



MAKING THE MOST OF EVERY MOMENT: DOING GENEALOGY BETTER

An Alabama-Mississippi Bicentennial Genealogy Conference

Saturday, August 26, 2017

Bell Conference Center

University of West Alabama

Livingston, Alabama

Host Partners:

Alabama Bicentennial Commission

Alabama Heritage Magazine

Marengo County History and Archives Museum

University of West Alabama Center for the Study of the Black Belt



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Time	Main Track (Bell Conference Room)		Optional Track (Young Hall)	
	Subject	Teacher	Subject	Teacher
9:00 – 10:00	Registration, Coffee & Exhibits in Bell Conference Room			
10:00 – 10:55	<i>Finding Your Story at the Alabama Archives</i>	Nancy Dupree	<i>How to Begin Your Family History Journey</i>	Susan Reynolds
10:55 – 11:05	Break			
11:05 – 12:00	<i>Ancestor Hunting in Mississippi</i>	Joyce Dixon-Lawson	<i>Barking Up the Wrong Tree</i>	Mary Jones-Fitts
12:00 – 12:15	Pick Up Lunches for Lunch Program in Bell Conference Room			
12:15 – 12:45	LUNCH PROGRAM <i>Photosleuthery: A Quick Look at Dating Old Photographs</i> Presented by Frances Osborn Robb in Bell Conference Room			
12:45 – 1:00	Break			
1:00 – 1:50	<i>Understanding DNA and Your Results</i>	Clarise Soper	<i>Organizing Your Research</i>	Laura Gentry
1:50 – 2:00	Break			
2:00 – 2:50	<i>Genealogy Power Tools (for Free)</i>	Donna Cox Baker	<i>Slave Ancestral Research</i>	Mary Jones-Fitts
2:50 – 3:00	Break			
3:00 – 3:50	Things I Wish I'd Known Earlier/Q&A Panel: All Teachers in Bell Conference Room			
3:50 – 4:00	Wrap-up in Bell Conference Room			

The Main Track Programs are designed for intermediate and self-taught genealogy practitioners. The first three programs on the Optional Track are designed for beginners. All other programs are for all levels.



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ALL ATTENDEES register in Bell Conference Room

9:00 – 10:00 Registration, Coffee & Exhibits

BREAKOUT #1: Main Track in Bell Conference Room

10:00 – 10:55 *Finding Your Story at the Alabama Archives*, Nancy Dupree

10:55 – 11:05 Break

11:05 – 12:00 *Ancestor Hunting in Mississippi*, Joyce Dixon-Lawson

12:00 – 12:15 Break

BREAKOUT #1: Optional Track in Young Hall

10:00 – 10:55 *How to Begin Your Family History Journey*, Susan Reynolds

10:55 – 11:05 Break

11:05 – 12:00 *Barking Up the Wrong Tree*, Mary Jones-Fitts

12:00 – 12:15 Break

ALL ATTENDEES meet in the Bell Conference Room

12:15 – 12:45 LUNCH PROGRAM: *Photosleuthery: A Quick Look at Dating Old Photographs*, Frances Osborn Robb

12:45 – 1:00 Break

BREAKOUT #2: Main Track in Bell Conference Room

1:00 – 1:50 *Understanding DNA and Your Results*, Clarise Soper

1:50 – 2:00 Break

2:00 – 2:50 *Genealogy Power Tools (for Free)*, Donna Cox Baker

2:50 – 3:00 Break

BREAKOUT #2: Optional Track in Young Hall

1:00 – 1:50 *Organizing Your Research*, Laura Gentry

1:50 – 2:00 Break

2:00 – 2:50 *Slave Ancestral Research*, Mary Jones-Fitts

2:50 – 3:00 Break

ALL ATTENDEES meet in the Bell Conference Room

3:00 – 3:50 *Things I Wish I'd Known Earlier* | Q&A, Panel of All Teachers

3:50 – 4:00 Wrap-up



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YOUR PRESENTERS

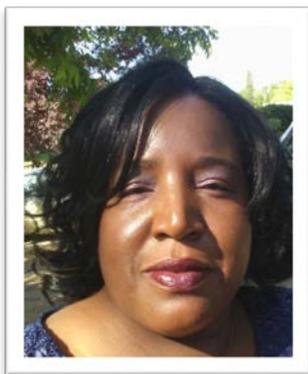


Donna Cox Baker

Genealogy Power Tools (for Free)

