

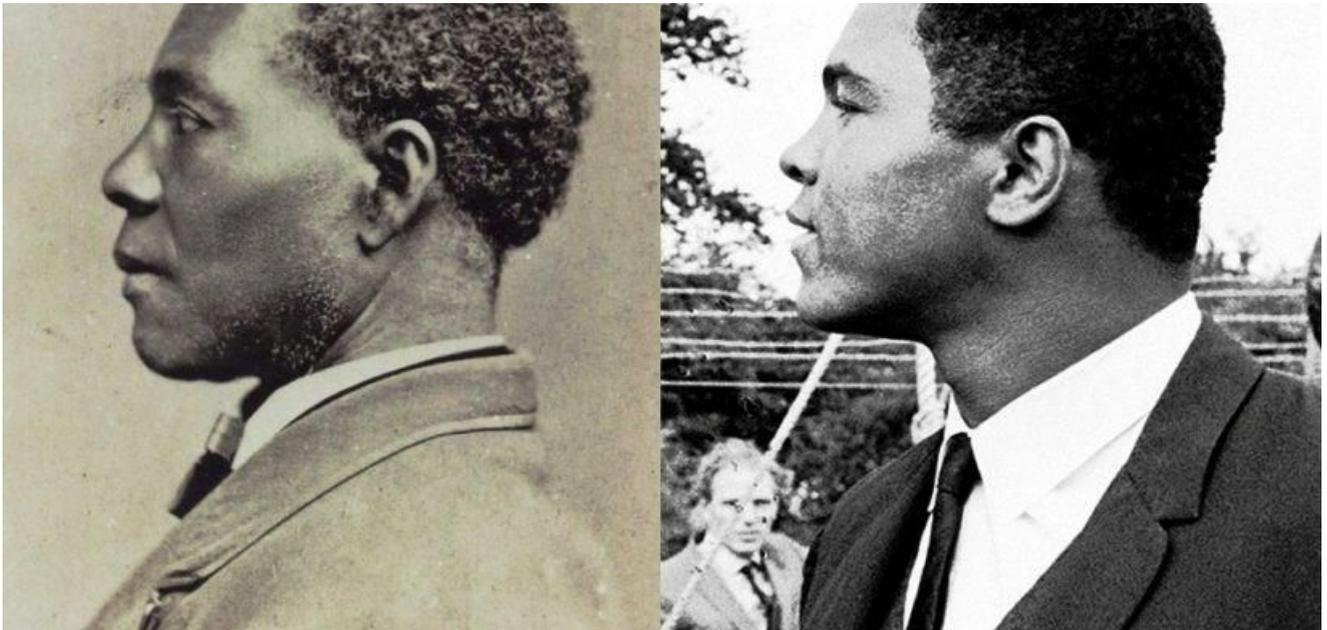
Archer Alexander and Muhammad Ali



Keith Winstead • Nov 28

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VISIT THE PLACES WHERE OUR HISTORY LIVES

In 1984, I bought a new computer and decided to buy a program called “Family Tree Maker.” My mother had a copy of a family tree she got at a family reunion. The tree was put together by my cousin, Loretta Pollard.

At the top of the tree, was a Betsy Hopkins, born in 1796 on Springhouse Plantation located five miles west of Danville, Kentucky and died in 1911 in Louisville, Kentucky at the age of 115. Her husband, Jesse Hopkins, lived on another farm nearby and was owned by a man by the name James Hopkins.

Betsy had about 17 kids — I only know of 13. Jerry, Rachael, Anaka, Patsy, Charles, Eliza, Jesse, John, Ezekiel, Susan, Mary, Lucinda, and Nathaniel. I found Betsy’s son Jesse Fry, his wife and two kids living with Abraham Lincoln’s best friend, Joshua Speed, in the 1880 census in Louisville.

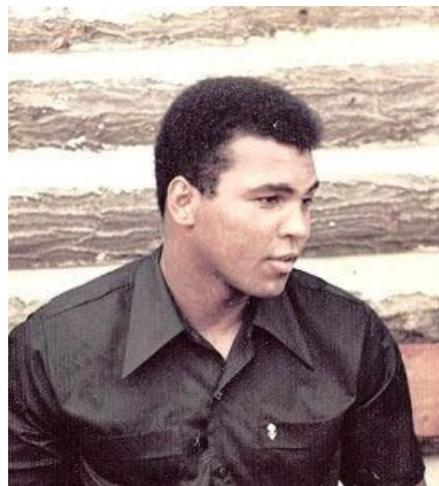
I found a newspaper article from The Courier-Journal — dated Sunday morning, January 7th, 1934 — about Betsy’s daughter, Patsy, who was married to a Wesley Alexander.

Betsy was being interviewed because she was over a hundred years old and she talked about coming to Louisville from Danville when her owner, Thomas Walker Fry's daughter, Mary Ann Fry, married Elias Lawrence in Middletown.

Betsy also talked about coming to Middletown on a stagecoach and then to Louisville on a train. She remembered when Abraham Lincoln was assassinated and seeing her first motorcar. She remembered reading her father's Bible — he was a minister.



