THE ST0 ATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
In the Court of Appeals

APPEAL FROM SUMTER COUNTY
Court of Common Pleas

The Honorable Michael Jordan
Master in Equity

RECEIVED
SEP 17 2026
SC Court of Appeals

CASE NO. 2025-002220

Celestine Parker
Loretta Black

Appellants,

v.

John Doe, Jane Doe, Richard Roe, Mary Roe, Infants, Insane Persons and Incompetents, Being Fictitious Names, Designating as a Class Any Unknown Person or Persons, Whose True Names are Unknown, Who May be and Heir, Distributee, Devisee, Legatee, Widow, Widower, Issue, Personal Representative, Executor, Administrator, Successor, Creditor, Assign and/or alienee of Phillis Weathers; Valarie McCray, Harry Burns, Alma Jackson, Lynn Neely, Matthew Peterson, Carolyn Dupree, Gary Dupree, Gregory Dupree, Edith Davis, May Thelma McGee, Rodney Pitts, Denise Pitts, Sheryl James, Marie Gilespie, Eugene Canty, Ethel Swain, Amanda Canty, Connie Canty, Alexander Canty, Clarence Canty Jr., Daniel Canty, Luther Brogdon, Everette Brogdon, Naomi Brogdon, Obar Davis, Wilaba Brogdon, Michelle Thompson, Harold Brogdon Jr., Janice Brogdon, Lillie Mae Cleaveland Payton, Brian Canty, Gloria Canty, Herbert Canty, Randolph Gaymon, Alvin L. Gaymon, Ernestine Gaymon, Aaliyaa Hasan, Taheedah Griffin, Eugene Dowling, Geline Graham, Christopher Dowling, Sheryl Dowling, Donna Dowling, Sherly Richards, Gail White, Debra White, Dana White, Damon White, Danielle White, Also Any and All Other Persons or Legal Entities, Known and Unknown, having or Claiming Any Right, Title, Estate, Interest In or Lien Upon the Real Property Described in the Complaint,

Defendants,

of whom Valarie McCray is Respondent

RECORD ON APPEAL

qw1

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SUMTER COUNTY MASTER IN EQUITY

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MEMORANDUM AS TO 2024-CP-43-02109, Parker & Black v. Doe

The issue for determination in this case is whether Ella (Edna) Willis Williams is one and the same person as Ella (Edna) Murphy, and a descendant of Phyllis Weathers. Plaintiff contends the answer is no, and Defendant contends the answer is yes.

My hearing notes reflect the following:

Plaintiff's witnesses:
Celestine Parker
Daniel Canty
Loretta Black

Plaintiff's Exhibits:
A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I

Defendant's witnesses:
Valerie McCray
Vernetta Swinton
Vera Williams Bower

Defendant's Exhibits:
A, B, C, D

Underlying the above issue is ownership of approximately 8.75 acres of real property located in Sumter County. It is undisputed that Celestine Parker paid the property taxes on such property for 20 plus years, before Ms. McCray changed the name on the property tax card and bill.

Parker testified that from her research she believed Ella Willis was born in 1916, while Ella Murphy was born in 1912. She contends the birth of a child to Ella Willis was unrealistic due to her young age.

Plaintiff's Exhibit A is a family tree document indicating that Priscilla Geynes had no children.

Plaintiff's Exhibit B is a deed of distribution recorded July 11, 2000 and recites in the attached schedule that Persicella Robinson Geynes had three (3) children, Ella Willis, Mary Willis and Benjamin Willis; and that Ella Willis had one child, Edna W. Williams.

Parker made phone contact with William Williams some years ago to express her concerns regarding cut timber, but was told to contact the attorney.

During the hearing the court inquired as to whether the probate court proceedings included a determination of the issue in this case, such that res judicata or collateral estoppel might have an effect in this case. Both counsel responded in the negative.

Plaintiff's Exhibit C is a Death certificate for Ella Willis indicated her birth circa 1880, and her death in 1915, but this record is not entirely clear or easily legible.

Plaintiff's Exhibit D is a 2008 letter to the drafting attorney for Exhibit B which disputes the deed and attached schedule, and denies the familial relationship asserted therein between Edna Williams and Prescilla Weathers Gynes. The letter is not supported by other records or documents. Also attached is a response from the attorney. The response is also not supported by other records or documents.

Plaintiff's Exhibit E is a 1998 letter to the probate court requesting relief from certain transactions related to two estates. Attached is a portion of a recorded survey. The letter is not supported by other records or documents.

Plaintiff's Exhibit F is a deed of distribution recorded March 2, 1995.

Plaintiff's G is a select documents from condemnation proceedings filed in Sumter County. The notice states William Williams and Juliaette Blanding are heirs of Edna W.

Williams. Defense counsel in this action served as Guardian ad litem in the condemnation action.

Parker testified that in 2002, the treasurer, assessor and auditor listed Phyllis Wethers, et al for the property. In 2003, SCDOT initiated condemnation proceedings for a sidwealk along Loring Mill Road and defense counsel served as the Guardain ad litem is that case.

Plaintiff's Exhibit H is a 2024 letter from Defense counsel with attached death records for Ella C. Murphy and Edna Earl Willis Williams. The certificate for Ella Murphy recites a date of death of March 11, 1974 at age 62 years, and her parents were Pinkney Willis and Priscilla Wethers. The informant is listed as Edna Williams, daughter. The certificate for Edna Williams recites a date of death of May 26, 1997 at age 80 years.

Plaintiff's Exhibit I is a notarized statement from a non-testifying witness opining as to a central issue in the case, admitted for identification only. Defendant's objections as to heresay and inability to cross examine were sustained. I have not considered the substance of the affidavit.

Canty and Black both affirmed the testimony of Parker as to family history and the issue (none) of Phyllis Weathers.

Mrs. McCray testified that Ella Murphy died in 1974 and her mother was Priscella. Edna, the daughter of Ella, was a descendant of Priscilla, and the grandmother of McCray. Ella passed in 1974 and Edna passed in 1997. From her research McCray was certain of the familial realtionship.

Defendant's Exhibit A is a social security death index record, indicating Ella Murphy was born August 15, 1888 and died March 1974 at the age of 88 years.

Defendant's Exhibit B is a handwritten census report from 1910. It contains the name, Priscilla Willis with three children: Benjamin, Mary and Ella. This is consistent with the deed of distribution recorded July 11, 2000.

Defendant's Exhibit C, is a handwritten census report from 1900. It contains the name, Priscella Willis with three children: Benjamin, Mary and Ella.

Defendant's Exhibit D, a 1943 probate petition in the estate of Louise Richards, lists Benjamin Willis, Ella Clark, and Mary Dicks in series and to the right lists Priscilla Gynes.

Swinton and Bower both affirmed the testimony of McCray as to family history and the issue of Phyllis Weathers.

The greater weight of the evidence presented through testimony and exhibits supports that Priscella Robinson Gynes had three children: Ben, Mary and Ella. Ella is the mother of Edna and thus Edna is a descendant of Phyllis Weathers as asserted by Defendant. The evidence is not entirely consistent and some records are difficult to discern, but the weight of evidence supports the determination above.

I am asking Mr. Brooks to prepare a proposed order and submit to me via e-file after review by Mr. Connor. If I have omitted anything, please let me know. Thank you both for your work in this matter.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA	)	COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
	)	THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
COUNTY OF SUMTER	)	2024-CP-43-2109

Celestine Parker and Loretta Black,

Plaintiff

-vs-

John Doe, Jane Doe, Richard Roe, Mary Roe, Infants, Insane Persons and Incompetents, Being Fictitious Names, Designating as a Class Any Unknown Person or Persons, Whose Tur Names are Unknown, Who May be an Heir, Distributee, Devisee, Legatee, Wido, Widower, Issue, Personal Representative, Executor, Administrator, Successor, Creditor, Assign and/or alienee of Phillis Weathers; Valarie McCray, Harry Burns, Alma Jackson, Lynn Neely, Matthew Peterson, Carolyn Dupree, Gary Dupree, Greogry Dupree, Edith Davis, May Thelma McGee, Rodney Pitts, Denise Pitts, Sheryl James, Marie Gilespie, Eugene Canty, Ethel Swain, Amanda Canty, Connie Canty, Alexander Canty, Clarence Canty, Jr., Daniel Canty, Luther Brogdon, Everette Brogdon, Naomi Brogdon, Obar Davis, Wilaba Brogdon, Michelle Thompson, Harold Brogdon, Jr., Janice Brogdon, Lillie Mae Cleaveland Payton, Brian Canty, Gloria Canty, Herbert Canty, Randolph Gaymon, Alvin L. Gaymon, Ernestine Gaymon, Aaliyaa Hasan, Taheedah Griffin, Eugene Dowling, Sheryl Dowling, Donna Dowling, Sherly Richards, Gail White, Debra White, Dana White, Damon White, Danielle White, Also Any and All Other Persons or Legal Entities, Known and Unknown, having or claiming and Right, Title, Estate, Interest in or Lien upon the Real Property Described in the Complaint,

Defendants.

ORDER

MASTER IN EQUITY:	**MICHAEL M. JORDAN**
DATE:	**May 27, 2025**
PLAINTIFF'S COUNSEL:	**William M. Connor, V**
COUNSEL FOR Defendant McCray:	**Charles T. Brooks, III**

This matter comes before me pursuant to a Summons and Quiet Title Action concerning a tract of land situate in the County of Sumter, State of South Carolina as filed by the Plaintiffs on or about December 2, 2024.

The Plaintiffs file this action in order to Quiet Title to a tract of land indicated as Parcel No.: 205-00-01-006, physically located on Loring Mill Road in Sumter County, South Carolina. The subject property is currently titled in the names of Phyllis Weathers, et al. Phyllis Weathers

is a deceased person, having passed away in or around 1920. The Plaintiffs and named Defendants are all descendants of Phyllis Weathers. The Plaintiffs allege in their Complaint that the Defendant Valarie McCray is not a legitimate heir or descendant of the late Ms. Weathers and therefore has no interest in the subject property. The Plaintiffs request any and all named Defendants set forth their claims to the subject property, the adverse claims of the subject property be determined and a decree or title to this subject property in the names of the valid heirs of Phyllis Weathers.

The Defendant McCray asserts that she is the natural daughter of Juliaette Blanding, who is the natural daughter of Edna Williams. Further the Defendant asserts that Edna Williams is the daughter of Ella Clark Murphy (née Willis), a daughter of Persicella Robinson Geynes, a/k/a Priscilla Weathers Willis. The Plaintiffs, in their Complaint, have made an allegation that Ella Clark Murphy (née Willis) was not a child of Persicella Robinson Geynes a/k/a Priscilla Weathers Willis and therefore dispute the conveyance of the interest of Persicella Robinson Geynes a/k/a Priscilla Weathers Willis, in this subject property to the heirs and descendants of Edna W. Williams or Ella Clark Murphy (née Willis), of whom the Defendant McCray is descended.

The parties were properly notified of the Hearing to be commenced on this date as appropriate and as evidenced with the Notice of Hearing and Proof of Delivery on file with Clerk of Court for Sumter County, as filed by the Plaintiffs.

Present before me at this hearing were the Plaintiffs along with their counsel of record, William M. Connor, V, of the Orangeburg County Bar. Also present was named Defendant Valarie McCray, and she was represented by counsel, Charles T. Brooks, III, of the Sumter County Bar. No Guardian *ad Litem Nisi* was appointed to represent the interests of John Doe, Jane Doe, Richard Roe or Mary Roe, in this matter.

The Plaintiffs offered their testimony in this matter along with their witness, Mr. Canty, who also testified in support of the Plaintiffs assertion regarding the family history and lineage as known to him regarding the lineage of Phyllis Weathers. The Plaintiffs also provided Exhibits in support of their claims and requests in this matter; including the Plaintiff's "Family Tree" which indicates that "Priscilla Geynes" had no children, a July 19, 2000, (Plaintiffs Exhibit A); Deed of Distribution with an attached schedule indicating three children of Persicella Robinson Geynes, Ella Willis, Mary Willis and Benjamin Willis (Plaintiffs Exhibit B); Death Certificate of Ella Willis (Plaintiffs Exhibit C); a 2008 letter to the Attorney who prepared the Deed of Distribution in July 2000, disputing the familial relationship between Edna Williams and Persicella Robinson Geynes and the response from that attorney (Plaintiffs Exhibit D); a 1998 letter to the Probate Court requesting relief (Plaintiffs Exhibit E); a March 2, 1995, Deed of Distribution (Plaintiffs Exhibit F); documents from a 2002-2003 SCDOT Condemnation action against the subject property filed in order to obtain access to the property to construct a sidewalk along Loring Mill Road (Plaintiffs Exhibit G); a 2024 letter from Defendant McCray's counsel with the death certificate information for Ella Murphy and Edna Williams (Plaintiffs Exhibit H); and a notarized statement from a non-testifying witness opining on a central issue in the case, which the court accepted for identification only (Plaintiffs Exhibit I). The Court sustained an objection from defense counsel in regards to the provision of the Affidavit of a non-testifying witness. There was no raised objection or Motion made by the Plaintiff or her counsel in this proceeding regarding the service of counsel for the Defendant McCray in the previous action of condemnation as the guardian twenty-three years preceding the initiation of this action.

The Defendant McCray offered her testimony in this matter along with her witnesses Vera Williams Bower and Vernetta Swinton, who both testified affirming the testimony of the

Respondent went to the tax's office and changed my name to hers, without any notification to me. My name has been on the tax statement since 1994 and in the Clerk of Court's office in Sumter, since 2006, as I was selected as the contact person for this family. Where would we be if taxes had not been paid for over 30 years. One year, 2023 is the only time taxes were paid by Respondent. At no time did Respondent, her mother or Uncle contacted me about property or taxes.

Willie Williams died, I don't know when, I was not notified. Juliette died in 2023, No one notified me. We found out in 2024, that Juliette died. In 2024 when I did not receive the tax statement I inquired as to why. I then came to Sumter and went to the Auditor's office and then to the Assessor's office and there, I found out that the Respondent had taken my name off and placed her name as owner. There was no notification to me or any other real descendant.

The Respondent's siblings gave the Respondent Title To Real Estate in 2024. In the same year, the Title To Real Estate was given to the Respondent without any notification to any other descendant. This was through her Attorney to the Probate Court. There has been no proof that the Respondent or her siblings were ever entitled to this property as it had not been a hearing of any kind to determine that any of them were descendants. We were not aware that this was happening as I especially was not notified in order to defend my rights.

In all of the years that Edna Williams lived, she never said to anyone that she was a descendant of Phyllis Weathers or any mention of the land.

There was a hearing on May 27, 2025 in the Master in Equity and a Memorandum from the Judge in July, 2025. The Memorandum was denoting the mother of Edna Williams and that was not what the hearing should have been about. We were there to determined if one of the three Ellas presented to the Court was the daughter of Priscilla Gynes.

c

The 1/3 interest to the land was invalid as the Attorney stated to me in writing that he took what Willie Williams said and did not do a title search 2000.

Death Certificate presented to the Courts, by Willie Williams stated that Ellis Willis, who died in 1915 was the mother of Edna Willis Williams, who was born in 1916.

Respondent in 2023, 23 years later, came up with an announcement from Dailey Item stating that Ella C. Murphy who was Edna William's mother was born in 1912 and died 1974. Edna Williams was born 1916. When that didn't work, Respondent came up with a death certificate that stated Ella C Murphy was born 1888 and died 1974, making her around 86. Priscilla being born in 1876, making her 12 years old.

Research came out that:

1. Ellis Willis's mother was Elizabeth White and father was Steve Brailsford.

Ellis Willis was married to Henry Willis and they had 2 children according to the 1900 census, Mary E and Steven Benjamin, who were in the household.of Ella and Henry Willis.

2. Ella C. Murphy according to census, she had 1 son and her maiden name was Leary.

3. Perscilla Gynes lived in Ashville, North Carolina with her husband Marshall Gynes.

Respondent has stated in the reply Brief that Perscilla was not married when she had these children. This is untrue. In 1918, she and her husband were buying property in Ashville, North Carolina. His name was Marshall Gynes.

Pinkney Willis's according to the Respondent's presentation was that Pinkney was married to Perscilla Gynes. Pinkney Willis was born in 1866, Perscilla born in 1876. Pinkney was 34 years old and had been married for 12 years, making him 22 yrs old. Perscilla was 24 yrs

old in 1900, so being married for 12 yrs, that made her 12 yrs old with 3 children. That is impossible.

We as Appellants believe this act of Respondent was invalid and done in a malicious way as not contacting me before she removed my name. At the time of removing my name and being given Title to Real Estate througth her Attorney was a malicious act. Property that has been in our family for many years, goes from heirs to one owner without any notification to anyone.

The Appellee's Attorney going to Probate and filing and giving Ms McCray A Title to Real Estate, not acknowledging that the estate of Phyllis Weathers's grandaughter, Gardenia Brogdon had done a Deed of Distribution in 1994 for 1/26, Willie Williams did a Deed of Distribution in 2000 for 1/3 interest and in 2024 , Appellee's Attorney did a Deed of Distribution for 1/8 interest.

To recap, there were three Deeds of Distribution before Appellee's Attorney filed through the Probate Court, giving Ms McCray ,A Title to Real Estate without any notification to anyone.

Appellee's Attorney was also the Guardian ad Litem for this same family in 2004, and it was 2024 when we found out he was representing the Appellee. We then said it showed a Conflict of Interest

ARGUMENT

THE TRIAL COURT INCORRECTLY DETERMINED THE VALID INTEREST OF THE RESPONDENT IN THE SUBJECT OF THE DESCENDANTS

THE TRIAL JUDGE INCORRECTLY OMITTED A VALID DOCUMENT BY SUSTAINING AN OBJECTION BY RESPONDANT'S ATTORNEY AS THE PERSON WAS NOT THERE IN PERSPON TO TESTIFY AS SHE IS DECEASED SO ,IS EVERYONE ELSE WE ARE REFERENCING.

Respondent's Attorney was asked to write the Order after the Memorandum was writen by the Judge After reading the Order, there were several discrepancies and the Appellant did in fact bring them to the attention through our Lawyer at the time my mother was a granddaughter of Phyllis Weathers and her knowledge was certainly more known than Respondent's.

Respondent claimed she does not know how or why the Assessor sent her a revised account of the acreage. Loretta Black and I had a meeting with the Assessor in December, 2024, brought proof that what was listed was incorrect. After reviewing documents that Loretta and I brought to the meeting, the assessor stated he would correct it.

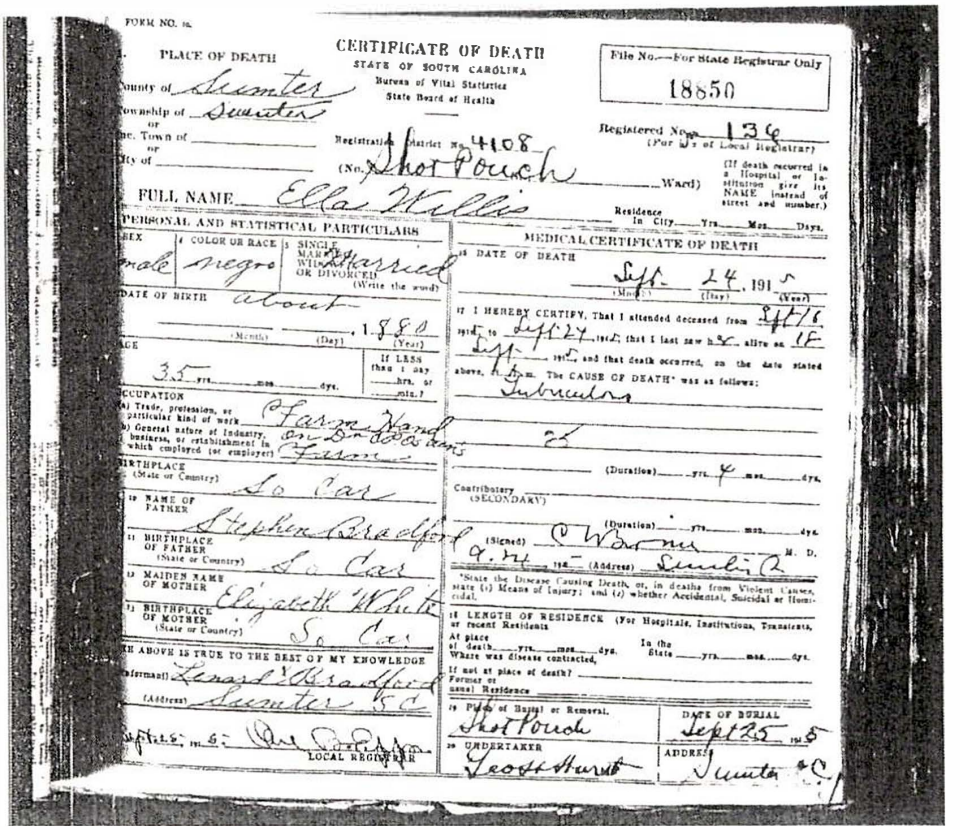
The reason the Respondent received a copy of the revised is because A Title to Real Estate was filed by this Attorney in the Probate, giving the Respondent sole ownership, so because Respondent's name was listed as owner, she received the revision, so did Loretta and I.

