

HARPER FAMILY REUNION & RECONNECTION NOTES for: Sunday, November 19, 2023 at 4PM

Green highlights = upcoming activity and/or action needed.

1. Attendees (plus residential state, in alpha order by first name)

Beverly Harper (PA), Bill Lee (NY), Cathy Harper Hogan (GA), Cindy Murray (DE), Cynthia Ford-Davis (PA), Faith Harper (MD), Janice Smith (PA), Jordan Lee (NY), Keisha Dominguez (MD), Linda Edwards (PA), Lisa James (PA), Sekea Murray (DE), Sylvia Ford-George (PA).

2. Harper Family Tree/Database: Lead - Keisha

We continued the previous month's discussion regarding updates needed to the family database. Keisha reported on the new software she's reviewed to house the 566 individually identified family members info, and the most efficient way to update current—and add new—records.

Family members will receive a copy of what's on file for their branch of the family tree for updating from Sylvia.

3. Family Research:

a. **Present:** Current information will be updated as noted above.

b. **Past:** Sammy and FedX Billy's research uncovered our oldest known family member, Alfred and his two sons, John and George. But who are Alfred's parents, wife, and other children.

- i. **Genealogy research**—the tracing of an individual's ancestral history using official and unofficial historical records, such as Census Records, and Vital Records (birth certificates, adoption records, death certificates, marriage and divorce records, etc.)—is how Sammy uncovered 200 years, 9 generations, 461 named Harper Family members, from 1810 – 2010. And we know there are at least one additional generation, and many more family members born between 2010 and 2023 that need to be added.

>>>Our goal is to find family members who are willing to continue the research that Sammy and Billy started. If you'd like to lead or help with this research contact Sylvia.

- ii. **DNA/Genetic research** can identify biological relationships between or among individuals beyond what can be found on paper records. Several family members have had their DNA tested, but no real action has been taken to gather and review their information to see what additional family connections can be made. Reviewing the results could help uncover some of our missing pieces.

>>>Janice Smith (PA) works with several genealogists at Philly's Center in the Park and volunteered to help with the genealogy and DNA research. Additional volunteers are needed.

4. Family Social Media: Lead - Sekea

Sekea Murray will take the lead on our social media. We currently have a private group Facebook account for the family ([OneHarperFam](#)). It's suggested that we also create an Instagram account, as well as a call-in post (to deliver messages). Sekea will provide an update at our next meeting.

5. Updating Family Members Contact Information + Family Connections LLC: Lead – Sylvia

The goal is to get contact information for all family members so that we can communicate with everyone about our family history (past and current), and updates on our reconnecting the family and the reunion.

There's a need to update family members contact information because we've received many returns on recent emails (and we only had about one-fourth of your emails); and because we know that many family members have moved and/or exchanged their landlines for cell phones; and because many of you have grown to adulthood and haven't had the opportunity to provide your contact information so that you can receive family information directly. In other words, we want to be able to be—and stay—in contact with you and your family members. Additionally, we've been asked to participate in a Beta program being tested to make it easier for family reunion planners when planning reunions. And because we know that a reunion is in our future we're accepting the

opportunity to see how much easier this program will make it for us to plan, communicate, and hold our next reunion.

The name of the program is called Family Connections LLC. **Family members will be sent information for review and sign-up in January. We hope you'll participate.** By doing so you'll help our reunion planning as well as help us update family members contact information.

6. Harper Family Reunion: When, Where & What

We had preliminary discussions regarding an upcoming reunion to contemplate when (Spring, Summer, early August); number of days (1 day or 3); location (Philly, Delaware, Maryland, Brookside/Harper Cabin); activities (dress-up event, family cookbook); and funding/fundraisers.

We determined that if 2024, we will have a 1-day reunion because more time will be needed to put together a successful multi-day reunion. (It was also suggested that the multi-day reunions be bi-annual). **Discussion and decision for 2024 to be made at January's meeting.**

7. Family Newsletter: Lead for now - Sylvia

As a way to reacquaint family members with one another, we will re-establish the family newsletter on a quarterly or bi-annual basis, electronically. **>>>Volunteers needed.**

8. Virtual Family Game Nights: (Lead - Lisa)

We discussed once a month virtual family game nights as another way to bring the family back together, including *Family Feud*, *Trivia*, *What's That Sound*, *Memory Games*, *Scavenger Hunt*, *Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader*, *Charades*, *Bingo*, and *Pictionary*. It was suggested that we have monthly game nights at 4pm, starting on the last Sunday of January (28th), February (25th), and March (17th- due to Easter being on the last Sunday of March). **All family member are invited to participate. Information on January's game to be provided early next month.**

9. Other Updates:

A. Harper Cabin – Brookside Nature Center – 1400 Glenallan Avenue – Wheaton, MD 20902

Suzanne Bode, Program & Facility Manager is out indefinitely on medical leave. Taking her place are: Glenn Rice, Acting Manager & Grace Yick (Nature Center Director, Montgomery County Parks) Mr. Rice wasn't that helpful when I spoke with him two days after the meeting. He said he would call Brookside staff to see if they have anything going on. He suggested that Ms. Bode would be back in January and that we may want to call back then. No contact was made with Ms. Yick.

B. Jones-Hall-Sims House – National Museum of African American History & Culture (NMAAHC), Washington DC

Cathy mentioned after the meeting that she was told the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) is conducting testing. We are contacting the museum for more information/details.

10. Other Ideas and Suggestions:

It was suggested we should look into Storyworth, the digital storytelling that captures meaningful moments and memories in a keepsake book.

11. Family Updates

Billy Roy's (PA) graduation ceremony from Southern New Hampshire University was held Sat., Nov 18 in Manchester, New Hampshire; Cindy Murray (DE) celebrated 70 years on November 9th; Clarence Finney (PA) celebrated 80 years in October; Deborah and Clarence Finney (PA) celebrated their 53rd wedding anniversary in October; Janice Smith (PA) is teaching Spanish; Jessica Lee (NY) ran the NYC marathon for the third time on November 6th with her best time so far; Jordan Lee (NY) has her own crocheting business; and Melissa Lee (NY) is a certified Yoga instructor.

12. Next meeting date: Sunday, January 21, 2024 – 4 PM