

YUILLE ROOTS



An African-American Story : Descendants of GEORGE & PHOEBE YUILLE

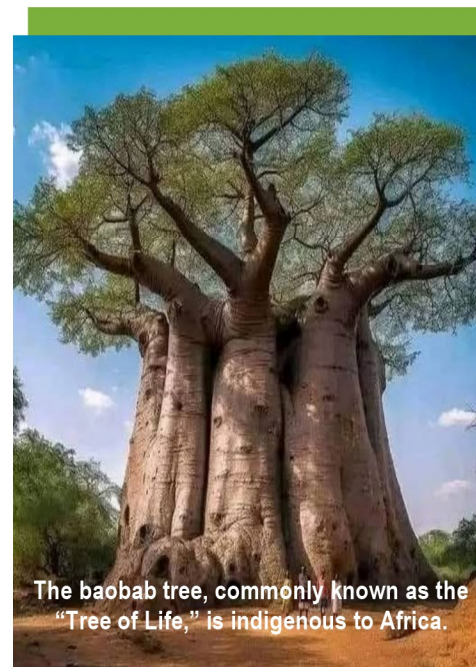
Finding Our Homelands . . .

Genealogy is the study of family histories and lineages and plays a vital role in human identity, shaping how individuals see themselves and their place in the world. For descendants of Africa, particularly those whose ancestors were displaced by the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism, genealogy serves as a powerful tool to reclaim identity, recover lost heritage, and heal historical trauma. It offers a means of reconnecting with ancestral roots, rebuilding cultural identity, and establishing familial ties. We will explore the profound importance of genealogy for African descendants, we will examine how it addresses historical trauma, strengthens cultural identity, fosters community healing, and overcomes the challenges related to lost records and the disruption of oral traditions.

The displacement and the loss of genealogical continuity resulted from the transatlantic slave trade (16th-19th century) and the European colonization of Africa that disrupted centuries of genealogical continuity. Over 12 million Africans were forcibly taken from their homelands, primarily from West and Central Africa, and transported around the globe. Africans brought to the Americas were renamed, sold, and often scattered across many plantations thus resulting in the systematic destruction of African family units, the erasure of names, and the loss of oral traditions that had sustained genealogical knowledge for generations.

Once enslaved Africans arrived in the Americas, they often underwent further separations. Families were torn apart at auctions, and individuals were given new names by their enslavers, often European surnames, erasing any trace of their African identities. This renaming further complicated efforts to preserve genealogical information, creating immense gaps for future generations seeking to trace their ancestry.

Additionally, colonial governments in Africa frequently disregarded local record-keeping systems. Many African societies, particularly those without extensive written histories, relied on oral traditions to maintain genealogical knowledge. The arrival of European colonial rule disrupted these traditions, as local languages and customs were suppressed in favor of European practices. The destruction or neglect of oral and cultural records during the colonial era has contributed to the challenge African descendants face in tracing their roots.



The baobab tree, commonly known as the "Tree of Life," is indigenous to Africa.

Finding Our Homelands . . .cont

Today, DNA testing has revolutionized the ability of African descendants to trace their ancestry. It does not provide identification by tribal associations but by regions and countries of Africa.

Autosomal DNA testing, which analyzes the genetic material inherited from both parents, can reveal an individual's ethnic composition and help connect them with distant relatives. Y-DNA and mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) tests are also important tools, as they allow individuals to trace their paternal and maternal lines, respectively, over many generations.

Many African descendants in the diaspora have used DNA testing to uncover their ethnic origins. One notable example is the story of renowned scholar and historian Henry Louis Gates Jr., who, through DNA testing and genealogical research, discovered that he descended from both enslaved Africans and a white slave-owner. This knowledge allowed him to reclaim parts of his history that had been obscured for generations, providing a clearer sense of identity. For many others, DNA testing has similarly provided the first step toward rediscovering lost names, traditions, and customs that once shaped their family history.