Notice, after all was said and done, it comes out Ella C Murphy was born in 1888, and Pyrscilla was born in 1876, meaning Prycilla was 12 hears old .when Ells Murphy was born Appellants had two witnesses who were the actual great-grands of Phyllis Weathers. Daniel Cantey's father, Clarence Cantey was a son of Lena Cantey . Loretta Black is the grand-daughter of Angeline Dupree, who was the daughter of Lena Cantey.

Out of the thirteen children born to Lena Weathers Cantey, I personally knew ten of them, their children and some of their grand children and to include my mother, at no time did any one of them

Pinkney Willis's according to the Respondent presetation was that Pinkne6y was marrieds to Perscilla Gynes

Pinkney Wil;lis was born in 1866,, Perscilla born in 1876. Pinkney was 34 years old and had been married for 12 years, making him 22 yrs old. Perscilla was 24 yrs old in 1900, so being married for 12 yrs, that made her 12 yrs old with 3 children. That is impossible.



FORM NO. 10.

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
Bureau of Vital Statistics
State Board of Health

File No.—For State Registrar Only
18850

Registered No. 136
(For Use of Local Registrar)

1. PLACE OF DEATH
County of Sumter
Township of Sumter
or
Inc. Town of _____
or
City of _____
Registration District No. 4108
(No.) Shot Pouch Ward)
(If death occurred in a hospital or institution give its NAME instead of street and number.)

FULL NAME Ella Mullis
Residence In City Yrs. Mos. Days.

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS

3 SEX	4 COLOR OR RACE	5 SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED OR DIVORCED (Write the word)
Female	negro	Married

6 DATE OF BIRTH about _____ (Month) 1880 (Day) (Year)

7 AGE 35 yrs. _____ mos. _____ dys. If LESS than 1 day _____ hrs. or _____ min.

8 OCCUPATION
(a) Trade, profession, or particular kind of work Farm Hand
(b) General nature of industry, business, or establishment in which employed (or employer) on Dr Dabbs farm

9 BIRTHPLACE (State or Country) So Car

10 NAME OF FATHER Stephen Bradford

11 BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (State or Country) So Car

12 MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER Elizabeth White

13 BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (State or Country) So Car

14 I HEREBY CERTIFY, THAT THE ABOVE IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE
Informant Leonard Bradford
(Address) Sumter SC
Sept 25, 1915 [signature] LOCAL REGISTRAR

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

15 DATE OF DEATH Sept. (Month) 14 (Day) 1915 (Year)

17 I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from Sept 6 1915 to Sept 27 1915; that I last saw h[illegible] alive on Sept 1915, and that death occurred, on the date stated above, at 6 p.m. The CAUSE OF DEATH* was as follows:
Intruders
2
(Duration) yrs. 4 mos. dys.
Contributory (SECONDARY)
(Duration) yrs. mos. dys.
(Signed) C Warren M. D.
9.24 1915 (Address) Sumter

*State the Disease Causing Death, or, in deaths from Violent Causes, state (1) Means of Injury; and (2) whether Accidental, Suicidal or Homicidal.

18 LENGTH OF RESIDENCE (For Hospitals, Institutions, Transients, or recent Residents
At place of death yrs. mos. dys. In the State yrs. mos. dys.
Where was disease contracted,
If not at place of death?
Former or usual Residence

19 Place of Burial or Removal. Shot Pouch — DATE OF BURIAL Sept 25 1915
20 UNDERTAKER Jesse Hurst — ADDRESS Sumter S C

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

CERTIFICATION OF VITAL RECORD

DEATH CERTIFICATION

Registrar's No. _____ STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA BOARD OF HEALTH 74 005197

Birth No. CERTIFICATE OF DEATH STATE FILE NUMBER

DECEASED—NAME (FIRST, MIDDLE, LAST)			SEX	DATE OF DEATH (MONTH, DAY, YEAR)
1 Ella	C.	MURPHY	3 Female	4 March 11, 1974

RACE (WHITE, NEGRO, AMERICAN INDIAN, ETC.) (SPECIFY)	AGE—LAST BIRTHDAY (YEARS)	UNDER 1 YEAR: MOS. / DAYS	UNDER 1 DAY: HOURS / MIN.	DATE OF BIRTH (MONTH, DAY, YEAR)	COUNTY OF DEATH
5 Negro	5a 62	5b	5c	6 1912	7a Sumter

CITY, TOWN, OR LOCATION OF DEATH	INSIDE CITY LIMITS (SPECIFY YES OR NO)	HOSPITAL OR OTHER INSTITUTION—NAME (IF NOT IN EITHER, GIVE STREET AND NUMBER)
7b Sumter	7c yes	7d 426 Council Street

STATE OF BIRTH (IF NOT IN U.S.A., NAME COUNTRY)	CITIZEN OF WHAT COUNTRY	MARRIED, NEVER MARRIED, WIDOWED, DIVORCED (SPECIFY)	SURVIVING SPOUSE (IF WIFE, GIVE MAIDEN NAME)
8 S. C.	9 U. S. A.	10 Widow	11

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	USUAL OCCUPATION (GIVE KIND OF WORK DONE DURING MOST OF WORKING LIFE, EVEN IF RETIRED)	KIND OF BUSINESS OR INDUSTRY
12 248-10-9411 A	13a Laundry Worker	13b

RESIDENCE—STATE	COUNTY	CITY, TOWN, OR LOCATION	INSIDE CITY LIMITS (SPECIFY YES OR NO)	STREET AND NUMBER
14a S. C.	14b Sumter	14c Sumter	14d yes	14e 426 Council Street

FATHER—NAME (FIRST, MIDDLE, LAST)	MOTHER—MAIDEN NAME (FIRST, MIDDLE, LAST)
15 Pinkney Willis	16 Priscella Wethers

INFORMANT—NAME	MAILING ADDRESS (STREET OR R.F.D. NO., CITY OR TOWN, STATE, ZIP)
17a Edna Williams (daughter)	17b 426 Council St., Sumter, S. C. 29150

PART I. DEATH WAS CAUSED BY (ENTER ONLY ONE CAUSE PER LINE FOR (a), (b), AND (c).) — APPROXIMATE INTERVAL BETWEEN ONSET AND DEATH

18 IMMEDIATE CAUSE
(a) Hypertensive Heart Disease
DUE TO, OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF:
(b) Arterial Hypertension
DUE TO, OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF:
(c) Arterio-Sclerosis

CONDITIONS, IF ANY, WHICH GAVE RISE TO IMMEDIATE CAUSE (a), STATING THE UNDERLYING CAUSE LAST

PART II. OTHER SIGNIFICANT CONDITIONS (CONDITIONS CONTRIBUTING TO DEATH BUT NOT RELATED TO CAUSE GIVEN IN PART I (a).)

AUTOPSY (YES OR NO)	IF YES, WERE FINDINGS CONSIDERED IN DETERMINING CAUSE OF DEATH
19a	19b

ACCIDENT, SUICIDE, HOMICIDE OR UNDETERMINED (SPECIFY)	DATE OF INJURY (MONTH, DAY, YEAR)	HOUR	HOW INJURY OCCURRED (ENTER NATURE OF INJURY IN PART I OR PART II, ITEM 18.)
20a	20b	20c AM	20d

INJURY AT WORK (SPECIFY YES OR NO)	PLACE OF INJURY (AT HOME, FARM, STREET, FACTORY, OFFICE BLDG., ETC. (SPECIFY))	LOCATION (STREET OR R.F.D. NO., CITY OR TOWN, STATE)
20e	20f	20g

CERTIFICATION— ATTENDED THE DECEASED FROM	MONTH DAY YEAR	TO	MONTH DAY YEAR	AND LAST SAW HIM/HER ALIVE ON	I DID/DID NOT VIEW THE BODY AFTER DEATH	DEATH OCCURRED AT THE PLACE, ON THE DATE, AND, TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, DUE TO THE CAUSES, STATED
21a	Jan. 30, 1974	21b	Mar. 11, 1974	Mar. 9, 1974	did	21d 1:45 A.M.

CERTIFIER—NAME (TYPE OR PRINT)	SIGNATURE	DEGREE OR TITLE	DATE SIGNED (MONTH, DAY, YEAR)
22a S. J. McDonald, Jr., M. D.	22b S. J. McDonald, Jr. M.D.		22c 3/25/74

MAILING ADDRESS—CERTIFIER (STREET OR R.F.D. NO., CITY OR TOWN, STATE)	
22d	202 W. Oakland Sumter, S. C. 29150

BURIAL, CREMATION, REMOVAL (SPECIFY)	CEMETERY OR CREMATORY—NAME	LOCATION (CITY OR TOWN, STATE)
23a Burial	23b Dicks Cemetery	23c Broad St., Sumter, S. C.

DATE (MONTH, DAY, YEAR)	FUNERAL HOME—NAME AND ADDRESS (STREET OR R.F.D. NO., CITY OR TOWN, STATE, ZIP)
24a March 13, 1974	24b Palmer Memorial Chapel, 304 S. Main St., Sumter, SC 29150

FUNERAL DIRECTOR—SIGNATURE	REGISTRAR—SIGNATURE	DATE RECEIVED BY LOCAL REGISTRAR
25a #580	25b Annette R Brown	25c 3 27 74

SC13065572

ISSUED SEP 23 2024

This is a true certification of the facts on file in the Division of Vital Records, SC Department of Public Health.

Edward D. Simmer, MD, MPH, DEAPA
Director and State Registrar

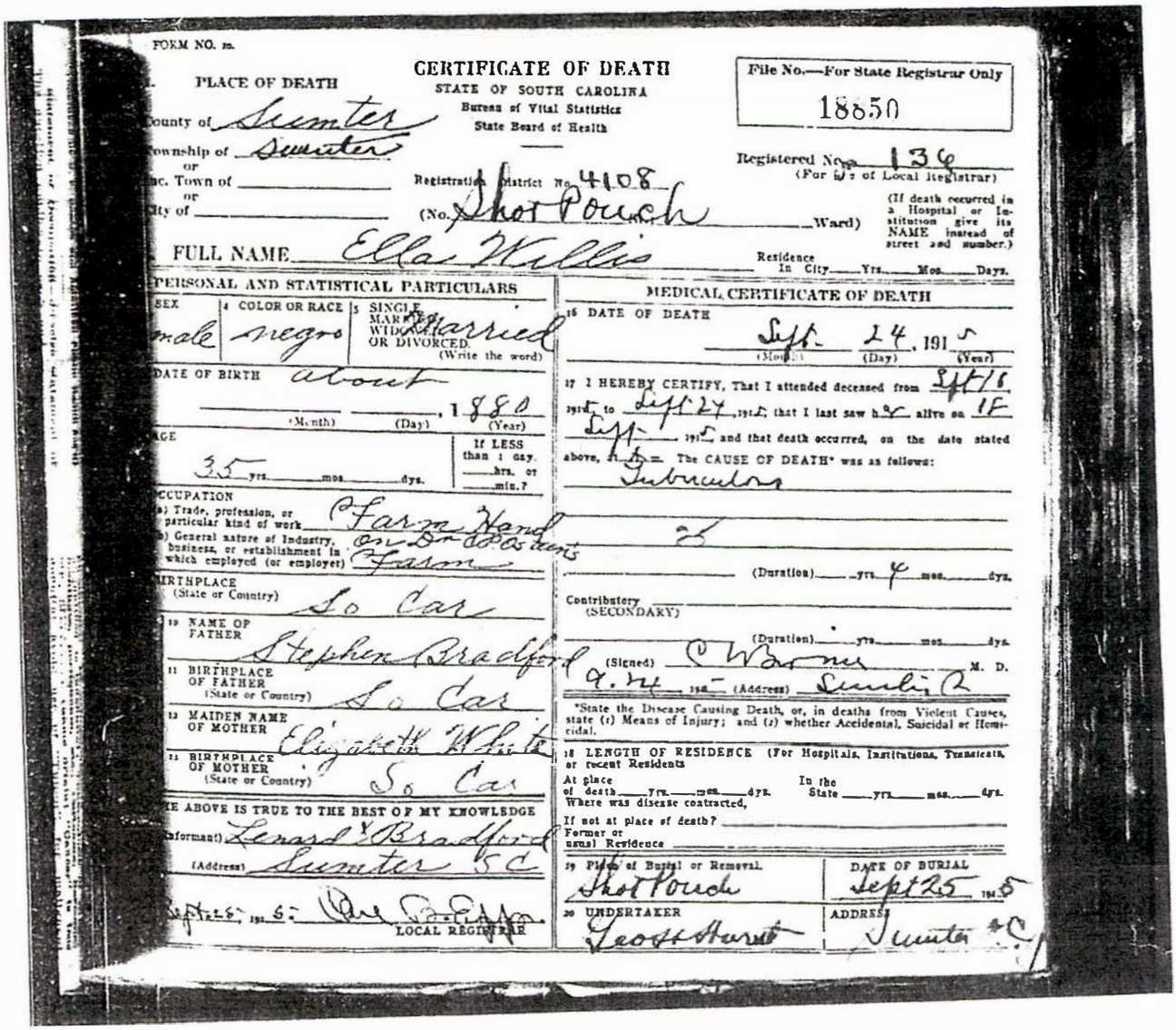
Caleb N. Cox
Assistant State Registrar

This is watermarked paper. Do not accept without noting watermark. Hold to light to verify watermark.

Revision Date: 08/09/2023

IF ANY ALTERATION OR ERASURE VOIDS THIS CERTIFICATE

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH DPH



FORM NO. m.

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
Bureau of Vital Statistics
State Board of Health

File No.—For State Registrar Only
18850

Registered No. 136
(For use of Local Registrar)

PLACE OF DEATH

County of Sumter
Township of Sumter
or
Inc. Town of _____
or
City of _____

Registration District No. 4108
(No.) Shot Pouch Ward)

(If death occurred in a Hospital or Institution give its NAME instead of street and number.)

FULL NAME Ella Willis

Residence In City ___ Yrs. ___ Mos. ___ Days.

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS

SEX	4 COLOR OR RACE	5 SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED OR DIVORCED. (Write the word)
male	negro	Married

DATE OF BIRTH about _____ (Month) _____ (Day) 1880 (Year)

AGE 35 yrs. ___ mos. ___ dys. If LESS than 1 day, ___ hrs. or ___ min.?

OCCUPATION
(a) Trade, profession, or particular kind of work Farm Hand
(b) General nature of Industry, business, or establishment in which employed (or employer) On Farm

BIRTHPLACE (State or Country) So Car

10 NAME OF FATHER Stephen Bradford

11 BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (State or Country) So Car

12 MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER Elizabeth White

13 BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (State or Country) So Car

THE ABOVE IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE

(Informant) Lenard Bradford

(Address) Sumter SC

Sept 25, 1915 [signature] LOCAL REGISTRAR

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

16 DATE OF DEATH Sept. (Month) 24 (Day) 1915 (Year)

17 I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from Sept 16 1915 to Sept 24 1915; that I last saw h[illegible] alive on Sept 1915 and that death occurred, on the date stated above, at [illegible] m. The CAUSE OF DEATH* was as follows:

Tuberculosis

25

(Duration) ___ yrs. 4 mos. ___ dys.

Contributory (SECONDARY) _____

(Duration) ___ yrs. ___ mos. ___ dys.

(Signed) C Warren M. D.

9. 24 1915 (Address) Sumter

*State the Disease Causing Death, or, in deaths from Violent Causes, state (1) Means of Injury; and (2) whether Accidental, Suicidal or Homicidal.

18 LENGTH OF RESIDENCE (For Hospitals, Institutions, Transients, or recent Residents)

At place of death ___ yrs. ___ mos. ___ dys. In the State ___ yrs. ___ mos. ___ dys.

Where was disease contracted, _____

If not at place of death? _____

Former or usual Residence _____

19 Place of Burial or Removal. Shot Pouch — DATE OF BURIAL Sept 25 1915

20 UNDERTAKER Geo. Hurst — ADDRESS Sumter S C

B. V. S. Form 11

294

NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS

STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

1. PLACE OF DEATH
County Buncombe Registration District No. 11-95 Certificate No. 295
Township ____ or Village ____ or
City Asheville No. ____ St. ____ Ward
(If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give its Name instead of street and number)
Length of residence in city or town where death occurred ____ yrs. ____ mos. ____ ds. How long in U. S. if of foreign birth? ____ yrs. ____ mos. ____ ds.

2. FULL NAME Pargilla Gaynes
(a) Residence: No. 15 Hampton St. St. ____ Ward ____
(Usual place of abode) (If non-resident give city or town and State)

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS

3. SEX Fem 4. COLOR OR RACE Col 5. Single, Married, Widowed, or Divorced (write the word) Married

5a. (If married, widowed, or divorced) HUSBAND of (or) WIFE of Marshall Gaynes

6. DATE OF BIRTH (month, day, and year)

7. AGE Years 61 Months ____ Days ____ If LESS than 1 day, ____ hrs. or ____ min.

OCCUPATION
8. Trade, profession, or particular kind of work done, as spinner, sawyer, bookkeeper, etc. Cook
9. Industry or business in which work was done, as silk mill, saw mill, bank, etc. ____
10. Date deceased last worked at this occupation (month and year) ____ 11. Total time (years) spent in this occupation ____

12. BIRTHPLACE (city or town) Sumpter
(State or country) S.C.

FATHER
13. NAME Ben Withers
14. BIRTHPLACE (city or town) Sumpter
(State or country) S.C.

MOTHER
15. MAIDEN NAME Pargilla Withers
16. BIRTHPLACE (city or town) Sumpter
(State or country) S.C.

17. INFORMANT Marshall Gaynes
(Address) 15 Hampton St

18. BURIAL, CREMATION, OR REMOVAL
Place Davis Hill Date 5-24-1937

19. UNDERTAKER McCarty Undertaking Co.
(Address) Asheville, N.C.

20. FILED 5-24-1937 M. M. Ford
REGISTRAR

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

21. DATE OF DEATH (month, day, and year) 5-20-1937

22. I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from 2-9, 1937 to 5-20, 1937
I last saw her alive on May 19, 1937 death is said to have occurred on the date stated above, at 8 p.m.
The principal cause of death and related causes of importance in order of onset were as follows:

	Date of onset
Cardio Renal Disease	1936

Contributory causes of importance not related to principal cause:
Secondary Anemia

Name of operation ____ date of ____
What test confirmed diagnosis? ____ Was there an autopsy? ____

23. If death was due to external causes (violence) fill in also the following:
Accident, suicide, or homicide? ____ Date of injury ____ 19__
Where did injury occur? ____
(Specify city or town, county, and State)
Specify whether injury occurred in industry, in home, or in public place.

Manner of injury ____
Nature of injury ____

24. Was disease or injury in any way related to occupation of deceased? ____
If so, specify ____

(Signed) E. M. Gallego M.D.
(Address) Asheville N.C.

North Carolina
Buncombe County

I, DREW REISINGER, Register of Deeds of Buncombe County, do hereby certify that the above information is from Volume 24 Page 294 of the record of Vital Statistics for Buncombe County, North Carolina.
Witness my hand and official seal this the 4th day of June 2019

Drew Reisinger
DREW REISINGER, Register of Deeds

Deborah J. Worley
By: Asst./Deputy/Register of Deeds

R. V. S. Form 11

5-16

NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS

STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

1. PLACE OF DEATH
County Buncombe Registration District No. 11-95 Certificate No. 483
Township or Village
City Asheville No. (If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give its NAME instead of street and number) St. Ward
Length of residence in city or town where death occurred yrs. mos. ds. How long in U. S. if of foreign birth? yrs. mos. ds.

2. FULL NAME Marshall Gaines
(a) Residence: No. 32 Hunter St. Ward
(Usual place of abode) (If non-resident give city or town and State)

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS

3. SEX	4. COLOR OR RACE	5. Single, Married, Widowed, or Divorced (write the word)
Male	Col	Married

5a. If married, widowed, or divorced HUSBAND of (or) WIFE of Annie Gaines

6. DATE OF BIRTH (month, day, and year)

7. AGE Years	Months	Days	If LESS than 1 day hrs. or min.
55			

OCCUPATION
8. Trade, profession, or particular kind of work done, as spinner, sawyer, bookkeeper, etc. Laborer
9. Industry or business in which work was done, as silk mill, saw mill, bank, etc.
10. Date deceased last worked at this occupation (month and year)
11. Total time (years) spent in this occupation

12. BIRTHPLACE (city or town) Greenville
(State or country) S.C.

FATHER
13. NAME Unknown
14. BIRTHPLACE (city or town) Greenville
(State or country) S.C.

