

The Stuff That We Are Made Of

The stuff that we are made of literally flows through our veins. Our DNA is a blueprint of ourselves which may be traced back in time to our ancestors. And we are a mixture of many individuals who played their roles in history. Siblings born of the same parents possess features from a variety of ancestors, and the dosage is not equal.

Although it is quite interesting to discover the origin of our features, stature, and personality traits while viewing old photographs (everyone should do this), the more interesting aspect of it is the decisions made in the face of adversity. No generation escapes troubles, for all are tested. We share many common elements of those past lives, viz: war, religious beliefs, immigration, marriages, divorce, death and so on.

And our trials of today run a pretty close parallel to those of the past. After it is all done, scholars write a history of those days. Owing to the difficult times of our ancestors, how did they stack up? Everyone's history is not written by the scholar. Yet, the ancestors left their story for us to tell. It is in the records (census, county court houses, pensions, bibles, cemeteries, etc.) During troubling times, the memories of their era is somewhat consoling, especially when we know that they stood among the righteous, exhibited bravery in the wars, and had a strong belief in freedom. Yes, this country was founded upon that one belief.

Freedom! I found some old letters of one of my great-grandfathers and discovered that he was overtaken by a deep sadness when he left his family during the Civil War. In this way, I understood that same sadness existed during my own unhappy moments. As one traces the families further back in time, the old last wills and testaments display a virtual reality of those days.

We can almost put ourselves there, in the shoes of our kin. There are many

questions concerning the migrations and lifestyles of our ancestors. And the answers are there, but require a great diligence and patience. And might I say, time?

During this era, genealogy research is very much improved, however, as more records are added to the internet. Virginia Pioneers is processing more old wills and estates, and I must say, the answers are in the details.

The final question is: "How will we stack up?"