

**An Eleven-Generation African-American  
Line of Descent from Sally Hemings' Grandparents  
down through the  
White House, Monticello, Montpelier  
and Service in the Civil War and WW II  
to the Present**

by

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This report has the following sections:

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## Introduction

This report traces and largely proves an eleven-generation genealogical African-American descent from Africa to the present. This line of descent includes the following remarkable persons:

- The half-sister of Sally Hemings, President Jefferson’s mistress. “Brown” Hemings was likely the grand-daughter of an enslaved African woman, grandmother of both Sally and “Brown.”
- John Freeman, an amazing enslaved man who served in the White House, at Monticello, Montpelier, and in the White House. He fled the burning of the White House by the British with his wife, child and the only piece of furniture saved from the blaze. He gained his freedom in 1815.
- John’s wife Melinda, who also served in Monticello and the White House, and gained her freedom in about 1807.
- Two black brothers who served in the Civil War in the Union Army: Lt. John Freeman Shorter and Sergeant Charles Henry Shorter. Both fought in battles against the Confederacy and were wounded.
- Distinguished modern descendants and family members with degrees from Howard, Princeton, Yale and Stanford universities, who served in positions such as Associate Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer at the University of Maryland, Executive Director of a public charter school, and program director at the Family Institute of Northwestern University.

## Methodology

This genealogical report relies heavily for the first six generations on excellent work done previously by historians at Monticello in the Getting Word Project, and at James Madison’s Montpelier by Hillarie M. Hicks in The Naming Project. The seventh through eleventh generations below reflect new research.

In the analyses below, the most important items are the proven linkages between one generation and another, and the proven marriage/liaison linkage between the asserted parents of a child. Dates and locations of birth, death and marriage are also important, but it is understandable that in difficult circumstances and early periods not all dates and locations may be exact or even available.

If a key linkage is deemed to be weak in terms of proof, then a **NOTE** (in bold type) will be inserted. Such a note does not necessarily mean that the link did not exist, it may just mean that at present, insufficient proof (paper trail, testimony, affidavit, DNA, etc.) has been amassed to make a confident assertion. If no **NOTE** is inserted, then the linkage and assertions are deemed to be at least reasonably proven, and if numerous overlapping and confirming proofs are present, then the assertion can be judged by the reader to be confirmed to a high standard of proof. The most important linkage points in each bullet point set of evidentiary items are underlined.

Similarly, in the chart below, if a question mark [?] is inserted, this means that the link or person is not adequately proven.

Most genealogical articles and report only cite sources briefly, and do not list all the information provided by each source. Here, since the tracing of the links, dates, places, etc. is challenging, all the relevant information provided by each source is shown, so that the reader can see and evaluate the quality of the information and does not have to obtain the original sources. Biographical information (e.g., occupation, income, religion) obtained from the sources is presented here, for interest but also because such items can also help establish proof of linkages. (For example, if John Smith is, say, a carpenter and a Wesleyan Methodist in Record A and also in Record B, then the chances that the two Records point to the same John Smith are markedly increased.)

The site for obtaining the original sources in this report is Ancestry.com, unless otherwise specified. This source has dramatically improved in scope and depth over the last decade, but of course is not truly comprehensive. This research effort was somewhat hampered by the closure of libraries, courthouses, Family Research Centers and various repositories during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This report focuses on tracing one blood line down to the present, and does not pursue or document the descendants of all the many siblings of the main line persons. These siblings are often mentioned in the proof items, especially US Census records, but are not further discussed except if they are of special interest. Further research to fill out those lines is encouraged.

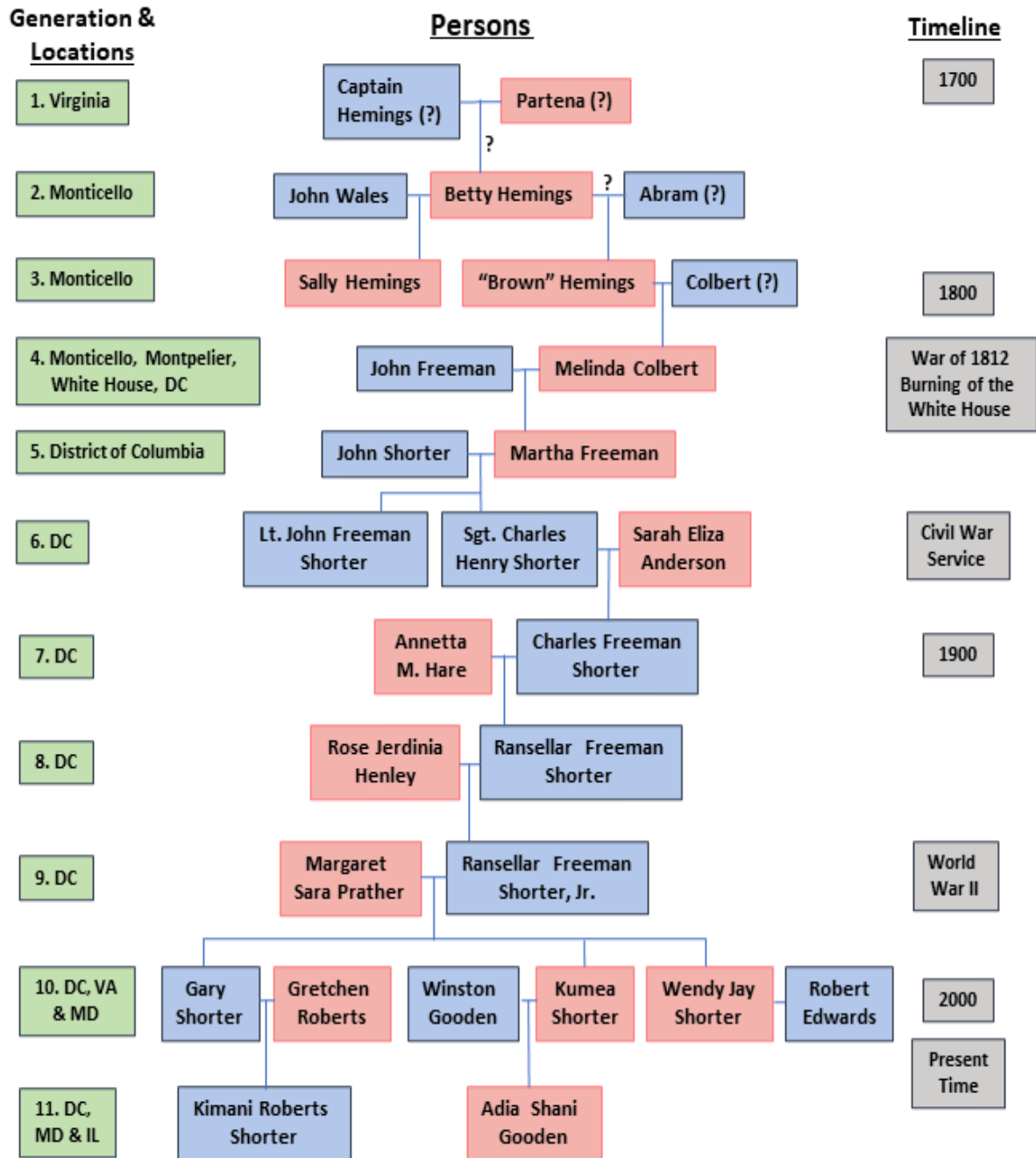
Abbreviations used in this report include the following:

