

AAHGS Metro Atlanta – General Meeting Minutes

Date: October 25, 2025

Time: 5:00 PM EST

Meeting Called to Order By: Tamu Taylor

Number of Attendees: 51

Welcome and Introduction

Tamu Taylor welcomed members, guests, and the featured speaker to the first virtual meeting following the chapter's 25th Anniversary celebration and the AAHGS National Conference. She expressed appreciation for everyone's presence and introduced the agenda, which included a special presentation by Taneya Koonce.

Meeting Etiquette and Disclaimer

The meeting was recorded and will be made available in the members-only section. A legal disclaimer was read regarding copyright and intellectual property protection for all content shared during the session.

Presentation by Taneya Koonce:

"One Name Studies: How to Use Them for Your Family History"

Taneya Koonce, National Treasurer of AAHGS and founder of the Academy of Legacy Leaders, delivered a dynamic and interactive presentation on the value and methodology of one-name studies (surname studies) in genealogical research. Drawing from over 25 years in information science and her own surname projects, she highlighted the following:

Key Concepts and Definitions

- A one-name study involves researching all occurrences of a single surname, regardless of geographic or familial connection.
- This approach differs from traditional family tree research by focusing on surname-wide patterns and connections.
- Benefits of One-Name Studies
- Surname Variants: Taneya illustrated how surname spelling variations (e.g., Koontz, Koonce, Kuhn, Koons) emerge across records and regions, and how collecting these variants improves search accuracy.
- Lineage Distinction: She shared how her Koontz Surname Genealogy Project helped distinguish white and Black Koontz lineages, including descendancy charts and family clusters.

- Migration Mapping: Using Ancestry's surname distribution maps and historical research, Taneya traced Koontz family migrations from Pennsylvania to Indiana, West Virginia, North Carolina, Alabama, and Florida.
- DNA Integration: She explained how surname-focused Y-DNA projects on FamilyTreeDNA can help identify common paternal ancestors and group individuals into genetic lineages.
- Genealogy Goodwill: Taneya emphasized the collaborative nature of surname studies, sharing recent examples of community members submitting corrections, additions, and feedback to her website.

Case Studies and Personal Research

- Taneya recounted her discovery that her ancestor's surname Koontz came from a stepfather, not a biological line, prompting her to research both Black and white Koontz families in Eastern North Carolina.
- She described her collaboration with John Koontz, a white researcher who had published a Koontz newsletter in the 1990s, and how their shared work led to the creation of her online surname project.
- She discussed the story of Nero Koontz of Henry County, Alabama—believed to have fathered over 100 children—and how his life may reflect the legacy of forced breeding during enslavement.
- Tools and Resources
- Ancestry's surname distribution timeline map (linked in her handout)
- FamilyTreeDNA's surname project interface and marker comparison
- WikiTree and other platforms for collaborative documentation
- Participant Engagement
- Members shared their own surname study experiences, including challenges with common names like Davis and discoveries through Y-DNA projects.
- Taneya welcomed questions throughout and encouraged attendees to email her for slides and handouts, noting that she prefers direct referrals rather than redistribution of materials

Chapter Business Meeting

Tamu Taylor provided brief chapter updates:

- As of this date, we have 119 members
- Revamped the website. Please visit
- Please share our meetings and events when on social media platforms
- New SIG – Alabama group; reach out to Allison Woodley-Tyehimba for more information: alabamafocustgroup@gmail.com
- Recap of the 25th Anniversary celebration and AAHGS National Conference in Charleston
 - Like a family reunion
 - Great to see people we normally only see on Zoom
 - Chapter members presenters - Tammy Ozier, Terri Ward,
 - Atl Chapter members Book Award winner - Orice Jenkins
 - Atl Chapter award winners - Rhonda Barrow
- Members were reminded to check the members-only site for recordings, minutes, and financial reports

- Encouragement to continue collaborative research and engagement through the chapter's platforms

Announcements

- American Revolutionary Screening and getting Started with African American Genealogy Beginner's Workshop on Nov. 8th from 9am to 12PM at the Georgia Archives
- AAHGS Chapter Meeting will be on Nov. 8th from 1PM – 3PM EST Hybrid
- Chapter Officers Elections begins October 26th and Offices are up for election
 - Nominations Oct 26 – Nov 7th
 - Voting Nov 10-Nov 21
 - New officers announced Dec 5 terms Jan 1, 2026, through Dec 31, 2027
- Several National Officers are also up for elections go to national website for more information
- Join and renew your membership now for 2026 year
- New members and guests were welcomed and invited to introduce themselves and share surnames or research interests

Adjournment

Tamu Taylor closed the meeting by thanking all attendees for their continued support and participation. She expressed appreciation for the speaker and encouraged members to stay connected and inspired in their research.