

From Colonial Virginia to Washington, DC: André Kearns Recovers the Ancestors History Tried to Erase

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- In 'Finding

Cornerstone Stories,'

author/genealogist traces his family's 250-year American story — and leads readers through the path to finding their own

WASHINGTON, D.C. and BOSTON, MA, Issued July 28, 2026... As the United States marks its 250th anniversary, genealogist, entrepreneur, and speaker [André Kearns](#) is publishing "Finding Cornerstone Stories: Uncovering Inspiration in Your Family's History," a new book that traces his ancestry from present-day Washington, D.C. through the American South and back to some of the earliest Africans in colonial Virginia. Written and published by Kearns in conjunction with American Ancestors®, the book distills more than two decades of research into a collection of richly illustrated essays — and a practical guide readers can implement while uncovering their own family histories.

For more than twenty years Kearns has walked the plantations and stood at the gravesites where his enslaved ancestors lived and are buried, at times delivering public talks on these exact sites.



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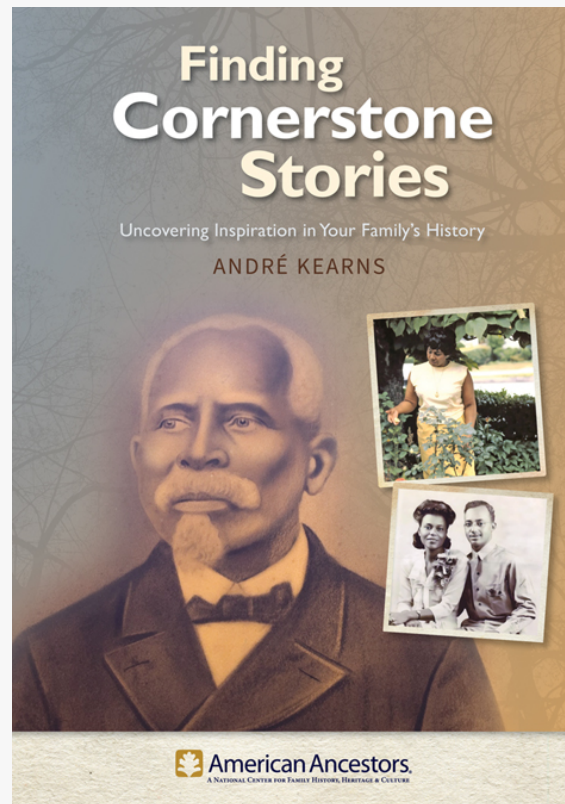
Genealogist, speaker and author André Kearns is releasing his first book "Finding Cornerstone Stories" at the end of September with American Ancestors.

The book's timing is deliberate. In a year when the country is revisiting its founding, through "Finding Cornerstone Stories", Kearns brings a rare personal authority to widening the lens to include the Americans too often left out of traditional narratives.

Throughout "Finding Cornerstone Stories" pages, readers meet enslaved and free people of color — entrepreneurs, educators, ministers, soldiers, and community leaders in Kearns' own lineage — individuals whose courage, faith, resilience, and determination shaped the generations that followed. Their lives reveal not only the history of Kearns' family, but a more expansive and inclusive story of America, spanning slavery and emancipation, the American Revolution, Reconstruction, military service, the civil rights movement, and the enduring pursuit of opportunity.

"Family history is about more than names and dates. It's about uncovering the cornerstone stories that best explain who you are, where you come from, and the values that shaped your family," says Kearns. "When we uncover those stories, we gain a deeper understanding of ourselves, a richer understanding of America, and inspiration we can carry forward for generations."

"Finding Cornerstone Stories: Uncovering Inspiration in Your Family's History" is published in conjunction with American Ancestors. To learn more, or to purchase the softcover book, visit americanancestors.org/publications or amazon.com on or after September 30.



The front cover design for André Kearns' new book "Finding Cornerstone Stories: Uncovering Inspiration in Your Family's History."



André Kearns exploring a historic graveyard and the gravestones of ancestors of our past, courtesy image.

Book Details

"Finding Cornerstone Stories:
Uncovering Inspiration in Your Family's
History" by André Kearns

Published by American Ancestors,
September 2026

7 x 10 softcover, 144 pages, illustrated

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Categories: [Reference / Genealogy;
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Available on or after September 30 at
americanancestors.org/publications, or
amazon.com

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Boston Book Launch

American Ancestors celebrates the launch of "Finding Cornerstone Stories: Uncovering Inspiration in Your Family's History" with a hybrid talk featuring author André Kearns, followed by a book sale and signing.

