

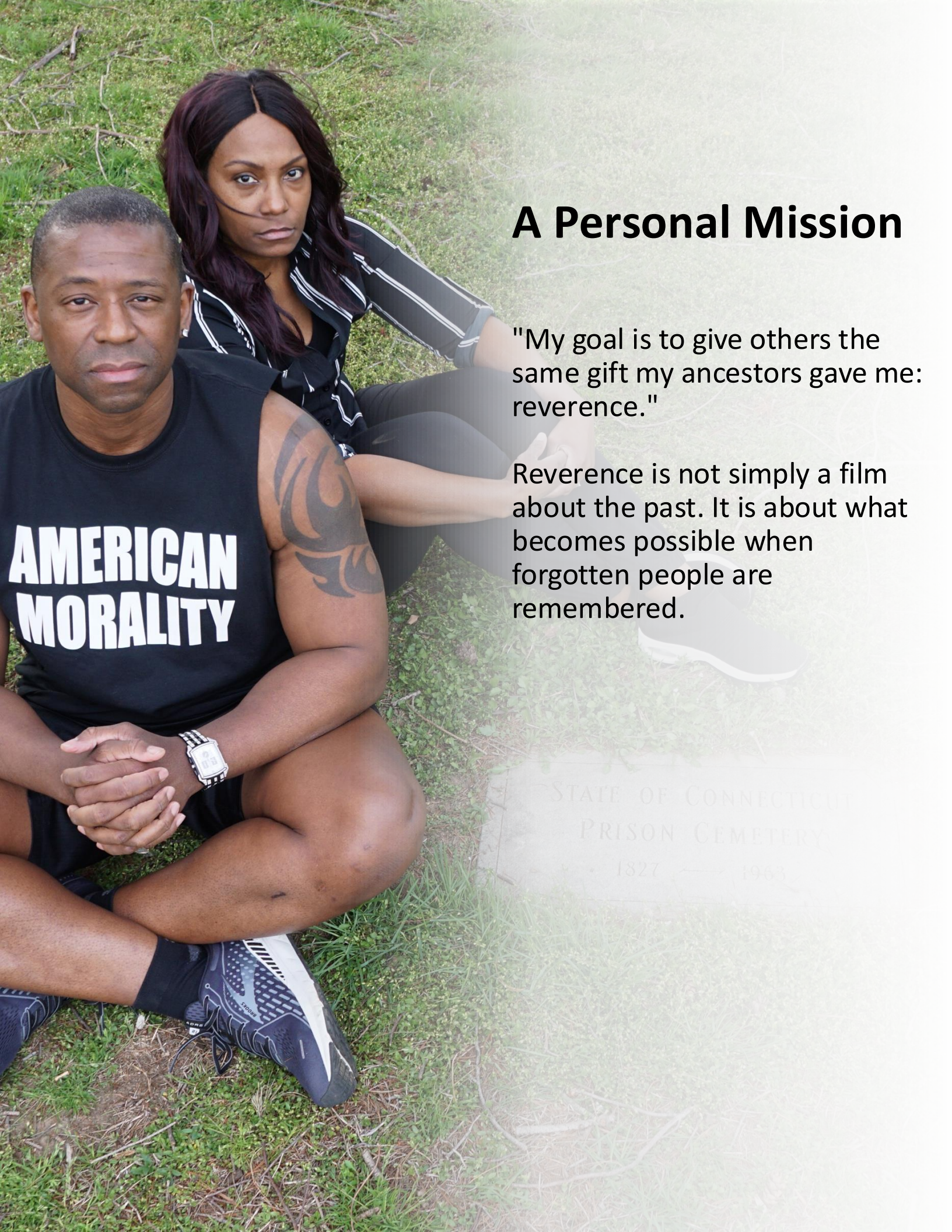
Reverence

Reclaiming the Forgotten

John Mills Media Portfolio

Featuring the documentary
Reverence: Reclaiming the Forgotten
and the published works of John Mills

A Film by John & Erica Mills



A Personal Mission

"My goal is to give others the same gift my ancestors gave me: reverence."