MOTHER
15. MAIDEN NAME Unknown
16. BIRTHPLACE (city or town) Unknown
(State or country)

17. INFORMANT Annie Gaines
(Address) Asheville, NC

18. BURIAL, CREMATION, OR REMOVAL
Place Walnut Hill Date Aug 15, 1939

19. UNDERTAKER Allen Funeral Home
(Address) Asheville, NC

20. FILED 8-15, 1939 M. M. Jones
REGISTRAR

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

21. DATE OF DEATH (month, day, and year) Aug. 11, 1939

22. I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from June 16, 1939 to Aug 11, 1939
I last saw him alive on Aug 4, 1939 death is said to have occurred on the date stated above at 10:30 p.m.
The principal cause of death and related causes of importance in order of onset were as follows:

	Date of onset
Cardio Renal	
Hemorrhage Cerebrum	
Senility	

Contributory causes of importance not related to principal cause:

Name of operation date of
What test confirmed diagnosis? Was there an autopsy?

23. If death was due to external causes (violence) fill in also the following:
Accident, suicide, or homicide? Date of injury 19
Where did injury occur? (Specify city or town, county, and State)
Specify whether injury occurred in industry, in home, or in public place.
Manner of injury
Nature of injury

24. Was disease or injury in any way related to occupation of deceased?
If so, specify
(Signed) R. L. Gabbett M. D.
(Address) Asheville, NC

North Carolina
Buncombe County

I, DREW REISINGER, Register of Deeds of Buncombe County, do hereby certify that the above Information is from Volume 26 Page 546 of the record of Vital Statistics for Buncombe County, North Carolina.

Witness my hand and official seal this the 4th day of June 20 19

Drew Reisinger
DREW REISINGER, Register of Deeds

Deborah J. U. Bailey
By: Asst./Deputy/Register of Deeds

Quick Name Search

1 - 9 of 9 4/12/2019 3:06 PM

	Date Filed	Index	Type	Grantor	Grantee	Description (Not Warranted)	File Number	Book/Page	Ref	Images	GIS	Ta
1	05/11/1918	DTR		**GYNES, MARSHALL** GYNES, PRISCILLA	-W E SHUFORD	[D/T]		116 / 564				
2	05/11/1918	DEE		WILLIAMS, ELIZA/ ET AL WILLIAMS, L W/ AND WIFE	**GYNES, MARSHALL/ AND WIFE** GYNES, PRISCILLA/ ET AL	HAZZARD STREET		220 / 656		1		
3	04/17/1919	DTR		**GYNES, MARSHALL** GYNES, PRISCILLA	-CITIZEN BANK	[D/T]		123 / 69				
4	05/03/1919	DTR		**GYNES, MARSHALL** GYNES, PRISCILLA	-SHUFORD W E	[D/T]		128 / 76				
5	08/13/1923	DTR		**GYNES, MARSHALL** GYNES, PRISCILLA	-CITIZENS BANK	[D/T] HAZZARD ST		162 / 253				
6	12/07/1929	DTR		**GYNES, MARSHALL** GYNES, PRISCILLA	-CENTRAL B & TR CO	[D/T] HAZZARD STREET		305 / 279		1		
7	12/01/1932	DTR		**GYNES, MARSHALL** GYNES, PRISCILLA	-SHUFORD R E	[D/T] HAZZARD STREET		327 / 258		1		
8	**/**/1937 Date Married **/**/1937	MAR	MARRIAGE	**GYNES, MARSHALL**	HILL, ANNIE			54 / 254		2		
9	**/**/1939 Date Filed **/**/1939	DTH		**GYNES, MARSHALL**	UNOBTAINABLE UNOBTAINABLE			26 / 546		1		

1 - 9 of 9 4/12/2019 3:06 PI

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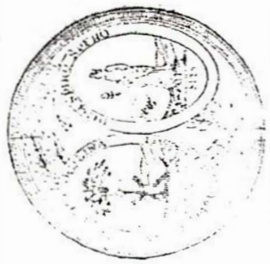
DEC 14 2006



A TRUE COPY OF THIS SIGNATURE IS RECORDED ON FILE IN THE DIVISION OF VITAL RECORDS, S.C. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL.

ASSISTANT STATE REGISTRAR

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL
CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

STATE FILE NUMBER: **97 013319**

STATE SMITH NUMBER

DECEDENT

1. DECEDENT'S NAME — First: Edna — Middle: Earl — Last: Willis — Suffix: Williams
2. SEX: Female
3. DATE OF DEATH (Month, Day, Year): May 26, 1997
4. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: 248-28-7172
5a. AGE - Last Birthday (Years): 80
5b. UNDER 1 YEAR — Months: | Days:
5c. UNDER 1 DAY — Hours: | Minutes:
6. DATE OF BIRTH (Mo, Day, Year): May 27, 1916
7. BIRTHPLACE (City, and State or Foreign Country): Sumter, S. C.
8. WAS DECEDENT EVER IN U.S. ARMED FORCES? (Yes or No): No
9a. PLACE OF DEATH (Check only one; see instructions on other side): ☒ Hospital: Inpatient ☐ ER/Outpatient ☐ DOA — OTHER: ☐ Nursing Home ☐ Residence ☐ Other (Specify)
9b. FACILITY NAME (If not institution, give Street and number): Tuomey Regional Medical Center
9c. CITY, TOWN, OR LOCATION OF DEATH: Sumter
9d. COUNTY OF DEATH: Sumter
10. MARITAL STATUS - Married, Never Married, Widowed, Divorced (specify): Widowed
11. SURVIVING SPOUSE (If wife, give maiden name):
12a. DECEDENT'S USUAL OCCUPATION (Give kind of work done during most of working life. Do not use retired): Custodian
12b. KIND OF BUSINESS/INDUSTRY: School Dist.#17
13a. RESIDENCE - STATE: S. C.
13b. COUNTY: Sumter
13c. CITY, TOWN, OR LOCATION: Sumter
13d. STREET AND NUMBER: 426 Council Street
13e. INSIDE CITY LIMITS? (Yes or No): Yes
13f. ZIP CODE: 29150
14. Was Decedent of Hispanic Origin? (Specify Yes or No - If yes, specify Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, etc.): ☐ Yes ☒ No (Specify)
15. RACE - American Indian, Black, White, etc. (Specify): Black
16. DECEDENT'S EDUCATION (Specify only highest grade completed) — Elementary/Secondary (0-12): 11 — College (1-4 or 5+):

PARENTS

17. FATHER'S NAME — First: Unknown — Middle: — Last:
18. MOTHER'S NAME — First: Ella — Middle: — Maiden Surname: Willis

19a. INFORMANT'S NAME (Type/Print): Willie A. Williams
19b. MAILING ADDRESS (Street and Number or Rural Route Number, City or Town, State, Zip Code): 316 Palmetto St.(P.O.Box 2295)Sumter,SC 29150

DISPOSITION

20a. METHOD OF DISPOSITION: ☒ Burial ☐ Cremation ☐ Removal from State ☐ Donation ☐ Other (Specify)
20b. PLACE OF DISPOSITION (Name of cemetery, crematory, or other place): Walker Cemetery
20c. LOCATION - (City or Town, State): Sumter, S. C.
21a. FUNERAL DIRECTOR OR PERSON ACTING AS SUCH (Signature): Lorin Palmer
21b. FUNERAL DIR. LICENSE NO: 1843
21c. NAME AND ADDRESS OF FACILITY: Palmer Memorial Chapel,Inc. 304 S. Main Street Sumter, S. C. 29150
22b. LICENSE NUMBER (of facility): 343
21d. EMBALMER (Signature): Lorin Palmer
21e. EMBALMER LICENSE NO: 1507

CERTIFIER

Complete items 23a-c only when certifying physician is not available at time of death to certify cause of death.

To the best of my knowledge, death occurred at the time, date, and place stated
23a. Signature and Title
23b. LICENSE NUMBER
23c. DATE SIGNED (Month, Day, Year)

24. TIME OF DEATH: 0525 M
25. DATE PRONOUNCED DEAD (Month, Day, Year):
26. WAS MEDICAL EXAMINER OR CORONER CONTACTED? (Yes or No): No

CAUSE OF DEATH

27. PART I. Enter the diseases, injuries, or complications that caused the death. Do not enter the mode of dying, such as cardiac or respiratory arrest, shock, or heart failure. List only one cause on each line. — Approximate Interval Between Onset and Death

IMMEDIATE CAUSE (Final disease or condition resulting in death)
a. CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE
DUE TO (OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF)
b. CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE
Sequentially list conditions, if any, leading to immediate cause. Enter UNDERLYING CAUSE (disease or injury that initiated events resulting in death) LAST
DUE TO (OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF)
c.
DUE TO (OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF)
d.

PART II. Other significant conditions contributing to death but not resulting in the underlying cause given in Part I
28a. AUTOPSY (Yes or No)
28b. IF YES, WERE AUTOPSY FINDINGS CONSIDERED IN DETERMINING CAUSE OF DEATH? (Yes or No)

29. MANNER OF DEATH: ☒ Natural ☐ Accident ☐ Suicide ☐ Homicide ☐ Pending Investigation ☐ Could not be Determined
30a. DATE OF INJURY (Month, Day, Year)
30b. TIME OF INJURY
30c. INJURY AT WORK? (Yes or No)
30d. DESCRIBE HOW INJURY OCCURRED
30e. PLACE OF INJURY - (Home, Farm, Street, Factory, Office, etc.) (Specify)
30f. LOCATION (Street and Number or Rural Route Number, City or Town, State)

CERTIFIER

31. CERTIFIER (Check only one): ☒ CERTIFYING PHYSICIAN (Physician certifying cause of death) ☐ MEDICAL EXAMINER ☐ CORONER ☐ PRONOUNCING AND CERTIFYING PHYSICIAN (Physician both pronouncing death and certifying to cause of death)
32. NAME OF ATTENDING PHYSICIAN IF OTHER THAN CE
33a. SIGNATURE AND TITLE OF CERTIFIER: To the best of my knowledge, death occurred at the time, date and place, and due to the cause(s) and manner as stated
33b. LICENSE NUMBER: 5867
33c. DATE SIGNED (Month, Day, Year): 5/29/97
34. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO SIGNED #s 33a (Type/Print): P.H. BRANDT 244 CHURCH ST. SUMTER SC

REGISTRAR

REGISTRAR'S SIGNATURE:
DATE FILED (Month, Day, Year): MAY 29 1997

ancestry

Henry Willis

in the 1900 United States Federal Census

View

View blank form

Add alternate information

Report issue

Name:	Henry Willis [Henry Willie]
Age:	27
Birth Date:	Mar 1873
Birthplace:	South Carolina
Home in 1900:	Sumter, Sumter, South Carolina
Sheet Number:	8
Number of Dwelling in Order of Visitation:	145
Family Number:	145
Race:	Black
Gender:	Male
Relation to Head of House:	Head
Marital status:	Married
Spouse's name:	Ella Willis
Marriage Year:	1893 — 23
Father's Birthplace:	South Carolina
Mother's Birthplace:	South Carolina
Occupation:	RR Laborer
Months Not Employed:	0
Can Read:	No
Can Write:	No
Can Speak English:	Yes
House Owned or Rented:	O
Home Free or Mortgaged:	F
Farm or House:	F
Neighbors:	View others on page

Household Members:

Name	Age
Henry Willis	27
Ella Willis	25
Mary E Willis	5
Stephen Willis	2

Historical Record Search Results (3,031)

PREFERENCES SEARCH

Name	Events	Relationships
Elouise Pinkney Willis Principal South Carolina Deaths, 1915-1973	**Death** 31 March 1970 Sumter, Sumter, South Carolina, United States **Birth** 1900 South Carolina	**Parents** Pricilla Gardner, Steven Pinkney
Pinkney Willis Principal United States, Census, 1900	**Census** 1900 Sumter Township, Sumter, South Carolina, United States **Birth** April 1866 South Carolina **Marriage** 1888	**Spouses** Priscilla Willis **Children** Ella Willis, Mary Willis, Benjamin Willis
Pinkney Willis Principal United States, Census, 1920	**Census** 1920 Stateburg, Sumter, South Carolina, United States **Birth** 1920 South Carolina	**Parents** R* Willis, Lonnie Willis **Siblings** Marion Willis, Margree Willis, James Willis, Irene Willis, Berniece Willis, Baxter Willis
Pinkney Willis Father		

Elizabeth White

Mentioned in the Record of Ella Willis (Elizabeth White's Daughter)
Death • South Carolina Deaths, 1915-1973

Name	**Elizabeth White**
Birthplace	**South Carolina**
Sex	**F**

Elizabeth White's Spouses and Children

Stephen Brailsford	Husband	M	South Carolina	⌄
Ella Willis	Daughter	F 35	South Carolina	⌃

Name	**Ella Willis**
Sex	**Female**
Age	**35**
Birth Date	**about 1880**
Birthplace	**South Carolina**
Burial Date	**1915**
Burial Place	**Shot Pouch**
Marital Status	**Married**
Race	**Negro**
Father's Name	**Stephen Brailsford**
Father's Sex	**Male**
Father's Birthplace	**South Carolina**
Mother's Name	**Elizabeth White**
Mother's Sex	**Female**
Mother's Birthplace	**South Carolina**
Event Type	**Death**
Event Date	**24 Sep 1915**
Event Place	**Sumter Township, Sumter, South Carolina, United States**

Document Information ⌄

Collection Information
South Carolina Deaths, 1915-1973

Cite This Record

"South Carolina Deaths, 1915-1973", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:N969-889 : Mon May 06 18:33:06 UTC 2024), Entry for Ella Willis and Stephen Brailsford, 24 Sep 1915.

Tree

ATTACH TO TREE

Similar Records

Elizabeth White
South Carolina Deaths, 1915-1973

RECORDED
VOL 618 PG 1472
SUMTER COUNTY, S.C.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
SUMTER CO. S.C.
COUNTY OF SUMTER

PROBATE COURT

IN THE MATTER OF Gardenia C. Brogdon

CASE NUMBER 94ES4300145

DEED OF DISTRIBUTION

WHEREAS, the decedent died on the 12th day of April, 1994; and,

WHEREAS, the estate of the decedent is being administered in the Probate Court for Sumter County, South Carolina in File Number 94ES4300145; and

WHEREAS, the grantee herein is either a beneficiary or heir at law, as appropriate, of the decedent; and,

WHEREAS, the undersigned Personal Representative is the duly appointed and qualified fiduciary in this matter; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, in accordance with the laws of the State of South Carolina, the Personal Representative has granted, bargained, sold and released, and by these Presents does grant, bargain, sell and release in equal shares to:

Name:	Christopher A. Brogdon	Harold M. Brogdon	Naomi Brogdon
Address	324 Wyoming Drive	1030 Decatur St.	205 W. Palisade Ave.
	Sumter, SC 29153	Sumter, SC 29150	Englewood, NJ 07631

Ruth Brogdon Davis
297 W. Palisade Avenue
Englewood, NJ 07631

Everett L. Brogdon
4220-25 Hutchington Parkway
East Bronx, NY 10475

Luther U. Brogdon
7511 Ridgewick Drive
Dallax, Texas 75217

the following described property:

The one-third (1/3) interest in Parcel #226-14-03-024, containing 7 acres and 1 building located in School District #1, Sumter County, South Carolina.

The one-twentieth six (1/26) interest in Parcel #205-00-01-006, containing 8.75 acres, located in School District #1, Sumter County, South Carolina

The one-thirteen (1/13) interest in Parcel #210-00-01-003, containing 10 acres, located in School District #2, Sumter County, South Carolina.

FILING FEES: $ 10.00
STATE TAX: $
COUNTY TAX: $
TOTAL PAID: $ 10.00

FORM #400PC (1/89)
62-3-907, 62-3-908

Miles & Weeks

RECORDED
VOL 618 PG 1993
SUMTER COUNTY S.C.

TOGETHER with all and singular, the Rights, Members, Hereditaments and Appurtenances to the said Premises/Property belonging, or in anywise incident or appertaining.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD, all and singular, the said Premises/Property unto the said Christopher A. Brogdon, Harold M. Brogdon, Naomi Brogdon, Ruth B. Davis, Everett L. Brogdon and Luther U. Brogdon their heirs and assigns forever.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, as Personal Representative of the estate of the decedent, has executed this Deed, this 1st day of March, 1995.

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED IN THE PRESENCE OF

Witness: Brenda E Hamm

Witness: Jackie M. Alfred

Estate of: Gardenia C. Brogdon

by Signature: Christopher A Brogdon

Christopher A. Brogdon as Personal Representative

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
)
COUNTY OF SUMTER)

PROBATE

PERSONALLY appeared before me Brenda E. Hamm and made oath that he/she saw the within named Personal Representative(s) sign, seal, and as their act and deed, deliver the within written Deed, and that he/she with Jackie M. Alfred witnessed the execution thereof.

SWORN to before me this 1st day of March, 1995

Jackie M. Alfred
Notary Public for South Carolina
My Commission Expires: 9-9-2002

Witness Signature:

Brenda E. Hamm

THIS DOCUMENT WAS FILED ON:
March 2 1995 AT 4:26 PM.
RECORDED: VOL 618 PG. 1992
H.D. "DON" JOHNSON
REGISTER OF MESNE CONVEYANCES
SUMTER COUNTY, S.C.

form #400pc

SCDOT R/W Form 101A (Revised 2-98)

South Carolina Department of Transportation

NOMINAL APPRAISAL REPORT

Identification & Description

1-	File: **43.782**	Rd./Rt.: **Wedgefield Road/Loring Mill Road**	
	Project: **STP-NR43(004)**	Pin: **27161**	County: **Sumter**

2-	From Station: **37+00**	To Station: **38+00 Rt. SC Route 441**	Sheet: **4B, 5A, 11**

3 a-	Owner: **Heirs of Phillis Weathers, etal**		Telephone: **718-653-0362 (M. Durant)**	
	Owner Address: **416 Meadowbury Drive, Columbia, SC 29203**			
	Tract Location: **North side of Loring Mill Road**			
b-	Mortgages & Addresses: **None of Record**			
	Recorded: Bk.	Pg.	Date	Amt.
c-	Lessees & Address:			
	Terms of Leases: **None of Record**			

4-	Size: A) Before: **8.75 Acres**	Tax Map: **205-00-01-006**
	B) After: **8.725 Acres**	Plat: **None found recorded**
	C) Acquired: **.025 Acre (1,077 sq. ft.)**	Width of R/W: **New 36' right of way**

5- Tabulation of sales: (At least 5 years; if more than 5 years, last sale)

From	To	Date	Consideration	Book	Page
We understand the title is clouded. The last deed we have is as follows:					
Estate of Edna Williams (DOD 05/26/97)	**Willie A. Williams & Juliatte Blanging**	**07/11/00**	**N/A 1/3 interest**	**776**	**1846**

6- PURPOSE OF THE APPRAISAL: To estimate the difference in the market value of this property caused by acquisition of the right of way for the proposed construction of this project. This is a complete appraisal-summary report as described by USPAP Standard 2-2B.

Property Rights Appraised: **Fee Simple**

7-	Present Use: **Vacant**	Zoning: **R-15; Single Family Residential**

8-	Highest and Best Use Before: **Residential**
	Highest and Best Use After: **Residential**

Assessor's Endorsement
08/29/2024 09:05:13 AM

Auditor's Endorsement
09/12/2024 03:55:44 PM

D August 28, 2024 11:11:43 AM
Rec: $15.00 Total: $15.00
Cons: $0.00
RHONDA B. CARTER - REGISTER OF DEEDS SUMTER COUNTY
BY: LAM

PGS: 5325 - 5329
Pgs 5

TITLE TO REAL ESTATE

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
)
COUNTY OF SUMTER)

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, THAT

WE, PHILLIP BLANDING, VERNITA L. SWINTON AND SHAWN BLANDING, hereinafter referred to as Grantors. in the State aforesaid. for the sum of Five and 00/100 ($5.00) Dollars and other considerations to me in hand paid by **VALERIE MCCRAY** hereinafter referred to as Grantees in the State aforesaid (the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged) has granted, bargained, sold, and released, and by these presents do grant, bargain, sell, release unto the said **VALERIE MCCRAY,** his or her heirs and assigns forever, in fee simple, together with every contingent remainder and right of reversion. their interest in the following described properties, to wit:

That parcel of land in Sumter County, State of South Carolina, containing 8.75 acres and being shown on the tax map of Sumter County as tax map parcel 2050001006. This property was originally vested in Phillis Weathers pursuant to a partition plat recorded in the Office of the Register of Deeds for Sumter County in Report Book H at Page 367, being a plat by Haron D. Moise, Surveyor, dated December 14, 1891, and shown as Parcel 6 on said plat. Phillis Weathers died Intestate leaving as her heirs and her daughters, namely, Persicella Robinson Geynes, Louise Richards, Lena Canty and Mary Robinson. Louise Richards died leaving no surviving spouse or children. Lena Canty died leaving children surviving her, whose names are undetermined/to be determined. Mary Robinson died leaving children surviving her, whose names are undetermined/to be determined. Persicella Robinson Geynes had three children, namely Ella Willis, Mary Willis and Benjamin Willis. Mary Willis and Benjamin Willias are said to have died Intestate leaving no surviving spouse or children. Ella Willis died leaving one child, namely Edna Willis, who is the mother of the Decedent (Juliaette Blanding). This being the same properties conveyed to Juliaette Blanding by Deed of Distribution from the Estate of Edna Willis Williams (Estate Pkg 97ES4300247).