Friday, October 16, 2026, 5:00 to 6:30 pm ET

American Ancestors' Family Heritage Experience, 97 Newbury Street, Boston, and online (hybrid event)

Admission is free, registration reservation and event details TBA at
americanancestors.org/events

Join André Kearns in person or online as he shares the remarkable family stories behind his new book, and offers practical inspiration for uncovering your own family story.

About the Book

"Finding Cornerstone Stories: Uncovering Inspiration in Your Family's History" reveals tales of Black entrepreneurship and resilience from slavery to leadership through the family tree of author André Kearns. Presented as illustrated essays, the book provides inspiration on every page as the author offers personal stories and practical guidance for readers to conduct



Genealogist, speaker and author André Kearns speaking at the Washington D.C. regional chapter of the Black Employee Network (BEN) at its BEN-DMV Gala on "Mission Driven Leadership: Lessons from my Grandfather,"

genealogical research and discover their own family histories.

Praise for André Kearns' "Finding Cornerstone Stories"

"André Kearns' 'Finding Cornerstone Stories' is the blueprint and practical guide genealogists have needed to transform the raw material of family trees, treasured photographs, archival documents, yellowing newspaper clippings, and DNA tests into compelling narratives. Just in time for the nation's 250th, he traces the journey of a thoroughly American family from his African ancestors' arrival in Virginia in the early 1600s through generations of accomplished relatives whose contributions continue to enrich their communities."

—A'Lelia Bundles, author of "On Her Own Ground and Joy Goddess"

"Through rigorous research and deeply personal storytelling, André Kearns shows how Black family history can illuminate the broader American experience. 'Finding Cornerstone Stories' inspires readers to uncover the resilience, humanity, and achievements of earlier generations, reminding us that genealogy is not merely about names and dates but about preserving stories that deserve to be remembered and shared."

—Paul Heinegg, author of "Free African Americans of North Carolina, Virginia, and South Carolina"

"Our stories are sacred. They connect us to those who came before us and help illuminate the path for those who will come after us. In 'Finding Cornerstone Stories,' André Kearns offers a compelling invitation to discover the wisdom, resilience, and inspiration hidden within our own family histories."

—Rev. Thomas L. Bowen, General Secretary, Progressive National Baptist Convention

About the Author

André Kearns is a genealogist, author, speaker, and founder and CEO of Black Ancestries, a company dedicated to helping families of African descent uncover, celebrate, and preserve their family histories. A nationally recognized voice in African American genealogy, he serves as Vice President of the National Genealogical Society's Board of Directors and chairs its Development Committee. He is a member of The District of Columbia Society, Sons of the American Revolution; a charter member of the Society of the First African Families of English America; and a member of the Sons and Daughters of the United States Middle Passage.

A sought-after speaker, Kearns has presented at leading genealogy conferences, including RootsTech, the National Genealogical Society Family History Conference, and the African American Historical and Genealogical Society Conference. His work has been featured in The Washington Post, USA Today, National Geographic, Fox 5 DC, and WTOP News. He is also a participant in BYUtv's Relative Race. Before founding Black Ancestries, he held senior business and marketing roles at Amazon Web Services and other global technology companies. He holds a bachelor's degree from Morehouse College and an MBA from Harvard Business School, and lives in Washington, D.C. with his wife, Nadine, and their two sons.

About American Ancestors

American Ancestors® is a national nonprofit center for family history, heritage and culture based in Boston, Massachusetts, that has been setting the gold standard for genealogical research since its founding in 1845. Today, American Ancestors serves 400K+ members and subscribers through americanancestors.org, one of the world's largest online collections of family history resources.

In 2025, American Ancestors launched the Family Heritage Experience, an interactive, state-of-the-art exhibition that introduces visitors to the joy of family history research, located at 97 Newbury Street at our headquarters in Boston. American Ancestors is also home to the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center, which preserves New England's Jewish history, and 10 Million Names, a project dedicated to finding the names of the enslaved men, women, and children in pre- and post-colonial America before emancipation. For more information, visit americanancestors.org.

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