<b>abt.</b>	about	<b>aft.</b>	after
<b>b.</b>	born	<b>bef.</b>	before
<b>c.</b>	circa	<b>d.</b>	died
<b>d.c.</b>	died circa		

## Summary Chart

The chart on the next page summarizes the assertions and proofs in the subsequent section.

# FROM AFRICA TO MONTICELLO, MONTPELIER AND THE WHITE HOUSE DOWN TO THE PRESENT, IN ELEVEN BLACK GENERATIONS



## Potential Memberships

Based on the chart above and the detailed assertions and proofs below, the living descendants of this genealogical line should qualify for the following organizations:

- The Getting Word Project of Monticello: This project was founded in 1993 and traces descendants of enslaved persons who worked at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello. See: <https://www.monticello.org/getting-word/about/about-getting-word>. Contact: [Getting\\_Word@Monticello.org](mailto:Getting_Word@Monticello.org).
- Montpelier Descendants Committee: This organization is composed of descendants of enslaved persons who worked on President James Madison's Montpelier plantation or in the surrounding area. It is obtaining 501(c)(3) certification and is currently negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding for input into The Montpelier Foundation, the organization that runs President Madison's Montpelier. See: <https://montpelierdescendants.org/>
- Sons and Daughters of the United States Middle Passage: This society is open to men and women 18 or older whose African-American ancestors were enslaved or held in indentured servitude in colonial and ante-bellum years, up through December 1865. See: <https://sdusmp.org/join/>.
- Society of the First African Families of English America. This organization is open to men and women descended from a person of African descent who lived in English America before 5 March 1770, the date of the Boston Massacre and the death of Crispus Attucks, the first Patriot casualty of the American Revolution. See: [https://sofafea.org/?page\\_id=270](https://sofafea.org/?page_id=270).
- Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War: This organization is open to men 14 years or older who are descended from veterans of the Civil War who fought on the Union side. See: [http://www.suvcw.org/?page\\_id=129](http://www.suvcw.org/?page_id=129)
- Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic: This organization is open to women 10 years or older who are descended from honorably discharged veterans of the Union Army or from Civil War nurses. See: <http://suvcw.org/LGAR/Membership.html>
- Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War: This organization is open to female descendants of honorably discharged soldiers or sailors who served in the Union Army. See: <https://www.duvcw.org/>
- National Society Daughters of the Union: This organization is open to female descendants of honorably discharged soldiers or sailors who served in the Union Army. See: <https://www.nsdu.org/>
- National Order of the Blue and Gray: This organization is open to descendants of persons who served the Union or the Confederacy in a military or civil capacity. See: <http://nobg.org/>

- Sons and Daughters of World War II Veterans: This society is open to descendants of persons who served in WW II through 31 December 1946 (hence Ransellar F. Shorter, Jr., below, qualifies). See: <https://www.pacificwarmuseum.org/join-give/society-sons-daughters>
- Guild of Colonial Artisans and Tradesmen, 1607-1783: As discussed below, there is a possible but currently unproven propositi (qualifying ancestor) in this line, in the person of Benjamin Colvert/Colvard, who may have been in this line, and was a white man and a carpenter working on the Monticello plantation in 1778-9. For membership information, see: <https://guildcolonialartsandtrades.weebly.com/membership.html>

## Assertions and Proofs

### Generation #1

**Assertion:** A Captain Hemings and an enslaved woman from Africa, possibly named Parthena, Partena or Parthenia (dates and places of birth of both uncertain or unknown), had a liaison and an enslaved daughter, c. 1735, named Elizabeth (Betty) Hemings.