Reverence is not simply a film about the past. It is about what becomes possible when forgotten people are remembered.

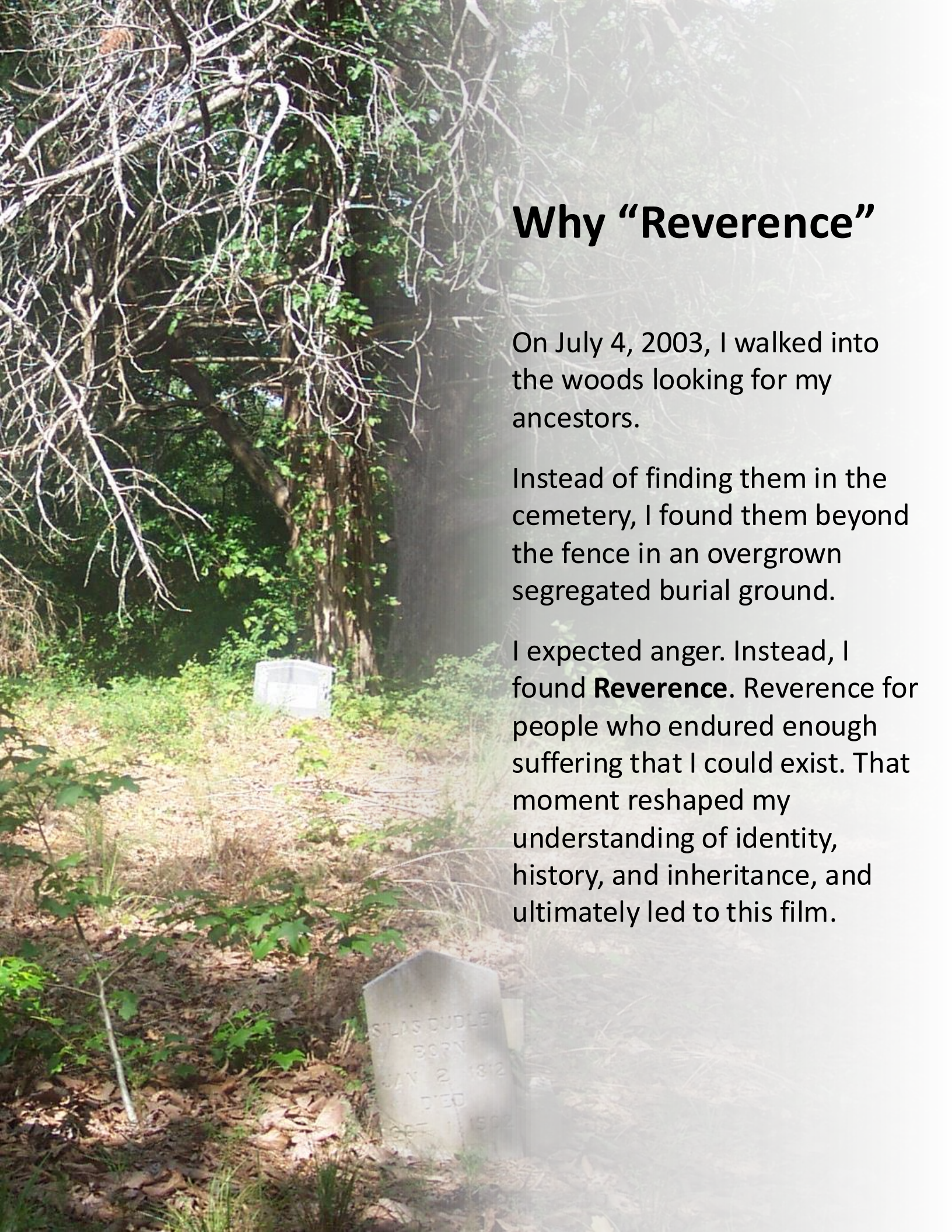


My Journey

“As a child, my father taught me to value Blackness.”