Donna Cox Baker will introduce three free but powerful tools that can save time, enhance analysis, minimize errors, and reduce stress for genealogists. The “Pre-1850 Census Analysis Tool” dramatically simplifies comparison and maximizes the value of early U.S. census records. The “Narrowing Dates Calculator” allows researchers to narrow birth and marriage date ranges based on multiple records. Zotero bibliographic and note-taking software blends structure, flexibility, speed, and computing power to facilitate research, note-taking, to-do-lists, citations, and filing.

Donna serves as editor-in-chief of *Alabama Heritage* magazine, acquires history manuscripts for the University of Alabama Press, and co-chairs the Statewide Initiatives Committee of the Alabama Bicentennial Commission. She writes the “Adventures in Genealogy” department for *Alabama Heritage*, owns and hosts “The Golden Egg Genealogist” blog (gegbound.com), and cofounded “The Beyond Kin Project” (beyondkin.org), which encourages the genealogical documentation of historically enslaved populations. Her first book, *Views of the Future State*, is due out this fall. She has a PhD in history.



Joyce Dixon-Lawson

Ancestor Hunting in Mississippi

This presentation is designed to get researchers to think outside of the normal genealogical box. The attendees will use primary sources like children’s school records, deeds, prison records, and mental hospital records to knock down brick walls that usually stand in their paths. We will also talk about using census records effectively.

Joyce Dixon-Lawson has worked for the Mississippi Department of Archives and History for nearly 30 years, serving now as a senior historic resources specialist, archives outreach coordinator, reference librarian, and curator. Her work is predominantly related to genealogy. Joyce has traveled throughout the South, hosting genealogical seminars or workshops. She teaches two MDAH-sponsored genealogy workshops annually, a spring workshop for beginners and a fall workshop for the more advanced researchers. In addition to general genealogy, she also teaches African American and Native American research statewide. She has an M.A. in history.



Nancy Dupree

Finding Your Story at the Alabama Archives

Nancy Dupree's program will review numerous genealogical records available at the Alabama Department of Archives and History. She will provide instruction on how to use the ADAH online tools and how to access other treasures available only at the Archives. This will enable researchers to craft an effective research plan to better utilize their time when visiting the Archives and to discover the many resources available in the ADAH Digital Collections.

Nancy Dupree is the coordinator of the Alabama Department of Archives and History Research Room. She has worked at ADAH as a research archivist for the past 20 years and specializes in genealogy. She has a degree in history and an M.A. in education. In the ADAH Research Room, Nancy provides reference assistance to historical, academic, and genealogical researchers worldwide. She acts as a liaison for the numerous volunteers who assist the staff and patrons in the Research Room. She also teaches others to do genealogical research and about the many research treasures at the Alabama Archives by conducting workshops and giving presentations on behalf of the Archives.



Laura M. Gentry

Piles of Paper and Digital Dilemmas: Organizing Your Genealogy Research

Is your genealogy research out of control with piles of paper and scattered files on your computer? If you answered yes, come learn about different methods of organization and techniques for both paper and digital files and set yourself up for organizational success.

