

**10 Million Names**  
**Impact Report 2024-2025**  
*Reconnecting History,  
Empowering the Future*



# Recover. Restore. Remember.



## Introduction: Restoring Dignity, One Name at a Time

Imagine standing in the shadows of history, longing to know the names of those who came before you—their dreams, their struggles, their triumphs. These are the names of mothers and fathers, builders and dreamers, whose legacies have shaped the world yet remained hidden for far too long. The 10 Million Names project is changing that. We are bringing these names to light, reclaiming their dignity, and reconnecting families with the stories that define them.

This impact report is more than a reflection on the past year—it is an invitation to join a movement. A movement that bridges centuries, transcends borders, and brings communities closer to the heart of their heritage. Through innovative research, groundbreaking partnerships, and the power of storytelling, 10 Million Names is not only recovering the untold stories of history but inspiring hope for a more inclusive future.

As you read this report, you will learn more about the profound impact of this work. From poignant family discoveries that rekindle connections to transformative partnerships that amplify our mission, each story is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the power of reclaiming the past.

Join us on this journey. Whether by uncovering your own story, contributing to this mission, or sharing these legacies with the world, you can help ensure these names—and the lives they represent—are never forgotten. **Together, we can honor the past, inspire the present, and build a future where every story is remembered.**

## A Journey of Discovery: Lisa Shepperson's Story



Lisa Shepperson always knew her family's history carried echoes of resilience, but it wasn't until she delved into the records recovered by 10 Million Names that she unearthed the remarkable legacy of her ancestor, Elizabeth Freeman. Known as "Mum Bett," Elizabeth Freeman was the first enslaved African American to successfully sue for her freedom in Massachusetts in 1781—an act that set a powerful precedent in the abolition movement.

*"Knowing what Elizabeth fought for inspires me to stand tall and continue her legacy."*

—Lisa Shepperson

For Lisa, discovering Elizabeth's courage and conviction was deeply personal. "It's more than history; it's who we are," she shared. "Knowing what Elizabeth fought for inspires me to stand tall and continue her legacy." Through 10 Million Names, Lisa connected with the documents and stories that transformed her understanding of her family's place in American history.

This story is just one example of how the 10 Million Names initiative is helping families reclaim their past while empowering future generations to build on that legacy.

## Our Mission in Action

### Key Metrics of Impact

- **Recovered Over 864,000 Names:**
  - ◇ Sourced from 15 unique databases spanning 21 states and national records, including the Freedmen's Bureau and Civil War soldier profiles.
  - ◇ Each name represents a step toward restoring lost histories.
  - ◇ [Discover the story of Willie Mae Coleman](#), a South Dallas resident who uncovered her great-great-grandmother's legacy through this initiative.
- **Built a Free Public Resource:**
  - ◇ At [10MillionNames.org](https://10MillionNames.org), families can access tools, records, and guidance to begin their genealogical journeys.
- **Empowered 100+ Communities:**
  - ◇ Hosted workshops and educational events to teach individuals how to uncover their and celebrate the stories that shape us.



Willie Mae Coleman, Courtesy of WFAA.



## Leadership That Inspires

The 10 Million Names Advisory Board has been instrumental in guiding our mission, forging partnerships, and amplifying our reach. These visionary leaders bring unparalleled expertise and dedication to this transformative work.

### Advisory Board Members:

- **Henry Louis Gates, Jr.**  
Advisory Board Member
- **Ketanji Brown Jackson**  
Honorary Advisory Board Member
- **Paula Madison**  
Advisory Board Member
- **Dr. Kendra Field**  
Chief Historian
- **Richard Cellini**  
Founding Executive Director
- **Gwill York**  
Advisory Board Chair
- **Mattie McFadden-Lawson**  
Advisory Board Member
- **Michael A. Lawson**  
Honorary Advisory Board Member

## Paula Madison: A Catalyst for Change and Connection



Paula Madison, an award-winning journalist, media executive, and storyteller, brings her commitment to inclusion and breaking barriers to the 10 Million Names Advisory Board. As the former CEO of the Los Angeles Sparks and the first African American woman to hold the position of Executive Vice President at NBCUniversal, her career has been defined by her ability to lead with vision and purpose. Her passion for uncovering and celebrating untold stories is deeply personal. Paula's own journey into family history chronicled in her memoir and documentary *Finding Samuel Lowe*, reflects her commitment to honoring and preserving legacies.

