

This is the soundtrack of the YouTube video I released on June 10th, combined with some further explanations and discourse in reference to Reparational Genealogy. It contains challenges to White American genealogists to use social media platforms to start to publicize the facts about their slaveholding ancestors. For those White American genealogists whose ancestors didn't enslave, there are questions to answer, and the same challenge to be met, concerning the truth of how our post-Civil War and non-slaveholding ancestors still benefited from White Privilege. This is a hot topic, too hot for some. It's not a new topic; I've been discussing aspects of it here since the beginning of 2018, and for some years before that elsewhere.

I'm asking that you set your biases, fears, and preconceived notions and do the work of actual genealogy - examine the historical accuracy of what you've been told, of your assumptions, and of your responsibility for correcting an absurdly biased history that has been forced upon American students since the participating soldiers in the Civil War were still alive. If this is too hot for you, I have to say it - this isn't the place for you. I have held my tongue for too long. It's time to do the hard work of self-examination, and of reexamination. I hope that you'll listen, and that you'll join in the work.

You can join my Discord server and Facebook group by visiting [this page](#) for links.

[Please follow my YouTube channel here](#) - I will be doing more videos face to face, and



perhaps even some live, with chat and everything!

Hello, and welcome to the long-awaited episode 307 of From Paper To People. I'm your hostess with the mostest, Carolynn ni Lochlainn, and it's Independence Day Weekend in the United States. A big thank-you & welcome to three new Patreon supporters - Donovan Howard and Leslie Griffin Roberts are new Blossoms at \$20/month, and David Damiano is a new Roots supporter at \$5/mo. I'm so grateful!!! You all rock.

Today, we're having The Discussion. I'm talking about two Americas, Black and White, and how White American genealogists can use genealogy and family history as tools for self-education about our toxic heritage. We can reveal documents and stories in our own families and share them for the benefit of all researchers, and I'll start with an example from my own family.

If you check out the graphic for this episode, you'll see a pair of my ancestors, George Penn and Sarah Lea. George Penn is identified by the Daughters of the American Revolution as Ancestor #A088508. I identify him as my 6th great-grandfather, Sarah Lea as my 6th great-grandmother, George Penn as a Patriot, and George and Sarah together as enslavers.

Today, the irony of my ancestor's fight for freedom for humans EXCEPT those he chose to enslave is especially piquant. According to a book published in 1930 called "Our Kin: The Genealogies Of Some Of The Early Families Who Made History In The Founding And Development Of Bedford County, Virginia," pp 184-186, George named 20 enslaved persons in his will. He filed it 5 February 1790, and bequeathed named human beings, along with furniture and featherbeds, to his children "and [their] heirs forever."

May Frances "Frankey" Penn Burton (my 5th great-grandmother), received Peter and Jude. Molly Penn Harrison received Simon and Virgin. Nancy Penn Savage received Candis and Davy. Lucy Penn received Moses and Rachel. Sally Penn received Charlotte and Betty. William Penn received Henry and Rose. George Penn received Diner and Sam. Wilson Penn received Benn and Lucy. Thomas Penn received Sampson and Delf. Moses Penn received Adam and Hanner. Oh, and some of the children also got a horse or a saddle.

George didn't die until 1796, and his will took this into account - he provided that all enslaved persons in his possession but not specifically named in that 1790 instrument should be divided evenly among his children "and their heirs forever." I guess enslaving humans was a growth industry for my patriot.

Let's ponder the complexity of that for a moment. He fought in a revolution for the right to elect his government; the right to own and bequeath property; the presumption of innocence at trial; and the ability to move between his properties in Virginia and Kentucky freely. He apparently didn't smell the acrid stench of hypocrisy as he enslaved 20 human beings that he fully intended to see enslaved "forever," to whom none of these rights could be granted. He certainly didn't have the prescience to see that up to this very moment, Black voter suppression would be rampant; that a school-to-prison pipeline combined with racial profiling, a militarized police force and a disparate system of prosecution and sentencing would knee-cap Black America's right to a presumption of innocence; nor that Black American property ownership and wealth would be at one-tenth of the levels that White American families enjoy in 2016.

The Brookings Institute, in [an article published on February 27, 2020](#), stated it this way:

"A close examination of wealth in the U.S. finds evidence of staggering racial disparities. At \$171,000, the net worth of a typical white family is nearly ten times greater than that of a Black family (\$17,150) in 2016. Gaps in wealth between Black and white households reveal the effects of accumulated inequality and discrimination, as well as differences in power and opportunity that can be traced back to this nation's inception. The Black-white wealth gap reflects a society that has not and does not afford equality of opportunity to all its citizens.

"Efforts by Black Americans to build wealth can be traced back throughout American history. But these efforts have been impeded in a host of ways, beginning with 246 years of chattel slavery and followed by Congressional mismanagement of the Freedman's Savings Bank (which left 61,144 depositors with losses of nearly \$3 million in 1874), the violent massacre decimating Tulsa's Greenwood District in 1921 (a population of 10,000 that thrived as the epicenter of African American business and culture, commonly referred to as "Black Wall Street"), and discriminatory policies throughout the 20th century including the Jim Crow Era's "Black Codes" strictly limiting opportunity in many southern states, the GI bill, the New Deal's Fair Labor Standards Act's exemption of domestic agricultural and service occupations, and

redlining. Wealth was taken from these communities before it had the opportunity to grow.”

George and Sarah may not have seen any of that coming when George provided civilian service to the Colonies with supplies and as a juror, nor when he served as a Captain in Colonel Charles Scott’s Virginia Militia. But, then again, they assumed that enslavement would be “forever.” And yet, they were responsible, and we cannot forget that.

Just a little food for thought. But hey, let freedom ring. Happy 4th of July.

Bearing that in mind: this episode is a cross-over. On June 10th, I posted a YouTube video about shifting the paradigm and self-examination for White American genealogists. In it, I challenged viewers to place their families’ historical and current blessings, advantages and comforts in terms of slavery and subsequent historical oppression of Black America. I asked viewers to examine their privilege in the context of history that has always allowed white-skinned immigrants to merge themselves into the “Melting Pot,” or to gain cultural “whiteness,” while understanding that in America, black skin is a permanent branding of sorts, excluding descendants of the enslaved and free people of color full assimilation. You can’t disappear into a society that you don’t match, especially if that society is hostile to your immersion.

This is the first of more videos to come that promise to be in the same vein, but for now, please listen in.

[insert transcript of YouTube video here]

That’s my challenge to you. Research, re-examine, and reconsider.

For future videos, please subscribe to my YouTube channel.

The Twitter thread I mentioned is pinned at the top of my Twitter account, @ancestorsalive. Please read it and all of the responses in the thread. All links mentioned are in the show notes on my website.

If you want to volunteer for the Reparational Genealogy Project, or if you just want a great online place to hang out with genealogists and family historians, join my new Discord server. It has lots of great channels. You'll find a link to it and to the Facebook group on my website, too.

Thanks so much for listening! Keep researching, re-examining and reconsidering, and above all, expect surprises!



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