In 2019, Ghana's "Year of Return" campaign marked the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in Jamestown, Virginia. Thousands of African-Americans and other members of the African diaspora visited Ghana as part of a cultural and genealogical reconnection. Many traveled to trace their roots, reclaim their ancestral identities, and participate in ceremonies that symbolized a spiritual return to their homeland. This event highlighted the importance of genealogy as a way to bridge the gap between African descendants and their cultural origins.

Genealogy has become a tool for healing historical trauma by helping descendants reconnect with their ancestors and reframe their family histories. By learning about their

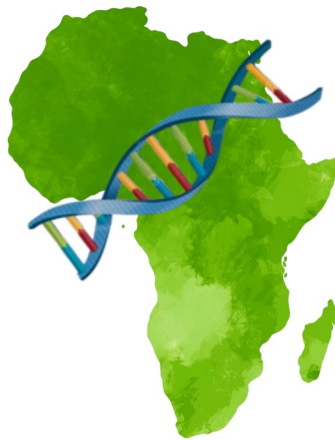
ancestors' survival, strength, and resilience, individuals can relevantly position the slave narrative and honor the legacy of those who endured unimaginable hardships and made it possible for future generations to thrive.

Personal stories are powerful in illustrating how genealogy can aid healing. The experience of reconnecting with long-lost relatives and learning about one's African heritage provides a sense of closure. For example, descendants who discover that their ancestors were enslaved or displaced may find solace in learning about the strength their families displayed in the face of adversity.

African-American communities have embraced genealogical reunions as a means of collective healing. Family reunions, and ancestry-sharing events provide opportunities to strengthen ties, build connections, and foster healing. Genealogical research becomes a unifying effort that honors not just one's individual ancestors but the collective African ancestry, reaffirming a sense of pride and resilience.

Genealogy is critical to restoring and strengthening cultural identity for us as descendants of Africa. In many African cultures, the dissemination of genealogical knowledge through oral tradition is central to preserving history, customs, and values. As African-American descendants reconnect with our roots, we often rediscover cultural practices, languages, and traditional values that were passed down through their family.

For some, genealogical research has inspired a reconnection with African spiritual and cultural practices. In rediscovering our ancestry, individuals are often able to participate in ceremonies or rituals that honor our ancestors and celebrate our African heritage. African descendants are reclaiming cultural aspects that were lost



Finding Our Homelands . . . cont

or suppressed due to the injustices of slavery and colonization.

Community organizations also play a key role in genealogical efforts. Groups like the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS) offer resources and support to individuals seeking to trace their roots. These organizations foster a sense of community among African descendants by offering a space to share findings, connect with distant relatives, and build collective histories.

The Pan-African movement, which seeks to unite people of African descent across the globe, has contributed to the renewed interest in African genealogy. Leaders like Marcus Garvey emphasized the importance of reclaiming African identity and heritage. Today, Pan-Africanism encourages descendants of Africa to reconnect with their ancestry, fostering a sense of solidarity and cultural pride.

Despite advances in DNA testing and digitization of historical records, tracing African genealogy remains a challenge. One significant issue is the lack of African DNA representation in major testing companies' databases. Historically, DNA databases have been more robust for populations of European descent, making it difficult for African descendants to receive accurate results about their ethnic makeup. Companies like Ancestry have worked to address this issue by building larger reference databases specific to Africa.

The loss of genealogical records during the colonial period remains a substantial barrier. Many African countries relied heavily on oral traditions, and the displacement caused by colonization further disrupted these practices.

Additionally, European colonial administrations often prioritized administrative records, such as land ownership or tax documents, over the personal histories of African families. As a result, African descendants struggle to find

written documentation of their family lines, especially before the 19th century.

Since enslaved individuals were given European names upon arrival, it erased their original identities and complicating efforts to trace their lineage. Our family history exemplifies this. There are multiple variations of our Yuille surname: Yuile, Ewell, Guile, Yuill, Juell, Yule, Eural, Zuill and more. So, in all the genealogical records found to date, for the 982 relatives on our family tree none reflect an individual's original African heritage, making it harder to reconnect with specific family lines.