As an adult, I realized I was presenting myself to the world as though I believed I was less valuable than white Americans.

I wanted to make sure my daughter never arrived at that same place.”

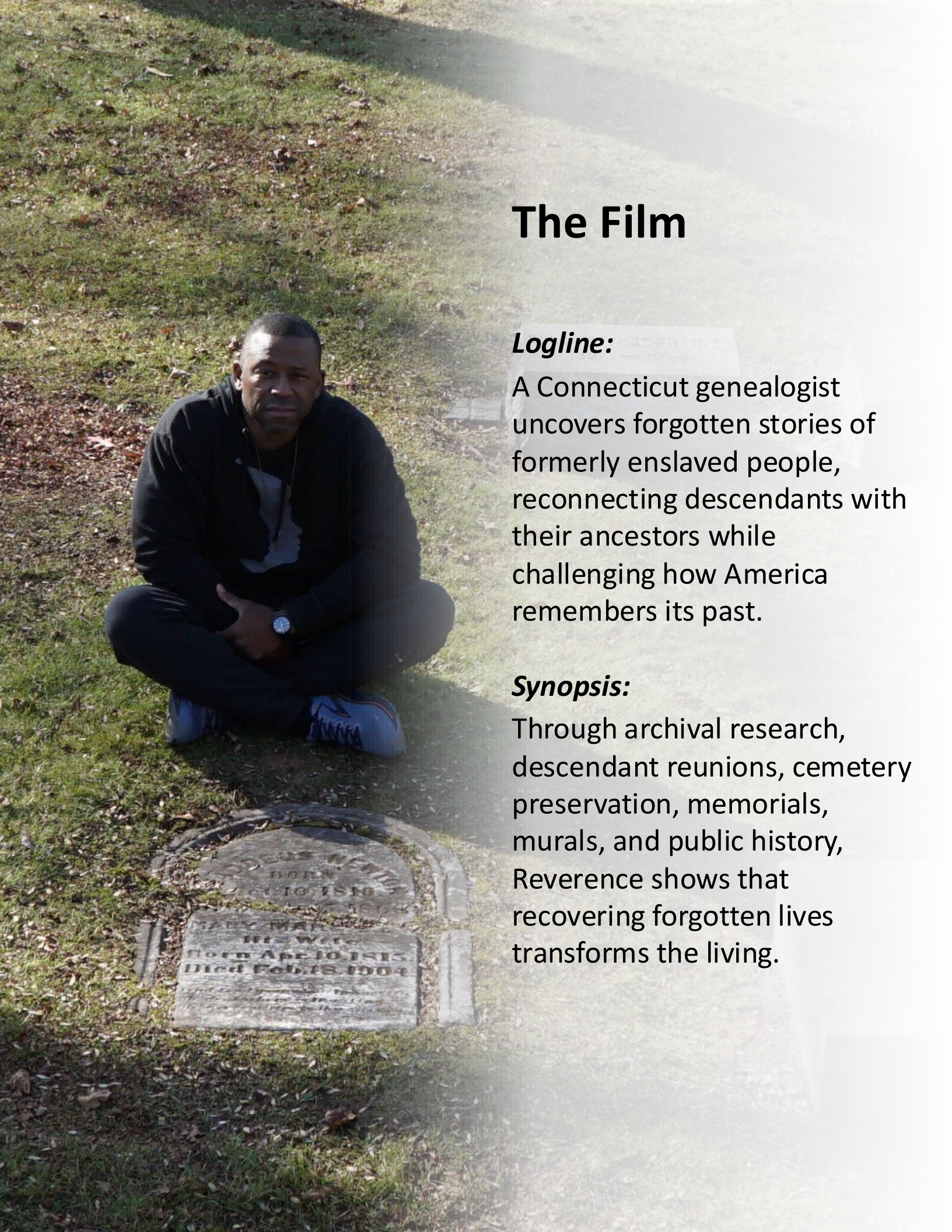


Why “Reverence”

On July 4, 2003, I walked into the woods looking for my ancestors.