### Proofs:

- <https://www.monticello.org/getting-word/families/colbert-hemings-family> has a detailed, multi-generational biographical description of this family. This description from Monticello.org states that, “according to Elizabeth (Betty) Hemings grandson, Madison Hemings, she [Betty] was descended from an English sea-trading captain named Hemings and an enslaved woman.” The captain “sailed between England and Williamsburg, VA and the enslaved woman was a full-blooded African.” The captain tried to purchase the child Elizabeth (Betty) Hemings, offering an extraordinary price, but her owner refused to sell, whereupon the captain sailed off and never returned. In adulthood “Betty was taken as a concubine by her owner John Wales, by whom she had six children...” (and had twelve children in total). John Wales (or Wayles) was the father-in-law of President Thomas Jefferson, and when Wales died Betty was inherited by Jefferson. This website also shows Betty Hemings listed in a 1774 register of slaves at Monticello. The Madison Hemings statement comes from his statement in the *Pike County Republican*, 13 March 1873, of Waverly, OH.
- “Captain” Hemings may have been John Hemings or William Hemings, father and son, both asserted to be whaling captains. See: <https://www.moremarymatters.com/Betty%20Hemings'%20Father.htm#2-1-7-5-6> The dates for John Hemings (or Hemmings) are reported as b. 3 November 1672 in Bassingbourne, Cambridgeshire, son of John Martha Hemmings (Ancestry.com, England Selected Births and Christenings), d. late in 1738 or early 1739, buried 6 January 1739, St. Giles, London, England (Ancestry.com, London Registry of Church of England Births and Marriages). William Heming (Hemings?) was baptized 29 October 1699 in Haselor, Warwickshire, England, with father John Heming and mother Elizabeth Heming (from Ancestry.com, Warwickshire, England, Church of England Baptisms...).

- Annette Gordon-Reed, *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: An American Controversy* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1997) speculates that Parthena or Parthenia was the enslaved mother of Elizabeth (Betty) Hemings.

**NOTE:** The asserted links and identifications require more proofs to meet high genealogical standards. Also, the “whaling captains” assertion seems questionable, since the peak of whaling under sail was in the 1830s and later, although there were whalers during the 1700s and the American Revolution. The assertions may well be true, but additional proofs and research are desirable.

## Generation #2

**Assertion:** Elizabeth (“Betty” or “Betsey”) Hemings, b. 1735 likely in VA, d. 22 August 1807 at Monticello, VA, and another slave Abram (01) (or an unknown man) were married or had a liaison c. 1759 in VA, and had a daughter Betty “Brown” Hemings.

### Proofs:

- Monticello Farm Journal 1773-1826: Entries for pages 5 and 15 of the 1774 section show that Betty Hemings is the mother of Bett “Brown” Hemings and Abram (01) is the father, that “Brown” was b. in 1759, that her owner was Thomas Jefferson, and that “Brown” was located at Monticello in Albemarle County, VA in 1774. See the following website: <https://www.moremarymatters.com/Table%201,%20Farm%20Book.htm>
- See the Monticello.org multi-generational site, *ibid*.
- Find-a-Grave: Betsey Hemings, b. 1735 in VA, d. 22 August 1807, Albemarle Co., VA; large marker in the Monticello African American Graveyard; photo of the marker on the Ancestry.com/Find-a-Grave website.

**Biographical Information:** One of the daughters of Elizabeth (Betty) Hemings by John Wales (or Wayles) was Sally Hemings, the famous enslaved long-term mistress of President Thomas Jefferson. Sally Hemings was thus the half-sister of Betty “Brown” Hemings. (She is not the full sister because the father of Betty was Abram and the father of Sally was John Wales.) Sally Hemings was b. 9 February 1773 in Charles Co. VA and d. 1835 in Charlottesville, VA. Sadly, her burial location is unknown. See: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/8463/sally-hemings>

**NOTE:** It is not clear if the name “Brown” is a nickname, or a name acquired by marrying or liaising with a man with the surname of Brown. Further proof items are desirable. Also, the partner/husband of Elizabeth (likely Abram) is not well established.

## Generation #3

**Assertion:** Betty “Brown” Hemings, b. 1759 in VA, d. aft. 1831, and an unknown man, likely surnamed Colbert, were married or had a liaison c. 1787 in VA, and had a daughter, Melinda (or Malinda) Colbert, and seven other children.



Left: a reconstructed slave cabin at Monticello; right: the Monticello mansion

### Proofs:

- <https://www.monticello.org/getting-word/families/colbert-hemings-family> has a detailed, multi-generational biographical description of this family. See also the family tree showing dates and descents for three generations related to line analyzed here.
- This related site has a short biography of Betty Brown and gives her dates as 1759 to after 1831: <https://www.monticello.org/getting-word/people/betty-brown>
- *Virginia Genealogical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 2: citing Charlottesville District Court, Deed Book 1, states that on p. 59 it states that “24 December 1794. Thomas Jefferson emancipated Robert Hemings, son of Betty Hemings.”

**Biographical Information:** Two of Betty’s sons became runaways after being told that they would be sold away from Monticello, and a daughter and a different son sought freedom in the colony of Liberia. A mini-biography of Betty “Brown” Hemings on Ancestry.com by Julius69 states that by the age of twenty-three Betty had witnessed the *battle of Richmond*, the *battle of Yorktown*, General Cornwallis’ surrender, and Martha Jefferson’s death.

**NOTE:** An on-line tree by jaisfamily67 and various other trees on Ancestry.com assert that the unknown Colbert was actually Benjamin Colvard, 1762-1800, a white man who served in the Revolution and lived in Albemarle County. Unfortunately, no convincing proof that Colvard was Colbert is presented. This same assertion, and the related assertion that “Benjamin Colvard Jr. was the father of four of Betty Brown’s children,” and that she was his concubine while his white wife was still alive, is also made on this site: <http://calvertfamilygenealogy.blogspot.com/2020/06/benjamin-colvard-jr-of-albemarle-county.html>. The Calvert Family DNA Project at the following site asserts that 45 of the 300+ members of the project are named “Colbert,” the biggest grouping outside of “Calvert.” And there are five members of the project named “Colvard,” another asserted variation of “Calvert.” See: <https://www.familytreedna.com/groups/calvert-genealogy-dna-repository/surnames>. The following site asserts that Benjamin Colvard, Jr. fathered four children by Betty Brown, and that “was employed by Joseph Neilson, Thomas Jefferson’s contractor, as an apprentice carpenter/cabinet maker/joiner at Monticello between 1778-1779” and that, “During this time Benjamin Colvard, Jr. lived with his parents on land that was down the mountain and adjacent to Monticello.” Evidence cited is the Fee Book of the Neilson Account, Monticello Research Center, Albemarle County, VA. See:



<https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Colvard-65>. However, the Monticello “Getting Word” African American Oral History Project states that “the father has not been identified” of the six children bearing the surname of Colbert, who were children of Betty Brown. See: <https://www.monticello.org/getting-word/families/colbert-hemings-family>. Hence despite assertions and some evidence, the case is not yet convincingly proven. More research, and especially investigation of the DNA evidence from the Calvert project, is warranted. If carpenter Benjamin Colvard/Colbert could be established as the father of Melinda Colbert, then her descendants could qualify for membership in the Guild of Colonial Artisans and Tradesmen, 1607-1783.