Laura M. Gentry holds a B.A. in history and secondary education from Ouachita Baptist University, an M.A. in history from the University of Alabama, and a Master of Library and Information Science from Wayne State University. Prior to becoming a librarian in the Southern History Department of the Birmingham Public Library, she worked in two archives and special collections libraries, a public library, and an academic library. In her current position, she is responsible for outreach and digital projects and is passionate about digital preservation. Laura has also worked as independent genealogy researcher for Northeastern University's Civil Rights and Restorative Justice Project and the television show *So Who Do You Think You Are?*



Mary Jones-Fitts

Barking up the Wrong Tree

Before you waste time, money, and patience, make sure you are climbing your own family tree and not someone else's. Those enticing "Member Trees" you find online might be clues, but they are not evidence. There is nothing more frustrating than discovering that the supposed ancestors you've been so diligently researching—that you've come to know and love—aren't connected to you by history or blood. Learn how to *avoid wrong turns in your family history*.

Slave Ancestral Research

For African American genealogy researchers, the road back in time tends to come to a screeching halt around 1870, the first time that a comprehensive source of full names appears in the U.S. federal census. Before 1870, they tend to hit the brick wall that slavery created for African American heritage. This course will introduce students to several record sources, particularly court documents, which may potentially take their family trees further back in time. Mary Jones-Fitts will

demonstrate the importance of historical context—both time and place—in solving genealogical problems in the era of slavery.

Mary Jones-Fitts is the president/director of the Marengo County History and Archives Museum Foundation and Alabama's Canebrake Genealogical Society and Library. She is the cofounder of Birmingham African American Genealogy Studies. Mary has written papers, lectured, and taught African American research since 1981.



Susan Reynolds

How to Begin Your Family History Journey: Learning Basic Lessons and Avoiding Future Problems

Are you new to genealogy or nearly new and feel completely overwhelmed with the task ahead? Sometimes it is best to get to the basics. In this session, you will learn how to begin exploring your family history with helpful hints to help you avoid mistakes along your journey. Topics discussed will include: gathering information from family members, how to look for helpful information in family documents, ethics of genealogy, etc.

Susan Reynolds is the associate editor for *Alabama Heritage* magazine. She earned her PhD in literature and, after discovering newly found free time post graduate school, she took up the hobby of researching her family history. She now teaches an OLLI course on genealogy with Donna Cox Baker, the editor of *Alabama Heritage*.



Frances Osborn Robb

Photosleuthery: A Quick Look at Dating Old Photographs

Getting better and quicker at deciphering old documents? Why not add old photographs to your repertoire? For the essentials that make sense of **your** pictures, just listen up and you will be amazed, amused, excited, enlightened, and, hopefully, passionate about these wonderful images from your family's past.

Frances Osborn Robb has been researching historic photographs for more than 25 years. She is eager to see photographs that you are passionate about, so bring one or two to the conference. She holds M.A. degrees from the University of North Carolina and Yale University, and taught at universities for 17 years before becoming a consultant to museums, archives, and libraries. Her new book, *Shot in Alabama: A History of Photography 1839-1941 and a List of Photographers* is full of interesting pictures and stories. She is writing another, in between presentations and workshops about historic and family photographs.



Clarise B. Soper, CG

Understanding DNA and Your Results

DNA is fast becoming a genealogical research standard and certainly fits into the *Genealogical Proof Standard* element of "reasonably exhaustive research." Understanding the inheritance pattern of the three types of DNA (Y-DNA, mtDNA, and Autosomal) is important. However, the main focus of this lecture will be on Autosomal DNA (AtDNA) and interpreting your *23andme*, *AncestryDNA*, and *FamilyTreeDNA* results effectively. DNA is a pertinent source for familial information and can support your genealogical hypotheses or conclusions. Use it!

Clarise Soper, who has been conducting genealogical research for more than 30 years, was certified by the Board for Certification of Genealogists®. She specializes in the states of Mississippi and Alabama and frequently speaks at genealogy societies. She is a member of several national and local organizations, sits on the board for the Association of Professional Genealogists®, and is an Administrator for the Mississippi Genealogy Researchers Facebook group. After living in Mississippi for twenty-five years, she recently moved to Louisiana to accept the genealogist position with the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) in a joint venture with The National WWII Museum. Their mission is to identify and return the remains of missing military personnel to their families.

YOUR CONFERENCE ADMINISTRATORS



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Rebecca Todd Minder

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