Paula has leveraged her influence to help 10 Million Names secure important partnerships with ABC News and Marc Morial, President & CEO of the National Urban League, and open doors to important philanthropists. We are deeply grateful for her contributions and inspired by her example to act boldly, give generously, and help carry forward the legacies of those who came before us. [View Paula speak at NABJ in 2023.](#)

## Stories of Impact

From its launch, 10 Million Names has captured national attention, sparking meaningful conversations and inspiring millions to reconnect with their heritage. Here are some highlights of the media coverage that has propelled our mission forward:

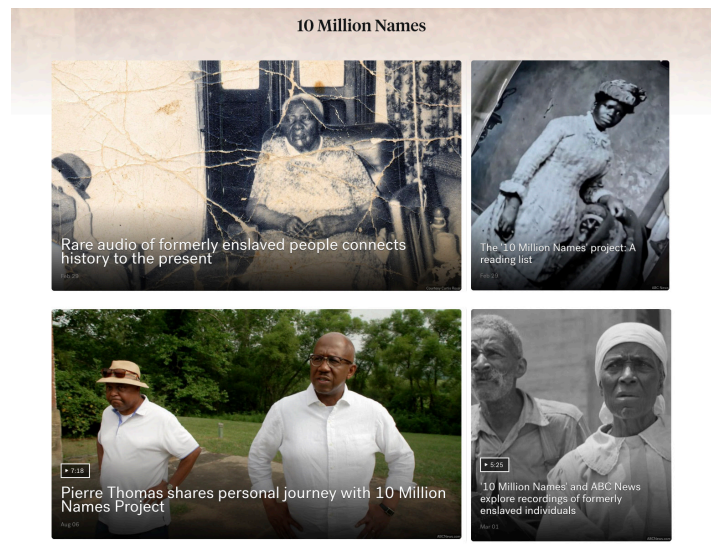
- **Good Morning America:** Linsey Davis shared her personal journey of uncovering her family's history through 10 Million Names, inspiring a national audience to explore their own roots. [Watch the story.](#)
- **WFAA News:** Willie Mae Coleman's powerful story of uncovering her great-great-grandmother's legacy was featured, highlighting the grassroots impact of 10 Million Names. [Read more.](#)

These stories illustrate the transformative power of uncovering and sharing untold histories, reaching millions and inspiring a movement of discovery and empowerment that will last a lifetime.

## Partnerships: A Collective Effort to Reclaim History

Our success is built on a network of impactful partnerships. These collaborations help us amplify stories, recover histories, and empower communities. Here's how our partners make a difference:

- **ABC News:** Through compelling storytelling, ABC News has brought the mission of 10 Million Names into millions of households. [Their coverage](#) inspires viewers to connect with their own histories and pledge to support this transformative work.
- **Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS):** By providing research expertise and fostering community engagement, AAHGS is an essential ally in connecting African American families with their ancestral roots. Their partnership has deepened our ability to uncover stories across the nation.
- **Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR):** DAR's extensive archives and historical expertise have unlocked records critical to tracing African American genealogies during and after the Revolutionary War. Their collaboration brings new depth to our understanding of early American history.



*Courtesy of ABCNews.*

## Become a Collaborator

Imagine your organization as a catalyst for uncovering 10 million stories of resilience, hope, and freedom. By partnering with us, you're not just preserving history—you're shaping the future of how we understand our collective past. Ready to make an impact? [Join us today](#) and be part of a legacy that will inspire generations to come.

Partner with us to:

- Elevate untold stories of resilience and triumph
- Provide resources to communities seeking to reconnect with their histories
- Lead the charge in preserving and sharing the legacy of African Americans across generations

[Contact Lindsay Fulton](#) to explore opportunities to collaborate and leave your mark on history.