## Generation #4

**Assertion:** Melinda (or Malinda) Colbert (?), b.c. 1787 in VA, d. September 1859 in DC; on 24 March 1818 in DC married John Freeman, b. c. 1781 in VA, d. bef. 29 November 1839, and they had a daughter Martha (or “Mary”) A. Freeman.

### Proofs:

- Compiled Marriages in Washington, DC: John Freeman and Malinda Colbert, married 24 March 1818 in DC.
- Monticello website on Colbert/Hemings, *ibid*.
- Certificate of Freedom: 1831 DC document states that Malinda Freeman is a free woman and the mother of Martha Freeman, abt. 16, John Freeman, abt. 14, and four other children. See Appendix 1.
- Washington, DC Wills and Probate Records: John Freeman, will probated 10 August 1839 in DC, d.c. 1839. Image of will presented; gives “to my beloved wife ... Malinda” all his worldly possessions including a house, and mentions his “son John Shorter, Jr.”
- US 1840 Census for DC: Melinda Freeman, shown as “free person of color” (and listed beside Benjamin Freeman, also a free person of color).
- US 1850 Census for DC: Malinda Freeman, 63, mulatto female, b.c. 1787 in VA, resident of Washington Ward 1, DC, value of owned real estate: \$800, cannot read and write; in household with: Martha Shorts (should be Shorter), 34, mulatto female, b. in DC; John Shorts (Shorter), 35, mulatto male, b. in DC; Mary Shorts (Shorter), 10, black female; John Shorts (Shorter), 8, black male; Charles Shorts (Shorter), 6, black male; Ann Shorts (Shorter), 4, black female; Martha Shorts (Shorter), 11/12, black female; and Ellen Freeman, 21, black female; all of the children b. in DC.
- Federal Census Mortality Schedules: Malinda Freeman, black female, widowed, b.c. 1787 in VA, d. September 1859 in Ward 1, Washington, DC of inflammation of the bowels, after 26 days of illness, at age 72.

**Biographical Information:** As described in the Montpelier Naming Project (see <https://digitaldoorway.montpelier.org/2021/03/23/the-naming-project-john-freeman/> for details), John Freeman had a remarkable life. This included working while enslaved in the White House and at Monticello for President Thomas Jefferson; being sold to President James Madison and working for him at the White House and Montpelier; having to flee the White House with his wife, child and the only furniture item (a feather bed) that was saved from burning by the British; and being freed in the District of Columbia in 1815 at age 34. His wife Melinda also worked at Monticello and in the White House and was freed in

about 1807. This biographical information is also supported by Elizabeth Dowling Taylor, *A Slave in the White House: Paul Jennings and the Madisons* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2012), who states that "after July 1815 John Freeman was a free man, working for pay in the President's household and preparing to set up a household of his own. In 1816 he and an associate, John Shorter, purchased a remarkable assortment of goods....(John Shorter had been a stable hand in the Jefferson White House who stayed on for occasional employment under Madison.)" As seen here in Generations 4 and 5, John Shorter was much more than "an associate" of John Freeman – he became Freeman's son-in-law. Taylor publishes an account by Paul Jennings of the burning of the White House, which says in part, "People were running in every direction. John Freeman (the colored butler) drove off in the cochee with his wife, child, and servant, also a feather bed lashed on behind the cochee, which was all the furniture saved, except part of the silver and the portrait of Washington..."



Left: a slave cabin at Montpelier; right: the mansion at Montpelier



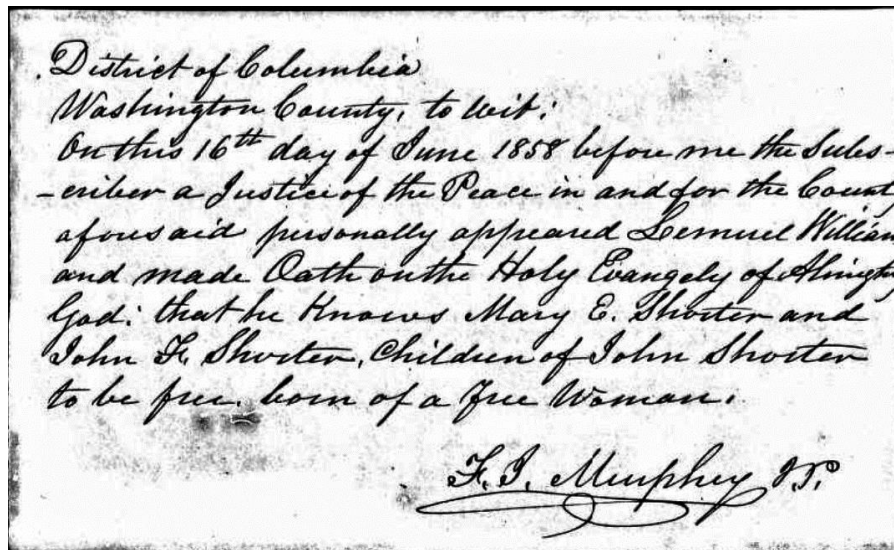
The burning of the White House

## Generation #5

**Assertion:** Martha ("Mary") A. Freeman, b.c. 1816 in DC, d. aft. 1920 in DC, married John Shorter, b.c. 1815 in DC, d. bef. 1887, likely in DC, and had sons John Freeman Shorter and Charles Henry Shorter.