This being the same property conveyed to the Grantors herein by Deed of Distribution from the Estate of Juliaette Blanding, Sumter County Estate Case No.; 2023-ES-43-178, recorded on January 2, 2024 in the Office of the Register of Deeds for Sumter County in Volume 1322 at Page 2100.

CHARLES T. BROOKS, III

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)

COUNTY OF SUMTER) **AFFIDAVIT FOR EXEMPT TRANSFERS**

PERSONALLY appeared before me the undersigned, who being duly sworn, deposes and says:

1. I have read the information on the back of this affidavit and I understand such information.

2. The property being transferred is located at LORING MILL RD, bearing SUMTER County Tax Map Number 205-00-01-006, was transferred by PHILLIP BLANDING, VERNITA SWINTON & SHAWN BLANDING to VALERIE MCCRAY on 8-26-24

3. The deed is exempt from the deed recording fee because (See Information section of affidavit):

NO GAIN OR LOSS RECOGNIZED

If exempt under exemption #14 as described in the Information section of this affidavit, did the agent and principal relationship exist at the time of the original sale and was the purpose of this relationship to purchase the realty? Check Yes ____ or No ____

4. As required by Code Section 12-24-70, I state that I am a responsible person who was connected with the transaction as:

ATTORNEY

5. I understand that a person required to furnish this affidavit who willfully furnishes a false or fraudulent affidavit is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than one thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than one year, or both.

Responsible Person Connected with the Transaction

CHARLES T BROOKS III
Print or Type Name Here

SWORN to before me this 27 day of AUGUST 2024

Notary Public for SOUTH CAROLINA
My Commission Expires: 6-10-2030

MORRIS D. MAZURSKY
ATTORNEY AT LAW
19 N. HARVIN ST. · P.O. BOX 1645
SUMTER, SC 29151

TELEPHONES
(803) 773-9532
(803) 775-3932
FAX
(803) 773-4832

February 5, 2008

Ms. Celestine Parker
416 Meadowbury Drive
Columbia, SC 29203

Re: Deed of Distribution for Estate of Edna W. Williams recorded on July 11, 2000 in Sumter County, Volume 776, at Page 1846
File: 97-153

Dear Ms. Parker:

I received your letter of January 30, 2008 in regard to the above matter.

It is not within my power to rescind the Deed of Distribution. I prepared the Deed of Distribution based on information provided to me by Mr. Willie A. Williams, who was the Personal Representative of the estate. I would suggest that you take this matter up with Mr. Williams.

My notes in this file indicate that you called me on July 24, 2002 and I advised Mr. Williams of your call.

Very truly yours,

MORRIS D. MAZURSKY

MDM:mm

Attorney Morris Mazarsky
19 N. Harvin St.
Sumter, S.C. 29150

January 30, 2008

Re: Estate of Edna Williams
Deed to Willie Williams, Juliette Blanding

Dear Sir:

This is my **second request** that you rescind a deed drawn up by you for Willie Williams and Juliette Blanding. Edna Williams was not a descendant of Phyllis Miller Weathers, thereby having no rights to heir's property. In the Probate Court, it states Edna Williams died Intestate, meaning she had no will and nothing to Probate.

Prescilla's name was never Robinson, she was Prescilla Weathers and married a Gynes. Ella Wilson Clark was not the daughter of Prescilla Weathers Gynes, as Prescilla had no children. Phyllis Miller Weathers had four daughters so how can one person have a 1/3 interest?

Again, we the family of Phyllis Miller Weathers is requesting that you immediately rescind the deed that you drew up for Willie Williams and Juliette Blanding on the estate of Phyllis Miller Weathers.

Sincerely,
Celestine Parker

Celestine Parker, Chairman
Canty/Cantey Family
Great Grand Daughter of Phyllis Weathers

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA) IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
)
COUNTY OF SUMTER) 2024-CP-43-02109

Celestine Parker and Loretta Black,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

John Doe, Jane Doe, Richard Roe, Mary Roe, Infants, Insane Persons and Incompetents, Being Fictitious Names, Designating as a Class Any Unknown Person or Persons, Whose True Names are Unknown, Who May be and Heir, Distributee, Devisee, Legatee, Widow, Widower, Issue, Personal Representative, Executor, Administrator, Successor, Creditor, Assign and/or alienee of Phillis Weathers; Valarie McCray, Harry Burns, Alma Jackson, Lynn Neely, Matthew Peterson, Carolyn Dupree, Gary Dupree, Gregory Dupree, Edith Davis, May Thelma McGee, Rodney Pitts, Denise Pitts, Sheryl James, Marie Gilespie, Eugene Canty, Ethel Swain, Amanda Canty, Connie Canty, Alexander Canty, Clarence Canty Jr., Daniel Canty, Luther Brogdon, Everette Brogdon, Naomi Brogdon, Obar Davis, Wilaba Brogdon, Michelle Thompson, Harold Brogdon Jr., Janice Brogdon, Lillie Mae Cleaveland Payton, Brian Canty, Gloria Canty, Herbert Canty, Randolph Gaymon, Alvin L. Gaymon, Ernestine Gaymon, Aaliyaa Hasan, Taheedah Griffin, Eugene Dowling, Geline Graham, Christopher Dowling, Sheryl Dowling, Donna Dowling, Sherly Richards, Gail White, Debra White, Dana White, Damon White, Danielle White, Also Any and All Other Persons or Legal Entities, Known and Unknown, having or Claiming Any Right, Title, Estate, Interest In or Lien Upon the Real Property Described in the Complaint Herein,

Defendants.

PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT OF HEARING
(Testimony of Celestine Parker and Valerie McCray only)

ORIGINAL

Date: May 27, 2025
Time: 11:01 a.m.
Location: Sumter County Judicial Center, 215 N. Harvin Street, Courtroom 1A, Sumter, South Carolina

Reported by:
Gretchen H. Wise
Wise Court Reporting, LLC
102 Sandy Run Court, Gaston, South Carolina 29053
Phone: 803-290-1988/Email: wisecourtreporting@gmail.com

APPEARANCES

Presiding:

The Honorable Michael M. Jordan
Sumter County Master in Equity
10 Law Range
Sumter, South Carolina 29150
sumtercountymie@ftc-i.net

For the Plaintiffs:

William M. (Bill) Connor, V, Esq.
Shannon Swann, Legal Secretary
Bill Connor Law Firm, LLC
1408 Russell Street, Suite 11
Orangeburg South Carolina 29115
office@billconnorlaw.com

For Defendant Valerie McCray:

Charles Thomas Brooks, III, Esq.
Law Office of Charles T. Brooks, III
309 Broad Street
Sumter, South Carolina 29150
attorneyctb@outlook.com

Also present:

Celestine Parker, Loretta Black, Daniel Canty, Vernita Swinton, Vera Williams-Bower, and Valerie McCray

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EXHIBITS

(All exhibits were retained by the Court and the court reporter did not receive a copy.)

P R O C E E D I N G S

(Portion of proceeding not ordered)

Whereupon,

CELESTINE PARKER,

having been duly sworn/affirmed to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth by the Court, testified as follows:

THE COURT: You are sworn. Answer the questions posed to you by Mr. Connor.

MR. CONNOR: I'm going to start, Your Honor, with a family tree that we will testify off with stipulating to that there is a -- shows some opposition in this case to Mr. Brooks's client, but to testify off this to keep it as less confusing as possible. I'm going to have her testify through her belief in the family tree for Ms. Phillis Weathers.

THE COURT: Okay.

THE WITNESS: Okay.

DIRECT EXAMINATION OF CELESTINE PARKER

BY MR. CONNOR:

Q. Okay. Celestine, can you explain to the Court your lineage back to Ms. Phillip -- Phillis Weathers?

THE COURT: And hang on one second. Let me get your full name for the benefit of the court reporter. And you might have to spell your first name.

THE WITNESS: Okay. Celestine, that's C-E-L-E-S-T-I-N-E. Celestine Parker.

THE COURT: Okay. All right. You may answer the questions posed.

Q. Okay. Yeah. With the -- the family tree, could you explain your lineage from starting with Ms. Phillis Weathers down to the present?

A. Yes. Ms. Phillis Weathers, she was -- her maiden name was Miller, married name Weathers. She was the mother of my grandmother, who was Lena Weathers, who is now -- was Lena Canty. So Priscilla would be my great-grandmother. That's our lineage.

Q. Okay. And we see on this that you start at the beginning with Ms. -- okay, yeah, Priscilla Geynes --

A. Oh, I'm sorry. I kept saying Priscilla. I didn't mean that. Phillis was my great-grandmother. I'm sorry. Yes.

Q. Okay. Ms. Celestine, do you recognize these documents?

A. Yes, I do.
Q. Okay. Can you tell the Court what they are?
A. Okay. The first one was put into play by Willie Williams, who's -- who came into the courts in 2000, and stating at that time that his mother, who is Edna Willis Williams, that Ella Willis was his mother -- was her mother. And we find that -- that to be untrue, because Ella Willis, the one that he presented, died in 1915, and Priscilla was born in -- Priscilla was born in eighteen -- 1886, and this lady was born in 1880; however, she died in 1915, when Edna was born in 1916. So that's a year's difference.
Q. Okay.
A. And -- oh, I'm sorry.
Q. Sure.
A. That's Edna. And I don't know where the other Ella came from that showed up in 2024. I've -- I've never heard of either of the Ellas, really. But this one in -- but we did find out about the Ella Ellis. But there's nothing on record in this family about a Ella Murphy. And, when I looked up Ella Murphy, she supposedly died in '74 at 62. And, when I did

the research on that, they did not have a Ella Murphy. The only Ella Murphy they did have that died in 1974, she was 85 years old, so today she would be 136. And that's the only Ella Murphy. We never heard of either of these Murphys, but especially the Ella Murphy.

Q. Okay. And just so we know, Edna was alleged to be the daughter of Ella Murphy, which eventually came down to Willie and eventually Ms. Valerie; is that --

A. Right.

Q. Is that correct?

A. That's correct.

Q. Okay. And, just for the record, what you have there is, is the death certificates that -- and just for the record, how did we get hold of the death certificates?

A. Well, the Ella Murphy and the Edna Ellis, that came when Bill first put in for saying that was his grandmother. So we got that copy from his notes when we finally found out. Because it was, like, a year or two later that we found out that they -- you know, either one had died. And so that's how we got the Ella Willis death certificate. Now, the Ella

Murphy death certificate was sent to us by Attorney -- the attorney there. And, again, we don't -- I don't know anything about that Ella. And for Edna Willis we got that death certificate the same time that we got the certificate for Ella -- Ella Willis. Edna Willis. It sounds -- you know, tongue twister. But Ella Willis was supposed to have been the mother of Edna Willis, and we found that to be untrue.

Q. Okay. And, actually, just for the record, too, if we can go ahead and pose the exhibits, exhibit for the --

A. Okay.

Q. -- family tree, Number 1, and then also the -- so that'd be Exhibit A.

COURT REPORTER: All right, A.

A. Give you this. Okay. That is the Edna Willis.

COURT REPORTER: That is a death certificate. The family tree should be A.

THE WITNESS: Oh. That's this, right?

MR. CONNOR: Yes. That --

THE WITNESS: I'm sorry. Yeah.

COURT REPORTER: Thank you.

(Plaintiff's Exhibit A is marked and introduced.)

Q. Okay. And then, and just to be clear for the record, on these death certificates, which you just testified to came from the other side, how old would Ella have had to have been in order to have sired Edna?

A. Well, the Ella Willis died in 1915, and Edna was born in 1916, so she was dead a year before -- Ella Willis was dead a year before Edna was born.

Q. Okay. But for the Ella Murphy though --

A. Ella Murphy, let's see, I don't -- I don't have that one. You gave me two Edna Earl.

Q. Oh, excuse me.

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. So, just to keep it clear --

A. Uh-huh.

Q. -- for the record, do you recognize that?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. What is that?

A. This was a letter from Brooks law office where he was saying that, well, Ms. McCray does not dispute my responsible of the payments that I made for the last 27 years, and that Lena Canty was my grandmother, who was the daughter

of Phillis Weathers. Also, it stated that Phillis Weathers Willis, Phillis, she was never married to a Willis. Her married name was Geynes. She was never married to a Willis. And -- and she was not the daughter. And she was the daughter of Phillis Weathers. He did say that. And Priscilla is the natural mother of Ella Murphy, which is Ella C. Murphy. Which that's the Murphy that came up September 24. And we don't know. We never heard of her.

Q. Okay.

A. Yeah.

Q. And, by the birth certificates that you received, again, looking at birth dates --

A. Uh-huh.

Q. -- how old would Ella had to have been to have sired Edna by those, the birth dates on those death certificates?

A. Well, this Ella Murphy that they presented was born in 1912. And Ella -- Ella --

Q. Edna?

A. Edna. I'm sorry. These two Ella are getting mixed up. She was born in 1916. So that means that Ella Murphy would have been four

years old when she had Edna.
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah.
Q. So, in the documents you had received, at least up to today --
A. Yeah.
Q. -- from the other side, is it fair to say it would have been possible for Edna to have been the daughter of Ella, by the dates in the vital records that you've received?
A. That's correct.
Q. Okay. And just for the record, too, I mean, you did pay taxes for the last 27 years or so --
A. Yes.
Q. -- correct?
A. Just last -- what happened, last year -- I have been paying them since '96, when -- because the two sisters, who were the grandchildren of Phillis, they were here in Sumter; they were paying it. And then, in -- I'm wondering what happened, because I didn't hear anything. So, when I checked, the taxes -- tax -- taxes had not been paid. That was 1996 -- '97. So, from '97 up to '23, I had

been paying the taxes. It -- and then I didn't get the tax bill, and I wondered what happened. The taxes had been paid. And that's when I found out that Ms. McCray had gone down to the tax office, changed my name to her name, and paid the taxes for -- for -- for '23. But then, when we were in a hearing in '24, I paid the taxes in '24.

Q. Okay.

A. So she has only paid the taxes one time.

Q. Okay. And all the way up till 27 years ago, who was paying the taxes?

A. I was.

Q. You were?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. And, before you, who was paying taxes?

A. The -- one of the sisters. Well, the first one was Angeline Dupree, which is Loretta's grandmother, and that's the granddaughter of Priscilla -- I mean Phillis. And when she died Gardenia Brogdon, another granddaughter of Phillis, was paying the taxes. And then she became ill. She was in her '90s. And her children took her to New York. And that's when I started paying them.

Q. Okay.
A. Yes.
Q. Do you recognize this?
A. Yes. We saw it in the packet. Yes.
Q. Okay. But what is it?
A. This is a deed of distribution that Bill Williams, or Willie Williams, did for his mother --
Q. Okay.
A. -- in 2000.
Q. And who was his mother?
A. His mother was Edna Willis Williams.
Q. Okay.
A. Yes.
Q. And that's the same -- is that the same Edna that we've been talking about with the vital records?
A. Yes, that's correct.
Q. Okay. And, after you discovered this, what did you do?
A. Well, that's when I started conferring with the attorney, which was Mr. Macursky(ph). I started conferring with him, you know, letting me know that Bill was not a -- a descendant. And we were kind of back and forth. And he

did write me a letter, and I do have copies of the letter --

Q. We do.

A. -- that he wrote, and telling me that he didn't have the -- I was asking him to rescind that deed. And he wrote me back and told me he didn't have the power to send it -- to rescind the deed. And he only went by what Bill told him.

Q. Okay. Let me do this. That's the next exhibit, I think Exhibit C, I believe.

COURT REPORTER: Okay. Plaintiff's Exhibit -- this will be B. I have it as B. I had A as the family tree. And would this be the next one?

MR. CONNOR: That's it. That is. Yeah.

COURT REPORTER: Okay.

(Plaintiff's Exhibit B is marked and introduced.)

A. Okay.

Q. Okay. And then the only other thing, I believe --

A. I didn't have the --

Q. Okay. I mean, what's -- this was not put in, correct?

A. She just --

MR. CONNOR: That was not another exhibit?

COURT REPORTER: So this will be Exhibit C.

A. Okay.

MR. CONNOR: Okay.

COURT REPORTER: Plaintiff's Exhibit C will be the death certificate --

MR. CONNOR: Okay.

COURT REPORTER: -- of Ella Willis.

MR. CONNOR: Okay. Thank you.

(Plaintiff's Exhibit C is marked and introduced.)

Q. Okay. Do you recognize that?

A. Yes.

Q. And what is it?

A. I'm sorry?

Q. What is it?

A. Oh, this is a letter from Attorney Marvin Magus -- Macusky(ph). I'm probably mispronouncing his name. But, anyway, this is -- this letter was telling him that this was my second request asking him to rescind the deed. This was in 2008, drawn up by him, for Willie Williams and Juliaette Blanding.

Q. Okay.

A. Because she was not a descendant of Phillis Miller Weathers.

Q. Okay. So you made the request. And -- and

then the second page is in response?
A. Yes.
Q. Correct?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. And go ahead and read for the record what Mr. --
A. Okay.
Q. -- Mazursky said.
A. Yes. This was a deed of distribution for the Estate of Edna Williams. He was stating that he received my letter in regards to the above matter. And then he stated that "It's not within my power to rescind the deed of distribution. I prepared the deed of distribution based on the information provided to me by Willie Williams." And then he asked me to take up the matter with him, with Willie Williams.
Q. Okay. And let's go ahead and put that in --
A. Okay.
Q. -- the record as --
MR. CONNOR: As what?
COURT REPORTER: D.
MR. CONNOR: D, okay.
(Plaintiff's Exhibit D is marked and introduced.)

Q. Okay. And what happened next? Did you attempt to reach out to Ms. -- Mr. Willie Williams?

A. Yes, I did. I got a call that he was cutting timber on the property. And I call him to verify the what and the why. And he was not very nice about that. And then I started communicating again with the lawyer, which came to know that didn't work out.

Q. Okay. We're going to go back in time a little bit, because we passed over another document. Do you recognize that?

A. Yes. This was back in two -- I mean 1998, when I wrote the probate judge at the time, and I was -- I wrote him telling him that the property that has been put in the deeds of distributions are incorrect, and that the heirs were numerous and cannot be distributed to any one person.

Q. Okay.

A. Yeah.

Q. Was that in response to the family of -- alleged -- the family of Edna?

A. Yes, Edna and Gardenia Brogdon. But it -- you know, those were both -- those were the two

distributions. Deed of distribution is the reason I added Gardenia Brown. But she was her granddaughter.

Q. Okay. Granddaughter of who?

A. Okay. Did she --

Q. Yeah. Next should be E.

A. Okay.

COURT REPORTER: E.

MR. CONNOR: Yes.

(Plaintiff's Exhibit E is marked and introduced.)

Q. Okay. Do you recognize this?

A. Yeah, this is the -- the deed of distribution -- distribution for Gardenia Brogdon, who was actually a granddaughter of Phillis Weathers.

Q. Okay. And did this generate the letter that you wrote about it for --

A. Not from her. But, you know, she was -- they were two distributions at the time. It was hers that was 1994, and the one that -- that Bill Williams did in 2000.

