



# WAKE GENEALOGY WATCH

*News from the Wake County Genealogical Society*

*Vol. 9, Issue 1*

*Fall 2025*

## Upcoming Event Schedule

**Sep 23**

**Revolutionary War: Moore's Creek Battleground and the Scots-Irish in NC**

John Miles

**Oct 28**

**Reconstruct your Ancestor's World with Google**

Lisa Louise Cooke

**Dec 2**

**Become a Power User of DigitalNC.org**

Taneyia Koonce

**Jan 27, 2026**

**Getting Started in Genealogical Research**

Renate Sanders

[Full details at wakecogen.org](http://wakecogen.org)

## Inside

|                                              |    |
|----------------------------------------------|----|
| Meet-up Recap - May 2025                     | 2  |
| NC Maps at U. of Alabama                     | 4  |
| Genealogy Classes                            | 5  |
| Full-Text Search Updates                     | 5  |
| Same Name Solving: Two Joel Lanes            | 6  |
| Creative Google Search                       | 7  |
| BIRLS Military Report Gold                   | 8  |
| AI Video: Quick Narratives & Research Guides | 9  |
| NUMIDENT Social Security files               | 11 |
| Member Name Tags                             | 12 |
| Events                                       | 13 |

## Plan to Stay Busy This Fall!

There is something on this list to interest every genealogist and family history enthusiast. Upcoming in-person events—ours and others—are highlighted here and detailed at the links provided.

### Beginning Genealogy Series, Sept. 8 - Nov. 17

A preview of the expanded class offerings is available on page 5 of this issue and full details and links to register are available at our blog.

[Descriptions and Registration](#)

### Save the date: Family History Fair at the NC Archives, Oct. 4

Further details from NC archives will be posted to the following link soon.

[Details and Registration](#)

### Celebrating Shiloh Community c. 1830, Oct. 18

This community was settled about 1830 by free people of color. Explore the enduring bond with church and cemetery. Discover the community connection to a free black Revolutionary War soldier. Conclude with a walking tour of the cemetery and Shiloh Greenway. This free event is a collaborative effort between WCGS, Wake Historical Society, Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, and the City of Morrisville. [Details and Registration](#)

### NCGS Fall Conference In-Person or Livestream, Oct. 24-25

Attend the NCGS annual two day conference at the McKimmon Center in Raleigh, NC or stream online everywhere. Fifteen genealogy experts will cover topics on the full spectrum of genealogical and North Carolina interests. There is even a day devoted to Beginning Genealogy! Mark Lowe is the featured speaker. [Details and Registration](#)

### WCGS Meet-Up, Dec. 4. Details to follow soon.

Members will have received an email with details last week. Further information will be posted publicly to the [Blog](#), [Facebook](#), and [Webpage](#) in a few weeks.

# "Find Your Family History" WCGS Event Recap

By **Barbara McGeachy**, President@WakeCoGen.org  
And other attendees

May 31, 2025

We held a free family event at the Laurel Hills Community Center in Raleigh on Saturday, May 31. We reserved the large meeting room from 10 am to noon. Six volunteers brought their laptops or Ipads. Each sat at a large table and helped attendees get started with genealogy by looking up their family histories online. Additional volunteers staffed the welcome table, which featured our society's trifold display and plenty of handouts about upcoming events and beginning genealogy research. In the lobby, more volunteers shared flyers and encouraged people to visit our event.

About a dozen people showed up to discover their family history.

We agreed that this meet-up was helpful for getting to know the volunteers and the people who asked for help. One volunteer said, "this event made me feel like I have useful knowledge and skills, just not the ones I need for my biggest brick wall!"



*You're invited to a free community event!*

Come on inside where our volunteers will search online for your family!

Ask questions of our genealogists!

Pick up free handouts so you can continue to grow your tree!

- Pedigree charts for kids and for grown-ups
- Upcoming local events (archives tour, classes, etc.)
- Local resources for genealogy
- Connect with the local genealogy community

What could you learn about your family?

1950 census

- Who lived in your family's home?
- Names & ages
- Relationships
- Occupations
- Where born
- Neighbors

World War I draft registration

- Signature
- Physical description
- Birth date
- Occupation

Sponsored by the Wake County Genealogical Society <https://wakecogen.org/>

Sat. May 31, 2025

10 am to Noon



Laurel Hills  
Community Center  
3808 Edwards Mill Rd  
Raleigh, NC 27612

We want to do this again. Some lessons learned: People headed to the playground are not interested in stopping by to learn about family history. We also needed to advertise better to reach the public. Otherwise, it was a good setup and location.

-- Cont'd next page



## Recap of WCGS event "Find Your Family History" May 31, 2025

This meet-up was inspired by the National Genealogical Society's 2023 SLAM! winner. Watch the free five-minute video on the National Genealogical Society YouTube channel titled "2023 SLAM! Idea Showcase Winner - *Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania* "Street Genealogy" at this [link](#).