## Proofs:

- Certificate of Freedom, *ibid.*
- US 1850 Census for the Melinda Freeman household, *ibid.*
- Oath taken before a Justice of the Peace, 16 June 1858: John Shorter has children Mary E. Shorter and John F. Shorter, and all are free. (See image below these bullets.)
- US 1860 Census for Ward 1, DC: John Shorter, 40, black male, b. in DC, waiter; Mary Shorter, 36, black female, b. in VA; Martha Shorter, 2, black female, b. in DC.
- US Civil War Draft Registrations, June/July 1863: John Shorter, 40, b. in DC, colored laborer
- US 1870 Census for Washington, DC: Charles H. Shorter, 27, black male, b.c. 1847 in DC, Patent Officer laborer; in household with John Shorter, 55 (owner of \$2000 in real estate, cannot read and write) and Mary A. (Martha?) Shorter, 45.
- US 1880 Census for Washington, DC: John Shorter, 60, black male b. in DC, waiter; with wife Martha A. Shorter, 50, black female, b. in VA; both residing at 1626 RI Ave., DC.
- City Directory for 1887 for DC: Mary A. Shorter, widow of John Shorter, living at 1804 T St. NW.
- City Directory for 1903 for DC: Mary Shorter, doing washing, living at 771 Sheridan, NW.
- US 1920 Census for Washington, DC: Martha A. Shorter, 102 (!), widowed black female, b. 1818 in DC, cannot read and write, shown as residing in the Home for the Aged and Infirm.



District of Columbia  
Washington County, to wit:  
On this 16<sup>th</sup> day of June 1858 before me the Sub-  
-euler a Justice of the Peace in and for the County  
aforesaid personally appeared Samuel William  
and made Oath on the Holy Evangel of Almighty  
God: that he knows Mary E. Shorter and  
John F. Shorter, Children of John Shorter  
to be free born of a free Woman.  
L. J. Murphy J.P.

## Biographical information:

Lt. John Freeman Shorter, b. 1842 in DC, d. 1865 in Delaware Co., OH, enlisted as a private, rose to lieutenant, and fought for the Union Army in the Civil War as one of only three black commissioned officers in the 55<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry (sister regiment of the more famous 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts, featured in the film *Glory*). He was wounded at the Battle of Honey Hill near Charleston, SC in November 1864. See: <https://www.monticello.org/getting-word/people/john-freeman-shorter>. The battle was the third in Sherman's March to the Sea, and although the Union failed to cut the target

Confederate rail line, four Medals of Honor were awarded for gallantry during the battle. Lt. Shorter's diary is on file and cataloged with biographical information at the National Museum of African-American History & Culture. (Note that the line below continues with Lt. Shorter's brother, Sgt. Charles Henry Shorter, since Lt. Shorter died young, apparently without issue.)



Lt. John Freeman Shorter

## Generation #6

**Assertion:** Charles Henry Shorter was b. April 1846 in Washington, DC and d. 23 February 1916 in Washington, DC. On 20 December 1870 in Delaware Co., OH, he married Sarah Eliza Anderson, b. November 1849 in Zanesville, OH and d. c. 16 November 1932 in DC. They had a son, Charles Freeman Shorter.

### Proofs:

- US Civil War Draft Registration Records: Charles H. Shorter, b.c. 1843, 20 years old in July 1863, black, unmarried, resident of DC.
- Ohio Marriage Records: Charles H. Shorter married Sarah E. Anderson in Delaware Co., OH on 20 December 1870.
- US Freedman's Bank Records: Charles H. Shorter, 27; date of record 15 September 1871; b. in DC; residence at 1626 RI Ave., NW, DC; laborer for the government; m. to Sarah E. A. Shorter, no children; father John Shorter; sisters Ann M. Bailey and Mary E. Carter.
- DC Birth Records: 15 February 1875 birth of child Shorter, with father Charles Shorter, b. in DC and mother Sarah Anderson Shorter, b. in Zanesville, OH.
- US Census for 1880: Charles H. Shorter, 35, b. c. 1845 in MD (?); black male, waiter, resident of 1645 RI Ave. NW, DC; father b. in DC, mother b. in VA; married to Sarah Shorter, 24, b. in Ohio; with children Ellen Shorter, 7, Cornelia, 5, and Charles, 2, all b. in DC.
- US Census for 1900: Charles H. Shorter, 54, b. April 1846 in DC; black male, government clerk, resident of 1804 T St. NW, DC; father b. in DC, mother b. in DC (?); married for 30 years (with 5 children, all still alive) to Sarah Shorter, 50, b. November 1849 in Ohio, black female; with

children Annie J., b. February 1876, Sadie E., b. October 1880, and John E., b. September 1883, all b. in DC.

- US Census for 1910: Charles H. Shorter, 56, b. 1854 (?) in DC; mulatto male, clerk in pension office, resident of 1804 T Street (I St.?) DC, NW; both parents b. in DC; can read and write, attended school, military veteran; with wife of 39 years Sarah E. Shorter, 55, mulatto female, can read and write; with children Sadie E., 28, b. in DC, single; Ransellaer, 8, b. in MA, single; and Ellen Orme, 37, b. in DC, married for the second time but zero years of marriage in this marriage (?). All the children are listed as mulatto. (NOTE: Ransellaer is listed as the son of Charles and Sarah, but this listing should be as the grandchild – an apparent error by the Census taker.)
- Civil War Pension Index: Charles H. Shorter, invalid's pension from 23 February 1907 in DC, deceased 23 February 1916 in DC; Unit B 22 US Colored Infantry, Widow Sarah E. A. Shorter.
- US City Directory for Washington, DC: Sarah E. Shorter, widow of Charles H. Shorter, living at 1804 T St. NW, DC.
- Newspapers.com Obituary Index: obituary of Sarah A. Shorter on 16 November 1932, of 117 U St., NW DC; burial 16 November 1932, widow of Charles Shorter, with (surviving) children Ellen Smith, A.O. Brown and Sadie Crump.

