

# Family Matters

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Official Newsletter of the Gillyard-Johnson-Mahoney Family Reunions  
www.gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com

*Happy New Year!*



## Team Leader's Corner Bettie Gillyard Griggs

### *Reflections*

I never start the New Year without taking a look back on the old. Today, I'm looking back to, August 4-6, 2010, when we gathered as a family and I remember how great it was. Over 130 family members participated in our weekend of fellowship, fun and love.

Most of us have a moment or moments that stood out as special for us during that weekend. I am especially thankful for friends who journeyed to where I call home, to celebrate "New Vines from Strong Roots." Their participation and your hospitality spoke volumes. And that those friends are making plans to include our 2012 celebration on their calendars humbles me.

Following our reunions, I am always more inspired to dig deeper into our history. In Our Trammell Roots on page 2, I share thoughts on my trip to Limestone County, Texas. There is no way however, that I could ever put in writing my true emotions about the trip. It was truly an emotional journey!

In the Family Spotlight (page 1) and in We Connect (page 2) read how since our reunion first cousins have been connected and how we've answered questions about how we are related to each other. All of these connections have taken place because of our reunions and engaging and fellowshiping with each other.

With so much talk about the historical landmark health care legislature signed by President Obama, and because of our commitment to Healthy Living,

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## Family Spotlight



(Standing l to r: Earlean Boatright, Mattie Thomas, seated Florida Narin)

William Guion, who was the eldest child of John and Florida Guion. William left Shreveport and relocated to northern California in the mid 1940s. Mattie, daughter of Appless, the fifth child of John and Florida.

Earlean and Florida were preteen and toddler, respectively, when their dad passed in 1956, and they lost contact with their Louisiana relatives. The cousins met for the first time on December 20, 2010. Florida hosted a beautiful luncheon in her home as the cousins connected. Also present for the luncheon were Earlean's granddaughter Mimi; Florida's husband George, her daughters Georgia and Cecilia and son Cecil.

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## Upcoming Events

2012  
Gillyard-Johnson-Mahoney  
Family Reunion

August 3-5, 2012

Check our website and your email frequently for all the latest information on the 2012 Family Reunion

This month the spotlight shines on first cousins, Earlean Boatright, Florida Narin and Mattie Thomas.

Earlean and Florida are the daughters of

## Our Trammell Roots

Submitted By: Bettie Gillyard Griggs



When I started the research of the Gillyards, I followed the advice of professional genealogists, start with what you know. I pulled out my Dad's obituary and found the names of my paternal granddad and grandma. The name Charlie Gillyard was no surprise and **Cynthia Trammell** had a familiar sound. I instantly realized however that I knew nothing at all about the Trammells, and decided to research that line also. I knew it would be tough because I did not know one Trammell relative.



Much to my surprise, over a course of only four years, I've come to learn more about my Trammell roots than I ever thought possible. I've collected historical data from newspapers, archives, published books and several other sources. I was shocked to learn that Grandma Cynthia's father and uncles served in the Texas Police during the reconstruction period. I actually obtained copies of their pay receipts.

With documentary evidence, I had discovered that grandma Cynthia was born in Limestone County, Texas. I needed to visit her home. So on, August 14, 2010, my husband and I started our drive from Dallas County to Limestone County, Texas, located in east central Texas, east of Waco. My goal

for my first visit was simply to see the area and to touch and feel the soil. As we approached the County line, I recalled from my research that it was on a plantation in Limestone County Texas that on, June 19, 1865, Grandma Cynthia's dad learned of his freedom from slavery. That had to be a day of great jubilation.

And now here I was, on the soil of the area that my ancestors had been enslaved and then freed. My body was seized with tearful emotion as I stood on and touched the soil.

That first trip to Groesbeck, Limestone County, Texas will be forever indelibly etched in my memory.



I'm there

## We Connect

Submitted By: Family History Team

Since our family reunion these connections took place.

Our cousin, Floris Gillyard Lymore, who attended the reunion from St. Louis, has been connected with her first cousin, Winnie who lives in Benton. They talk frequently and they are amazed that Floris was in Shreveport and Benton in August and never knew that she had a first cousin who lived only a few miles away. We now welcome Winnie to the family.

Annie Bates who attended the reunion from Littleton, Colorado, now has contact information for her first cousins who are living in the Los Angeles area( read more about the this connection in the Family Spotlight).

Thelma Henderson now knows that her

grandmother, Mariah Guion and Charley Gillyard were sister and brother. Both Charley and Mariah's death certificate identifies Harriett Guion as their mother. Thelma remarked she was always told that she was related to the Gillyards and Guions.

We look forward to clarifying more kinships as our research and communication continues, and We Connect.

## In Memoriam We Remember

Jerry Samuels  
B: November 21, 1950  
D: November 24, 2010

Jerry was a charter member of the Gillyard-Johnson-Mahoney Family Reunions Organization. His presence, valuable input and contagious laughter will be missed.