The Yuille Family History Committee faced these complexities in tracing our African-American history. The impacts we experienced from being removed from the Motherland, our treatment as property, and our enslavement has traumatized and caused major breakdowns in our family connections. But despite those factors, dedicated family researchers had spent over 200 cumulative years of researching Yuille Family history. Our historians collectively collaborated to develop, document,

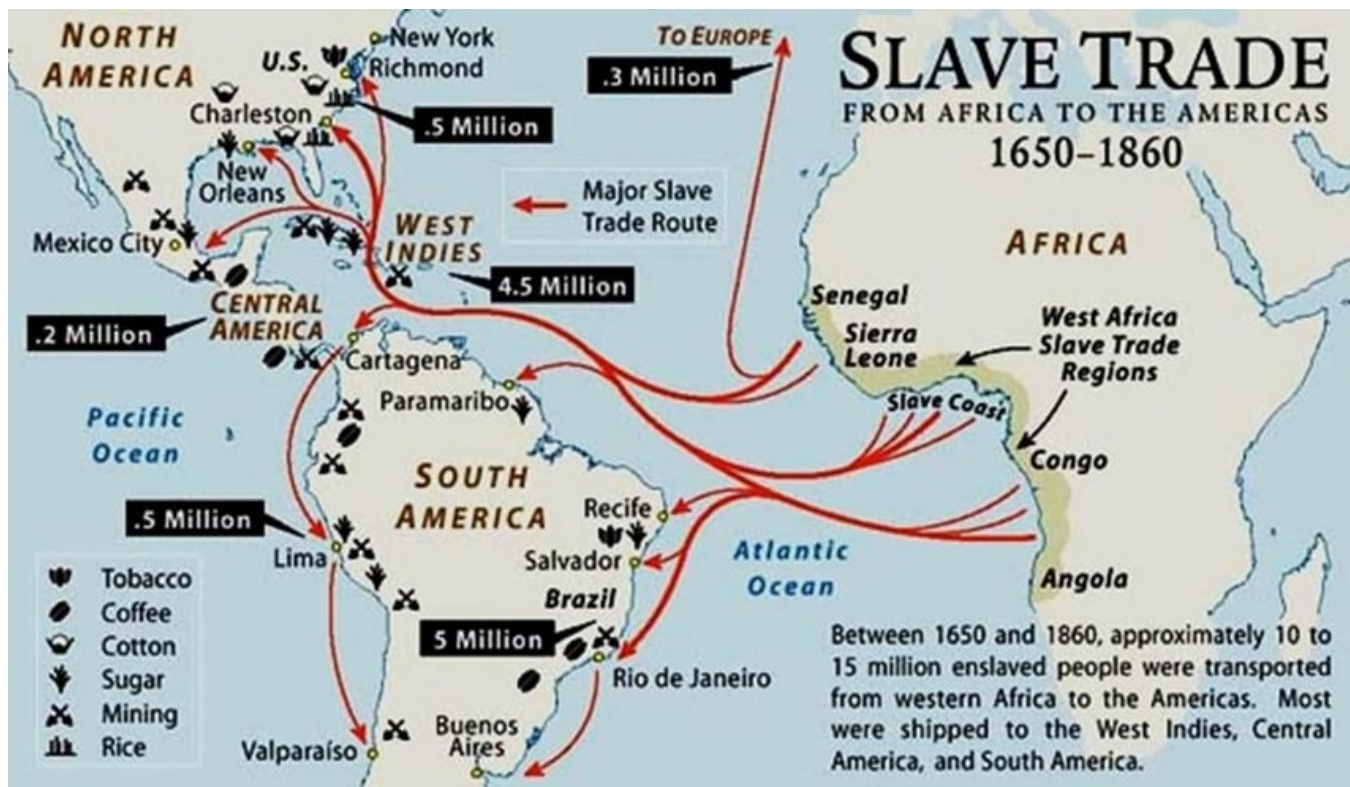
and formally present the Yuille Family History at the Yuille Family Reunion held in Lynchburg, VA in July 2023 where ~115 Yuille descendants were in attendance. We as the descendants of George and Phoebe Yuille are one of a very few African-American families that can verify their history back to the time of enslavement and the actual plantations.