#### Biographical information:

US Colored Troops Military Records: Charles H. Shorter, black male, drafted 4 October 1864 as a private and laborer in DC; black hair and black eyes, 5'8" tall; wounded in action at Fair Oaks, VA on 27 October 1864 (part of the Richmond-Petersburg campaign); promoted to Corporal in January 1865; promoted to Sergeant on 1 July 1865; mustered out of Co. B, 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Colored Infantry (part of the US Colored Troops, USCT) in Brownsville, TX on 16 October 1865.



Images above are of the front (left) and rear of the regimental flag of the 22<sup>nd</sup> USCT. Note the graphic imagery on the left panel.

**On-line source with useful information:** Philip Hughes Family Tree, compiled by “Julius69” on Ancestry.com. Note that this Tree provides other lines of descent (with various proof documents) which may go down to the present, but these were not pursued in this report.

## Generation #7

**Assertion:** Charles Freeman Shorter was b. 1878 in Washington, DC and d. in February/March 1924 in Washington, DC. He married Annetta M. Hare on 28 November 1900 in Boston, MA; she was b. in December 1883 in Charlottesville, VA, d. likely bef. 1906 in DC. They had a son, Ransellear Freeman Shorter.

### Proofs:

- US Census for 1880, *ibid.*, re Charles H. Shorter and son Charles Shorter, b. c. 1878.
- DC, Selected Births and Christenings: child Shorter, b. 18 January 1878 in DC, with father Charles Shorter and mother Sarah Anderson Shorter.
- US Census for 1900 for Boston, MA (conducted 7 June 1900): “Anita” Hare, 16, single black female, b. December 1883 in VA with both parents b. in VA; doing housework, can read and write; in household with brother John E. Hare.
- MA Marriage Records: Charles F. Shorter, 22, b. 1878 in DC, with father Charles H. Shorter and mother Sarah F. Anderson, marrying Annetta M. Hare, 18, b. in Charlottesville, VA, with parents Moses Hare and Marie Carr; married in Boston, MA, on 28 November 1900; both listed as “Col.” (colored).
- MA Birth Records: Ransellear Freeman Shorter b. 27 August 1901 at 60 Sawyer St. in Boston, MA, male, colored, with father Charles F. Shorter, clerk in DC and mother Annetta M. Hare, b. in Charlottesville, VA.
- Washington, DC Compiled Marriage Records: Charles F. Shorter, 28, single black male, marrying on 4 December 1906 to Jessie S. Addison, 21, single black female. (Hence Charles’ first wife Annetta likely died bef. 1906.)
- World War I Draft Registration Card: Charles Freeman Shorter, b. 18 January 1878 in DC, messenger at the War Dept., mother Sarah Shorter of 1804 T St., NW DC, tall, medium build, black hair and black eyes.
- US Newspapers.com Obituaries of 3 March 1924: Charles F. Shorter, d. 1924 at 419 Oakdale Pl., DC, with father Charles Shorter and mother Sarah E. A. Shorter; spouse Jessie A. Shorter; children Hansel, John, Evelyn, Jessie and Geneva; and siblings Ellen Smith, Geneva Brown, Sadie Crump.
- DC City Directory for 1930: Jessie Shorter, widow of Charles Shorter, seamstress, living at 714 Fairmont NW, DC.



Gen. Butler's unofficial bravery medal for USCT; 200 were awarded late in the war.

## Generation #8

**Assertion:** Ransellear Freeman Shorter was b. 27 August 1901 in Boston, MA and d. January 1972 in Washington, DC. He married Rose (or Rosa) Jerdenia Henley (later Jones) on 24 December 1924 in Washington, DC; she was b. 20 September 1904 in Washington, DC, d. 21 September 1999, likely in DC. They had a son, Ransellear Freeman Shorter, Jr.

### Proofs:

- MA Birth Records: Ransellear Freeman Shorter b. 27 August 1901, *ibid.*
- US Census for 1910 for DC: *ibid.*, showing Ransellear Shorter.
- Washington, DC Marriage Records: Ransellear F. Shorter, 23, b. c. 1901 married on 24 December 1924 in Washington, DC to Rose Jerdenia Henley, 20, b.c. 1904.
- DC City Directory for 1927: Ransellear F. Shorter, messenger for the Navy, res. at 1818 13<sup>th</sup> NW, DC.
- US Census for 1930 for DC: Ransellear Shorter, 28, black male, b. in MA, home value \$7000, with wife Rosa H. Shorter, 25, and son Ransellear Shorter, 2.
- 1940 US Census for Washington, DC: Rosa H. Shorter, (mis-transcribed as “Sharter”), 35, b. c. 1905 in Washington, DC, black female, divorced, daughter of Benjamin J. Henley, 56; with son in the household Ransellear Shorter, 13. Rosa was a grammar school teacher who had completed 4 years of college and her income for 52 weeks of work was \$2450. She lived at 4236 SD Ave. in DC.
- Virginia Marriage Records: Rosa Henley Shorter, 35, b.c. 1905, black female, with father Benjamin J. Henley and mother Daisy B. Crawford, married on 29 June 1940 in Manassas, VA to Albert Taylor Jones.
- World War II Draft Registration Card: Ransellear Freeman Shorter of 1714 U St. NW, DC; b. 27 August 1901 in Boston MA; employed by Naval Air Station DC; Negro, 5’6”, 130 pounds, brown eyes, black hair, light brown complexion.
- Social Security Index: Ransellear Shorter, b. 27 August 1901, d. January 1972.
- Social Security Index: Rosa Henley Jones, b. 20 September 1904 in Washington, DC, black female, d. 21 September 1999 (likely in DC); her father was Benjamin J. Henley and mother Daisy B. Crawford.

