "I might as well kill you as any other man." He shot Charles multiple times. James was immediately arrested and jailed. A crowd gathered and James was dragged out, in the pouring rain, and hung from a local bridge.

The story, known as the "McCrory Episode," is well documented in books and articles that I discovered through American Ancestors' vast resources.



Tamsen Munger is a general partner at Munger Properties and a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution. She has been a member since 2013 and is a Life Member. Tamsen lives in Fresno, California.

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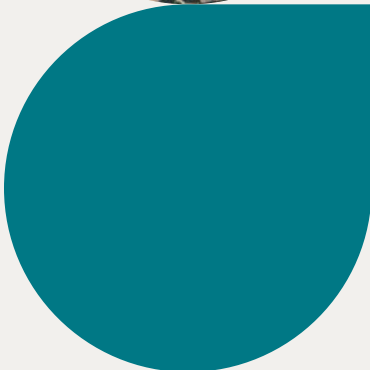
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*Deceased

American Ancestors counts on donated volunteer hours year after year, and in this fiscal year, our volunteers assisted with several large projects that helped American Ancestors get ready for the building to reopen in fiscal year 2025.

Research & Library Services volunteer Marie Wells working from home transcribing bible records.



Volunteers

In the fall, we had 132 volunteers who donated 3,996 hours, assisting with a variety of projects across activity areas. For Learning & Interpretation, volunteer Jingxuan Wang donated 240 hours working on a series of short videos, each explaining various aspects of getting started in genealogical research. She coordinated with American Ancestors genealogists to create the questions and a template for the video style and edited the audio and documents that the genealogists provided.

Leading into the winter, our volunteers increased their donated hours to 4,391 hours. Database volunteers, numbering 59, donated 3,405 hours. For Research & Library Services, volunteer Marie Wells donated 221 hours and completed the Tea Party sketches project that began in April of 2022.

By the spring, Youth Education volunteer Sophia Aubin, President of the Caribbean Genealogy Library, played a pivotal role in a full-day teacher workshop for thirty-one educators in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Aubin assisted American Ancestors Youth Genealogy Curriculum Coordinator Dustin Axe with the planning of the workshop for several months, and she led a session for teachers about conducting research in the USVI. In Research & Library Services, volunteers continued work on the Family Registers and Bible Records project being managed by June Henry. These accomplishments were celebrated by the 159 volunteers who donated 4,589 hours with other activity projects.

Ending the fiscal year, American Ancestors had two academic interns: Rebecca Miller, a student at Brigham Young University, Idaho, and Irene Garcia, a PhD candidate at Boston University. And while we continued, and finished with many projects over the year, we could not have done it without the 179 unique volunteers, who donated over 17,690 hours—which is the equivalent of nine full-time staff years.

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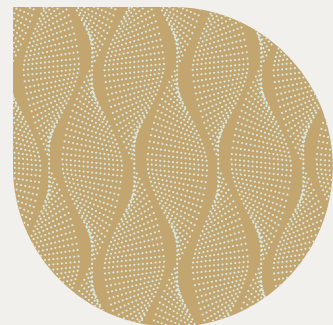
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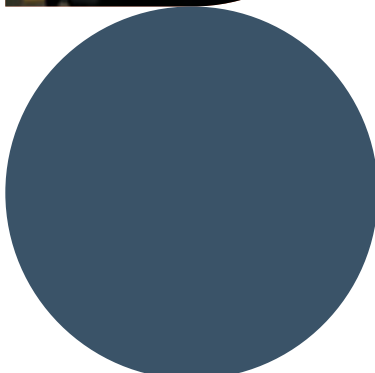
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15 years

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Ginevra Morse

10 years

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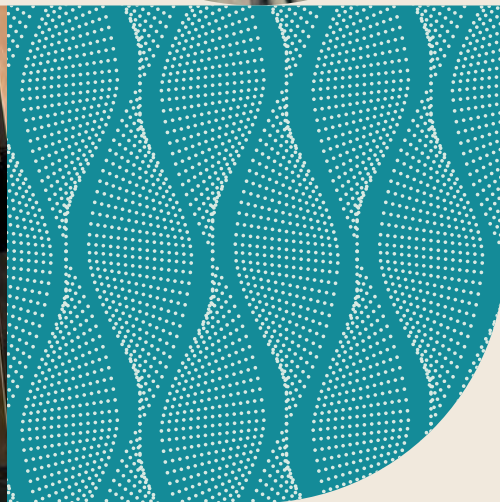
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