Patsy's first son with Wesley Alexander was my great-grandfather, John Alexander. Wesley and his wife Patsy are my — and the great Muhammad Ali's — second great-grandparents. In doing genealogy research, I decided to document the names of my four grandparents, my eight great-grandparents and my 16-second great-grandparents.



Muhammad Ali

After I found 15 of 16-second great-grandparents, I decided to work on my third great-grandparents. I did a DNA test on Ancestry, 23andMe and on Family Tree DNA.

On 23andMe, I matched with Muhammad — my third cousin — and his daughter, Maryum, whose DNA was collected when Muhammad and his wife, Lonnie, participated in a study with 23andMe to raise awareness for Parkinson's disease.

We all matched a Steven Alexander — someone we did not know.

I got in touch with Steven and asked for his tree. Ali, Steven's father, Frank, and I are within the same generation. So, Frank would be a fourth cousin — we shared the same third great-grandparent.

I did not know who my third great-grandfather was but Stephen knows his father's third great-grandfather, Archer Alexander.

Archer Alexander is the father of one of my 16-second great-grandparents because he is my third great-grandfather. Since Stephen, Muhammad, and Maryum all match me on my mother's side, we can eliminate the eight great-grandparents on my father's side.

The only common path Muhammad, Maryum and I have is through Wesley Alexander and Patsy Fry. Patsy's father and mother are Jesse Hopkins and Betsy Fry, respectively. This would make Archer Alexander Wesley's father.

In 1831, Archer was 18 years old when his owner Mr. Delaney died. Delaney's son, Tom, inherited Archer and decided to move to Missouri. On the way to Missouri, they stopped in Louisville for two days. I assume that's where Wesley was left.

Archer was a former slave whose likeness was used as a model for the slave in Emancipation Memorial located in Lincoln Park in Washington, D.C. William Greenleaf Eliot also authored his biography, *The Story of Archer Alexander*.

With the formal outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, Union forces sought to prevent Missouri from seceding with the Confederate states, but many — including Archer's owner — sympathized with the South.

They would often speak freely within earshot of Archer and one night he learned of their plot to cut the supporting timbers under a railroad bridge so that it would collapse under the weight of the Union troops who were expected to pass through

Archer, in the middle of the night, walked five miles to alert the Union army. The bridge was repaired and the catastrophe was averted, but the danger for Archer had just begun.

Local men suspected Archer as the traitor and ordered him to come before an examination committee to be judged. During the night, he fled to escape imminent harm, or possibly worse, death. So, he headed to St. Louis.

Here, he found refuge with D.C. William Greenleaf Eliot — as mentioned earlier he wrote Archer's biography.

Since Archer Alexander was a fugitive slave, Eliot tried to purchase him from his owner. But Archer's owner refused.

Due to Archer's heroics in helping the Union army, Eliot decided to receive an order of protection from the town's provost marshal for Archer.

Once the order of protection eventually expired, Eliot sent Archer to Alton, Illinois, where he stayed until the end of the Civil War.

Elias Lawrence — Betsy Fry Hopkins' owner and the mother of Muhammad Ali's second-great grandmother, Patsy Fry Alexander — married Marry Ann Fry but died just three years later.

More than 2/3 of Elias' slaves went to his infant son, Joshua Fry Lawrence. Joshua owned Patsy and Betsy until the end of slavery in 1865.

Mary Peachy Fry Lawrence moved back to Danville, Kentucky and married Lewis Warner Green. Their daughter, Letitia

Green, married Adlai Ewing Stevenson, who later served as the 23rd vice president of the United States.

Betsy had 18 children, but I only have records of nine of them. One of her sons, Charlie Fry, married Cynthia Taylor, who was a slave of riverboat captain, James W. Goslee.

Charlie fought in the Civil War and was stationed at Camp Nelson in Kentucky. Thomas Walker Fry's son, Speed Smith Fry, was in command of Camp Nelson at that time. Thomas' father, Joshua Fry, who was instrumental in starting Centre College in Danville, Kentucky.

Joshua Fry was named after his grandfather's namesake, who was a surveyor, soldier and politician best known as the creator — along with Peter Jefferson (Thomas Jefferson's father) — of the Fry-Jefferson map of Virginia.

Born in England, Fry came to Virginia in or about 1726 and secured a teaching position at the College of William and Mary. After his marriage in 1736, he served Essex County as justice of the peace, sheriff and coroner.

In 1745, Fry became a resident of the newly formed Albemarle County, which he represented as a court justice, first lieutenant and a member of the House of Burgesses. He died on May 31, 1754 and he was replaced as head of the Virginia Regiment by his second-in-command, George Washington, as you know who later became our first president.

Charlie was buried in 1899 in the military section of Cave Hill Cemetery in Louisville, Kentucky — the same cemetery Muhammad Ali is buried.

Betsy's other sons, Jesse, (and his wife Celia), and Frank are listed as servants in the 1880 Census at Joshua Speed's home. Joshua was Abraham Lincoln's best friend, who often visited Joshua at his home — the Farmington Plantation — located outside of Louisville, Kentucky.



Betsy Hopkins' gravesite and tombstone