Here are summaries from some volunteers:

**Lynne Deese** wrote:

"I worked with a lady who is interested in finding out about a family member for whom she was named. Her name was Neosha, and she is originally from Missouri. I was able to find records for her grandmother and her great grandmother which included numerous other family members. I also used an image search to locate profiles on Ancestry that may help to connect her with additional users constructing family trees. Seeing these records brought tears to her eyes! I shared some basic information with her about how to secure a library card at the state archives and invited her to our next tour of the archives. I made her aware of FamilySearch, and the FamilySearch Wiki, and other tools that she could use to find indigenous populations in Missouri to which she believes she may be related. I sent follow-up emails regarding the

things we discussed. She is interested in becoming a member of the organization and in being a volunteer. I am in hopes that this person will become a new member of our group."

**Beth Snyder** shared her experience:

"I helped a woman named Samantha. We looked through censuses in Hookerton Township in Greene County, NC. Her family was the Hooker family, so probably some relationship to the name of the township. After we spent about 45 minutes together, she spent the rest of the time on her own, looking up her ancestors on Ancestry. She was very excited about the opportunity."

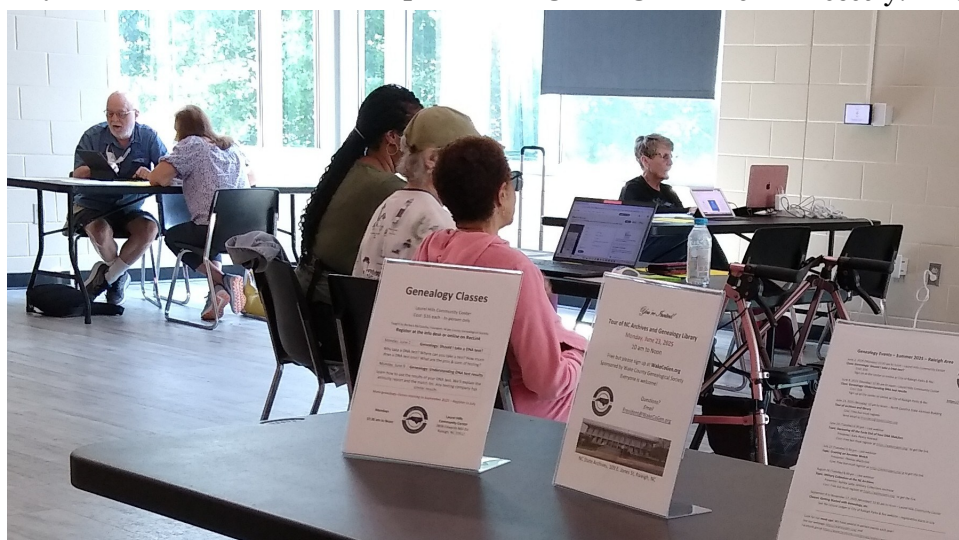
**Kathy Ruse** wrote:

"I helped a young African-American fellow named Vernon. He had done a bit of research already and had connected himself and his tree to the FamilySearch tree, was familiar with Ancestry, and had done a DNA test. He was getting ready for a family reunion.

We started by looking at his tree on FamilySearch and did some census lookups for some of the people on Ancestry. From there, we were able to find a

"Declaration of Intention" from 1940 for his great-grandfather, who had emigrated from the British West Indies in 1914. That one document was full of great family history info, including a list with names, birthdates, and birthplaces of all six of his children.

We also found a possible link on another line to service in the U.S.



## Recap of WCGS event "Find Your Family History" May 31, 2025

Colored Troops. In addition, we discussed possible ways to get back beyond 1870 when researching former slaves. He was delighted and delightful to work with. He even gave me a big hug at the end! He also asked when we would be doing this again!"

**Carol Stahl** summarized her morning:

"I worked with a family with origins in the British West Indies. Mom and grandmother sat with me while the daughter worked with someone else. We looked at their South Carolina roots as well as their New York City residency. Mom was thrilled to learn that she could camp out at the library to delve on her own with its version of Ancestry. I also mentioned FamilySearch, Find-a-grave and BillionGraves. She will very likely explore those sites in her efforts to "Find Her Family History."



Are you interested in participating in a local in-person event like this one?

Sign up for our blog updates to be notified of future events.

*Get the latest Wakecogen news, events and blog posts direct to your email.*

<http://eepurl.com/dljejz>

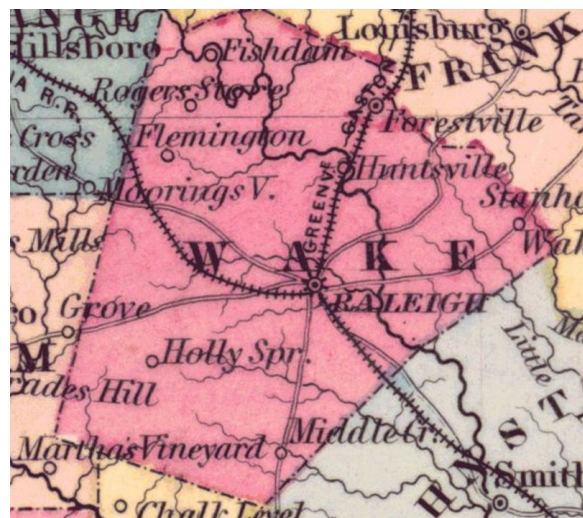
## Historical Maps of NC Online: University of Alabama Website

While trying to determine the start date of a community in Wake County, I stumbled onto an amazing map collection at the University of Alabama. While the University's primary focus is maps of all kinds related to Alabama, they have maps for all states and some international maps as well.

