

A Lifestyle Magazine for the Socially Conscious

TRUMPET

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NEWSMAGAZINE™

Donahue Peebles

A Mighty Mogul

Ron Brown

Who's Watching

Tracing the Family Tree

*Family Historian & Genealogist
Tony Burroughs*

Thoughts of a Father

THE BAKEWELLS

Upholding Family Legacy

Double Issue...Double Cover...AND IT'S ALL ABOUT FAMILY & FREEDOM

Tracing the FAMILY TREE

by Tony Burroughs

"Grandpa Brooks died, and I can't remember all the stories he used to tell me about our ancestors. I wish I had written them down." This story is repeated over and over everyday. Alex Haley, author of *Roots*, had a saying, "When an older person dies, it's like a library burns." We have lost so much of our history because we did not understand the importance or the urgency to record our relatives' stories. Don't take your relatives and family history for granted.

Importance of genealogy. Family history is important for everyone, but it is especially important for African Americans. Because of racism, discrimination and slavery, our history has been denied, distorted and destroyed. The study of Black history recreates our past on a macro level. Black genealogy recreates our history on a micro level.

If it had not been for the struggles, sacrifices, successes and failures of our ancestors, we would not be here today. We need to trace our family history, for we stand on our ancestors' shoulders. Our ancestors can no longer speak for themselves, so we must speak for them by researching our family history and writing about our ancestors in biographies, books, articles, and presentations at the family reunion.

Beginning. Contrary to popular belief, genealogy does not begin on the Internet.

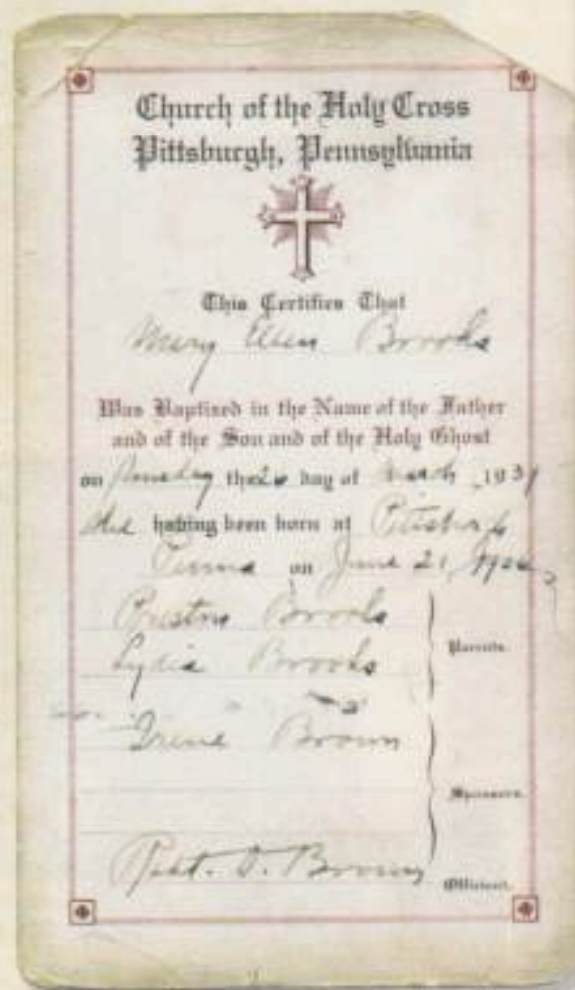
Many people think they can log onto the Internet, type in their ancestors' names, and trace their family tree before they log off. Then they get frustrated when they can't find anything.

Genealogy is like putting together a puzzle or solving a mystery. Genealogy is done by gathering bits and pieces of evidence and assembling a family history. For many, genealogy is a life long hobby; it is so fascinating that it captivates people. It's the most interesting thing I have ever done.

Genealogy starts at home. Start by writing your autobiography, your life story. You are the first link in your family tree. Record what you remember about your life, your relatives and your ancestors while it is still fresh. Record what your parents told you about your ancestors before you forget.

Oral History. Next, identify all living relatives and interview them, your father, mother, aunt, uncle, or grandmother. Get their life story and don't just interview the older people.

My cousin Lydia and I were swapping family stories one day when she mentioned something about our grandfather. I almost forgot Lydia lived in Pittsburgh with my grandparents until she was nine-years-old. She had stories about my grandparents and other relatives I needed to record.



I spent six hours video recording Lydia's life story in December 2005. She had cancer, but was in good spirits that sunny day. Lydia died fifteen months later. Collecting oral history is the most important thing you can do.

Family Records. Look into your basement, attic, trunk, scrapbook and photo albums for anything and everything that has the name of an ancestor on it.

OBITUARY—Cont'd.

Secretary of the Cook County Association in 1929, 26, and 27. President of the Cook County Bar Association in 1928 and 1929. Organizer and President of the Chicago Democratic Lawyers - 1932. Attorney and Director of Mid South Side Property Owners League and Mid South Side Business League. Member of the Executive Committee of the Boy Scouts. Chairman and Director of the Color Big Brothers 1937 - 1943.

Founder of the Cook County Bar Association Law Library in 1928. Candidate for Judge in Primary in 1936. Member of PHI BETA SIGMA FRATERNITY. Candidate for Judge in Primary in 1936.