## Generation #9

**Assertion:** Ransellear Freeman Shorter, Jr. was b. 26 April 1927 in Washington, DC and d. 21 February 1983 in Harrisonburg, VA. He married Margaret Sara Prather in 1949, and they were divorced in 1978. She was b. 20 September 1926 in DC and d. 19 April 2017 in DC. Her later partner was Loyd Newman. Margaret’s parents were William E. Prather and Ella Glascoe Prather.

### Proofs:

- US Census for 1930 for DC: Ransellear Shorter, Jr., 2 and 11/12 years old, b. c. 1928 in DC, with father Ransellear Shorter, Sr., b. in MA, US govt. messenger, owns a home worth \$7000, and mother Rosa H. Shorter, b. in DC, teacher in the DC Public Schools.
- US Census for 1940 for DC: Ransellear Shorter, 13, b. in DC, Negro, with mother Rosa H. Shorter, 35, b. in DC, Negro, living on SD Ave. in DC.

- US Census for 1940 for DC: Margaret S. Prather, 13, b. in DC, Negro, with mother Ella M. Prather, 34, and father William E. Prather, 40.
- World War II Enlistment Records: Ransellar F. Shorter, Jr., Negro, single, b. 1927 in DC, 2 years of college, enlisted 13 May 1946 at Baltimore, MD as a private.
- Dept. of Veterans Affairs BIRLS Index: R. F. Shorter, b. 26 April 1927, d. 21 February 1983, US Army enlistment 13 May 1946 and discharged 1 June 1947.
- Social Security Index: Ransellar Freeman Shorter, Jr. was b. 26 April 1927 in Washington, DC and d. February 1983; he was a black male with father Ransellar F. Shorter and mother Rosa Henley.
- Virginia Death Records: Ransellar F. Shorter was b. 26 April 1927 in Washington, DC, was a resident of Washington, DC, and d. 21 February 1983 in Harrisonburg, VA of a myocardial infarction. He was buried in Harmony Memorial Park in Prince Georges County, MD. His parents were Ransellar Shorter and Rosa Henley. He was a black male and had served in the US military, and was divorced.
- US Find-a-Grave Index: Ransellar Freeman Shorter, Jr. was b. 26 April 1927 in Washington, DC and d. 21 February 1983, buried in National Harmony Memorial Cemetery, Hyattsville, MD.
- Public Records Index: Margaret Shorter, b. 20 September 1926, living in 1995 and 1996-2002 at 1425 4<sup>th</sup> St. SW, Apt. A104 in DC.

## Generation #10

**Assertion:** Ransellar Freeman Shorter, Jr. and Margaret Sara Prather had the following children: Gary Shorter, b.c. 1951; Kumea (Dori) Shorter (later Shorter-Gooden); and Wendy Jay Shorter.

### Proofs:

- Obituary of Margaret Sara Prather Shorter, *The Washington Post*, 5 May 2017, located at: <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/washingtonpost/obituary.aspx?n=margaret-shorter&pid=185286533> States that she d. 19 April 2017, was b. 20 September 1926 in DC to William E. Prather Sr. and Ella Glascoe Prather. States she is survived by her children, Gary Shorter, Kumea Shorter-Gooden and Wendy Edwards; daughter-in-law, Gretchen Roberts-Shorter; sons-in-law, Winston Gooden and Robert Edwards; grandchildren, Kimani Shorter and Adia Gooden. States that she married Ransellar Freeman Shorter Jr. in 1949, she had the three children listed above, and this marriage ended in divorce in 1978. She later had a partner Loyd Newman who pre-deceased her. This obituary includes extensive other biographical information.



Margaret Prather Shorter



## Generation #11

**Assertion:** Gary Shorter married on 12 August 1978 to Gretchen Roberts, who d. 6 October 2017 in Washington, DC. They had a son, Kimani Roberts Shorter, b. in DC and living in 2021. Kumea Shorter married Winston Gooden and took the name Shorter-Gooden; they had a daughter Adia Shani Gooden. Wendy Jay Shorter was b. in DC and married Robert Theodore Edwards in Arlington, VA; he was b. in NY, son of Robert McLeod Edwards and Annie P. Pollack. (All these persons except Gretchen Roberts-Shorter are apparently alive as of October 2021.)

### Proofs:

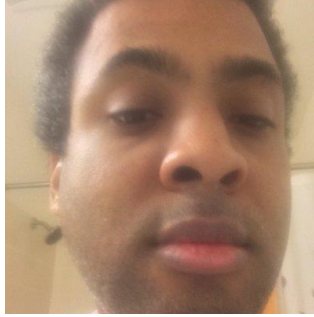
- *Washington Post* obituary for Margaret Sara Prather Shorter, *ibid*.
- Obituary of Gretchen Roberts-Shorter, *The Washington Post*, 19 October 2017, located at: <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/washingtonpost/obituary.aspx?n=gretchen-roberts-shorter&pid=186978671>. States that d. 6 October 2017 in DC; she married Gary Shorter on 12 August 1978, and was the mother of Kimani Shorter, b. in 1980.
- Virginia Marriage Records: Wendy Jay Shorter, daughter of Ransellear Freeman Shorter and Margaret Sarah Prather, was b. in 1956 in DC, and in 1990 in Arlington VA married Robert Theodore Edwards, b. 1951 in NY, son of Robert McLeod Edwards and Annie P. Pollack.
- Ancestry.com Index to Public Records: Kimani R. Shorter, b. 1980, residing in DC 2002-2016.