## Collaborative Partners

- ABC News
- Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society
- The Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' Family Search Library
- Daughters of the American Revolution
- FamilySearch
- Famous Kin
- Fordham University Press
- The Georgetown Memory Project
- Godfrey Memorial Library
- Howard University
- The New Bedford Free Public Library
- New Bedford Historical Society
- New Bedford Whaling Museum
- The Northeast Slavery Records
- Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association
- The Reckoning
- Slavery Legacy History Coalition
- HEARTS (History, Ecology, Arts, Reunion, Trails, Store)
- Heritage Library Foundation
- Historic Sotterly
- The Texas Freedom Colonies Project
- The White House Historical Association

## Education: Empowering Through Knowledge

### Bridging History in Maine and the U.S. Virgin Islands

At the heart of 10 Million Names' mission is education—an unwavering belief that reconnecting with history has the power to inspire, heal, and transform. This year, in partnership with American Ancestors' youth education program, we brought the transformative power of genealogical discovery into classrooms in Maine and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI). Together, we helped students and teachers uncover stories of resilience, courage, and strength woven into the fabric of their local communities.

In Maine, students explored archival records that revealed connections to the Underground Railroad. For many, it was their first glimpse into a chapter of history that felt personal and deeply significant. The pride and curiosity sparked in those lessons have left a lasting impression on young minds, rooting them more deeply in their state's remarkable history.

In the USVI, students unearthed stories of ancestors who endured the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade and emerged to build vibrant, thriving communities. For one high school senior, the experience was transformative. The courage and tenacity of those ancestors are now a source of inspiration for these students, empowering them to carry forward their legacies.

Through these partnerships, 10 Million Names is not just teaching history; we are helping a new generation find their place within it—instilling pride, resilience, and a deeper connection to the stories that define us all.

*“Learning about my ancestors has made me prouder of where I come from. It gives me strength to know the challenges they overcame.”*

—USVI Student



*USVI Teacher Workshop, Photo courtesy of the Caribbean Genealogy Library.*

## Our Impact by the Numbers

- **45 Schools Engaged:** 25 in Maine and 20 in the USVI participated in 10 Million Names teacher education workshops
- **12,000+ Students Reached:** Interactive sessions inspired students to connect with their community and family histories
- **92% of Teachers Reported:** Students showed increased engagement and understanding of history after the workshops

Through these programs, we are not just teaching history; we are building connections to identity, resilience, and pride.

## Be Part of a National Movement!

Join us in shaping the next generation of changemakers. Your support can bring these transformative educational experiences to more classrooms, empowering students to uncover their history and embrace their legacy. Sponsor a school, fund a workshop, or bring 10 Million Names to your community. [Contact Dionne Jackson](#) to learn how you can make a difference today.

## Looking Ahead: Our Vision for 2025

The future of 10 Million Names is bright, and we are committed to making even greater strides. Our goals for 2025 are bold, transformative, and community-focused as we imagine a world where every family can trace their roots. By 2025, we aim to:

### Expand the Database

- Add 1 million additional names from 17 new collections spanning 18 states;
- Integrate advanced AI tools to make genealogical searches faster, more intuitive, and more accessible than ever

### Empower Communities

- Continue our life-changing workshops, interactive sessions, and other programs and events
- Launch the “Paths to Freedom” series, guiding individuals in reveal their ancestors’ journeys from enslavement to emancipation

*“The excitement in my classroom is electric. These stories are bringing history to life for my students in ways I’ve never seen before.”*

—Maine Teacher



Maine Teacher Workshop.



Maine Teacher Workshop.

## Grassroots Campaign: A Movement for Connection and Change

The 10 Million Names Grassroots Campaign is more than an outreach initiative—it's a call to action for individuals, families, corporations, and organizations to reclaim history and build a shared future. This campaign invites diverse communities to come together to preserve the untold stories that form the fabric of our nation.

### Why This Campaign Matters

Every name we recover represents a life, a family, and a legacy. By joining this grassroots effort, you're helping to:

- Expand our database to include over 1 million additional names.
- Host educational workshops that empower individuals to uncover their ancestral roots.
- Ensure that African American stories are preserved and celebrated for generations to come.

### How Corporations Can Get Involved

Your company can play a pivotal role in preserving history and empowering communities:

- **Sponsor a Workshop Series:** Host events that connect individuals with their family histories.
- **Host Employee Engagement Activities:** Inspire your team by organizing genealogy sessions or storytelling events through your corporate social responsibility programs.
- **Support Digitization Efforts:** Help us make vital records more accessible through targeted funding.

**Call to Action for Corporate Partners:** Make history part of your legacy. Partner with us to amplify the reach and impact of 10 Million Names. [Contact Dionne Jackson](#) to learn more.