This collection made moving back and forth in time so easy. The North Carolina section is listed in chronological order within tabs for each time period. The time periods start in the late 1770s and span time up to 1985. While you can't search for specific county maps here, many of the maps were drawn with an amazing level of detail at the county level. No matter where you are searching, you should check out the University of Alabama map collection at this link:

<https://alabamamaps.ua.edu/historicalmaps/index.html>

This J. H. Colton North Carolina Map from 1854 includes railroads, common roads, cities, towns and villages. View the full map [here](#).



*Enjoy this vast collections of maps no matter where your research takes you.— CD*

## Fall Schedule Genealogy Classes with Barbara McGeachy

Do you want to start delving into your family history? Are you interested in taking your genealogy skills to the next level? We have great news for you, whether you are a beginner or intermediate family researcher. A new, expanded series of genealogy classes is being offered by Barbara McGeachy, President of the Wake County Genealogical Society. Classes will start September 8 and continue through November 17.

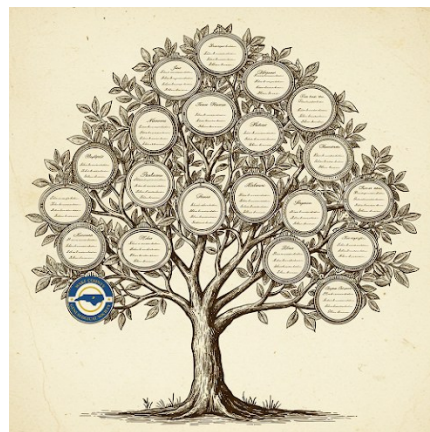
Barbara's classes are offered in partnership with the City of Raleigh Parks and Recreation. Classes will be held Mondays from 10:30 a.m. to noon in the large meeting room at the Laurel Hills Community Center, 3808 Edwards Mill Road.

Each class is \$8. You must register for each class separately. The first class—*Genealogy: Getting*

*Started!*—is recommended (but not required) as a foundation for the others in the series.

Topics include: the basics; vital records; census records; wills; newspaper research; DNA testing and working with matches; using FamilySearch.org and Ancestry.com; land records; and immigration records.

Find full details and registration at [this blog post](#).



## FamilySearch Full-Text Search Keeps Growing

A [July 2025 blog post](#) from FamilySearch outlines the truly astounding advancements made in the AI technology over the last 18 months. Michelle Barber, a FamilySearch user experience designer summed up the progress in a report to the FamilySearch Global/Tech Forum at RootsTech 2025.

- Full-text search started with records from 3 countries and now includes 29 countries.
- Full-text grew from 100 million images to include 1.2 billion images. There are nearly 10 billion names waiting to be discovered.
- Added to the early collections (land and probate records) are new collections including: death, marriage, family Bible, military, voting, court case, and naturalization records, to name just a few.

- Search options and advanced search tips have been added to the home page along with ability to search within a specific collection, and browse collections.
- Filtering has improved. You can arrow your search by year, place, record type, and so forth.
- You can now generate an AI summary of the historical documents you find while searching.

The future focus for Full-Text Search will be on expanding searchable collections from areas where records have previously been under represented

If you have not yet tried [Full-Text Search](#) and made an amazing discovery of your own, you should do so now. Access Full-Text Search at [this link](#) Try the new “[Browse all Collections](#)” link, and definitely read the advanced search tips.

## Two Joel Lanes: Same Name, Same Time, Same Places, Same Family

Disambiguating same named persons in one's family history is always tricky. Add extra challenge points if those persons were close relations with nearly identical time lines in nearly identical locations. You really have only two choices. Run away very quickly or dive down that deep rabbit hole.

Success in these complex same-name cases comes from gathering as many data points as possible for each person. These data points provide a richer context of each person's life and FAN club (Friends, Associates, and Neighbors). Contrasting the actions and events of two persons against each other helps make their differences apparent. Careful analysis leads to a solid conclusion about their uniqueness in time and place.

Belle Long, an experienced Wake County researcher and former Director of the Joel Lane Museum House, has faced just such a dilemma and has emerged successfully. Read her results which she has generously shared with us [here](#).

Belle describes the task set before her below:

"I have been working with two ladies who are seeking proofs for ancestors for the DAR. Both are descendants of Colonel Joel Lane's descendants who went to TN in the early 19th c. So once I started helping them, I have gone WAY down several rabbit holes to make their connections and others.

When I worked at the Joel Lane Museum House, I could never keep straight the two men named for Col. Joel Lane: one his son, Joel Hinton Lane, and the other his nephew, Joel Lane. Both went to TN.

After extensive research, I have figured it out and would like to submit the attached for possible sharing with your members."

Belle's conundrum was two men named Joel Lane. Not the one known by most Wake County old-timers as the "Founder of the City of Raleigh," Col. Joel

Lane, but two of his close relations instead. One was his son, Joel Hinton Lane. The other was his nephew, referred to as Joel Lane, Jr., the son of Col. Lane's brother James. Refer to the descendant tree below to get an idea of how all the important players interconnect. (The earliest ancestor line is grayed out as it only adds a little context here but does not help to tell the story of the two Joel Lanes.)