For us as Yuille descendants from the continent of Africa, we must utilize all genealogical resources to reclaim our identity, foster our healing, and reconnect with our cultural roots. The injustice of the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism created these immense challenges, but advances in DNA testing, historical research, and community efforts have allowed Yuille descendants to begin rebuilding those lost connections.

1619

In late August, 1619, 20-30 enslaved Africans landed at Point Comfort, today's Fort Monroe in Hampton, Va., aboard the English privateer ship White Lion.

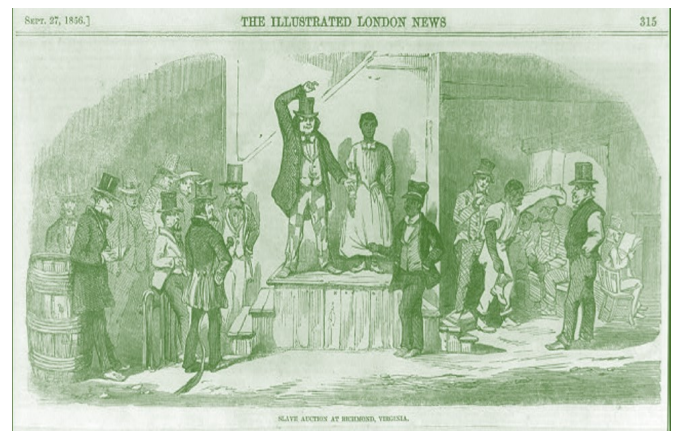
Finding Our Homelands . . . cont



Source: <https://www.researchgate.net>

“After an 1808 act of Congress abolished the international slave trade, a domestic trade flourished. Richmond became the largest slave-trading center in the Upper South, and the slave trade was Virginia’s largest industry. It accounted for the sale—and resulting destruction of families and social networks—of as many as two million Black people from Richmond to the Deep South, where the cotton industry provided a market for enslaved labor.

Prices of enslaved people varied widely over time. They rose to a high of about \$1,250 during the cotton boom of the late 1830s, fell to below half that level in the 1840s, and rose to about \$1,450 in the late 1850s. Males were valued 10 to 20 percent more than females; at age ten, children's prices were about half that of a prime male field hand.”



Slave auction at Richmond, Virginia.

Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress
<www.loc.gov/item/98510266/>.

Deepening Our Roots . . .

To deepen our roots, DNA is the asset that helps identify the puzzle pieces necessary to build and further develop our story, and enrich our understanding of our lineage and heritage.

Each DNA participant contributes to the puzzle by participation in the **Yuille Roots Family DNA Project**, which involves taking the DNA test and sharing the results with the Historical Committee for inclusion in the Yuille Roots Family DNA profile.

Cumulatively, members of the Yuille Genealogy and Historical Committee have spent over two hundred years researching the lineage of George and Phoebe Yuille, affectionately known as our "OGs." Now advances in DNA science allow us to expand our genealogical history by revealing connections within the large pool of individuals who have submitted their DNA to companies such as Ancestry, which owns one of the largest DNA databases.

Let's take a closer look at what is DNA to understand why this is possible. DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) is the hereditary material found in almost all living organisms. It has a structure like a twisted ladder, formed by sequences of molecules. These specific sequences of DNA are called genes, and they determine everything from physical traits, like eye color, to our risk factors for certain diseases.

DNA plays a crucial role in tracing our ancestry because it is passed down from generation to generation. You inherit half of your DNA from your mother and half from your father. Since each parent's DNA is a mix of what they inherited from their parents, the distribution can vary. The further back you go in your family tree, the more "mixed" your DNA becomes, but small traces of distant ancestors can remain.