Q. Okay.

A. And then there was another one done in 2023, so that's three deeds of distribution done on one piece of property.

Q. Okay.

A. Yeah.
MR. CONNOR: And, actually, just if we can put that as the next exhibit, please. This --
COURT REPORTER: This is F.
(Plaintiff's Exhibit F is marked and introduced.)
Q. For the record.
A. Okay.
Q. Do you recognize that?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay.
A. This was in October of 2002. Mr. Richardson, at that time, was the county treasurer. And so I visited the tax assessor's office and the auditor's office. And my concern was, as I stated in the letter, was the property of Phillis Weathers, et al. The owners had been changed to someone who's not a descendant, and the family is having a problem with that. Now we are not receiving a tax bill. I called the office and was told that was being mailed to me, but I never received it, so I had to come down here to get it. And the property is in the name of Phillis Weathers, et al., and that that's the way it should stay until the family collectively decides to do something about

that.
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah.
Q. Did you receive any response back with documents showing --
A. No.
Q. -- that Edna was the daughter? Okay.
A. No.
Q. Okay. And so you said in 2023 there was a deed of distribution --
A. Yes.
Q. -- filed?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay.
A. For -- for Ms. McCray.
Q. Okay.
A. Yes.
Q. And what was your response when you found out about it?
A. Well, you know, that's when I'm saying, you know, we've got to do something about it, because it cannot go -- go from a et al. to one owner. And that's what has happened. And that's why we're here today. And, plus, it was an unclouded title to begin with in 2'03

when Mr. Brooks was the guardian ad litem for the Department of Transportation.

Q. Well, let's -- let's talk about that very quickly.

A. Okay.

Q. So what year was --

A. 2003.

Q. 2003.

A. Yes.

Q. And -- and what was the nature, what was going on with the Department of Transportation?

A. Well, the Department of Transportation was coming in, in to do a sidewalk to the property on Loring Mill Road. And they did -- they did like 0.025, which came to 1,077 square feet, for the deal for that property on Loring Mill Road, yes. And, again, Mr. Brooks was the guardian ad litem at that time. However, I didn't see him. But --

Q. Okay.

A. -- he was, because he's noted.

Q. Okay. Does -- is this -- do you recognize that?

A. Yes. This is the decree, for the lack of a better word, that he was -- that this was the

order appointing Brooks as the guardian ad litem.

Q. Well, and, again, the key thing here is we have memorialization of the fact that there was a clouded title with that, at least a --

A. Yes.

Q. -- a claim for that?

A. I think you have a copy of that. I don't have that copy. You have a copy from the Department of Transportation stating that it was clouded.

Q. Yeah, I think you've got what you're -- on the top.

A. It's not -- yeah.

Q. Okay. Do you recognize --

A. That's -- no. It's a -- one from the Department of Transportation.

Q. Okay. Actually, do you recognize that?

A. Oh, this one?

Q. Yeah.

A. That's the same thing. This is -- this one is a notice of order appointing a guardian -- guardian ad litem.

Q. Okay.

A. And this one was from the Department of

Transportation, where they -- you know, they were settling on the $500.00 for what they were going to do.

Q. Okay.

A. Yes.

Q. Were you paying taxes during that time on the property?

A. Yes, yes. That's how I got involved. Yes.

Q. Do you continue to pay taxes on it?

A. Yes, I do.

Q. Okay.

MR. CONNOR: Okay. Go ahead and put that into exhibit, please. Thank you.

COURT REPORTER: Just -- just as one?

THE WITNESS: Yeah. Two of them are the same. Yeah.

MR. CONNOR: Yeah, as one. Thank you.

THE WITNESS: Okay.

(Plaintiff's Exhibit G is marked and introduced.)

Q. Is there anything you'd like -- else you would like to tell the Court about your knowledge within this of the family?

A. Yes. Well, Phillis -- Phillis Miller Weathers, she had four daughters: Louisa, Mary, Priscilla, and Lena. Lena was my

grandmother. Louisa had no children of her own. Priscilla had no children of her own. She was born, again, in 1876 when the one that -- the lady -- the Ella that Bill Williams was claiming, she died in -- you know, in -- in 1915. And then Edna was born in 1916. Also, in the documents of this family, Edna or Ella, or neither Ella was -- is ever -- is not mentioned in any family document. None. And, in 2000, Edna Willis mother was Ella Willis, who was born in 1880 and died in 1915, as stated by her son Willie Williams and her daughter Juliaette Blanding. Edna was born in 1916, a year later. Now, in nineteen -- in September of '24, another Ella has surfaced by the name of Ella Murphy whose birth date is 1912, when Edna birthday is 1916, which give this Ella giving birth at four years old. And when I -- when I researched the -- the Sumter Item and the cemetery records, there's no records of a Ella Murphy being buried at that -- that cemetery. And the only burial in March, Ella Murphy that was buried in March of '74 in Sumter, was -- she was 85 years old. And on the death certificate it stated that

she was 62. And she was born in 1888. Priscilla was born in 1876. Okay. And, if this second Ella, Ella Murphy, stated, and is the daughter of Priscilla Geynes, then she was 12 years old when Priscilla, her mother, was born. Also, the -- what I was thinking, I'm saying, if -- if -- well, we know it's not true, but if it is true, or if it was true that Valerie McCray was related to Phillis, that makes her our kin. You know, she's kin to us too. But which is not a fact. But, if it -- if it happens that way, that's what it would be. So we can't understand why all the shady dealings were going on. We knew nothing that Juliaette had died until someone came up a year later, and then we went to the courthouse, and that's when we got all the information from the courthouse. And what we couldn't understand was why was it done that way. And my name has been there since. My name has been in the courthouse from -- from my being the spokesperson for the family, and also it's been in there since the '90s. And also, on this, the one of the deeds that we gave, my name and addresses on there right

beside Brooks's name. You know, he was the guardian ad litem, as I stated. When the -- to -- to -- to my cousin Loretta and I finding out what was going on, we tried to reach out to Valerie. But it -- you know, it was to none. It kind of backfired on us. And we were wondering why they had to do it this way when we were right there, you know. And I'm an easy person to get along with and talk with. So but nobody never notified us. We didn't know he was going to be the attorney. We didn't know that Juliaette had died. We didn't even know that her -- her grandmother had died.

Q. Okay.

A. So, and also, so, to summarize the whole thing, is that Priscilla is not the mother of either one of these Ellas. And the other thing is, in 2'03, when the Department of Transportation was -- was -- we went through that about the clouded title. Yeah. So we are here today to uncloud this deed.

Q. Okay.

A. Yes.

Q. Before you walked in here, did you see a -- a

census record of -- that appeared to show the children of Ella -- or Priscilla? Excuse me. Did you get -- did you get a chance to see a census record outside the courtroom --

A. Oh, that he -- that Brooks showed?

Q. Yes.

A. Yeah, I glimpsed it.

Q. Okay. Did it have a last name for Ella in that census record?

A. Yeah, he -- he -- he claimed to not have the one for Willis, but he had the one for Murphy, which --

Q. Okay. On the -- on the census record, did the census record have a last name?

A. Oh, I didn't -- I didn't see that.

Q. Okay.

A. He was --

Q. Okay.

A. It was -- he was away from me.

Q. Okay. Okay.

A. Uh-huh.

Q. Okay. Anything further?

A. That's all, other than I've been this contact person since the '90s.

Q. Right.

A. And I just can't understand why I wasn't contacted about any of this, but I wasn't.
Q. Okay. Answer any questions of opposing counsel.
THE COURT: Mr. Brooks
CROSS-EXAMINATION OF CELESTINE PARKER
BY MR. BROOKS:
Q. Ms. Parker, when was Phillis born?
A. Excuse me?
Q. When did you say Phillis was born?
A. Phillis was born -- let's see. Phillis was born in eighteen -- well, I have to think. We have the record over there. You're -- you're saying Phillis, not Priscilla?
Q. When was Phillis born?
THE WITNESS: Do you have -- I gave you that. May I see that that you have?
COURT REPORTER: I can give you the exhibits.
THE WITNESS: Okay.
A. 1840, I'm -- I'm almost -- okay. Thank you.
Q. 1840?
A. Just a minute. Let me make sure.
Q. I'll narrow it -- let me -- are you willing to say she was born prior to the Civil War? The Civil War was 1861 to 1865. Was she born

prior to that?
A. Of course.
Q. Okay.
A. If she's 1840, yeah.
Q. Okay. I was just trying to save you from trying to give the exact day. We're just willing to stipulate that she was born prior to the Civil War.
A. Okay.
Q. Okay. All right. And what day did you say Priscilla was born?
A. Priscilla was born in 1876.
Q. Okay.
A. Yes.
Q. And what do you base that off of, Priscilla being born in 1876?
A. On the ancestry.
Q. What ancestry? I hadn't seen anything that says Priscilla was born 1876. You got anything showing she was born in 1876?
THE WITNESS: Did you have it?
(Sotto voce discussion between Mr. Connor, Mr. Brooks, and Ms. Swann)
Q. This Ancestry.com North Carolina death collection, that's something you pulled that

shows Priscilla was born or allegedly born in 1876?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. And also her -- her death certificate by her husband stated the same thing.

Q. And what was her husband's name?

A. Marshall Geynes.

Q. You got a copy --

A. She was never a Willis.

Q. Do you have a copy of her death certificate showing that?

A. Oh, it's in the packet, yes.

MS. SWANN: I don't have a copy of that.

MR. BROOKS: You don't have a copy of that?

MS. SWANN: Not that I'm aware of.

MR. CONNOR: Well, we can take -- take a look.

A. Well, it states here her death was 1937.

Q. I understand that. That's -- but that's the Ancestry.com.

A. Right.

Q. You said you had a death record.

A. Yeah. And this came from North Carolina.

Q. Ms. Parker, you testified that this is the package that you submitted to -- or submitted

to us that has Phillis Weathers being married to Bennie Weathers; is that correct? I was handed this by your attorney.

A. Phillis, yes.

Q. So Phillis was married to Bennie?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. And have you had an opportunity to look at the 1880 census?

A. I have the 1920.

MR. CONNOR: Yeah. Just remember we literally briefly saw it for a second when she was outside, so.

(Sotto voce discussion between Mr. Brooks, Mr. Connor, and Ms. Swann)

Q. Now, I'm going to hand you this 1880 census. And the -- you see the highlighted checked parts?

A. Yeah.

Q. Now, next to the highlighted checked parts, you have Bennie, who would have been the husband of Phillis.

A. Yes.

Q. And you would have had the wife named Phillis, and you had the children, and one of the children is Cilla(ph); is that right?

A. Is what?
Q. Cilla.
A. Cilla?
Q. Would it be short for Priscilla?
A. Oh. This is so dense, I can't see it.
Q. I know. That's a -- it's -- it's census records, and that's how folks wrote them down back then.
A. Phillis, Lena, let's see, and Louise and Mary.
Q. That would have been the Lena that you're referring to, right?
A. That's my grandmother, yes.
Q. Okay. And so on down is Priscilla also on this, right?
A. Oh, yeah.
Q. Okay.
A. We didn't deny that she was her daughter.
Q. Okay. All right. All right. All right. Okay. And, according to this, she would have been -- if you can look off to the right, she would have been nine years old, getting ready to turn --
A. Who, Priscilla?
Q. Yeah, she was nine years old, according to that census record. You follow, off the what

you earlier testified to in looking at that record? That's nine?

A. I can't -- I can't make that out.

Q. That's fine. If you can't make it out.

A. Yeah. In what year -- no.

Q. Just -- just -- she -- that's okay. I can get Ms. McCray to make it out. If you can't make it out, that's fine.

A. Well, if we have one my lawyer can look at.

Q. But that's -- that's for the 1880 census. You do acknowledge that's the 1880 census at the top?

A. No, I don't.

Q. You don't?

A. Because it doesn't say here.

Q. Oh, sure, it does, ma'am, at the top.

A. In June, yeah.

Q. So you acknowledge that's the 1880 census of the United --

A. Yeah, the --

Q. -- States of America?

A. -- Sumter Township.

Q. Here in Sumter?

A. Sumter. Fourth day. This says 1880, yeah.

Q. Okay. So that is the 1880 census?

A. Uh-huh.
Q. That's a accurate reflection of the family of Phillis and Bennie Weathers. So Bennie was the husband of Phillis?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. And, of those kids -- excuse me -- she had Priscilla, Mary, Louise, and Lena, and that's based on your documentation?
A. She had Louisa, Mary, and Lena, yes.
Q. And Priscilla?
A. And Priscilla, yes.
Q. Okay. All right. So we talking about -- we singing from the same sheet of music. We've got an 1880 census that documents Phillis and Bennie's family.
A. Uh-huh.
Q. And we've got the document that you presented that you've typed up that says Phillis married Bennie Weathers, and it has the four children?
A. Four daughters, yes.
Q. Four daughters.
A. Yeah.
Q. Priscilla, Mary, Louisa, and Lena.
A. Exactly.
Q. So we -- will you agree we're singing from the

same sheet of music now? We're talking about the same family?

A. Uh-huh.

Q. Okay. I just want to make sure.

MR. BROOKS: I think this was yours. Yeah.

MR. CONNOR: Okay.

Q. Now, I believe you earlier testified, and to the death record, death certificate of Edna, and you also testified about receiving the death certificate of Ella; is that right?

A. The which one?

Q. Ella C. Murphy.

A. You sent that, yes.

Q. Okay. You testified about receiving that and looking at it; is that correct?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. And, when you look at the entire document and not just focus on the year of birth that vital records put down as 1912, it puts down the mother's maiden name, and you've looked at it; is that correct?

A. At what, Murphy's maiden name?

Q. That's right. You see right here?

A. Oh, Priscilla?

Q. Right.

A. Yes.
Q. And -- and what is the last name of Priscilla?
A. It says there Weathers.
Q. Okay.
A. Yes.
Q. All right. Okay. And Priscilla was a child of Bennie; is that right?
A. Yes.
Q. According to your sheet?
A. According to the fact, yes.
Q. And to the facts. Okay. So, according to the death certificate, Ella's mama was Priscilla?
A. That's what that said, but that's incorrect.
Q. So you're saying that the South Carolina death certificate --
A. Let me see that.
Q. Because you testified to seeing that from us.
A. Oh, this is Murphy.
Q. I understand. But you -- you acknowledge that it does have her mother's maiden name as Priscilla Weathers on the death certificate?
A. Priscilla, that -- that was her name, yes.
Q. Okay. And that's the same Priscilla that's in the 1880 census of Phillis and Bennie's family --

A. Well, I don't know --
Q. -- and on your sheet?
A. -- because I couldn't see that, and -- and it couldn't have been, because, if that's 1880 and 9 from 10 leaves 1, that would have been like 1701.
Q. Well, I'm just saying --
A. Doesn't make --
Q. -- we -- you -- you --
A. -- any sense, no.
Q. -- you acknowledged that that 1880 census, you just acknowledged that the 1880 census --
A. But I couldn't see the age of the child that you're talking about.
Q. I understand. But you acknowledged that we were singing from the same sheet of music, to use that phrase. I asked you, are we talking about the same set of people? You said yes.
A. The set of people, yes.
Q. The set of people that I showed you on the June 1880. Might not have the ages of the people right, but we acknowledge that we're talking about the same people?
A. Exactly.
Q. Okay. The same sheet of people that you wrote

here --
A. Uh-huh.
Q. -- and the same sheet of people from the 1880 census. If you need me to go back and get it, I'll get it.
A. No, you don't need to do that.
Q. Okay. All right. And so, on the death certificate of Ella C. Murphy, we have mother's maiden name Priscilla Weathers. That's the same Priscilla Weathers that's born to Bennie and Phillis from the -- that established her existence in the 1880 census, correct?
A. But, first of all, where did the Ella Murphy come from?
Q. Just answer my -- just answer my question.
A. Ask your question again, please.
Q. Okay. Aren't we talking about the same sheet of music, the same family? You said the June 1880 census that documents in Sumter the family of Phillis and Bennie Weathers, because they were married to one another --
A. Uh-huh.
Q. -- that also documented on your documents that you submitted as evidence Phillis and Bennie,

they had four girls, Priscilla being one, Mary, Louisa, Lena. The June 1880 census has the same four girls. I asked you, are we talking about the same family, the same sheet of music? You said yes; isn't that correct?

A. That's correct. But the other thing about that is, I can't -- couldn't even make out the name on there. She wasn't born in 1880, so it couldn't have been. She couldn't have been on there.

Q. Okay. You said she was born in 1876.

A. 1876.

Q. So she would have been documented in the 1880 census if she was born in 1876.

A. Oh, yes. Yes, yes. You're right.

Q. Okay. So we're talking --

A. You're right.

Q. -- about the same --

A. Yes, yes.

Q. -- sheet of music?

A. Exactly.

Q. The same family?

A. Yes.

Q. So Priscilla Weathers is listed on the death certificate as the mother of Ella C. Murphy;

isn't that correct?
A. It's listed, yes. But it's not true.
Q. Okay. What do you have to show that Ella is not the daughter of Priscilla Weathers?
A. Because, when --
Q. Do you have anything to show that?
A. Yes, we do. We have a --
Q. What do you have to show --
A. We have a death certificate --
Q. Okay.
A. -- from Ella Willis that her -- that Edna's son presented.
Q. Okay.
A. Now, that was in 2000. Now, here you come in 2024 with Ella Murphy.
Q. Okay.
A. That we know nothing about --
Q. Let's
A. -- never heard of.
Q. Let's look at that.
A. Okay.
MR. BROOKS: Where is that death certificate that has Ella Willis on it?
COURT REPORTER: That's C, is the death certificate that I marked.

MR. CONNOR: Exhibit C.
COURT REPORTER: Yes.
MR. CONNOR: Our exhibits.
Q. Okay. All right. Now, I want to take a look at this document again that you're talking about. This is Plaintiff's Exhibit C. On this document, when it says maiden name of mother down here at the bottom, what does it have --
A. Elizabeth White.
Q. Okay. But that is not Phillis and it is not Priscilla?
A. No, it isn't.
Q. Okay.
A. It is Ella.
Q. It is Ella?
A. Yeah.
Q. But, on this document that you're talking about as the document of the certificate of death for Ella Willis --
A. Uh-huh.
Q. -- it has her father as Stephen Bradford; is that correct?
A. Bresford(ph), yes.
Q. And it has her being born in 1880; is that

correct?
A. That's correct.
Q. And it also has her mother's name as Elizabeth White.
A. Yes.
Q. Aren't we talking about a different person?
A. What do you mean? Who?
Q. We're not talking about the offspring of Priscilla.
A. You're -- you're -- you're --
Q. What I'm saying is, okay, this Ella --
A. Yes.
Q. -- has her mother's name on the date of death --
A. Uh-huh.
Q. -- as Elizabeth White.
A. That's correct.
Q. Not Priscilla as her mama.
A. We're talking Ella. Right. Ella. Priscilla is not her mother.
Q. Okay.
A. Yes.
Q. Priscilla was not this mama?
A. Was not Ella's mother.
Q. This Ella, Ella Willis, on this death

certificate.
A. That's -- that's a -- that's the one that her son presented.
Q. Okay.
A. And I don't know where you got her birth date from.
Q. But on this from the South Carolina vital records --
A. Well --
Q. -- it has her mother. You do acknowledge that it has her mother listed as Priscilla Weathers?
A. Yeah. Somebody did that.
Q. Okay. I'm just -- we're just talking about different documents. So, obviously, Ella Murphy and this Ella Willis are two different people?
A. Exactly.
Q. And this Ella Willis could not be the daughter of this Priscilla?
A. Neither is that one.
Q. Oh, no, no. But I'm asking you --
A. Yes.
Q. -- specifically --
A. That's correct.

Q. -- on this one.
A. She's not, no.
Q. We know this for sure?
A. That that's not Priscilla's daughter, yes.
Q. All right.
A. We know that for sure.
Q. And for this one, you -- there's still question about. In your mind, I understand you say there's not.
A. Uh-huh.
Q. But what other information do you have that says Ella C. Murphy is not the daughter of Priscilla Weathers? We've already covered this.
A. Uh-huh.
Q. So what other information you got?
A. But, when you look at the date --
Q. Hold on. Listen to me. Listen to me.
A. Well, we have to --
Q. Hold on. What other information do you have? You said you had the certificate of birth.
A. Yes.
Q. Or death.
A. Right.
Q. We've acknowledged that this is -- this woman

is not the child of Priscilla.
A. Right.
Q. So my question is, what other information do you have?
A. I have the information, when I researched the Sumter Item --
Q. Okay.
A. -- there, it was no cemetery records for this lady.
Q. Okay.
A. For the Murphy lady.
Q. Okay.
A. And there was no record of Ella Murphy. When I researched the person, there was a Ella Mae, which I stated before.
Q. Okay.
A. A Ella Murphy in Sumter died on that same day, two -- 1974.
Q. And what did that obituary say?
A. What obituary?
Q. The obituary of Ella Murphy, what did that obituary -- since you brought up the Sumter Item, that leads me to my next question.
A. Well, you know, that's -- that's not set in stone, you know.