Instead of finding them in the cemetery, I found them beyond the fence in an overgrown segregated burial ground.

I expected anger. Instead, I found **Reverence**. Reverence for people who endured enough suffering that I could exist. That moment reshaped my understanding of identity, history, and inheritance, and ultimately led to this film.

A man with short dark hair, wearing a black jacket and dark pants, is crouching on a grassy area in a cemetery. He is looking directly at the camera. In front of him is a low, rectangular gravestone. The stone is weathered and has some text on it, including "BORN APR 10 1815" and "DIED FEB 18 1904". The background shows a grassy field with some fallen leaves and a path leading away.

The Film

Logline:

A Connecticut genealogist uncovers forgotten stories of formerly enslaved people, reconnecting descendants with their ancestors while challenging how America remembers its past.

Synopsis:

Through archival research, descendant reunions, cemetery preservation, memorials, murals, and public history, Reverence shows that recovering forgotten lives transforms the living.

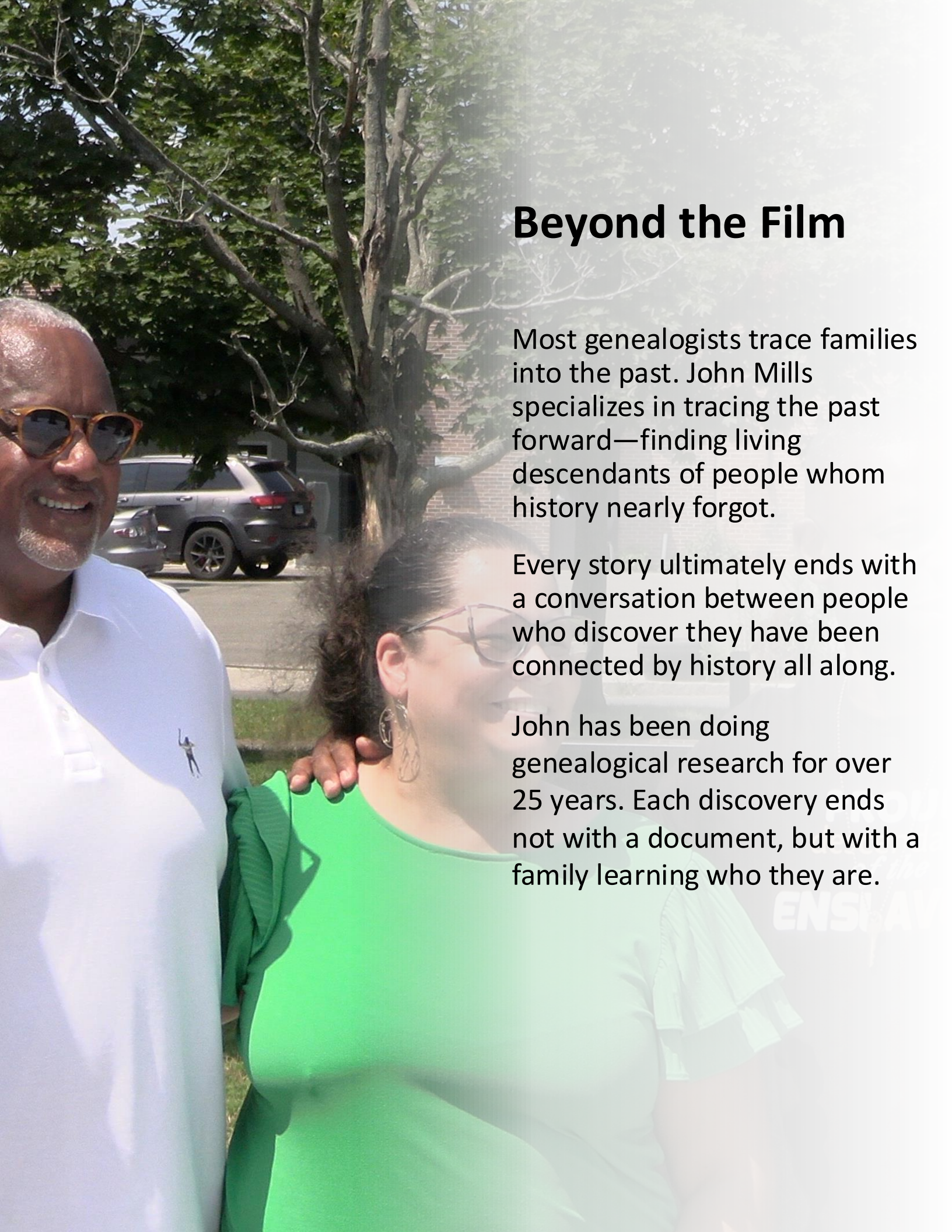
A photograph of John Mills, a Black man with glasses, speaking at a wooden podium. He is wearing a dark blue t-shirt with the text "PROUD descendant of the ENSLAVED" in white and orange. A microphone is positioned in front of him. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

