



**Testimony  
of  
Robin Semple  
Professional Genealogist  
before  
The California  
Reparations Task Force**

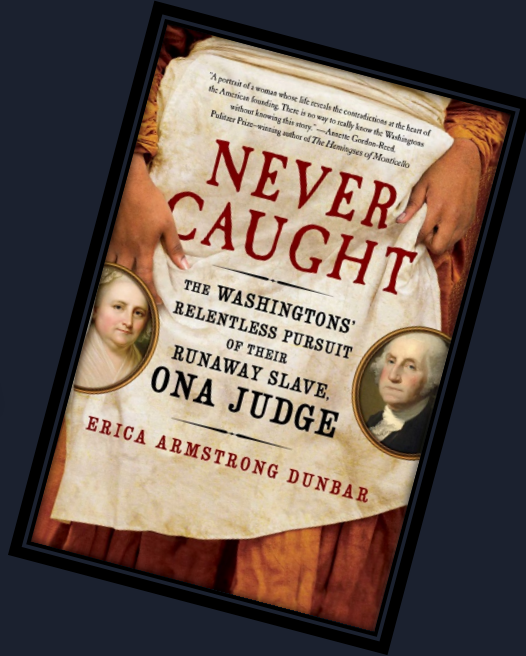
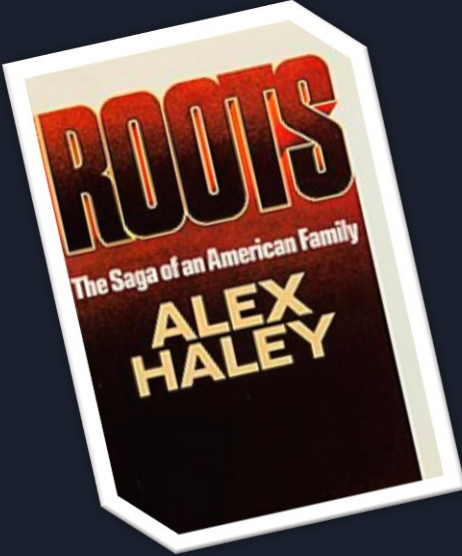
March 29, 2022



# Background

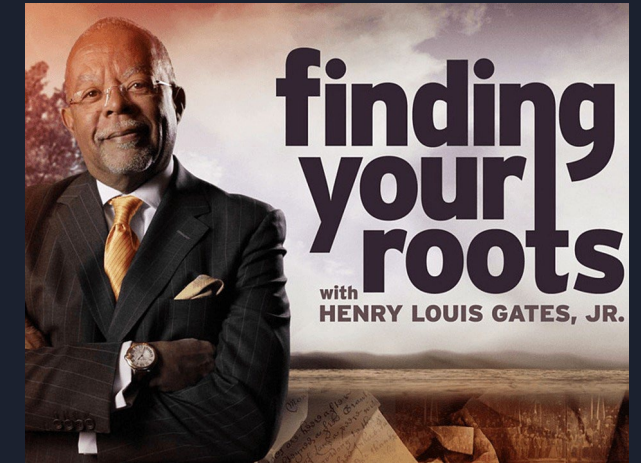
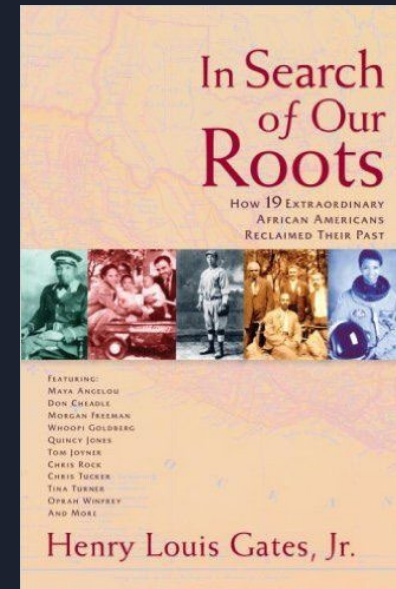
- Robin Semple is a Founding Member and Co-President of The Richard B. Dickenson Chapter of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS), Staten Island, New York.
- Professional Genealogist certificate holder from Boston University Metropolitan College's Certificate in Genealogical Research.
- Completed and holds a certificate from the GenProof program which focuses on mastering genealogical proof.
- Currently completing ProGen's certificate program
- Graduate Certificate candidate in Forensic Genetic Genealogy at the Henry C. Lee College of Forensic Science at the University of New Haven.
- Research focuses on Virginia and Southwestern Virginia.