Q. Okay. Well, I mean, I understand that --
A. Uh-huh.
Q. -- Ms. Parker.
A. Where do you see the -- yeah.
Q. But these are the only records that we have.
A. Uh-huh.
MR. BROOKS: Do we have the obituary?
A. It would be in there. Yeah.
COURT REPORTER: The only thing, I have a packet that was marked as --
MR. CONNOR: Exhibit C is what, Charles, your office sent us. It has the two deeds that are death certificates you're claiming are not correct. And it does have the --
MR. BROOKS: I'm looking for the obituary.
MR. CONNOR: It does have the obituary. Look at Exhibit C, where it's got your letter, Charles.
MR. BROOKS: Okay. Let's see.
A. There it is. Oh, no, that's the death certificates.
Q. Here we go, here we go, here we go. He's handed it to you. He's handed it to you. This is the death certificate.
A. That's what you showed. Yes.

Q. Okay. So, in addition to the death certificate that we're talking about, we have a documented obituary in the Sumter Item that has Mrs. Murphy, Ella C. Murphy, and it also, it has in here that her mother's name was Priscilla Weathers.

A. That's what that has, yes.

Q. Okay. And we're saying that's the same Priscilla Weathers who would have been born --

A. 1876.

Q. -- who would have been born to Phillis and Bennie. Priscilla, Ella's mama, is listed in the obituary and listed in the South Carolina vital records.

A. Uh-huh.

Q. Both documents have Ella Murphy's mama as Priscilla Weathers.

A. Uh-huh. But the --

Q. Do you acknowledge that? Hold on. Hold on. I -- okay. I'm going to get you -- I'm going to let you answer. I'm going to let you explain. I'm going to let you explain.

A. Oh, my.

Q. But we do acknowledge --

MR. CONNOR: Your Honor, I've got to --

THE COURT: Hang on just a second, Charles. Yes, sir.

MR. CONNOR: I'm just saying my only objection is, she's claimed she's seen the documents. This is the first time. So she can say that, yes, she has seen something she can't even read. But she can't acknowledge that it is the actual vital record. That's just -- we even said the same thing on on it. So she's testified to that. She's seen it.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. CONNOR: But she -- he's trying to say we agree that it's the vital record itself.

THE COURT: Okay. And, I mean, y'all agreed --

MR. BROOKS: Oh, well, he put it into evidence. We agreed. I mean, and all I'm saying is --

THE COURT: Hang on. Hang on. Hang on. Now --

MR. BROOKS: All I'm saying --

THE COURT: -- I thought they were marked for exhibits. So y'all stipulate that A, B -- that A through D are into evidence. I don't remember anybody asking --

MR. CONNOR: Well, Your Honor -- Your Honor, when we came here today, I had seen the death certificates that he is slamming my client

about. That's what he sent us to prove that Edna was Ella's -- and apparently he's now -- he's showing how these aren't correct. He gave them to us. That's -- he's --

THE COURT: Okay. Well --

MR. CONNOR: So that's the first thing. The second thing is, is that we didn't see the census records until literally we just walked in here.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. CONNOR: And my client really can't see it, because it's written in handwritten. You can barely see what's -- what's on it.

THE COURT: Okay. But y'all agree that the exhibits that I thought were being marked for evidence, those are in evidence by stipulation? Have you both looked at them?

MR. BROOKS: Right.

THE COURT: A through D or A through E?

COURT REPORTER: We've marked A through G, Your Honor.

THE COURT: A through G, okay. So y'all stipulate that those are in evidence now, can be used, and both of you have cross -- both of you have asked questions about them. So those are in

evidence.

(Plaintiff's Exhibits A through G are admitted into evidence.)

THE COURT: So, then, Mr. Brooks, you're asking -- you're asking this witness to acknowledge -- well, the documents in evidence speaks for itself. You're asking her to acknowledge details of that, of that document, and agree with you. I guess his objection is, and the record speaks for itself, I'm assuming it's a -- we're on the obituary. That's different than a death certificate. But you're just ask -- you're questioning her from those documents that are in evidence, but you're asking her to acknowledge the truthfulness or veracity of information contained therein?

MR. BROOKS: Well, no. I'm asking her is she talking about the same documents. For instance, she's talked -- this has been their main document they put in.

THE WITNESS: No.

THE COURT: You talking about Number A?

MR. BROOKS: Right.

THE COURT: All right.

MR. BROOKS: That's the main -- the first document

they put in that has Phillis Weathers married to Bennie Weathers, and it's got the tree of four daughters, okay? And, number one, you see me focusing on the -- the alleged daughter whose name was Priscilla.

THE COURT: All right.

MR. BROOKS: Okay. That's when we talked -- and then I came up with the June 1880 census to show, that was obviously marked by Bennie and Phillis, and they have these -- these daughters down.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. BROOKS: She looked at it. Now, granted, it's census records. It's tough. Her lawyer came up and looked at it with her. But we acknowledge these are the same people. So who's in the document --

THE COURT: Now, that -- is that -- that has -- that's not part of A through --

MR. BROOKS: The June 1880 is not --

THE COURT: That's your document?

MR. BROOKS: That's my document. That list --

THE COURT: That's not in evidence yet?

MR. BROOKS: Not yet.

THE COURT: All right.

MR. BROOKS: It's coming.
THE COURT: But you're -- okay, hang on. But you're asking her about the obituary, and the -- the objection is, it was only shown -- it's only recently been shown to her. I mean, if -- if the obituary is into evidence, then the Court can determine --
MR. BROOKS: That's fine. That's fine.
THE COURT: -- how -- what -- you know, what, if any, weight to give it. An obituary is clearly different than --
MR. BROOKS: Right.
THE COURT: -- a death certificate, which is a state record. But you're questioning her from the obituary, ostensibly, I guess, to build or diminish credibility.
MR. BROOKS: Well, what -- what my -- Judge, if you follow, my question to her was, what information do you have that says Ella Murphy is not the child of Priscilla. We've established that Priscilla was a child of Phillis and Bennie. And her response to that was, this death certificate of Ella Willis that had her date of death being 1915. And so then I went to that document and showed her.

Who does it have as the mother's maiden name? Elizabeth White, somebody that's not Priscilla, okay?

THE COURT: We'll call that the -- the --

MR. BROOKS: And then who was her -- and it also has there -- it does not -- so we're -- so that document of the death certificate -- and, obviously, my argument is, that is somebody different. And then my next question was, what other information do you have, other than that, we've covered that; what other information you have that Ella is not the child of Priscilla.

THE COURT: Well, we were past that, and you were dealing with the obituary.

MR. CONNOR: Well, my objection actually was for the vital record. And the reason I objected to getting her to agree over and over again it is a vital record is, we just barely saw it, and we know that the death certificates that his office provided, he's claiming they're not correct, because the birth certi -- you know, there's no way it lines up. So the point I'm trying to make is, we would have a question about the authenticity in this record without

looking at it. That's --

MR. BROOKS: But that's not what -- but hold on. So I think -- that's not what I'm questioning her on. What I'm asking her now is what other information does she have that says Ella is not the child of Priscilla. She stated one document, the death certificate of a person alleged to be Ella Willis. I went through that, showing that her mother is not the same. Okay, next question: What else do you have? So that's where I'm going. What other information do you have that the Ella Murphy that I have in the death certificate is not the child of Priscilla Weathers? That's all I'm asking.

THE WITNESS: I can answer that.

THE COURT: All right. So -- so, but you haven't put in -- you haven't put in the census yet?

MR. BROOKS: Correct.

THE COURT: The other -- the other records are in. That includes the obituary, which was attachment to -- to one of -- to one of these records.

MR. BROOKS: Which now you've got to say which obituary you're talking about.

THE COURT: The one that we -- the one dealing with --

MR. CONNOR: It's the one you -- you provided, Charles.

COURT REPORTER: I -- I don't --

THE COURT: The one dealing with, I believe it's Ella Murphy.

MR. BROOKS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. No, no, no. Yeah. That's -- that death -- that obituary, that's in.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. BROOKS: The obituary that I was questioning them about was the one that they purported to be Ella as offspring of Priscilla. As --

THE COURT: That's the Sumter Item obituary?

MR. BROOKS: No, no. Wrong.

THE COURT: That's what we were talking about.

MR. BROOKS: Right. There's two obit -- but there's -- there's two -- there's a -- there's a death certificate purported to be a Ella Willis, died in 1915, that has a mother maiden name as Elizabeth White.

THE COURT: All right. We've already passed that, and we're on to the --

MR. BROOKS: Okay. So, now, my next --

THE COURT: -- obituary, the Sumter Item obituary, Ella C. Murphy --
MR. BROOKS: Okay.
THE COURT: -- who lists the mother --
MR. BROOKS: All right.
THE COURT: -- as Priscilla Weathers.
MR. BROOKS: And so what I was getting to, and I asked her about --
THE COURT: And that's what we were questioning when the objection came.
MR. BROOKS: Right.
THE COURT: But the objection relates to another document. So -- so I'm going to allow you to -- to --
MR. BROOKS: Well, I'll simplify.
THE COURT: -- continue questioning about the Sumter Item obituary, but I -- but I get it. We've got conflicting documents about Ella Willis and Ella C. Murphy. I mean, I -- I get it.
MR. BROOKS: I'll ask her this.
BY MR. BROOKS:
Q. Ms. Parker, what other documentation do you have that says Priscilla Weathers is not the mama of Ella Murphy?
A. The -- the -- the documents that we had was

the one that Edna Williams' son presented, the one for Ella Willis. Now, again, I don't know where the Ella Murphy came from. So that was done in 2000. You come up with one in 2024.

Q. What document --

A. That's two different Ellas.

Q. Okay. That's what I -- okay.

A. Yes, it is.

THE COURT: Don't talk over each other. Hang on just a second.

Q. What document --

THE WITNESS: Okay. Sorry.

Q. What document are you --

THE COURT: Question -- question and answer.

Q. Okay. What document are you referring to?

A. I'm referring to the one that Edna Williams' son presented in 2000.

Q. Okay.

A. That's the one I'm referring to.

Q. All right.

COURT REPORTER: Your Honor, if I could clarify about the obituary, I don't see -- it could be attached.

MR. CONNOR: It's --

COURT REPORTER: But I don't see it.

MR. CONNOR: It's -- what you've got is, I think it's on C.

COURT REPORTER: Okay. I only have one page.

MR. CONNOR: Charles Brooks' law office actually sent us two -- two death certificates to prove his client's claim. The second part of it was an actual Ms. Murphy. Again, it's got these two documents; again, questions all over the place; and then there is a copy of the Sumter Item, which is -- again, the cover sheet is Charles Brooks' office.

COURT REPORTER: But do you see the -- see that as part of any of the exhibits? I don't see that as any of them.

MR. CONNOR: You know, I could've sworn I put it -- I put it in here.

THE COURT: So let's take a few minutes and get the exhibits in order, with both lawyers agreeing as to Plaintiff's exhibits, that they are -- that -- listed as they have the stickers on them, and that there's no objection to the contents of the document, or if it's supposed to have further attachments.

MR. CONNOR: Thank you.

THE COURT: I think it's A through E.

COURT REPORTER: A through G.
THE COURT: G. A through G.
MR. CONNOR: Yeah. I'm actually looking right now. I -- this was it. It was -- it was the Charles Brooks' office.
COURT REPORTER: Okay.
MR. CONNOR: With -- with the obituary --
COURT REPORTER: Okay.
MR. CONNOR: -- that he gave us, and the two death certificates.
THE COURT: So we didn't have that earlier as part of it?
MR. CONNOR: I thought -- I could've sworn we did. But maybe I handed to --
COURT REPORTER: I don't -- there might have been a couple of documents that --
MR. CONNOR: I see it right here.
COURT REPORTER: -- didn't get marked that were handed up, but --
MR. CONNOR: Okay. Yeah, that's it right there. Here it is. I mean, she must have got it, I guess, when I --
COURT REPORTER: Okay.
THE COURT: You need paperclips or staples?
COURT REPORTER: I've got some. Thank you.

MR. CONNOR: Okay, thank you. Thanks.
COURT REPORTER: But I will -- I can mark this as H if that's fine.
MR. CONNOR: Okay. Thanks. That's fine. Appreciate it.
THE COURT: Okay. Charles, you go through them. Mr. Connor, you look through them and make sure --
MR. CONNOR: That's -- those are Charles' products.
THE COURT: -- that everything we have is stipulated to as in evidence.
MR. CONNOR: Okay. Yeah, it's -- it's stipulated into evidence as having been received by the office.
MR. BROOKS: I -- I was just getting ready to ask, is this the document she's referring to that was filed by --
THE COURT: Okay. First, make sure we got -- have you looked at them?
MR. BROOKS: Yeah.
THE COURT: Okay.
MR. BROOKS: Yeah, I've seen all of them.
THE COURT: All right. I want to make sure they're all in, so everybody's looked at them --
MR. CONNOR: Okay. Thanks.

THE COURT: -- and they don't go anywhere.
MR. CONNOR: Thanks.
MR. BROOKS: Okay.
THE COURT: Because, obviously, they're conflicting.
All right. Go ahead.
BY MR. BROOKS:
Q. Ms. Parker, is this the document that you're referring to that you said Willie Williams would have filed?
A. This distribution, yes, he did that.
Q. Okay.
A. And what is the second page? Oh, that's just a continuation. Okay.
Q. Okay. Is that document that you were saying --
A. But it looks like it, yes.
Q. Okay. All right. Is it -- is -- is there anything else other than the death certificate of Elizabeth Willis that had her at 1915 and Willie Williams' document that you just looked at --
A. But I --
Q. -- that's Exhibit B?
A. May I say this, please?
Q. I just want to make sure. Well, I'm trying to

-- I'm trying to narrow down --
A. I'm not -- I'm not following you.
THE COURT: You can -- ma'am, you need to -- you need to first answer his question, and then you can --
THE WITNESS: Okay.
Q. So, and let me --
THE COURT: Hang on. Hang on. Hang on.
THE WITNESS: Okay.
MR. BROOKS: Okay.
THE COURT: You have to just first answer his question --
THE WITNESS: Okay.
THE COURT: -- to the best of your ability, and then you -- and then you can explain.
THE WITNESS: Okay.
THE COURT: So, but this -- but let me tell you, this isn't -- you know, this isn't a contest. There's no jury here.
THE WITNESS: Right.
THE COURT: So we're just trying --
THE WITNESS: Sure.
THE COURT: -- to get information to the Court so that I can make the best decision --
THE WITNESS: Right.

THE COURT: -- possible on the -- I guess the evidence, which I guess some of it conflicts.
THE WITNESS: Yes.
THE COURT: But, when he asks a question, you just need to answer it. Don't -- don't try to presuppose where he's going. Just -- just answer the question. But you have an opportunity to explain --
THE WITNESS: Okay.
THE COURT: -- your answer in detail. Okay.
THE WITNESS: Okay.
THE COURT: So let's proceed.
MR. BROOKS: Okay.
BY MR. BROOKS:
Q. And I'm -- I'm going to let you know why I'm asking this question, Ms. Parker. You said that the Priscilla -- and -- and -- is not the mother of the Ella Murphy that my client says. That's what your position has been.
A. That's my position, yes.
Q. Okay. And now my question was, what documentation do you rely on? And you said the Ella Willis death certificate. Ella Willis died in 1915. We talked about that. And then I said, what else do you have? And

you said the document filed by Willie Williams. That would be Exhibit B. Is that --

A. Distribution.

Q. Is that -- it's got Plaintiff's Exhibit B at the bottom --

A. Yeah, it looks like it, yes.

Q. Okay.

A. Uh-huh.

Q. Is that the documentation that you -- the additional document that you were relying on that says Priscilla is not the mother of Ella?

A. You lost me there.

Q. Okay.

A. Say that again.

Q. All right. I'm going to take it in steps. You -- you -- I'm going to start from, you said --

A. Okay.

Q. -- Priscilla is not the mama of Ella. That's what you said. The Ella Murphy that we've had, you said --

A. Oh, yes. Yes.

Q. -- that Priscilla --

A. Yes.

Q. -- is not the mother of her.
A. Exactly.
Q. Okay. And then I said, what documentation do you have? And you said that, one, I got documentation with the death certificate of Ella Willis. And then I said let's stop about it. And then we talked about it, and I pointed out the maiden name, and we talked about it. Then I said, what else, what other documents do you have that says Priscilla is not the mama of Ella? And you said the document filed by Willie Williams. And so we stopped. I pulled out this particular document --
A. Distribution.
Q. -- that's designated by the Court as Exhibit B.
A. Uh-huh.
Q. Is that the document that you were talking about when you said Willie Williams, where he filed?
A. I'm talking about he filed for a deed under Magursky(ph).
Q. That's right.
A. And that is the death certificate, 2000.

Again, I don't know where you come 2'24 with another Ellis. Those are two different Ellises.

Q. Okay. But -- but --

A. Yeah.

Q. -- it -- okay. Is this the document that you were referring to that was filed by Willie?

A. This is a, yeah, deed of distribution. It is.

Q. Okay. That's -- that's --

A. Yes.

Q. -- the one? Okay. Is there any --

A. But what does it have to do with it?

Q. Well, hold on. Hold on.

A. Okay.

Q. So do you have anything else that you're relying on? Two things you're relying on: The death certificate of Elizabeth Willis -- excuse me, Ella Willis.

A. Uh-huh.

Q. The deed of distribution filed by Willie Williams known as Plaintiff's Exhibit B. Is there any other document that you're relying on that says Priscilla is not the mama of Ella C. Murphy?

A. Yes. Because --

Q. What other documents?
A. -- on -- on the death certificate, it stated that Ella Willis's mother was Elizabeth White. So that's when I pulled that. I'm a researcher.
Q. Okay.
A. So, when I pulled that up, there it is right there. It says Ella Willis is the daughter of Elizabeth White. And her father was Steve Braceford(ph).
Q. Okay.
A. Yes.
Q. All right. But this --
A. So that's what I'm -- that's what I'm going on.
Q. Okay. This is -- but this is not the documentation that we were talking about for the date of the -- the death record of Elizabeth Murphy?
A. I -- I --
Q. Excuse me. Ella Murphy?
A. Yeah. I answered your question, because you asked me did I have any other. That's the one that I'm relying on.
Q. Okay. All right.

A. Yes.
Q. Is it -- is it so you're relying on this one, which is Exhibit C? Because it's got C at the bottom that your lawyer had designated.
A. Yeah. That's why we're in court today.
Q. Okay.
A. Yes.
Q. And the Willie Williams document, the deed of distribution that's filed, that's known as Exhibit B.
A. Okay.
Q. Are there any other of these exhibits that you're relying on?
A. I don't think I need another other than what he filed in 2000.
Q. Okay.
A. Which, to me, is exact.
Q. I gotcha.
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. And all of these -- some of these other documents are like letters that you have written, like --
A. To clarify, yes.
Q. -- to clarify?
A. Yes.

Q. But these are letters that you wrote?
A. Yes.
Q. Like you wrote a letter, it's known as Exhibit D, you wrote that to attorney Morris Mazursky?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. And --
A. When I finally found out.
Q. I gotcha.
A. Because nobody -- we weren't notified, or not even about you, that you're going to be an attorney for this same thing. We didn't know that.
Q. Okay.
A. No one said to me that you were going to be, or that you were doing anything with this case.
Q. Okay.
A. Yes, sir.
Q. And then you wrote this letter to Sumter County Courthouse, that's known as Exhibit E, if you can just look closer. That's your letter, right?
A. The deed of distribution, yes.
Q. Okay.
A. Yes. I was questioning it.

Q. And that was a -- your response to seeing this, right?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Just want to make sure. Okay. All right.
MR. BROOKS: Beg the Court's indulgence.
THE COURT: Yes, sir.
THE WITNESS: This one was too.
MR. BROOKS: No other questions.
THE COURT: Redirect?
MR. CONNOR: Thank you, Your Honor.

REDIRECT EXAMINATION OF CELESTINE PARKER

BY MR. CONNOR:
Q. If somebody, anybody, came in and filed a title action and made a claim to be a relative, who -- who has the burden proof of showing that they're a relative? Is it the --
A. I would think -- because I know who I am. I think they are.
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah. That --
Q. Is that your understanding, coming into the quiet title action, that the person who is claiming an interest would have to bring the proof?