About John Mills

John Mills is an author, filmmaker, public historian, and genealogist whose work reconnects descendants with forgotten ancestral stories through archival research, documentary filmmaking, and public history.

John is also the president and founder of the **Alex Breanne Corporation**—a Connecticut-based non-profit focused on reconnecting descendants of formerly enslaved people with their ancestral stories.

John's work has been featured by *The Kelly Clarkson Show*, *The Washington Post*, Connecticut Public Television, *Junior Scholastic*, and *The Areva Martin Show*. He is the author of *The Narrative of Primus* and a contributor to *A Century in Captivity*.

A photograph of a man and a woman standing outdoors. The man, on the left, is wearing a white polo shirt and sunglasses, smiling. The woman, on the right, is wearing a bright green top and glasses, looking towards the man. They are standing in front of a large, leafy tree. In the background, a silver SUV is parked on a street. The text 'Beyond the Film' is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Beyond the Film

Most genealogists trace families into the past. John Mills specializes in tracing the past forward—finding living descendants of people whom history nearly forgot.

Every story ultimately ends with a conversation between people who discover they have been connected by history all along.

John has been doing genealogical research for over 25 years. Each discovery ends not with a document, but with a family learning who they are.

BOSTON
UNIVERSITY

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

HEREBY CONFERS UPON

John Mills

THE CERTIFICATE IN

Genealogical Research

RECOGNITION OF SATISFACTORY COMPLETION
OF A PRESCRIBED SEQUENCE OF COURSES

AWARDED ON THE 18TH DAY OF DECEMBER, IN THE YEAR
SAND AND TWENTY-THREE, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.