There are different types of DNA genealogy tests: Autosomal DNA, Y-DNA, and Mitochondrial DNA. Each test provides insight into your lineage, but testing focuses on either your maternal or paternal line, depending on how DNA is inherited.

Autosomal DNA is inherited in a blended way, with 50% coming from each parent. Humans have 22 pairs of autosomes (non-sex chromosomes), with one set coming from each parent. Autosomal DNA contains the majority of your genetic information, including genes that determine physical traits, health predispositions, and ancestry. Autosomal DNA provides a broader view of both sides of your family tree.

Yuille Family DNA Project

Y-DNA is found only in males. The Y chromosome is passed down almost unchanged from father to son, making it a powerful tool for tracing paternal ancestry over many generations.

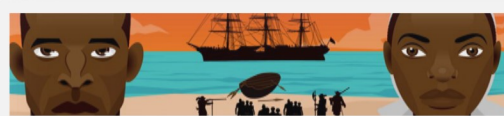
Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) is inherited only from the mother, making it useful for tracing direct maternal lineage. Both males and females inherit mtDNA, but only females pass it on to the next generation.

Genealogical DNA tests can help find connections by comparing your genetic markers to DNA databases from around the world. Ancestry has one of the largest worldwide databases of DNA samples, significantly increasing the chances of finding relatives. They also have a vast collection of historical data, allowing you to trace your ancestry across continents and centuries.

Our Yuille Family history can be advanced and leveraged because of DNA science. Of the eleven lines of descendants, we have identified six living lines of direct descendants of George and Phoebe Yuille. The Y-DNA lines we have identified as essential to furthering our research and deepening our roots to the African continent are the living descendants of George Nowlin Yuille, Charles Winston Yuille, and Thomas Squire "Monk" Yuille. We have identified the following individuals as significant Y-DNA contributors: George E. Yuille, Rudy Yuille Jr., Wirt Yuille, James G. Yuille, James K. Yuille, Grayson Yuille, Mural Yuille Jr., James P. Yuille, Norman W. Yuille, Roosevelt Yuille, Junius Yuille, Larry Yuille, Robert Yuille, Willie Earl Yuille, and Theodore Yuille.

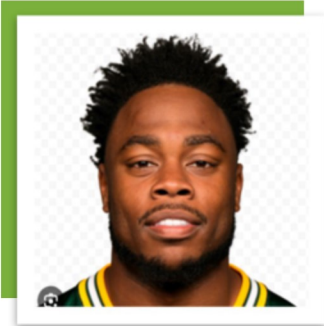
We encourage all family members, both male and female, to share their DNA results through Ancestry by sharing their results with Lisa Beal and Lynn M Price on the Ancestry DNA website. Every DNA participant, male and female, can contribute to the puzzle. We especially encourage all male Yuille descendants to share their results because the Y chromosome is passed down almost unchanged from father to son and extends further back than maternal DNA.

For all who have already completed a DNA, submit your DNA results to the Historical Committee for inclusion in the Yuille Family DNA Project.

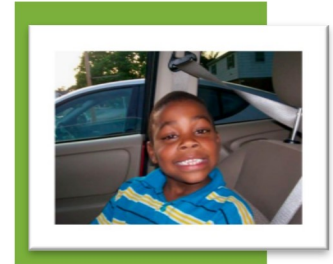


Our Living Legacy Emanuel Dashae Wilson Jr.

An Ascending Star in the NFL with Deep Family Roots

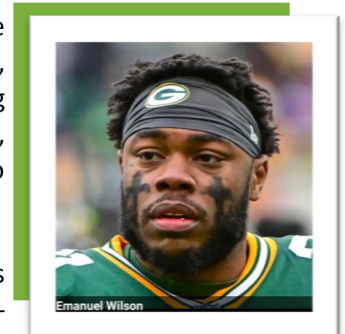


Emanuel Dashae Wilson Jr. (born May 8, 1999) is an American professional football running back for the Green Bay Packers of the National Football League (NFL). Born in Roanoke, Virginia, Emanuel's journey from a small town to the grand stage of professional football is both inspiring and deeply rooted in family tradition and perseverance.