A. Yes.
Q. Okay. And we testified about -- let me make sure I got the right exhibit. It's the letter from --
A. Okay.
Q. -- Mr. Brooks's office.
COURT REPORTER: Probably H at the very back.
MR. CONNOR: Okay. H in the back?
COURT REPORTER: Make sure that's the correct one though. Yeah.
Q. Have you got a copy right there, by the -- by the way, too?
A. Yes, this one.
Q. Okay. Go ahead and --
A. Okay.
Q. I'm going to read from it, because, when you received this, what was your understanding of why that -- that office sent it to our side?
A. Well, I was -- I was very surprised that he was the lawyer for this, being he was the guardian ad litem for the -- for the -- this same family to begin with when the -- the State Department of Transportation came through. And he's not disputing -- he's saying here he's not disputing that I'm

responsible. We wouldn't be here today --
Q. Right.
A. -- if I had not paid the taxes, because nobody else was or did. And I do -- I know my interest in the --
Q. Okay.
A. -- property, yes.
Q. Just to kind of go, the last paragraph, and I'll just read it into the record --
A. Uh-huh. Okay.
Q. -- for the Court: "Please see obituary and death certificate for Ella Murphy, daughter Priscilla Willis -- Weathers Willis, which clearly lists her surviving daughter as Edna Williams. Edna Williams is the natural mother of Juliaette Blanding and Willie Williams. Juliaette Blanding is the natural mother." So is it fair to say this -- this is telling you, in the packet you received, that these death certificates prove their case, that the -- that the death certificates show, these death certificates allegedly show that Edna was a daughter of Ella, correct?
A. Yes.
Q. That's what they're alleging?

A. Yes.
Q. Okay.
A. And we're not disputing that.
Q. Okay.
A. And Ella was the daughter of Elizabeth White.
Q. Okay.
A. And not Priscilla, so --
Q. So we're relying, looking at these documents.
A. Uh-huh.
Q. And, of course, these documents, as we said, would show that, you know, Ella would have been four years old having Edna --
A. Yes.
Q. -- within this. So those documents, apparently --
A. Okay.
Q. And then the other document you received that we put in you said came from Willie?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. And you received it from Willie?
A. No, I didn't know at the time we went to the courthouse to pull the -- pull the -- the -- I got -- I got no response or no --
Q. Okay.
A. -- cooperation from him at all.

Q. Okay. So --
A. That's why I went through the attorney.
Q. Okay. So we just talked about a second ago --
A. Yes.
Q. -- if somebody claims an interest, they have a duty to prove this. They -- they sent in two death certificates that showed it's impossible for the person to have been. And you -- of course, you're relying on this --
A. Neither one.
Q. -- as a vital record.
A. Yes.
Q. The same type of thing as the -- as right now, when was the first time you saw this, the handwritten census?
A. That he had --
Q. Yeah.
A. -- from -- I glimpsed it when we were in the hall.
Q. Okay.
A. Just then. Yes.
Q. Do you think it's possible there might be some other issues as -- as being claimed on these death certificates?
A. No. Again, I believe the one that Willie did

in 2000.
Q. Okay.
A. And, again, she was never -- Priscilla was never a Willis.
Q. Okay.
A. I mean, not a -- no, she was never a Willis.
Q. Okay, okay.
A. Yes.
Q. But it's fair to say that --
A. Uh-huh.
Q. -- this brings serious questions about --
A. Yes.
Q. -- what we've received from the other side --
A. Yes.
Q. -- claiming to be vital records?
A. That's correct.
Q. And had you seen the Sumter Item before? I mean, had you seen it online or anything else, I mean?
A. Yeah, I pulled it up, yes.
Q. Okay. Do you -- you were asked a question, since we're talking about proving the negative, and I didn't think I'd have to go here, but since it was, I'm going to go ahead and respond to it. Do you recognize this

document?
A. Yes. Back in August of 26, 2002, I, Ethel Dupree Gaymon, do certify with knowledge that Edna Earl Williams is not a descendant of Phillis Weathers.
MR. BROOKS: Your Honor --
A. Having grown up in the --
THE COURT: Hang on. Hang on. Hang on just a second.
THE WITNESS: Oh, I'm sorry.
THE COURT: Go ahead.
THE WITNESS: I didn't hear.
MR. BROOKS: I would object to this. I mean, this is clearly hearsay, unless Ms. Gaymon is going to testify to this so she can be subject to cross-examination.
Q. Well, let me just ask, is she alive?
A. No, she isn't.
Q. Okay. When did she pass away?
A. That's her daughter there.
MS. BLACK: 2005.
Q. In two thousand -- so three years after this -- this letter?
A. She wrote it in 2002.
Q. Right.

MR. CONNOR: Your Honor, we've been pretty loose as far as letting stuff in.
MR. BROOKS: Judge, I object to --
THE COURT: Let him finish first. So the objection is -- the objection is it's not admissible, hearsay, it's obviously not the witness's statement, and this person is deceased that signed it; is that correct? Ethel Dupree Gaymon?
MR. CONNOR: That that is. She died in 2005.
THE COURT: She's deceased?
THE WITNESS: She's deceased, yes.
MR. CONNOR: And the only reason I brought it in on cross-examination is because of the allegation that --
THE COURT: Well, this is redirect.
MR. CONNOR: Right. I -- I gotcha. Okay.
THE COURT: Okay. So you --
MR. CONNOR: Sorry.
THE COURT: Okay. So, Mr. Brooks, your objection is, this witness is not here to testify, this is -- this is the plaintiff, or this is the wrong witness for it to come in under, or it's hearsay from the standpoint of Ms. Celestine Parker?

MR. BROOKS: Correct.
THE COURT: All right. And then, Mr. Connor, your -- your response is?
MR. CONNOR: Well, you know, first of all, it's that, you know, dying, she's passed on, so she couldn't be -- I realize that there's -- we've been somewhat loose about things we have let in, things we've just -- just seen, and allowed in, understanding the objections to them. Like, for example, allowing in documents, like, we can't even read, but letting them in for the Court to analyze.
THE COURT: Well, was that by -- was that by stipulation or by agreement?
MR. BROOKS: Judge, I haven't asked for anything to be submitted yet. All I talked to her was I asked her to look at 1870 census to verify that we were talking about the same people. She looked at it. Now, granted, that's how people write things down, the census. I didn't have anything to do with it 150 years ago. But you can clearly, with your glasses, you can look at it and see Bennie and Phillis, and then it has the same kids that she put down in her documents that he has submitted as

evidence. All I asked her to do was confirm we're talking about the same people, Bennie and Phillis and their family. She said yes. And I left it at that.

THE COURT: All right. So I haven't read this yet. But, Mr. Brooks, is it -- is it -- I mean, what's the -- what's the offensive nature of it? Does it go the ultimate issue, or does it --

MR. BROOKS: It goes to the ultimate issue.

THE COURT: So here's what we're going to do: I'm going to admit it as -- for identification at this point. I'm going to allow the witness to testify to it. And I'll hold in abeyance ruling as to whether, based on the balance of the hearing and the other testimony, as to whether it's admissible later or not. Again, we don't have a jury here.

MR. BROOKS: Right.

THE COURT: So, if I decide it's out, I'm just not going to consider it. But, for now, in the interest of time, I'm going to allow the witness to -- again, admitted for identification as Plaintiff's, I guess that would be G.

COURT REPORTER: I have it as "I."
THE COURT: "I," okay. So Plaintiff's I for identification only.
(Plaintiff's Exhibit I is marked for identification purposes.)
THE COURT: And, Mr. Connor, you can ask Ms. Parker your question.
MR. CONNOR: Thank you, Your Honor.
BY MR. CONNOR:
Q. Okay. Please tell the Court about who Ms. Ethel Gaymon was --
A. Okay.
Q. -- and your connection to her, please.
A. Okay. Ethel Gaymon was the daughter of -- of Ms. Dupree, which is the daughter of Phillis. So Ethel would be the granddaughter of Lena and my first cousin, yes.
Q. Okay. And where did -- did she live within proximity of Ms. Phillis, or where did -- where did she live?
A. She lived here in Sumter.
Q. Okay.
A. Is that what you mean? Yeah.
Q. So --
A. Now, Phillis has been dead since --

Q. Right.
A. You know, but she knew. She knew about it, obviously.
Q. Okay.
A. Because she said that she grew up in the same community and she was taken in by a daughter of Phillis Weathers, and she was raised by that daughter as a good neighbor gesture.
Q. Okay.
A. Uh-huh.
Q. And how did you get a hold of this, this document? How did it come to you?
A. Well, I used to visit, and we -- we -- she said that -- well, she said what she did, and she agreed to write this letter. And we -- we accepted it.
Q. Okay.
A. Yes.
Q. Okay.
MR. CONNOR: No further questions, Your Honor.
THE COURT: Mr. Brooks, recross?

RECROSS-EXAMINATION OF CELESTINE PARKER

BY MR. BROOKS:
Q. What did Ethel -- Ms. Gaymon say about Ella? Is there anything in this document about Ella?

A. No. Not about Ella.
Q. Nothing --
A. We aren't talking about Ella. We are talking about Edna and Phillis.
Q. Okay. And so she doesn't say anything about Edna being the offspring of Ella? She doesn't talk about any of that?
A. No, she didn't say that. That's not what we ask.
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah.
Q. And she doesn't say anything about Ella being the offspring of Phillis -- I mean, excuse me, Priscilla? She doesn't -- this document, she -- she does not say anything about Ella --
A. No, she -- no.
Q. -- being a daughter of Priscilla? It's not in here, right?
A. Correct. No. She -- you see what she's talking about. She's talking about --
Q. Edna --
A. -- Edna being --
Q. Edna --
A. -- raised, yeah.
Q. -- being raised by Priscilla?

A. Not a descendant.
Q. Not a descendant?
A. No. No, not -- not -- not -- no. No. Huh-uh.
Q. Okay.
A. You're saying that --
Q. Well, I'm just looking at your document.
A. Okay. You're saying Edna is Ella's daughter, and Ellis is -- is --
Q. Priscilla's daughter?
A. -- Phillis's daughter.
Q. And Priscilla --
A. And that's what we're here to prove.
Q. And Priscilla is Phillis's daughter?
A. That's correct.
Q. So this document here that's signed by Ethel Gaymon --
A. Uh-huh.
Q. -- doesn't talk about who Ella's mama is?
A. No, no. We're talking about Phillis and -- and Edna.
Q. Oh, okay.
A. Is who we're talking about.
Q. Okay.
A. Yes.

Q. All right. Okay. And doesn't say anything about who Ella's mama is or anything about Priscilla's mama?
A. That wasn't a question, no.
Q. I'm just -- just -- just answer my question.
A. No, it doesn't.
Q. Okay. All right.
MR. BROOKS: No other questions.
THE COURT: Okay. All right. Thank you.
MR. CONNOR: Your Honor, this will be very quick, but I have two witnesses just to up there and confirm what her --
THE COURT: Thank you. Any other questions for this witness?
MR. CONNOR: No.
THE COURT: Okay. Ma'am, you can step down.
(Portion of proceeding not ordered)
Whereupon,
VALERIE MCCRAY,
having been duly sworn/affirmed to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth by the Court, testified as follows:
THE COURT: Okay. You are sworn. So give your name and spelling to the court reporter, and then

answer the questions posed by Mr. Brooks.

THE WITNESS: Valerie R. McCray. That's V-A-L-E-R-I-E, M-C-C-R-A-Y.

DIRECT EXAMINATION OF VALERIE MCCRAY

BY MR. BROOKS:

Q. All right, Ms. McCray. Take a deep breath. I know you don't come into court very often.

A. No.

Q. I'm going to put some of these documents back in front of you that Plaintiff stipulated and put into evidence. Some of them you may end up referencing. Spread them out for you.

A. Okay.

Q. Make it easier for you to get to.

A. All right.

Q. I'll right. I think we got it figured out a little bit. Okay. All right. So your name is Valerie McCray?

A. Yes, it is.

Q. Okay. Who's your mama?

A. Juliaette Blanding.

Q. All right. Who was her mama?

A. Ms. Edna Earl Williams.

Q. Okay. And who was her mama?

A. Priscilla -- I mean, not Priscilla. That was

her grandmother. Ella.
Q. Okay. And that would have been Ella Murphy?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Well, the person that died in 1974 was Ella Murray --
A. Correct.
Q. -- is that correct?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. And who was her mama?
A. Priscilla.
Q. Okay. And Priscilla was one of the four children of Phillis; is that correct?
A. Yes.
Q. There's no dispute in your mind about that?
A. No.
Q. Okay. Now, I think we've got some death records already into evidence. Just going to make sure we got what we need in here. And then, if it's not, then we're going to add our stuff to it. Okay. All right. I'm handing you part of Plaintiff's Exhibit H. I want you to take a look at it.
A. All right.
Q. I see you got your magnifying glass with you.
A. Yes.

Q. Okay. All right. That is the -- is that the death certificate you're looking at?
A. Yes, it is, for Ella.
Q. That's a death certificate for Ella Murphy; is that correct?
A. Correct.
Q. Okay. And it has down there her date of death being March 11, 1974; is that correct?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. And it has her father's name as Pinckney Willis; is that correct?
A. Yes.
Q. And it has her mother's name as Priscilla Weathers?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. All right. And it also has informant name is daughter Edna Williams.
A. Correct.
Q. Okay. Who is Edna?
A. It's -- it's my grandmother.
Q. Okay. All right. And, now, I know a lot of times women don't like to answer these questions. How old are you, Ms. McCray?
A. I'll be 69 in September.
Q. Okay. All right. So you were around in 1974?

A. Correct.
Q. Okay. So, if you're 69, and 1974, that's 51 years ago, you'd have been about 17, 18 years old?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Did you happen to know Ella?
A. Yes, I did.
Q. Okay. Did you see her, talk to her, you know -- you know, it wasn't like a one-off, but you saw her and you had conversations with her?
A. Yes, I did, every day after I got out of school. Matter of fact, her daughter, my uncle, and I, and another uncle went up to North Carolina to get her because she got sick. So her daughter Edna brought her back to 426 Council Street and kept her until her health started failing, until she passed in '74.
Q. Okay. All right. Now, looking at this death certificate, it has -- for date of birth, it does not have a specific date of birth. It has a year, 1912.
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Now, can you -- you went and pulled this record; is that correct?

A. Yes, I did.
Q. Why does it have just a year?
A. Because they didn't keep dates of birth or really dates of people dying until 19-I think-15, because of the census and stuff like that. That what was told to me, so that's why they would stamp a date on it -- I mean, not a date, the year. So that's why it's 1912. And Edna has 1915 or 1916, something like that. Yeah.
Q. Now, on Edna's, it has the specific date of birth; is that correct?
A. Yes, correct.
Q. May 27, 1960?
A. Yes.
Q. And May 27th is today.
A. Correct.
Q. Okay. Happy birthday to your grandmama. So, now, in Ella's death certificate, it has age of 62.
A. Yes, it does.
Q. Now, you dispute that facet; am I correct?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Because you knew Ella?
A. Yes.

Q. You were around Ella?
A. Yes.
Q. Was she 62?
A. No.
Q. Okay. What did you -- how old did you know her to be?
A. 80.
Q. Okay. And was it -- is it clear that, you being a teenager, 17, 18 years old at the time, do you feel confident that you could discern between somebody in their early 60s versus somebody in their 80s?
A. Of course.
Q. Okay. Somebody -- particularly somebody you're talking to regularly; is that correct?
A. Yes, correct.
Q. Okay. Because and you said Edna was around too then; is that correct?
A. Correct.
Q. Edna passed away in 1997?
A. Correct.
Q. Okay. So, clearly, you knew what -- had an idea of what the ages were of these people; is that correct?
A. Yes.

Q. Okay. And, all right. And so one of the things is that the vital records, they didn't necessarily focus on -- when they were going back, they didn't focus on people who may have been born in the 1800s; they just wanted to put a date down, because the most important thing was to rely on the date of death.

A. Correct.

Q. Okay. All right. All right.

MR. BROOKS: May I approach my witness, Judge?

THE COURT: You may.

Q. If you could take a look at this.

MR. CONNOR: Is -- can we get a copy over here? I'm just saying, I gave you copies of things that --

A. Yes.

MR. BROOKS: Sure.

(Sotto voce discussion between Mr. Brooks and Mr. Connor)

Q. Take a look at that. Can you tell me what that is?

A. This is a Social Security Death Index.

Q. Okay. Is it a death index on Elizabeth -- excuse me, Ella C. Murphy?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. It has down there date of death?
A. Yes, March 1974.
Q. Does that pretty much correspond with the death certificate, Ella's?
A. Yes, it does.
Q. And on its birth, what does it have?
A. August 15, 1888.
Q. Okay. And that would put her at about 86 when she passed; is that correct?
A. Correct.
Q. Does that correspond with your memory?
A. Yes, it does.
Q. Okay. Did she -- from what you remember, she was getting Social Security?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. And from what you know about history, Social Security didn't come along until the late 1930s and early '40s; is that correct?
A. That's correct.
Q. Okay. Okay.
MR. BROOKS: Your Honor, we would submit this as Defendant's Number 1, or Defendant's A.
THE COURT: Mr. Connor?
MR. CONNOR: No objection.
THE COURT: Okay. So admitted. Defendant's A?

What were we using on the others? A?
COURT REPORTER: A.
MR. BROOKS: You were using alphabets.
COURT REPORTER: Defendant's A.
THE COURT: Defendant's Exhibit A is admitted.
(Defendant's Exhibit A is marked and admitted into evidence.)
MR. BROOKS: Okay.
BY MR. BROOKS:
Q. Now, you'll know you're 69; you got those glasses on.
A. That's right.
Q. You been -- you been doing some research, right?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. All right. All right. Won't you take a look at this one. And then you got your magnifying glass. I've got to put my glasses back on too. I don't know if I can -- is that the -- that's the -- is that the census records for 1880?
A. Yes, it is.
Q. Okay. And it has the record for the family of Phillis and Bennie Weathers; is that correct?
A. Yes.

Q. And it has the four children?
A. Yes.
Q. One of which being Priscilla?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. I'm going to hold up Plaintiff's A. Are those the children? That's the family that -- that's what Plaintiff has submitted as the family of --
A. Yes.
Q. -- Phillis and Bennie, so that's one in the same?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. All right. And on there it's got -- got Priscilla?
A. Yes.
Q. One of the children of Phillis?
A. Correct.
Q. Okay. All right. I'm going to hand you another one of these. It's good you got your magnifying glass.
A. Yeah.
Q. Can you tell me what that is?
A. Yes, it's another census from 1910.
Q. Okay. Now, on that census, 1910, it has -- does it have Priscilla?

A. Yes, it has Priscilla Willis, Benjamin, Mary, and Ella.
Q. Okay. And how old has it got Ella down there?
A. They've got Ella being at 20.
Q. Okay. Now, okay, all right.
MR. BROOKS: Your Honor, we would submit this as Exhibit B.
THE COURT: Mr. Connor?
MR. CONNOR: Your Honor, I'm just going to put it for the record on these that, you know, I really couldn't see what was there. I'll -- you know, obviously, it's been, you know, testified to that it is a document she pulled off line.
THE WITNESS: Online.
MR. CONNOR: And I think Your Honor will take a look at that as well.
THE WITNESS: A census.
THE COURT: Mr. Brooks, is the --
THE WITNESS: I'm sorry.
THE COURT: -- is the record hard to discern? Or is -- is it light, or is it small print, or is it --
MR. BROOKS: Judge, do you want to take a look at it and see what you --

THE COURT: Not yet.
MR. BROOKS: I -- I -- now, I will say it's based on people's writing, because, obviously, there were no computers or anything at the time in 1910. In my opinion, I can -- I can discern what's what. But I had to put my little reading glasses on. And my client had to use a little magnifying glass. That's there from the archives.
THE COURT: All right. So I'm going to admit it, and the Court will do the best it can to -- is it -- so it's in handwriting?
MR. BROOKS: It's in handwriting, which is how all census documents were, Judge.
THE COURT: All right. So that'll be admitted as?
COURT REPORTER: B.
THE COURT: B.
COURT REPORTER: Defendant's B.
THE COURT: Defendant's B, without objection.
(Defendant's Exhibit B is marked and admitted into evidence.)
(Sotto voce discussion between Mr. Brooks and Mr. Connor)
BY MR. BROOKS:
Q. I'm going to hand you another one of these.

Put your magnifying glass out. Okay.
A. Okay.
Q. All right. Now, can you see what census that is?
A. No. It's cut off. It's cut off at the top.
Q. Is it the 1900 census?
A. Oh, yes, I'm sorry.
Q. That's all right. It's the 1900 census?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay.
A. Looking at the wrong place.
Q. All right. Now, you probably see where we -- you see the little mark in there?
A. Yes.
Q. And you see where there's Pinckney?
A. Yes.
Q. Pinckney Willis?
A. Yes.
Q. And then after that is --
A. Priscilla.
Q. -- Priscilla?
A. -- Ella, Mary, and Benjamin.
Q. Okay. So we talking about the same people?
A. Correct.
Q. Now, it's got Ella age 11, right?