ve

DEAN
of Professional Education

Research Foundation

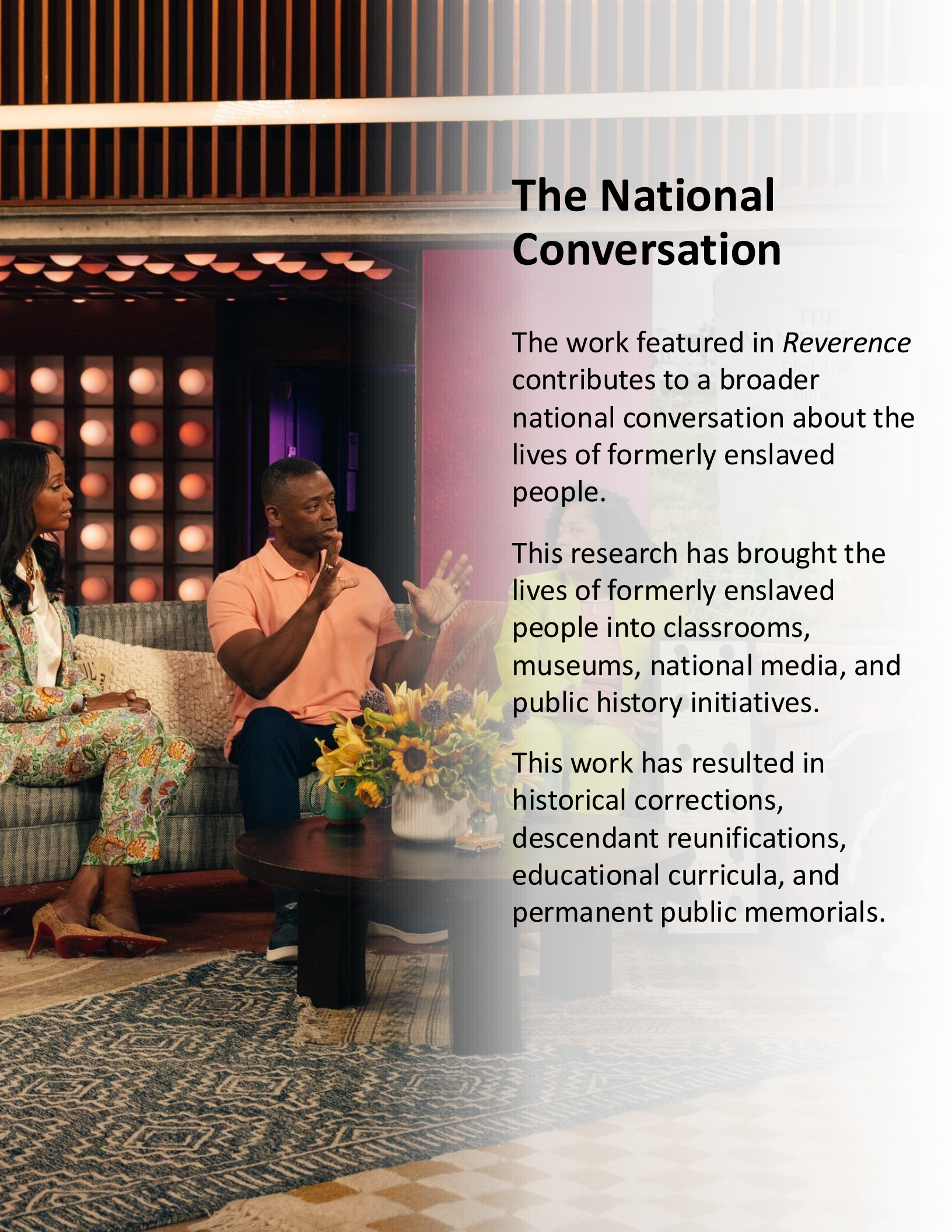
Boston University Certificate in Genealogical Research

Formal training in archival
research and reverse genealogy.

Using archival records,
newspapers, probate files,
obituaries, and modern
research techniques, John
reconnects living descendants
with their formerly enslaved
ancestors.

Melissa Johnson

MELISSA JOHNSON, DIRECTOR
Genealogical Research Certificate Program

A man and a woman are seated on a grey sofa in a modern, dimly lit room. The man, wearing an orange polo shirt and dark pants, is gesturing with his hands while speaking. The woman, wearing a colorful patterned dress and high heels, is listening attentively. In front of them is a dark wooden coffee table with a vase of yellow and purple flowers. The background features a wall with a grid of glowing orange lights and a balcony with a wooden railing.

The National Conversation

The work featured in *Reverence* contributes to a broader national conversation about the lives of formerly enslaved people.