# How Have We Arrived at This Moment?

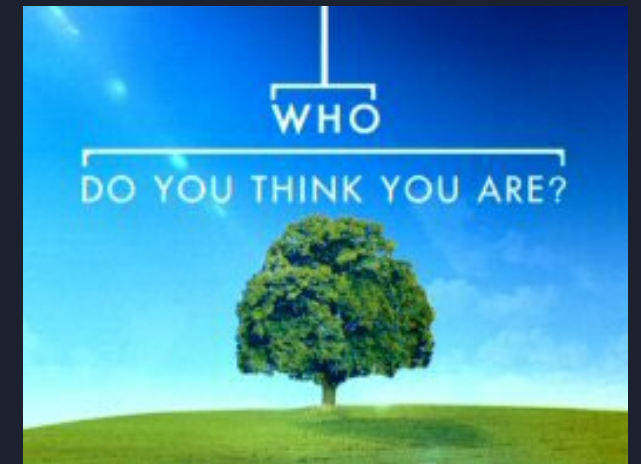


# Recreating the Lives of the Formerly Enslaved

- Local
- State
- Regional
- Census Records
- Courthouse Records
- Manifests
- Property Records
- Wills and Probate Records
- Newspapers



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# Useful Collections For Researching Americans of African Descent

- The Freedmen's Bureau Records (formally known as the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands)
  - In the years following the Civil War, the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (the Freedmen's Bureau) provided assistance to tens of thousands of former slaves and impoverished whites in the Southern States and the District of Columbia. The Bureau was established in the War Department in 1865 to undertake the relief effort and the unprecedented social reconstruction that would bring freed people to full citizenship.
- U.S., Colored Troops Military Service Records, 1863-1865
  - Contains compiled military service records for the United States Colored Troops that volunteered to serve with the Union in the American Civil War.
- U.S., African American Photo Collection, 1850-2000
- Cohabitation Register Records
  - Cohabitation Registers provide critical insight into the formerly enslaved population's family connections and last slave owners. In many cases records found there among few documents to capture the marital relationships of newly freed – formerly enslaved persons whose relationships dated back to their years of enslavement. The information was provided by the formerly enslaved themselves and is likely quite accurate to the best of their recollections.

# Cohabitation Register For Montgomery County, Virginia Feb. 1866

Montgomery County Register of Marriages (Colored) Under Act of Assembly of Virginia; February 27, 1866

Accession 50157

Library of Virginia

Page	Line	Husband's Name and Age	Husband's Birthplace	Husband's Residence	Occupation	Last Owner	Last Owner's Residence	Wife's Name and Age	Wife's Birthplace	Wife's Residence	Last Owner
3	8	Henry Johnson, 36	Pulaski County, Va.	Montgomery County, Va.	Farmer	Walter Preston	Montgomery County, Va.	Louisa Boone, 24	Pulaski County, Va.	Montgomery County, Va.	Preston Pugh

PENSIONERS now on the ROLL are NOT required to make new application, but must file annual certificate.  
**This Application must be filed with the Clerk of the Corporation Court of Your City or  
 Circuit Court of Your County**  
 (No application will be entertained not on the printed form.)

**FORM No. 6**

APPLICATION of a person who served the Confederate States in the war between the States as body servant, cook, hostler, or teamster, or who worked on the Confederate greatworks, under Act approved March 14, 1924.