Gretchen Roberts-Shorter



Kumea Shorter-Gooden



Kimani Shorter



Dr. Adia Shani Gooden

**Biographical information:**

Kumea Shorter-Gooden received a B.A. in Psychology from Princeton University and a Ph.D. in Clinical and Community Psychology. She served as Associate Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer at the University of Maryland from the University of Maryland. She co-authored the book *Shifting: The Double Lives of Black Women in America*.

Winston Gooden holds a PhD from Yale in psychology and was the Dean of Fuller Theological Seminary.

Wendy Shorter Edwards was the Executive Director of the Early Childhood Academy Public Charter School in Washington, DC.

Gretchen Roberts-Shorter was the oldest child of Aneita and Bertrand Roberts. She earned a BA from Howard University and MEd from George Washington University. For 30 years was an art and special education teacher in the DC Public Schools. She was a prize-winning photographer and author of the award-winning novel *Can't Remember Playing* (available on Amazon), about a mixed-race slave who fought in the Revolution. She was active in genealogy and history, and she published an on-line database of the 3100 enslaved District of Columbia residents who were emancipated on April 16, 1862.

Kimani Roberts Shorter is the developer of the “Shorter Typology, a personality typology system that borrows ideas from Carl Jung and applies them to DSM disorders.”

Dr. Adia Shani Gooden received her bachelor's degree in Psychology from Stanford University and earned her PhD in Clinical Community Psychology from DePaul University. She served as a Staff Psychologist and the Coordinator for Multicultural Outreach and Support at The University of Chicago Student Counseling Service for four years. She also served as the Director of the Clinic and Community Programs at the Family Institute at Northwestern University.

## Information on the Author

Llewellyn "Lew" Toulmin holds a PhD in public administration and economics from American University in Washington, DC, an MPA from the Maxwell School of Syracuse University, and a BA in sociology, anthropology and political science from Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida. He worked for over 40 years in 30 developing countries and the US in public administration reform, telecommunications policy, disaster response and management analysis. For three of those years he served as a senior policy advisor in e-government in the Prime Minister's Office of the Republic of Vanuatu, sponsored by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs.

Lew has over twenty years of experience in genealogy, is a member of over 40 genealogical and lineage societies, and was the President of the Hereditary Order of the Families of the Presidents and First Ladies of America, and Governor-General of the Hereditary Order of the Descendants of the Loyalists and Patriots of the American Revolution. He has published in various professional and academic journals in the areas of history, genealogy, exploration, emergency management and public administration, and is the author of the non-fiction book *The Most Traveled Man on Earth*. He is the author of the first major genealogical study of the Henson clan, focused on Reverend Josiah Henson, the heroic inspiration for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and on explorer Matthew Alexander Henson, co-discoverer of the North Pole and the first black member of The Explorers Club.

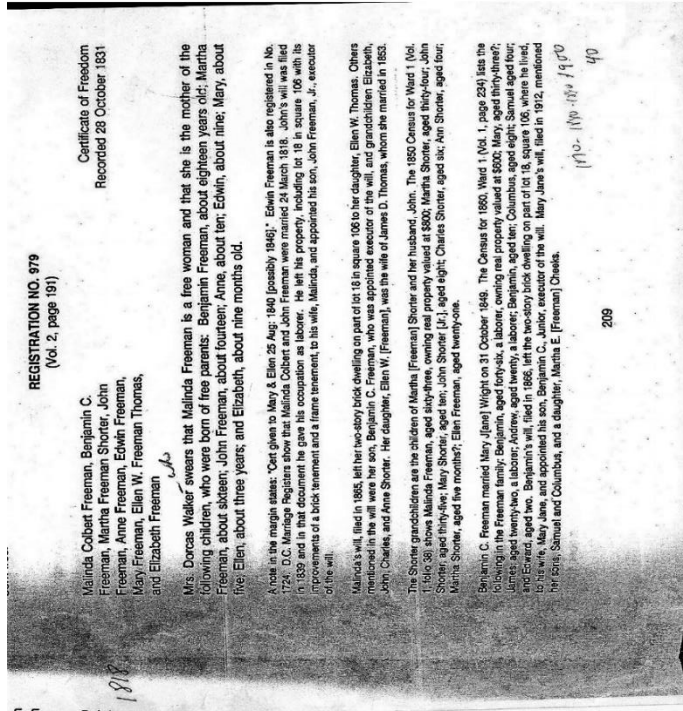
Lew is a Fellow of The Explorers Club and has carried the Flag of the Explorers Club ten times on expeditions in archaeology and anthropology to Vanuatu, England, Alabama, Maryland, Virginia and South Carolina, and led or participated in other anthropological and archaeological expeditions to Thailand, Malaysia, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Honduras and various US states. Most of his expeditions have involved extensive genealogical and historical research. He is the research director of the private Missing Aircraft Search Team, a Knight of the Sovereign and Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem (the modern Knights Templar), a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. He volunteers at the University of South Alabama Archaeology Lab and at the Montgomery Parks Archaeology Division.

Lew's website is [www.themosttraveled.com](http://www.themosttraveled.com), and the page on that site "Adventures in Genealogy" provides popular and academic articles he has written about that topic. His "Travel Tales" columns regularly appear in Montgomery Community Media at: <https://www.mymcmedia.org/category/access-voices/local-blogs/travel-tales/>.

Corrections or comments on this report are welcome and can be submitted to [LewToulmin@aol.com](mailto:LewToulmin@aol.com).

# Appendix

## Certificate of Freedom for Members of the Freeman/Shorter Family



**Date:** 28 Oct 1831

**Place:** Washington, District of Columbia

**Description:** (Cropped & Adjusted from Original) 1831 Freedman's Registration for John Freeman and family, 001 - 1831 Registered in the District of Columbia - Julius69 originally shared this on 30 Dec 2011

**Transcription:** Registration No. 979 - (Vol. 2, page 191)

#end of genealogy report#