This research has brought the lives of formerly enslaved people into classrooms, museums, national media, and public history initiatives.

This work has resulted in historical corrections, descendant reunifications, educational curricula, and permanent public memorials.



Festival Recognition

➤ Official Selections

- San Antonio Black Intl. Film Festival
- Twin Cities Black Film Festival
- Independent Shorts Awards
- Columbia Maryland Film Festival
- Greater Cleveland Urban Film Festival
- Mystic Film Festival
- Diaspora Festival of Black and Indy Film
- Oscar Devereaux Micheaux BFAB Festival
- Grand Rapids Film Festival
- Black Indie Filmmakers Assoc. Houston Film Festival
- Bermuda Black Film Festival

➤ Semi-Finalist

- Flickers' Rhode Island Intl. Film Festival

➤ Awards

- Independent Shorts – Best Editing (Bronze)
- Oscar Devereaux Micheaux BFAB Festival – Best Documentary Short

National Media

Kelly Clarkson Show

June 19, 2024



The Washington Post

February 6, 2024



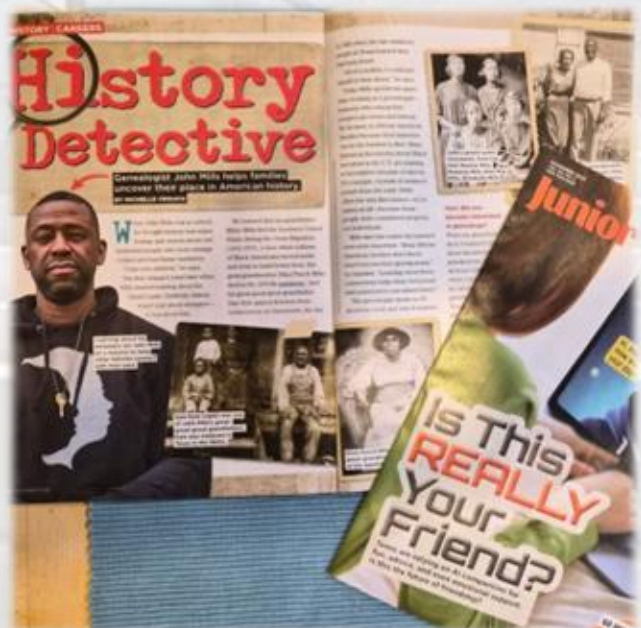
The Areva Martin Show

February 20, 2024



Junior Scholastics Magazine

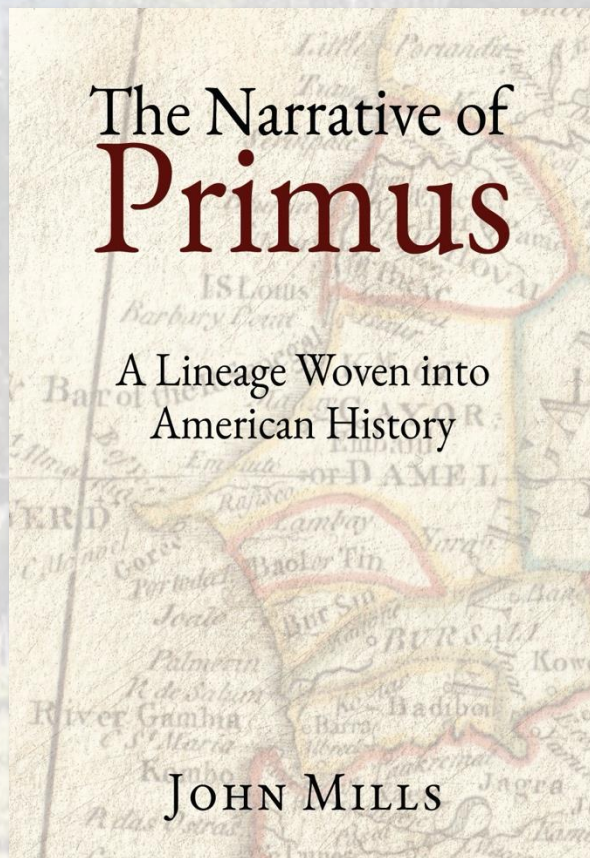
November 2025



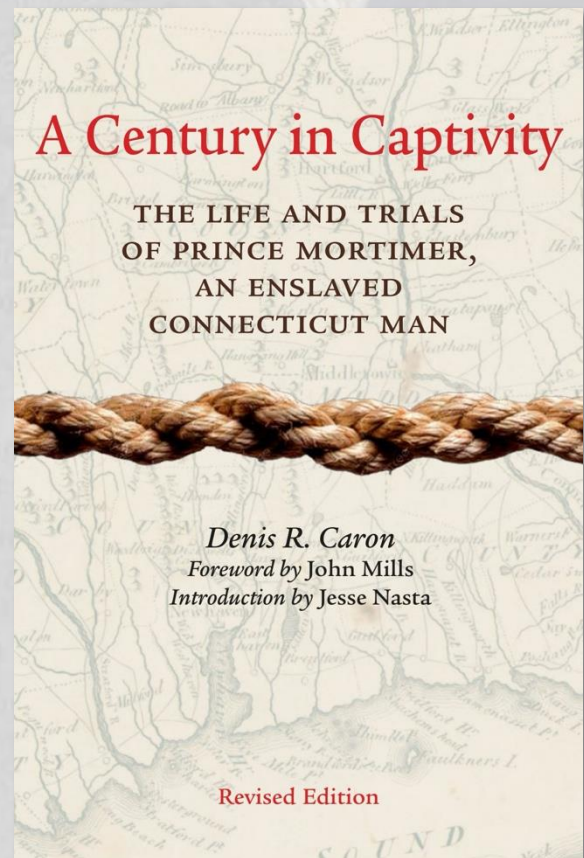
Published Works

The Narrative of Primus — *A multigenerational family history that follows one formerly enslaved child and his descendants across three centuries of American history.*

A Century in Captivity — *A deeply researched biography of Prince Mortimer that examines the intersection of slavery, justice, and the early American prison system through the life of one extraordinary man.*