Lewis W. Holmes do hereby apply for a pension under the provisions of the Act of the General Assembly of Virginia, approved March 14, 1924, relating to Confederate pensioners.  
 I do solemnly swear that I am a citizen of the State of Virginia, and that I have been an actual resident of the said State for seven years next preceding the date of this application; and that I served the Confederate States Government in the War between the States as teamster; and that I am now disabled and from the effects of such disability, I am incapacitated from performing any occupation for a livelihood; and that during the said war I was loyal and true to the Confederacy and duties assigned me, and by reason of such service and disability, I am now entitled to receive the pension under the provisions of said act. And I further swear that no income from any source of employment, or any other source does not amount to an amount as three hundred dollars (\$300.00) per annum. I do further swear that I do not receive a pension from this or any other State, or from the United States. I do solemnly swear that the answers given to the questions which I am required to answer in this application are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

**ALL QUESTIONS MUST BE ANSWERED FULLY**

1. What is your name? Lewis W. Holmes
2. What is your age? 75 years.
3. Where were you born? Montgomery Co. Va.
4. How long have you resided in Virginia? All My life
5. How long have you resided in the City or County of your present residence? 40 years.
6. In what branch of the service were you employed? Mill
7. What service did you render? Hauled + Grinded Iron Bars + worked in yard for 1 1/2 years
8. Under whose order or by whose request did you render the service, above explained? C. A. Christiansen, Sr. Run Saw Yard for Mill
9. Who was your master at the time of entering upon duties in the war between the States? C. A. Christiansen
10. When did you begin such service? during the last
11. Where did you begin such service? Two Shores of Lake
12. When and why did you leave the service? Continued this work until the surrender
13. Where do you reside? Is in a city, give street address. Postoffice New River Depot County of Pulaski Virginia
14. What is your occupation for earning a livelihood? Minister of Baptist Church
15. What is your annual income from all sources? \$115.00

A signature made by X mark is not valid unless attested by a witness.

WITNESS J. A. Painter Clerk of Court in and for the City of Norfolk Lewis W. Holmes Signature of Applicant

I, J. A. Painter, in the State of Virginia, do certify that the applicant whose name is signed to the foregoing application, personally appeared before me in my City aforesaid, having the aforesaid application read to him and fully explained, as well as the statements and answers therein made, the said applicant made oath before me that the said statements and answers are true.  
 Given under my hand this 23 day of June, 1924 J. A. Painter Clerk of Court

(A) OATH OF RESIDENT WITNESSES.  
W. J. Christiansen  
 and J. A. Christiansen  
 do solemnly swear that we are residents of the County of Montgomery, in the State of Virginia and that we have known personally and well for 70 years the applicant whose name is signed to the foregoing application for aid under the act of the General Assembly of Virginia, approved March 14, 1924, and that the said applicant is a resident of the said city or county and is a man of good reputation for truth and honesty, and that we have read the foregoing application and the answers to the questions therein propounded, made by the said applicant, and verily believe that the said applicant has been truthful in the said statements and answers, and we verily believe the said applicant is justly entitled to aid under the said act and that we have no personal interest in the allowance of the applicant's claim.  
 A signature made by X mark is not valid unless attested by a witness.  
J. A. Christiansen  
 Resident Witnesses.

WITNESS J. A. Christiansen  
J. A. Christiansen  
 Subscribed and sworn to before me, a Justice in and for the County of Montgomery State of Virginia, this 23 day of June, 1924.  
W. C. Haggy Jr. Signature of Officer.

(B) AFFIDAVIT OF EX-CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS.  
 Having personal knowledge of the applicant's service. (If no such ex-Confederate soldiers are known to be living, then let one or more reputable citizens, having personal knowledge of the service of the applicant, fill in this certificate.)  
W. J. Christiansen  
 and  
 do solemnly swear that we are residents of the County of Montgomery, in the State of Va and that applicant whose name is signed to the foregoing application for aid under the act of the General Assembly of Virginia, approved March 14, 1924, is personally well known to us, and that we have known him 70 years, and that we were sol-

**Lewis W Holmes  
 in the Alabama, Texas and  
 Virginia, U.S., Confederate  
 Pensions, 1884-1958**

# A Closer Look at William B. Johnson In The 1870 U.S. Census

4	Johnson Henry	43	M	B	Team Laborer		5.00	
	Louisa	34	F	B	Keeping House			
	Emeline	4	F	B	at Home			
	John B	3	M	M	" "			
	Alexander	2	M	M	" "			
	William J	3	M	M	" "			
	George	19	M	B	Team Laborer			
	Tractious Francis	75	F	M	Nurse			



# 1870 U.S. Census For Montgomery County, Virginia

William B. Johnson is listed  
with his family. He is listed  
as 3/12 which means he was  
about 3 months old.