### Professional Advocates: Your Voice Matters

Are you a wealth manager, financial advisor, corporate philanthropy officer, tax attorney, accountant, or estate planner? If you are a professional who influences, manages, or advises on philanthropy, corporate investments, or community engagement initiatives, join our growing network of professional advocates for 10 Million Names.

[Contact Dionne Jackson](#) to learn how you can leverage your platform to champion the untold stories of 10 Million Names.

*“The 10 Million Names initiative is a transformative project that reconnects families and communities to their histories. It’s a testament to resilience and the enduring contributions of African Americans to our nation’s story.*

*This grassroots campaign is a chance for all of us to honor the past and invest in a brighter, more inclusive future.”*

—Marc Morial, President & CEO of the National Urban League



Scan to support  
10 Million Names.



## Organizational Partners: Building a Movement Together

We're inviting organizations—faith-based groups, civic organizations, and educational institutions—to be part of history in the making through this transformative campaign:

- **Collaborate on Workshops:** Partner with us to host genealogy sessions in your community
- **Engage Your Members:** Inspire your network to participate in the grassroots campaign
- **Amplify the Message:** Share campaign updates and success stories across your organization's channels

## Volunteer Impact: Honoring Lives, Preserving Legacies

In 2024, 10 Million Names achieved extraordinary milestones, thanks to the unwavering dedication of our volunteers. From the moment we began our initiatives in December 2023, a group of 70 passionate individuals poured their hearts into uncovering history, contributing an astounding 1,933 hours of their time across four critical projects. Their work stands as a testament to the power of community and collective purpose.

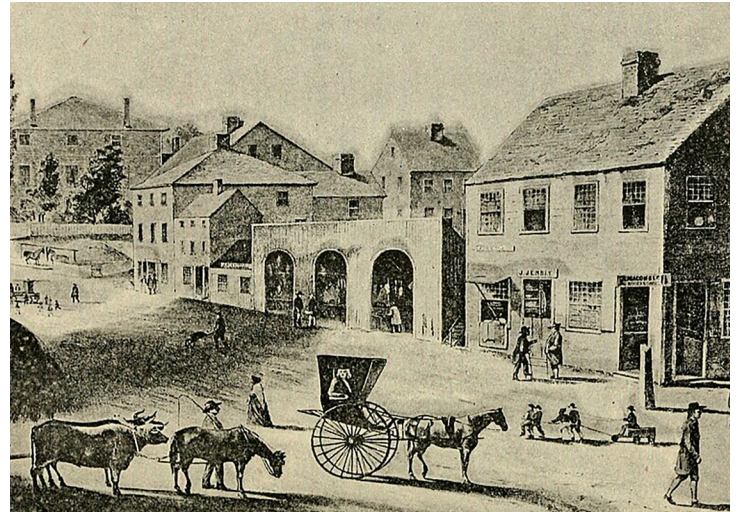
One of the crowning achievements this year was the release of [\*Massachusetts: Biographical Entries of People of African Descent in New Bedford and Coastal Towns Also Once Part of Dartmouth \(Westport, Dartmouth, and Fairhaven\)\*](#)—a database created entirely by volunteers. This first volume, covering surnames beginning with A–D, added 12,501 names, 405 pages, and 6,504 records to our growing collection. With additional volumes already underway, this accomplishment represents the beginning of a legacy that will resonate for generations to come.

Beyond the numbers, the stories we have uncovered hold profound meaning. **One volunteer, while piecing together fragments of history, found his fourth great-grandfather among the records—a deeply personal moment that brought his family's past to life.** It's moments like these that remind us of the transformative power of this work: we are not just documenting history; we are helping individuals reconnect with their roots, their ancestors, and their identities.

## Be Part of History

This is your chance to make a difference. Join us today and help bring history to life, one name at a time. Whether it's hosting an event, donating, or simply sharing the message, your involvement matters. Together, we can honor the past, inspire the present, and build a future where every story is remembered.

[Contact Danielle Rose](#) and start your journey now.



New Bedford (Mass.). Board of Trade; Pease, Zeph. W. (Zephaniah Walter), b. 1861; Hough, George A; Sayer, William L. (William Lawton), 1848-1914.

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