Publication date: April 21, 2026
Publisher: J. & E. Mills Publishing
Distributor: Ingram
Paperback ISBN: 979-8-9944118-2-7
Hardcover ISBN: 979-8-9944118-3-4



Publication date: October 20, 2026
Publisher: Wesleyan University Press
Distributor: Wesleyan University
Paperback ISBN: 978-0-8195025-9-9

Restoring History to Families

Each of John's projects culminates in returning a forgotten story to descendants who inherited it. In that moment, history is no longer something they study—it becomes part of who they are.



Voices that Bring History to Life



John Mills
Filmmaker and Narrator



Dr. Jesse Nasta
Professor of African American
Studies, Wesleyan University



Morgan Bengel
Curator, Old New-Gate Prison



Kevin Johnson
Historian, Connecticut State Library



Nicole Thomas
Historian, Connecticut Landmarks



Dawn Lathrop-Goode
Descendant



Michael Lathrop
Descendant

Key Creative Team

Director

John Mills

Cinematographer

John Mills

Producer

John Mills

Editor

John Mills

Co-Producer

Erica A. Mills

Story Consultants

Roger J. Kuhns

Anne W. Schmidt

Film Information

Runtime: 33 minutes

Format: Color

Country: USA

Audio: Stereo

Language: English

Aspect Ratio: 16:9

Genre: Documentary

Year: 2026

Contact

John Mills

2550 Albany Ave. #1142
West Hartford, CT 06117

john@alexbreanne.org

<https://alexbreanne.org/reverence>
<https://facebook.com/reverencefilm>



Visit the Reverence
website

Private Screening Link Available Upon Request