He remained in his law practice until his health began to fail in the early 60's.

ASA MORRIS BURROUGHS leaves to mourn his passing:

A Devoted Wife, Alma.

Three Sons: Morris, Leonard and Elmer Burroughs of Chicago, Illinois.

One Daughter, Miss Irene J. Spencer of Santa Clara, California.

Seven Grandchildren and Five Great-grandchildren; and MANY friends.

(INTERMENT - OAKRIDGE CEMETARY
Tuesday, December 28, 1971)

OBSEQUIES

for
ASA MORRIS BURROUGHS

January 26, 1893

December 22, 1971



MONDAY, December 27, 1971
Wake - 7:00 to 8:00 p. m.
Funeral - 8:00 to 9:00 p. m.

BARKER FUNERAL HOME
8801 So. Stony Island Ave.
Chicago, Illinois
C. FRANCIS STRATFORD JR., in Charge

First look for the family Bible. In the old days, when babies were born, the family brought out the Bible and recorded the name of the baby and the birth date. Bibles also have pages for deaths and marriages.

Baptismal records are also important. My mom did not have a birth certificate, but her baptism certificate listed her birth date, baptism date and her parents' names.

Funeral programs and obituaries.

Many people save programs passed out at funerals, which have obituaries inside. They also save obituaries clipped from newspapers. Obituaries can be a gold mine of family information.

My grandfather died in 1971, before I started tracing my family history in 1975. When my grandmother gave me a copy of Grandpa's funeral program I was stunned at his legal accomplishments. He was secretary and president of the Cook County Bar Association and started their law library in the 1920s.

Newspaper obituaries often list the deceased's birth date, death date, residence, parents' names, siblings and their residences, children, surviving relatives, minister, the name of the church attended, and the name of the cemetery where buried. Cemeteries also have good records.

Birth and Death Certificates. After the dates and locations of birth and death are determined, order birth and death certificates. They often list parents' names, which takes you back another generation in your family tree. Death certificates sometimes list social security numbers and military service, additional sources for records.

These records are not very expensive—between \$5 and \$20. Consult Where to Write For Vital Records, which lists where to obtain these records, how much they cost, and what years records are available. It is also available on the Internet: www.cdc.gov/nchs/howto/w2w/w2welcom.htm

Fathers. Many of our fathers and grandfathers served in the military, which has great records. Search the trunk or scrapbook for a military discharge certificate. It will not list parents' names, but will list address, date of birth, education, occupation, military service number, when enlisted and discharged, where served and medals earned.

I located my dad's discharge certificate in the basement. I was very fortunate because the military

no longer had a record of him. World War I and II service records are stored in the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis. A fire in 1973 destroyed 80% of the records. I had more information than the military had. So treat those discharge certificates as rare, valuable documents, and check records in St. Louis to see if your ancestors' records are in the 20% that survived. <www.archives.gov/st-louis/>

Most soldiers received veteran's benefits after their service. Contact your local VA office to request to view their records.

Internet. After the above records are searched, the Internet can be a fruitful source. Instead of entering names in Google or genealogy databases, it is better to search specific databases.

The **Social Security Master Death Index** is one of the best beginning sources. It contains millions of people who died, had Social Security and someone received their benefits. Several free sites have the database.

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THE DEATH RECORD

Simmons

Mrs. Ella Bateh Simmons, one of the best known colored residents here, died at her home on ... the late Stephen and Geo-Bateh. She was a faithful member of the Allen Chapel church.

Mrs. Simmons is survived by: One daughter, Mrs. ... her daughter, Lydia Brooks, ... of Washington and ... James W. Bateh of the Stephen Bateh of Monroe. Funeral services were held here on Friday afternoon of her pastor, Rev. F. W. ... was in Elizabeth's ...

ENLISTED RECORD AND REPORT OF SEPARATION
BOOK 555 PAGE 388 HONORABLE DISCHARGE

NAME: SIMMONS, JAMES W. NO. 10 728 023

DATE OF ENTRY: 1 APR 45

DATE OF SEPARATION: 1 APR 45

REGIMENT: 8888 CEN. Postal Directory: SIMMONS, JAMES W.

ADDRESS: 10700 13th St. N.W. Washington, D.C. 20032

STATUS: 1. Active 2. Inactive 3. Discharged 4. Retired 5. Other

REASON FOR SEPARATION: 1. Honorable Discharge 2. Other

REMARKS: ...

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Family, continued from page 25

If you locate a name in the record, write the Social Security Administration for a copy of the original application, which sometimes lists parents' names. The fee is \$27. [Office of Central Records Operations, Social Security Administration, Baltimore, MD 21201.] Even if you don't find an ancestor in the database, if they died, and you know their Social Security number, apply for their application.

The most popular genealogical records are Census records. They were created every ten years and list people in family groups and contain tons of genealogical information.

Census records are on the Internet for a fee. However, you can search these for free at many libraries. If you live in Washington, or one of the thirteen major cities that have regional archives, you can search the databases and the original microfilm for free. <www.archives.gov/>

Tracing your family tree is both fun and rewarding. Anybody can do it. It doesn't cost much to record your story, interview your relatives, look in your basements and order a few vital records. Find more tips and sources in my book, *Black Roots: A Beginners Guide to Tracing the Family Tree.* ●