Belle introduces "the Joels" in this summary:

1) "Joel Lane, Jr (1772-1848), son of James Lane (brother of Col Joel Lane) and Lydia Speight, was born 10 Feb 1772 in Wake Co NC and died on 27 Mar 1848, probably in Tennessee. This Joel married Eve or Evey Darnal or Darnold in Wake in 1794. He is referred to as "Jr" in the marriage record to Eve Darnel. (Jr was used in this period to distinguish a younger man from an elder one of the same name who was living at the same time. Col Joel Lane who died in 1795 would have been the elder at the time of Jr's marriage.) Joel Lane Jr moved to TN by 1809, was living in Bedford Co in 1812, and bought land in Giles Co in Dec 1813. He appears to have lived the rest of his life in Giles Co."

2) "Joel Hinton Lane (JLH) (1790-1832), son of Col. Joel Lane and Mary Hinton, was

-- Cont'd next page

### Lane - McKinney line of Halifax NC (1700s - 1770s)

James Lane b. 1730  
m. Lydia Speight

Col. Joel Lane b.1739  
m1 - Martha Hinton  
m2 - Mary Hinton\*

Joel Lane, Jr. 1772 - 1848  
m. Eve Darnal

Joel H Lane 1790 - 1832  
m. Mary A G Freeman

## Two Joel Lanes : Same Name, Same Time, Same Places, Same Family

born in Wake County on 11 Oct 1790, died on 22 June 1832, and is buried in Giles Co TN. JHL married Mary A G Freeman on 4 Jan 1815 in Warren Co NC. He is reported to have left Wake Co NC for Tennessee in 1824 after many financial and legal difficulties.”

There was a third Joel contemporary to these two, who is only mentioned briefly at the outset of her notes. “This other Joel Lane (1816-1854), is probably the son of Col Joel Lane’s son, John Lane (1775-1864).” She was able to distinguish him from the first two based on age, proximity to John Lane and his other sons, and the specificity of the land records this family left behind in Bedford and Marshall Counties in Tennessee.

Belle’s research file is a great road map to follow if you are faced with a similar confusion between individuals. You will benefit from following her lead as she goes beyond census records and vital statistic records to establish the identities of the two Joels.

Belle made extensive use of tax records, wills, deeds, bills of sale, land records, bible records, news clippings, and court records — including a lengthy

divorce proceeding against one of the Joels. She consulted the records for Wake County and the respective home counties in Tennessee for each man.

It is also useful to notice her use of a timeline and chronological order as she recorded her findings for each man. She frequently paused to analyze the data, ruling in or out one man as she studied the individual records.

You will find Belle’s complete research file available to read and review at [this link](#). WCGS is grateful that she wished to share with us. This glimpse at her work process is a skill building exercise that will strengthen any researcher, local or otherwise. It is certainly a gold mine for any one with Wake County Lanes in their family tree.

*Thank you, Belle Long, for going down the rabbit hole and leaving a nice guide for the rest of us to follow. - CD*

## Seek and Ye Shall Find: A lesson in Creative Googling

Don't ever discount the value of absurdly long search strings. I needed information on a specific person who was not easy to research.

I have been researching some under-documented local residents. I am finding them exceedingly difficult to find. I have the vitals, but I really need the “in-between the dashes” information to round out their life stories.

After several unsuccessful attempts to find specific sources where I expected information, I Googled the following long string :

**"black baptist pastor Ed Cole started Shiloh church in 1867 Morrisville NC"**

I used that exact spelling and wording. It worked! The second result on the google page led me this wonderful book available at Internet Archive. [Who's Who Among North Carolina Negro Baptists: With a Brief History of Negro Baptist Organizations](#)

This book gave me more than enough detail to round out my research on Rev. Cole and others. I highly recommend this book if your research leads you to early Black Baptists Churches in NC.

*Go ahead and try your wildest search string. You just might get lucky! - CD*

# Father's Record Bonanza Revealed by FOIA and BIRLS

By Ed Webb,  
WCGS Member and Director

In December 2024, Dick Eastman published an [article in his newsletter](#) about the Reclaim the Records [birls.org](#) website. The Beneficiary Identification Records Locator Subsystem (BIRLS) was also reviewed in the [WGW Newsletter Spring 2025 \(V8#3\)](#) on page 5.

So in late Dec 2024, I went to the website, searched for my father, found his basic info there. Following the prompts, I filled in the FOIA request (Freedom of Information Act) for a copy of his Veterans records, and submitted it electronically. This is a free service.

As noted at [birls.org](#), it took a while. The Veterans'

to obtain benefits for the widow of a veteran.

The file also included some of his military service records. I already have a complete OMPF (Official Military Personal File) from NARA, as he served in the U.S. Marine Corps.

**User Tip:** If your veteran was in the U.S. Army prior to 1973, this VA information could be very helpful in documenting U.S. Army service that was lost in the fire in St. Louis. Note that only U.S. Army and Army Air Corps records were burned (and some were recovered). Other service branches, Marines, Navy, Coast Guard were not lost in the fire and are available from NARA St. Louis.