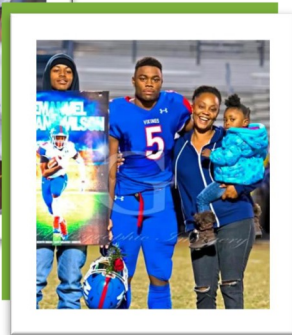
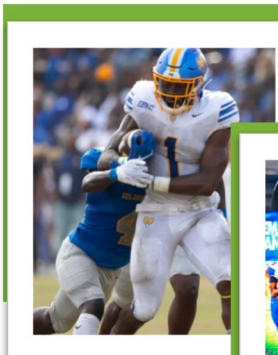


At the age of 8, Emanuel moved with his mother and brother to Charlotte, North Carolina, where he began laying the foundation for his football career. He played high school football at North Mecklenburg High School, showcasing the talent and determination that would later propel him to collegiate and professional success.

Emanuel began his college football career at Johnson C. Smith University, where he redshirted in 2018 and officially joined the field in 2019 as a member of the Golden Bulls. In 2020, he transferred to Fort Valley State University, where he played for the Wildcats through the 2022 season, leaving a legacy of exceptional performance and leadership. Despite going undrafted, Emanuel's talent caught the attention of the Denver Broncos, who signed him as a free agent in 2023. His journey ultimately led him to the Green Bay Packers, where he continues to excel as a running back.



Beyond football, Emanuel's lineage connects him to the Yuille family's rich history and legacy. He is the great, great, great, great, great-grandson George and Phoebe Yuille.



Emanuel's story is not just one of athletic achievement but also a testament to the strength and values passed down through generations of the Yuille family. His journey reminds us all of the importance of determination, hard work, and staying connected to our roots.



- George & Phoebe Yuille
 - Charles Winston Yuille & Elvira Epperson
 - Elise Yuille & Edwin Clark
 - Rufus Clark & Lorraine Gray
 - Dacota Clark & Darryl Wade
 - Renata Clark & Emanuel Wilson

My Family



Viewing Our Family Tree on Ancestry.com

OUR FAMILY TREE IS NAMED:

George & Phoebe Yuille Combined Family Tree

OUR URL:

<https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/tree/182505487?cfpid=252449211063>

GUEST ACCOUNT :

https://support.ancestry.com/s/article/Free-Registered-Guest-Accounts?language=en_US

SHARE YOUR FAMILY STORY . . .

The Yuille Family History and Genealogy Committee encourage you to share your family stories and contribute memorabilia, artifacts and documents as we expand our knowledge of our family history. From stories your grandma told you, to interviews of cherished elders, family pictures, home-going, memorial programs, obituaries and clippings of the Yuille Family. Do you have photos of unknown relatives, let us help you identify them. For our living relatives who are making history, let's get our stories told. So dust off those memories and share those stories—our stories tell us who we are!

email: yuilleroots2022@gmail.com

*The Sankofa Bird reminds us that we must continue forward as we remember our past.
At the same time we plant a seed for the future generations to come after us.*



SEE YOU IN RICHMOND, VA

2025 REUNION

JULY 24th – JULY 27th

Share your DNA Results
So when we see you in
Richmond, we will have
more to discuss



Yuille Family Descendants 2023 Reunion

Not pictured Lisa Beal & Lynn Brownlee-Williams, Historical Committee Co-Chairs

Yuille Roots Newsletter is published by the Yuille Family Genealogical and Historical Committee.
We welcome articles and stories from all family members

*Lynn Brownlee-Williams –Publisher/Editor
Great –Great–Grand–daughter of Bettie Yuille*