Page No. 11 Instructions numbered 7, 16, and 17 are not to be added in respect to tabulation. Instructions numbered 11, 13, 16, 17, 19, and 20 are to be answered (if not applicable) by an affirmative mark, as /.

SCHEDULE 1.—Inhabitants in Blackburg, Washington, in the County of Montgomery, State of Virginia, enumerated by me on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of August, 1870. (1870)

Post Office: Blackburg, Va. J. S. Gordon, Ass't Marshal.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		10	11				18	19	20	21
							8	9		11	12	13	14				
Name of head of household		The name of every person whose place of abode on the first day of June, 1870, was in this family.		Sex	Color	Profession, Occupation, or Trade of each person, male or female.	Value of real estate	Value of personal estate	Place of birth, naming State or Territory of U. S. or the Country, if of foreign birth.	Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, pauper, or convict.	Whether male or female.	Whether single, married, widowed, or divorced.	Whether foreign-born.	Whether naturalized citizen.	Whether citizen of the United States.	Whether citizen of the United States.	Whether citizen of the United States.
1	William Beards	W. B.	M.	at home					Virginia								
2	John E.	J. E.	M.	Farmer													
3	George	G.	M.	keeping house													
4	George	G.	M.	at home													
5	George	G.	M.	at home													
6	John C.	J. C.	M.	at home													
7	Mary	M.	F.	at home													
8	John	J.	M.	at home													
9	John	J.	M.	at home													
10	John	J.	M.	at home													
11	John	J.	M.	at home													
12	John	J.	M.	at home													
13	John	J.	M.	at home													
14	John	J.	M.	at home													
15	John	J.	M.	at home													
16	John	J.	M.	at home													
17	John	J.	M.	at home													
18	John	J.	M.	at home													
19	John	J.	M.	at home													
20	John	J.	M.	at home													
21	John	J.	M.	at home													
22	John	J.	M.	at home													
23	John	J.	M.	at home													
24	John	J.	M.	at home													
25	John	J.	M.	at home													
26	John	J.	M.	at home													
27	John	J.	M.	at home													
28	John	J.	M.	at home													
29	John	J.	M.	at home													
30	John	J.	M.	at home													
31	John	J.	M.	at home													
32	John	J.	M.	at home													
33	John	J.	M.	at home													
34	John	J.	M.	at home													
35	John	J.	M.	at home													
36	John	J.	M.	at home													
37	John	J.	M.	at home													
38	John	J.	M.	at home													
39	John	J.	M.	at home													
40	John	J.	M.	at home													

6 No. of dwellings. No. of white males. No. of males, foreign born. No. of females. No. of colored males. No. of males. No. of white males. No. of females. No. of colored females. No. of females, foreign born. No. of females. No. of colored females. No. of females.

# Getting Beyond The 1870 U.S. Census

- In 1850 and 1860, enslaved men, women, and children were not listed on the census population schedules, nor were their names typically recorded in birth, marriage, and death records or other go-to family history documents.
- Shift your attention to slave owners
- Manifests, property records, wills and probate records, manumission and emancipation papers, and newspapers all may mention the enslaved

# Bryant Oxendine, Runaway

## 25 Dollars Reward.

**R**UNAWAY from the subscriber on the 3rd inst.,  
BRYANT OXENDINE, a free man of color, who  
was sold at the Court House, by an order of Court,  
and purchased by the subscriber. This is to forewarn  
all persons from harboring said Oxendine as the strict-  
est penalty of the law will be enforced against them.  
I will give the above reward for his confinement in  
Jail so that I can get him.

JOHN T. WRIGHT.

No doubt he will be found lurking in Robeson coun-  
ty as he has a mother in that county.

J. T. W.

202-3t

Nov. 9, 1857.

# The Genealogical Proof Standard (GPS)

To reach a sound conclusion, we need to meet all five components of the GPS.

1. Reasonably exhaustive research.
2. Complete and accurate source citations.
3. Thorough analysis and correlation.
4. Resolution of conflicting evidence.
5. Soundly written conclusion based on the strongest evidence.



Thank You!