Centralized Support Division  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
Fax: (844) 531-7818

### FOIA REQUEST

This is a request made under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) for copies of records relating to a deceased veteran. Please provide a full copy of this veteran's Claims File (if file).

| DECEASED VETERAN INFORMATION                                                      |                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Given Name                                                                        |                                                                 |
| Middle Name                                                                       |                                                                 |
| Surname                                                                           |                                                                 |
| Suffix                                                                            |                                                                 |
| Alternative Names (if any)                                                        |                                                                 |
| Date of Birth                                                                     |                                                                 |
| Date of Death                                                                     |                                                                 |
| Veteran's Service Number (if known)                                               |                                                                 |
| Social Security Number (if known)                                                 |                                                                 |
| Possible Branch(es) and Date(s) of Service (data may be incomplete or inaccurate) | ENTERED/ENLISTED MARINE CORPS on DUTY on / RELEASED FROM ACTIVE |
| Additional Information                                                            | Purple Heart                                                    |

This FOIA request is not being made for commercial purposes. My contact information is:

Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

### REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FROM

NAVY ☐ MARINE ☒ COAST GUARD ☐

1. ORIGINATING UNIT: Administrative

2. LAST NAME—FIRST NAME—MIDDLE INITIAL (UNDER WHICH SERVED):

3. LOCATION OF REQUESTING OFFICE: 310 W. 4th St., Winston-Salem, N. C.

4. TYPE OF CLAIM: SUPP. DISABILITY

5. DATE: 10-14-47

6. DATE OF BIRTH:

7. DATE OF DEATH:

8. PLACE OF BIRTH:

9. CONVERTED INSURANCE NO.:

10. NAT'L SERV. LIFE INSURANCE NO.:

11. DATE(S) OF ENROLLMENT(S) OR ENLISTMENT(S):

12. DATE(S) AND PLACE(S) OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE:

13. DATE(S) AND STATION(S) OF ACTUAL DISCHARGE FROM SERVICE:

14. IF NOT DISCHARGED, INDICATE DATE(S) AND STATION(S) FROM WHICH RELEASED FROM ACTIVE DUTY:

15. CHARACTER OF DISCHARGE: HONORABLE

16. LAST RANK OR RATING: Corp., USMC

ALLEGED DISEASE OR INJURY, DATE OF INCURANCE, DATE(S) AND STATION(S) OF TREATMENT:

Left thigh condition (bullet wound), 3-13-45.

TREATED:

Naval Hosp., Guam, 3-15-45 to 4-26-45; Naval Hosp., Honolulu, T.H., 4-26-45 to 5-2-45; Marine Conv. Op., Oahu, T. H., 5-45 to 9-28-45.

ENTIRE RECORD SERIES. PLEASE EXPEDITE.

BY: H. V. VANCE, Chief, Adm. Div.

FROM (CHECK WHICH): ☐ CHIEF, BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL ☐ COMMANDANT, U. S. MARINE CORPS ☐ COMMANDANT, U. S. COAST GUARD.

Administration (VA) sent a USPS letter several weeks later (28 Feb 2025) to acknowledge my submission, and to inform me that it might be several months before anything showed up. Sure enough, in early May, I received a certified mail envelope from the Veterans Administration. Inside was a DVD containing digital copies of all of my father's interactions with the VA.

I received more than 400 pages of forms and letters back and forth requesting further compensation from the VA for my father's WWII wounds and after effects. The file also included all the paperwork submitted on behalf of my mother

In my father's VA file, I found details on his wound and, more importantly to me, his treatment and recovery locations (Guam, Oahu) and dates that were not included in his OMPF. Wow!

I highly recommend that you search [birls.org](#). Order the VA file if you find the veteran.



Ed is very fortunate indeed. Sadly, as of July 2025, the VA has reinterpreted the process making this info harder to get. Visit this [Reclaim the Records link](#) for the update and change in what the VA is allowing. — CD

## Adventures in AI: Quick Start Narratives and Research Guides

*This short video passed through my genealogy feed a while back. My friends and I have had great fun using it. We gained a few really good ideas while trying it out. - CD*

John Beaumont of [beaumont-genealogy.com](https://beaumont-genealogy.com) has spent the last two years creating quite a catalog of YouTube videos relating to all things genealogy, family history, and the use of AI for the same. One of his recent videos has really captured my interest, and I'd like to share it with you now.



John's [Turn Ancestry Profiles into Research Plans: Here's How!](#) presents a fun way to put an ancestor's profile from Ancestry or FamilySearch to work for you. The video shows you how to create a narrative, a quick bio summary or a research plan to fill in gaps in the ancestor's story. At just under ten minutes long, it is a quick watch and easy to implement. You can preview once and then do a start/stop version as you copy an ancestor profile to cut and paste into ChatGPT to start your project. You will want to choose a profile that is reasonably well researched. This will make it easier to judge the product returned to you for its correctness. You will be surprised to find gaps never noticed and new research suggestions given by ChatGPT. Many folks have said that they got ideas from this exercise that they would not have thought of on their own.

This whole exercise can be done for free. You can use

your ancestor profile from FamilySearch or Ancestry, you can use the profile there. (Access your Ancestry profile for free using the library.) I completed my first trial with an Ancestry profile and my free account at ChatGPT.com.