A. Correct.
Q. But, and does it, does that census say what time of the year it was done?
A. No, it doesn't say.
Q. It may not okay.
A. No.
Q. Okay. I'm going to hand you B back.
A. Okay.
Q. Exhibit B back. Now, this one says it was done in June, right?
A. Correct.
Q. Okay. Ella's birthday would have been in August, so she would have turned 21 next year; is that right?
A. Correct.
Q. Okay. And that's based on the Social Security Death Index?
A. Right.
Q. Okay. Which jives with all of your research?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay.
A. I'm sorry.
Q. That's okay. That's okay.
MR. BROOKS: Judge, we would submit this as Exhibit C.

THE COURT: Mr. Connor? Same objection?
MR. CONNOR: Same objection.
THE COURT: Okay.
MR. BROOKS: It's hard, Judge. It's hard. It's hard. But anyway.
THE COURT: That would be Exhibit C.
MR. BROOKS: C, right.
(Defendant's Exhibit C is marked and introduced.)
MR. BROOKS: My position is, they kept it -- they did it for a reason. Okay. All right.
THE COURT: Be nice if they'd typed it up.
MR. BROOKS: Oh, man, that'd be wonderful, wouldn't it. Maybe digitize it. Okay. Now --
(Sotto voce discussion between Mr. Connor and Mr. Brooks)
BY MR. BROOKS:
Q. I'm going to hand you one other document.
A. Okay.
Q. You can use your reading glasses or your magnifying glasses.
A. Okay.
Q. When you're finish looking at it, look up. You ready?
A. Yeah.
Q. Now, was that a form here in Sumter Probate

Court?
A. Yes, it was.
Q. Okay. Now, we have a part highlighted as Ella Clark.
A. Yes.
Q. Who was Ella Clark?
A. On the side, it has Ms. Priscilla, so I -- I'm assuming that's -- on the side, it said niece -- but Asheville, North Carolina.
Q. Okay. So but is Ella Clark the same person as Ella Murphy?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. Okay. And, now, you know, I have to ask.
A. Uh-huh.
Q. You got a Ella Clark, got a Ella Murphy.
A. Yeah.
Q. You got Ella --
A. Willis.
Q. Yes. Is -- now, you've said you did know her when she was in her 80s.
A. Yes.
Q. She had different names?
A. But she put it all together. Ella Clark Murray Willis, that's how she wrote it. And I'm assuming that she was married more than

one time. I have no idea, because I didn't ask that question.

Q. But, in that document, it says that she was living in Asheville that time?

A. And that's -- yes.

Q. Okay. Now, that doc -- that's from a probate matter back in the '40s here in Sumter County?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. You did testify earlier that your mama, Edna, went and got her --

A. Yes.

Q. -- and she lived down here in Sumter with y'all; is that correct?

A. Correct.

Q. Until she passed away in '74?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. So is it your testimony that the Ella we're talking about in that probate form is Ella Clark?

A. Yes.

Q. Is that the same Ella that's listed in the census which we put in as Defendant's Exhibit B?

A. Yes.

Q. Is that the same person we -- that's the Ella

that we've put in as Ella Murphy's Social Security Death Index?

A. Yes.

Q. Is that the same person as listed in Exhibit C of the 1900 census?

A. Yes.

Q. Is that the same person that's in this death certificate that's attached as Plaintiff's H? Is that the same person that's listed on that death certificate?

A. Yes, it is.

Q. Even though it just has the year to date?

A. Yes.

Q. But it doesn't have a specific year of birth; it just has 1912?

A. Right.

Q. And that's based on the information you got from DHEC; is that correct?

A. Correct.

Q. The DHEC personnel said, we don't go back in the 1900s?

A. That's correct.

Q. We were just only focusing on when these people died?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. And so, by virtue of that fact of Ella Murphy Clark or Clark Murphy being your great-grandmama, the mother of Edna, Edna the mother of Juliaette --

A. Yes.

Q. -- and Juliaette's your mama?

A. Correct.

Q. Okay. Ella was a daughter of Priscilla?

A. Yes.

Q. And Priscilla was a daughter of Phillis?

A. Yes.

Q. And Edna, being the informant, gave the mother's name of her mama as Priscilla Weathers; is that correct?

A. Correct.

Q. And it's listed down there?

A. Yes.

Q. Which is one of the important things, we keep the death certificate, right?

A. Correct.

Q. Okay. And the census information connects all of that?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. So it's your position that you have an interest in this property by that chain we

just described?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Answer any questions of opposing counsel.
THE COURT: Cross-examination.
MR. CONNOR: Thank you.

CROSS-EXAMINATION OF VALERIE MCCRAY

BY MR. CONNOR:
Q. Ms. Valerie --
A. Yes.
Q. -- we're going to go straight back to the exhibit with the Brooks letter.
A. Uh-huh.
Q. Have you got that here?
A. I think this is it right here.

COURT REPORTER: I think that was --

Q. That should be it, yep.
A. Okay.
Q. Okay. Thanks.
A. Uh-huh.
Q. Okay. Obviously, this is coming from your attorney, and the reason for this was to help prove your -- your claim of being a descendant of Phillis Weathers. And the bottom does say, just for the record, please see a obituary and

death certificates for Ella Murphy, daughter of Priscilla Weathers Willis, clearly listing her surviving daughter as Edna Williams. Edna Williams' natural mother. Okay. You know, you testified here that allegedly the birth date is incorrect. So what you're saying, just for the record, was, this vital record is not correct; is that what you're saying?

A. Not the first birth date. It's just the year that she was born. I had nothing to do with that. That came from vital records.

Q. I understand. But you're sending this -- this document to the other side because you've got someone doing quiet title within this to prove this, these records prove our case.

A. Yes.

Q. And was there any notation from your side about the fact that, you know, it shows a four-year-old giving birth? Was there anything, any note to say there's a mistake here when you sent it over?

A. No. When I went over there to vital records in Columbia, DHEC, as they call it, I went and got it. I had to sit for a couple of hours. And, when I got it, I got back home. When I

realized what had happened, I went back over there, and they explained it to me they didn't keep all those records until 1915. That's when they started keeping them. They weren't concerned about the year. It just -- they were concerned about the -- you know, when they pass. They just put a year.

Q. Okay. But --

A. Put a year on it.

Q. So you would agree that the burden of proof in this, as far as -- is on you for --

A. Yes.

Q. -- proving your interest?

A. I understand that.

Q. Okay. So you have to send documents. Well, why didn't you make a notation? Why didn't you, you know, provide us something until now to say, oh, yes, the -- that this was a year, and allegedly they just picked a date, I guess, randomly?

A. Well, to be honest, I really didn't think I needed it until not too long ago. And I hadn't gotten back over there, because I went back to work. And by me working out of town, it's kind of hard. So I just hadn't gotten

back over there.

Q. Okay. But you -- you would have to admit here that, obviously, going back over 100 years ago, it looks like there -- there are some problems with the documentation, including the vital records as important as the death certificate, correct? Is that correct to say?

A. Well, that's what you're saying. But I agree. Well, yeah. But remember, when they had the Civil War, a lot of stuff got burnt. And I wasn't going to Washington, DC, to get all of the information.

Q. Okay. But this -- this is for Ella and for Edna.

A. Yes.

Q. And, you know, we're talking about, in this case, you know, how they came up with anything within a birth date.

A. Well, I have -- yes.

Q. But it's your testimony they just randomly picked the date; is that what you're --

A. Yes. I guess you will have to ask them that question.

Q. Okay. Well, again, I'm asking you, because --

A. I don't know that.

Q. -- these are vital records provided --
A. I don't -- I don't know the answer.
Q. Okay. So we do know that we do have to be skeptical --
A. Correct.
Q. -- of the records that come in? Okay. Because that comes to another point. You've heard the testimony of Ms. Gaymon's daughter talk about the -- the signature by her mother on the relationship of Ethel and Edna -- excuse me, Edna Ellis, correct? I'm going to get the exhibit here again. This would be the letter, the Gaymon letter. Okay. The question with this is, this issue of sort of raising someone as a good -- goodwill measure back at that time period, would that have generally, as far as from your knowledge and talking to vital records, mean that they have legally been adopted or legally been a child in every case when we're talking about things like census records?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay.
A. And you heard the testimony about the transportation case. And we've actually put

the exhibit to it back in the early, the 2000s. Mr. Brooks, I think, was the guardian ad litem.

MR. CONNOR: Have you got the exhibit for that as well? That was for the --

COURT REPORTER: What is it?

MR. CONNOR: That was for the transportation case. It's the -- actually, I think it's right here. Okay.

BY MR. CONNOR:

Q. Okay. Were you aware, at that time, of issues that were going on with the Department of Transportation?

A. Not the transportation, but I did remember my uncle and my grandmother going to Mazursky about this property.

Q. Okay. Did -- so were you -- when did you become involved in -- in this property and --

A. Well, I can't remember the year. I was out of town. Ms. Parker went to my mother's before she passed, and she wanted help with the taxes. So my mother, Mrs. Blanding, talked to Ms. Parker and said that, as soon as I get in town, I will call her. Which I did. I never received any feedback on it. I kept calling

Ms. Parker and calling her during the time that my mother was living. So I said, well, you know what, I'm not going to keep calling somebody that they don't answer the phone. I guess because I got a out-of-state phone number, you know, scams and stuff like that, I guess she didn't want to answer the phone. So I understand that. So I wasn't upset about that. And so, when my mom passed, I was going into surgery. And then my phone rang, and I was like, well, who is this calling me? And then she explained who she was. And I said okay. And she wanted to talk to me. Her and Loretta came to my place, we discussed it, and we came up with the idea of, well, who do you want -- do you want us to pay the taxes on it. I said, yeah, I can do that. I told her I did pay the taxes on it one time. And we agreed to it, it would come to my house. She didn't have a problem with it. And she also took us out to the property, where it was at. Which I always had an idea, because my grandmother used to take me out there when I was coming up as a teenager and stuff like that. So I never disagreed with anything like that. But I did

ask a question, who was paying the taxes before she started. So whatever was going on with her and my uncle, that was between them two. I wasn't involved in that. My mother wasn't involved with it. Just my uncle and her, so.

Q. Did your uncle talk to you about the correspondence --

A. No.

Q. -- that Ms. Parker had disputing his ownership claim through Edna?

A. My mom did.

Q. Your mom did?

A. So he talked to her about it.

Q. Okay. And what did she tell you?

A. That she disagreed that we weren't a descendant of Ms. Weathers, Phillis. And when she came to the house, she got -- we got to talking. She said, well, I don't think you are. And I'm like, well, okay, you know. Said, she have any documents? And I said yes. I showed her what I had. And she said, no, that wasn't true. She showed me what she had. And I'm like, okay. I said, can I take some pictures off my phone? Which I did. And I

took it from there.
Q. Okay. Did you receive correspondence from her attorney before you filed a deed claiming ownership of this property?
A. If -- I did, but, like I say, I work out of town, so, when I do get my mail, it's behind. So, when I -- when I realized what was going on, I'm like, oh, okay. So I reached out to Mr. Brooks. But she did know I had Mr. Brooks, because we talked about it at my place. Her and Ms. Loretta was at my house. I have a recording when you and I was talking.
Q. Okay. Well, the question I've got, too, though, is, is that, you know, you did file a deed claiming -- claiming ownership.
A. Only because my mother, I was claiming it for her children, my two siblings. Well, my three siblings. My sister and my two brothers and myself.
Q. Well, since the -- you at least knew about the cloud, number one, on the title.
A. Yes.
Q. So, in this case, you know, filing the deed appears to be telling the world, the register of deeds, that --

A. Okay, yes --
Q. -- you were the owner --
A. -- we got that straightened out. Yes.
Q. Okay. And did you or your attorney, did you, through your attorney, did you send over any of these census documents?
A. Yes, I did --
Q. -- to look at before this hearing?
A. Oh, yeah.
Q. You did?
A. Yeah. What you have.
Q. Well, we -- we're seeing them for the first time day.
A. I have no -- I -- that's not my problem.
Q. When did you receive it?
A. I went to the archives. This was last year when I went over there myself and I was looking up the information. That's how I got it.
Q. Okay. You got it last year then?
A. Yes, not this year.
Q. Okay. Because you did see the exhibit that we just talked about that showed proof --
A. I didn't see -- I didn't get this until after the fact.

Q. After what, what fact? I'm sorry.
A. This document. Your -- your -- what you gave me.
Q. Okay. Well --
A. I could have -- I could have the year mixed up with the --
Q. Sure.
A. -- going back to Ancestry.com. I might have been -- it could have been this year.
Q. Okay.
A. Maybe January, somewhere up in there.
Q. Okay.
A. But I'm thinking --
Q. Well, I mean, you know, the Court record's pretty clear that --
A. Yeah.
Q. -- you filed the -- your deed, we'd done the slander of title, but then we got this correspondence, and all we received was the two death certificates. Are you saying that, at that time, you already had these other documents you're claiming came from the vital -- other census records and that kind of thing?
A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Because you've already, again, admitted that there does seem to be at least some problems with the vital records from -- from 100 years ago.

A. I understand that. I know it looks like she had a child at four years old, and I know that's not true. So, like I said, you may have to ask somebody from there, because I cannot answer that question. And I'm not trying to be rude or anything like that.

Q. No, I -- I gotcha. But we, of course, received this, and we had to figure it out. It took a little bit to go through --

A. I gotcha.

Q. -- and figure out that issue. Because did you really see the issue when this -- when this first came over --

A. Yes, I did see it.

Q. Okay. But you -- you didn't tell your attorney to make a note about it, that --

A. We saw that. You know, he explained to me that that was -- I guess he talked to you, because he told me that's when y'all saw the discrepancy. And I'm like, okay, then I don't have a problem with that. Okay.

Q. Okay. So, when you sent the death certificates, you didn't know about the discrepancy; is that -- is that correct?
A. I really didn't pay that much attention until Mr. Brooks brought it to my attention.
Q. Right.
A. And then I looked at it. I said, well, yeah, she was right on that. But, like I said, they didn't keep all those records until a certain time, of the year. And that, you have to ask somebody that -- that question. I can't answer that question.
Q. Okay.
A. I just only got the death certificate because I'm the grand -- granddaughter.
Q. Right. Okay. Let me just ask, you know, for the record, do you think that -- and you got the -- the copy of her letter.
A. Uh-huh.
Q. Do you think Ethel Gaymon lied in claiming that Edna Earl Williams is not a descendant of Phillis Weathers, but she did grow up in the same community and was taken in by the daughter? Is that -- is that incorrect?
A. Yeah. I don't know, really know her. I do

know some of the descendants, because my grandmother used to take me to see them and they used to sit around and talk. So, yes, I do understand where she's coming from. But, as far as adoption and all of that, taking in, no, I disagree with that.

Q. Okay. And you mentioned too, just for the record, there was no -- no dispute in your mind that Edna was the daughter of Ella; is --

A. No.

Q. Is --

A. Well, it's no dispute. She was the daughter.

Q. Well, when I say that, though, your basis for that is -- is what you were told? Or what -- what -- what's your basis of it?

A. Okay. Rephrase your question again.

Q. Sure. You said there's no dispute in your mind that Edna -- Ella was the daughter of Priscilla and Edna was the daughter of Ella.

A. Correct.

Q. Now, you weren't alive back when -- you -- when Priscilla would have had Ella, at that point, you were not of conscious age, correct?

A. I was born in 1956.

Q. Right.

A. Okay. So what did -- that tells you? No, I was not.
Q. Okay. Got it. So your knowledge would have been, I guess, what -- what you were told in this case by --
A. My grandmother and my great-grandmother.
Q. Okay. Got it.
MR. CONNOR: No further questions, Your Honor.
THE COURT: Redirect?
MR. BROOKS: Okay.

REDIRECT EXAMINATION OF VALERIE MCCRAY

BY MR. BROOKS:
Q. Ms. McCray --
A. Yes.
Q. -- in regards to that death certificate of Ella, on the death certificate -- I'll hold it back for you. That's Ella. It has the informant's name as Edna; is that correct?
A. That's correct.
Q. That's your grandmother?
A. That's my grandmother.
Q. That was a daughter of Ella?
A. That's correct.
Q. She gives the information as far as who her mama was and who her daddy was?

A. Correct.
Q. Okay. Now, you have the death certificate of Edna?
A. Correct.
Q. Your grandmama?
A. Correct.
Q. Down there, it's got an informant. Who is that?
A. Willis?
Q. That's your -- that -- that --
A. Oh, it's Willie Williams.
Q. And who was Willie? Was that your uncle?
A. That's my uncle.
Q. He was the -- he was the son of Edna?
A. He was the son of Edna.
Q. Brother of Juliaette?
A. Brother Juliaette.
Q. Okay. Now, they're the ones that gave the information, when a person dies, as who their next of kin are and who their mamas and daddies were; is that correct?
A. Correct.
Q. Okay. And that's what, that part of the death certificate is what you were relying on when we sent it over to the plaintiff; is that

correct?
A. Yes.
Q. We weren't focused in on the stamped year that vital records had put down; is that correct?
A. Correct.
Q. And that's because of what the people at vital records told you, we don't go back into the 1900s to figure out when somebody was born; is that correct?
A. Correct.
Q. We're more focused on establishing that a person who was alive is now deceased?
A. Correct.
Q. Is that -- is that correct?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. And so, when we sent that, we weren't focusing on that part; is that correct?
A. No, we were not.
Q. We thought that that would speak for itself?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. But since they talked about that, that's when you did some research and looked back at the census records; is that correct?
A. That's correct.
Q. To find out that Ella was not born in 1912?

A. Correct.
Q. And that's when we came up with the Social Security Disability Index, as well as the census records establishing when Ella was alive; is that correct?
A. That's correct.
Q. To show that she had to be of childbearing age in order to produce Edna?
A. Yes.
Q. Is that correct?
A. That's correct.
Q. Your grandmama?
A. My grandmother.
MR. BROOKS: Okay. No other questions.
THE COURT: Recross?
MR. CONNOR: Yeah, just one thing.
RECROSS-EXAMINATION OF VALERIE MCCRAY
BY MR. CONNOR:
Q. Isn't it correct that on September 30th of last year I sent notice to you, your counsel, saying we had a problem with the issue of 1912 versus 1916 and asking for something with this, and October 3 we received basically that you maintained that Edna was a child of Ella and sort of filed your action? That's before

we decided to even file the slander -- file the slander of title?

A. Yes.

Q. So, when you first got this, at least it looks like, for at least almost a week, we're telling you there's an issue here. And, with the correspondence, you're not saying, oh, sorry, let me check this out; you're saying, go ahead and file suit?

A. I wasn't there. And, well, like I say, I was traveling back and forth, so, when I did get my mail, it was late. So, when I did realize it, that's when I talked to Mr. Brooks.

Q. Okay. But you -- you understand, like, from our side --

A. I understand where you're coming from.

Q. -- when we filed suit --

A. Yes.

Q. -- we're saying, this is a major issue, because you've given us two -- two death certificates that show that one was only four years old, and the answer at least that came back to us is, is that go ahead and file? You know, I -- so, at least at that point, it -- it took you a bit, I guess, then to go get all

the records that you're claiming here; is that --

A. And I explained that the first time when you asked that question.

Q. Okay. But then you didn't -- I mean, we didn't actually receive these things until today. So okay.

MR. CONNOR: That's all I've got. Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. Ma'am, you can step down.

(Portion of proceeding not ordered)

(The proceeding concluded at 1:54 p.m.)

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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
) CERTIFICATE
COUNTY OF CALHOUN)

Be it known that Gretchen H. Wise took the foregoing proceeding and hereby attests:

that I was then and there a notary public in and for the State of South Carolina-at-large and that by virtue thereof I was duly authorized to administer an oath;

that the deponent/witness, if any, was first duly sworn to testify to the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, concerning the matter in the controversy aforesaid;

that the foregoing transcript represents a true, accurate, and complete transcription of the REQUESTED PORTIONS of testimony so given at the time and place aforesaid to the best of my skill and ability (THOSE REQUESTED PORTIONS BEING THE TESTIMONY OF CELESTE PARKER AND VALERIE MCCRAY ONLY);

that I am neither a relative nor an employee of any of the parties hereto, nor of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor interested in the outcome of this action;

that, if a recording of an event was supplied by another party for purposes of transcription and I was not present during that event, the foregoing pages were transcribed to the best of my skill and ability; additionally, any identifications of speakers were provided to me by the party supplying the recording;

that, in the event of a nonappearance by the witness, the foregoing details for the nonappearance are accurate.

In witness thereof, I have hereunto affixed my signature and title this 8th day of December, 2025.

GRETCHEN H. WISE NOTARY PUBLIC SOUTH CAROLINA

Gretchen H. Wise

Gretchen H. Wise
Notary Public for South Carolina
My commission expires 10/12/2027