On March 23, 2010, President Obama signed into law HR 3590, which enacted sweeping changes to America's health care system. With 46 million Americans living without health insurance, according to the Center for Economic and Policy Research, health care reform's real benefits breached divisions between classes, genders and races. Nevertheless, **African Americans** are still suffering disproportionately with the problems of this country's broken health care system. In 2009, 19 percent of blacks did not have health insurance, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The number for whites 10.4 percent in 2007 and **48 percent of African-American adults** suffer from chronic diseases, compared with 39 percent of the general population.

With a series of steps set to roll out over the next five years, HR 3590, also called the Affordable Care Act, is designed to eliminate these and other disparities. And in fact, many of the law's provisions have already begun to be implemented. Simply getting health insurance will be a big step forward for millions of African Americans. The Institute of Medicine has articulated that health insurance is a key component to reducing health disparities within minority communities. A series of measures will guarantee that all people who are insured are treated fairly by their insurance companies. This means that by 2014, insurance companies will no longer be able to deny coverage to anyone with pre-existing conditions -- a huge coup for the **African-American community**, which is plagued with chronic illness.

Insurers are already barred from denying children with pre-existing conditions. Again, while all Americans stand to gain from this particular regulation, **African Americans** in particular should celebrate: **Black children** are more prone than white children to a host of illnesses, including type 2 diabetes and asthma. This will make sure that children up to the age of 19 don't get denied coverage.

Article summarized from  
[theroot.com](http://theroot.com)

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## Family Spotlight

(continued from page 1)

Earlean and Florida were ecstatic about making and sharing the connection to their Louisiana roots with their family. Earlean remarked that it was the "best Christmas gift."

Bettie Griggs, Family Historian shares that Earlean and Florida are also related to the Gillyards and Mahoneys. Their grandmother, Florida, was the daughter of Caesar and Charlotte Mahoney, and their granddad, John Guion was Charlie Gillyard's brother.

Florida Narin is named for her grandmother, Florida.

What a beautiful start to the New Year. We shine the light on family and first cousins.

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## Poll Questions

Submitted By: Frederick Gillyard

Over the last few months, poll questions have been placed on our website to give family members an opportunity to critique our 2010 reunion, and to participate in plans for our 2012 family reunion.

Here is what those responding to the poll questions have told us:

88% rated our 2010 reunion as Excellent; 9% rated it as Good and 3% rated it as Poor.

33 % liked the Black and White Banquet best; 27% liked the Opening Ceremony best, 20% liked the Pentathlon Games/Activities and 20% liked the Health Fair best.

67% rated the Shreveport Convention Center as an Excellent Location and 33% rated it as Good.

77% would like to see the 2012 family reunion held in the Shreveport/Bossier City area, 15% in Las Vegas Nevada and 8% in New Orleans. Dallas was given as a choice, but received no votes.

Our current poll question, What is your choice for a theme for the 2012 family reunion? will run through January 31, 2011. You still have time to tell us which theme you like best.

Take part in the Polls and share our site [www.gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com](http://www.gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com) with family and friends.

Family Historian  
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**Family Reunions  
Mission:**

*To focus on the things that shape us rather than the circumstances that divide us; to strengthen and preserve family as God orders our steps. We value God's Plan, Family, Tradition, and Service.*

**We're on the Web!**  
gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com

**Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday  
Day of Service**

Submitted By: Alicia Brumfield

On January 17, 2011 we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the holiday recognizing one of America's greatest heroes, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

At our 2010 family reunion on August 6, 2010, our Call to Action, **SERVICE**, was announced. We were asked to provide community service as a way to "Pay it Forward" for the sacrifices that our ancestors made on our behalf. Dr. Martin King once said, "Life's most

**Team Leader's Corner**

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Our Healthy Living contributor, Ida Oatis, RN, provides an interesting summary on Health Care Reform and African Americans (page 3).

Since our Call to Action in 2004, we have held two Family Health Fairs and we've added a "Healthy Living" column to Family Matters. It is my fervent

persistent and urgent question is: "What are you doing for others?" You can answer that question and our Call to Action on, Monday, January 17, 2011, by coming together to serve your neighbors and communities.

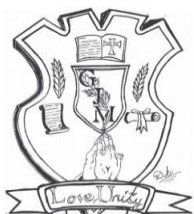
Email us at [gjmfamilyreunion@gmail.com](mailto:gjmfamilyreunion@gmail.com) and tell us how you spent the MLK Day of Service.

prayer that we are serious about advocating for our health and taking care of ourselves.

And so now, in the tradition of our ancestors, I wish you all, blessings without numbers and all good things without end. Enjoy the New Year, Enjoy Family Matters and

Enjoy Your Blessings,

*Bettie*



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