I used John's directions to create a biography and a research plan for my paternal brick wall ancestor. John Cleaver circa 1800 spent most of his life in Rowan County, NC. I used the prompt shown below at ChatGPT (free version) to create an Ancestry profile in [PDF form](#). Note that I added restrictions on ChatGPT's behavior as recommended in the video. I submitted the PDF File for John Cleaver with this prompt as directed in the video.

### **My Prompt for a Narrative:**

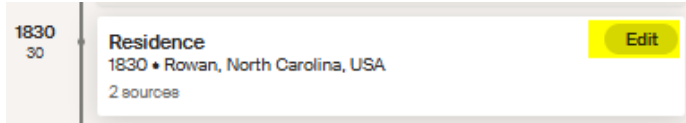
I am writing a narrative for the attached relative. Please create a draft story from the attached file and add historical facts where appropriate, but do not add or embellish any genealogical details. You can indicate missing information. The tone should be casual and suitable for a genealogy study group.

I received John Cleaver's [biography](#) fairly quickly. ChatGPT returned a nicely written biography of about 550 words. The biography included historical context and pointed out a few discrepancies in his timeline.

A word of warning before you proceed, if you want a discussion of your ancestors occupation as traceable through census documents, you must edit the census facts individually as Ancestry does not include this information by default. This is not hard to do. Just check each census that included occupation data and go in and edit each fact. They appear as "Residence" facts. If you hover your cursor in the upper right hand corner of the "Residence" fact, an edit button will appear and you have access to a description field

## AI: Quick Start Narratives and Research Guides— cont’d

where you can paste the occupation or other details. When you hover and the edit is active, the fact will look like this.



I will go back at a later time and edit this occupation information as it is such an important clue paired with location and “FAN club” members. You can read the first pass at John Cleaver’s bio [here](#). I would go back and edit the prose—some of the phrasing just does not feel right.

After creating the file, ChatGPT offered to produce a concise version to use for a presentation or family history booklet. It produced the four-paragraph summary version shown here. I would like to see the changes in the summary with the occupation data added.

### ChatGPT’s Summary:

#### John Cleaver (c. 1800 – after 1870)

John Cleaver was born around 1800 in Virginia. Though little is known about his early life or parentage, by 1826 he had settled in Rowan County, North Carolina, where he married Susannah Cope.

Together, John and Susannah raised a large family, including children born between 1828 and 1852. The couple eventually made their home in Iredell County, where John appears in census records through 1870.

He lived through some of the most dramatic shifts in American history—spanning the antebellum period, the Civil War, and the start of Reconstruction. Though his occupation isn’t listed, he likely worked in agriculture, as was common in rural North Carolina at the time.

John Cleaver’s life may not be fully documented, but his steady presence in historical records and the lives of his descendants reflects the endurance of everyday families through a century of profound change.

Next, I asked ChatGPT to create a research plan for filling in the missing information and discrepancies in his biography. I used the following prompt.

### My Research Plan Prompt:

Please review the original pdf file for John Cleaver and create a research plan and additional reading that may be helpful.

ChatGPT provided a three-page, seven-point research plan that reinforced searching for all the vitals—birth, marriage, and death—as well investigating the children’s records for indirect clues, and review of local history resources. A list of four books were included, and links to five online research sites. Beyond that, it included a list of repositories to visit or contact. I can’t wait until I have time to follow this plan.

The profile, biography, summary, and research plan created for John Cleaver are viewable in a combined PDF at the link below. Feel free to pick it apart and check for hallucinations and validity of the sources. I will be doing just that when I get some free time. (See *how I crowdsourced that chore!*) [Link](#).

Watch John Beaumont’s video and play with this technique. If you don’t have Ancestry to work with, use your ancestor’s profile at FamilySearch. There may be a way to work with WikiTree, too. I have not explored that option. Let me know what you find out.

*Folks, this is a quick experiment. It’s dead easy, free and fun. Pick an ancestor and start playing around with this process. You will be sharing with family in no time. — CD*

# NUMIDENT: Use this dataset for 20th Century Ancestors

by Cynthia Gage

WCGS member

If you have ever paid for a copy of an ancestor's Social Security application form (SS-5), then you will appreciate this find! While looking through the NARA (National Archives) website for searchable databases, I discovered an obscure-sounding dataset which turned out to be something valuable! The dataset is called "Numerical Identification Files (NUMIDENT)" and contains Social Security (SS) files, specifically SS number application forms (SS-5), SS Death files, and SS Claims files.

To access the dataset from the NARA website, select "Research Our Records," then under "Other Online Research Tools" select "Access to Archival Databases". The NUMIDENT file is on the "Civilians" page under the Genealogy/Personal History category. The direct link to the "Civilians" page is [here](#). Ten data series are under the "Civilian" category including NUMIDENT as shown below. (Note that this record set is a transcription of the forms and not the originals.)

**Numerical Identification Files (NUMIDENT), created, 1936 - 2007, documenting the period 1936 - 2007 - Record Group 47**

 Application (SS-5) Files, 1936 - 2007  
(Last Names A through B)

 Application (SS-5) Files, 1936 - 2007  
(Last Names C through D)

 Application (SS-5) Files, 1936 - 2007  
(Last Names E through G)

[+] [Show More](#)

This set of over 146 million records covering 1936-2007 has been broken into smaller searchable series by last initial and by type of file, i.e. SS-5, death, and claims. It is important to note that due to privacy issues this dataset does not have all Social Security Number application forms. The dataset is reported to include every SS number assigned to individuals with a verified death or who would have been 110 years old by December 31, 2007—the cutoff for presumed

death. These forms contain valuable genealogical information:

- Birth date and location
- Parents' names
- Death date and location (sometimes shown as nine-digit zip code)
- Maiden names for women
- Claim files indicate either life claim (filed by individual) or death claim (filed by survivors)

As I am still living, my SS-5 form is not in the set. But I found my mother listed in two sets: first in the "M"s by her maiden name given on her original application, then by her married name ("I"s) on a duplicate/replacement card. This form also showed her "other" name as listed on the original form, which would lead me to the form with parent's names if not listed on the duplicate form.

In searching through the death files, I was unable to find some names that I expected to find. My grandmother who died in 1983 was not shown even though I have a SS number from her death certificate. My assumption is that since she had an unconventional burial (her ashes were scattered on a lake), there was no funeral home to report her death – a task they usually perform. Since my grandmother was not receiving SS payments, my grandfather may not have reported her death to the agency. And since she was not 110 by the end of 2007, her SS-5 was also not shown.

I have also noted other areas where the files are incomplete. For example, I found a name in the Claims files but was unable to find the same person (per their SS number) in the death or SS-5 records. Nonetheless, this is a very large dataset worth searching for individuals who died after the advent of Social Security. When you do search, be sure to check all three file types! [Further reading](#).

## Show Your Wakecogen Colors! Grab a Name Tag Now

New members! You may have seen several of us “older” members wearing our WCGS name tags at genealogical events. We ordered them pre-COVID when we only had in-person meetings.

We are once again taking orders for name tags! Any member may order a WCGS name tag. We will take orders until September 15.

The name tag has your name and “Wake County Genealogical Society”. Lettering is white on a dark blue background. Name tags are **\$15**. Specify either a magnet back or a pin back. Clearly write your name for the tag.

You can pick them up at any in-person WCGS event in October through December. Or you can ask us to mail your name tag for an **additional \$6 for postage and padded envelope**. Payment is required before we place the order on **September 15th**.

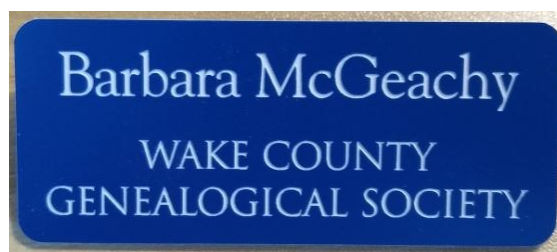
### Payment by Check or Paypal:

Mail a check made out to Wake County Genealogical Society and send it to:

Barbara McGeachy  
3602 Burwell Rollins Circle  
Raleigh, NC 27612

Or on PayPal, send the money to **Wake County Genealogical Society Inc.**

Any questions? Email [President@WakeCoGen.org](mailto:President@WakeCoGen.org)



**Order by Sept. 15. Pay by Check or Paypal**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                         |                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <div><div>WAKE COUNTY<br/>GENEALOGICAL<br/>SOCIETY</div><div>Shaw University</div></div> |                                                                         |                                                   |
| <b>Resources</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Events</b>                                                           | <b>Publications</b>                               |
| <a href="#">Wake Cemetery Survey</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <a href="#">WCGS events</a>                                             | <a href="#">Wake Gen Watch - Newsletter</a>       |
| <a href="#">Wake Research Resources</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Member Content</b>                                                   | <a href="#">Wakecogen Blog</a>                    |
| <a href="#">Wake History Resources</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <a href="#">Log in for member content</a>                               | <a href="#">WCGS Publications for Purchase at</a> |
| <a href="#">Other Links and Resources</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | including SIG info, Surname List,<br>recorded presentations and<br>more | <a href="#">Lulu.com</a>                          |

# Fall 2025 Events Calendar

**WCGS Meetups:** Location varies. It's always more fun to meet in person. Members will receive an email for details of future in-person Meetups. Come bond with your fellow local Genies! *\*\*Holiday meet-up plans will be announced soon. Watch the blog and webpage for updates.*

**Sep 8 - Nov 17**

**Beginning Genealogy Classes.** Teacher: Barbara McGeachy. Six classes, Mondays 10:30 to Noon at Laurel Hills Community Center. Attend one or all. [Details](#)

**Sep 23**

**WCGS Meeting: Revolutionary War: Moore's Creek Battleground and the Scots-Irish in NC.** Speaker: John Miles. 6:30pm. Online Virtual Meeting. [Details](#)

**Oct 28**

**WCGS Meeting: Reconstruct your Ancestor's World with Google .** Speaker: Lisa Louise Cooke. 6:30pm. Online Virtual Meeting. [Details](#)

**Dec 2**

**WCGS Meeting: Become a Power User of DigitalNC.org.** Speaker: Taneya Koonce. 6:30pm. Online Virtual Meeting. [Details](#)

**Jan 27, 2026**

**WCGS Meeting: Getting Started in Genealogical Research.** Speaker: Renate Sanders. 6:30pm. Online Virtual Meeting. [Details](#)

**Fee based online learning:**

**GenWebinars** - Live, in-depth, and interactive genealogy webinars. This is an ongoing series provided by David McCorkle and Diane Richard. [Details and fees](#)

**Take advantage of free content online:**

**Family History Library Webinars** - [Link to upcoming webinars](#)  
**Conference Keeper.org** - Follow the virtual page for a constantly updated list of online events content. [View page](#)

**Genealogy Bargains** -from Thomas MacEntee.  
[Blog](#) | [Newsletter](#)

**Legacy Webinar series** - Free to attend with registration and for viewing on demand for 7 days afterward. [Schedule and Registration](#) \*Members see Wakecogen Member page for first time discount.

**Family History Fanatics** (YouTube channel) - video guides covering basic to intermediate DNA and Genetic Genealogy skills. [Watch videos](#)

**DNA help from Diahna Southard** - a combination of free and fee based content. [Your DNA Guide](#) [YDG Blog](#)

**Visit WCGS Website** - [Homepage](#) | [WCGS Events](#) | [Join WCGS](#) | [Journal](#) | [Wake Cemetery Survey Images](#) | [Society Surnames](#) | [Digital Resources](#) | [History Resources](#) | [More Links and Resources](#) | [Research Guides](#) | [Newsletter](#) | [Blog](#) | [Contact](#)

## Passionate about Genealogy and Family History?

Since 1982, WCGS has preserved local stories and empowered researchers with resources and educational opportunities like our monthly virtual meetings, newsletter, blog and special projects. [Join, renew, donate](#) or [volunteer](#) to keep uncovering the past together. Thank you for reading, meeting and contributing to our efforts. We look forward to seeing you at future events.



## Societies and Sources in the surrounding area

North Carolina Genealogical Society: [Details](#)

Johnston County Heritage Center: [Details](#)

Durham-Orange Genealogical Society: [Details](#)

Granville County Genealogical Society: [Details](#)

Tar River Connections Genealogical Society: [Details](#)

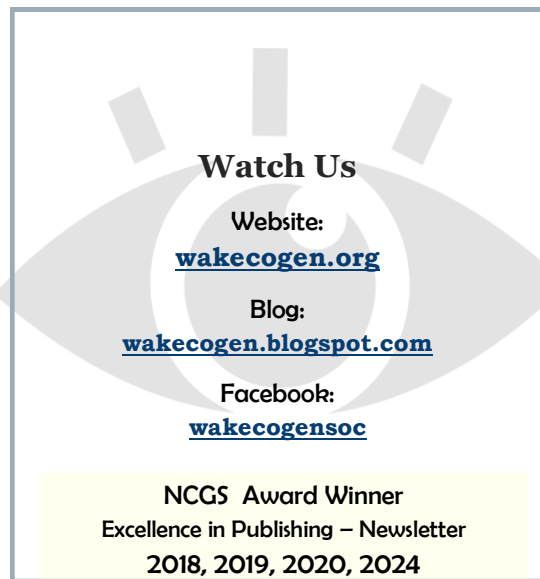
Heritage Society of Franklin County: [Details](#)

Triangle Jewish Genealogical Society: [Details](#)

Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society: Triangle Region Chapter - [Facebook](#), [Website](#)



Check our [webpage](#), detail links, and/or [Facebook page](#) for late additions, schedule changes and updates to the WCGS calendar between issues. This Calendar is accurate as of August 22, 2025.



## One Last Thing

Thank you for reading this far! I hope you have found a bit of insight or a useful tool for your time invested.

Get lots of rest! If you are going to hang with us this season, you will need it. We look forward to seeing you at any or all of the great in-person and virtual events we have planned through the end of the year.

If you have an idea for an event or would like to volunteer with WCGS please contact us. We would love to hear from you and have you on our team.

Your humble editor -

[Cyndi Deal](#)

## Contact Us

### WCGS Board of Directors

President: [Barbara McGeachy](#)

Corresponding Secretary: [Linda Hames](#)

Director: Jessica Conklin

Director: Ed Webb

Diversity & Inclusion Officer: [Saundra R. Cropps](#)

Membership: [Carol Kimball Stahl](#)

Past President: Carla Stancil

Program Chair: [Carla Stancil](#)

Recording Secretary: Harriet Jenkins

Treasurer: [Stephanie Ernst](#)

Vice President Communications: [Cyndi Deal](#)

Webmaster: [Lynne Deese](#)

Newsletter, Blog & Social Media Editor: [Cyndi Deal](#)

Volunteer Co-Ordinator & Queries: [Saundra R. Cropps](#)

Please send all other emails to  
[info@wakecogen.org](mailto:info@wakecogen.org)

Postal mail:  
Wake County Genealogy Society  
P. O. Box 17713  
Raleigh, NC 27619-7713

### Deadline for submissions for the Winter 2026 issue is Dec. 1, 2025.

Ideas? Questions? Feedback of any kind? We love to hear from you. [Drop us a line!](#)

Submissions: [newsletter@wakecogen.org](mailto:newsletter@wakecogen.org)



**Reminder to Members:** Renew by **September 30** to avoid missing updates and member services. Visit our member portal at our [website](#). [Questions](#) ?

## GenQuotes

