

# Genealogy and Anti-Racism:



## A Resource for White People<sup>1</sup>

compiled by Diane Kenaston,<sup>2</sup>

created July 2017, last updated December 2022<sup>3</sup>

White privilege is endemic to doing genealogy in the United States in the 21st century. So are there ways for white people to act as anti-racist allies<sup>4</sup> while exploring our own white ancestry? This document attempts to address this question, starting with background information (family historians should love research!) and moving to suggestions for action: LEARN + ACT. **The**

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<sup>2</sup> With gratitude to my brother and to members of the inter-racial facebook group “Coming to the Table,” who saw early drafts of this document and provided valuable feedback: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/comingtothetable/>

<sup>3</sup> Because this is a google doc, I occasionally update it as I encounter new resources. Feel free to suggest new resources in the section “Introduction / Contact.” And please let me know when links have expired!

<sup>4</sup> This document was originally titled, “Genealogy, Race, and Being a White Ally.” I updated the title based on the feedback that the term “ally” can be problematic. Specifically, “*Being an ally implies wanting to help, and... ‘wanting to help’ implies that it is not your problem... [when ‘allies’] are part of creating or reproducing these problems... [and] might benefit from a changed culture*”

<http://www.racetalk.ca/discourses-of-race/whats-wrong-with-being-an-ally/> . However, you will still occasionally see the word “ally” in here. The only alternative nouns I’ve seen are “Decent Human Being” (what should be standard for everybody) and “Accomplices” (implying putting one’s own life/health/resources on the line in solidarity). This document gets nowhere near “accomplice” level --- and “decent human” is still so far from the norm that using that phrase would be relatively meaningless.

**outline to the left can take you quickly to the sections that most interest you.** If you do not see an outline, go to “View” and check “Show Document Outline.”

## CAVEAT

This guide assumes that readers are comfortable deconstructing race, talking about racism, and examining participation in racialized systems of oppression. Race needs to be named, and “color-blindness” is an unhelpful remedy to entrenched societal racism. If you are put off by the terms “white,” “privilege,” “racism,” or the general premise of this document, then this guide is not for you --- at least not for right now. Instead, you may want to seek out general resources on racism, white privilege, and growing as anti-racist allies.<sup>5</sup> Go explore your questions. Deal with whatever emotions come up. And when you come back to integrate what you’ve learned about race into your genealogical work, this resource list will be here for you.



White people, no one is asking you to apologize for your ancestors. We are asking you to dismantle the systems they built and you maintain.

11:01 PM · Jun 1, 2016

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## PERSONAL BACKGROUND<sup>7</sup>

As a child and teenager, I loved genealogy. I created handwritten charts and typed bios of my ancestors. I interviewed relatives and sent away for as many birth certificates as my small budget would allow. I had no question about the goodness of what I was doing, only a love for it. Then, in high school, I set it aside and focused on other pursuits.

I became involved in white consciousness-raising. I learned about redlining and white privilege and institutional racism. I have deliberately tried to grow as an ally for communities of color. (Although I’m using “ally” as a noun, it is never an achieved state of being but must always refer to action in the world). I speak humbly about this because I still have lots to learn.

This past year, I received an ancestry DNA test as a gift from my sister, who remembered my passion for family history. It was no surprise that I am 99.9% North Western European. (I am

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<sup>5</sup> One such resource is *#MeAndWhiteSupremacy* by Layla F. Saad:  
<http://meandwhitesupremacybook.com/>

<sup>6</sup> @YoliWriter <https://mobile.twitter.com/YoliWriter/status/738218885380374528>

<sup>7</sup> Thanks to Christine Sleeter who invited me to post a guest blog summarizing this document’s personal background, actions, and conclusion: <http://christinesleeter.org/genealogy-and-anti-racism/>

curious about my <.1% “Broadly East Asian” ancestry, but I doubt I’ll figure that one out! That would be at least 9-10 generations back.) It did surprise me how much excitement and enthusiasm I still have for brushing off those old charts and notes. I dove right back into my genealogy hobby.

This time, however, as I get back into genealogical research, I do so with a lens of how privileged I am just in accessing this hobby. Through ancestors' participation in the DAR, I have family trees going back to the 1700s ---- and the knowledge that the DAR was formed for explicitly racist reasons. Through ancestors' ability to purchase homes, attend institutions of higher education, and transfer wealth to their descendants, I have paper trails. I can afford internet access and travel and subscriptions to paid genealogical sites. Local, state, and federal governments have valued keeping my ancestors’ records and writing down their names. Some of my ancestors benefited from the Homestead Act, in which the U.S. government transferred to white citizens land stolen from indigenous peoples. Even for those who didn’t directly apply for land under the Homestead Act, by migrating to these shores, my ancestors participated in what is known as “settler colonialism” --- deliberately replacing native peoples with new settlers.

When I do a DNA ancestry test, my results are very specific (e.g., Scotland, Ireland, and other specific northwestern European countries), whereas my Black friends and colleagues frequently receive the very unhelpful and unspecific result of “West African.” The DNA tests can also be very difficult for them when they have to deal with significant percentages of European ancestry --- the genetic reminder of sexual exploitation under slavery. And that’s not to mention the very legitimate fear that many African Americans have of government/business misuse of their health/DNA data! (The privacy of genetic data and blatant attacks on people of African descent in so-called scientific research are well documented --- for example, the mothers of gynecology, the Tuskegee Institute, the eugenics movement).

The above privileges don't even get into the confirmed branch of my family who were enslavers. Some of my ancestors enslaved other human beings. They fought on the side of the Confederacy. I want to acknowledge this without defending it.

Struggling with whether the very hobby of genealogy was racist/privileged, I began searching online for how other people have engaged with these questions. I wanted to know if there were ways I could engage in genealogical research without perpetuating currently existing inequities/injustice. Specifically, I wanted to know how to ally with people of color who were looking for their own ancestors' origins. Lacking a general overview addressing this topic --- and accumulating more and more links/notes, I decided to create this document.

## TARGET AUDIENCE

I hope that this guide reaches white people in the U.S. who are amateur genealogists. I tried to find resources and action steps for any white genealogist. We have all benefited from the white

supremacy that undergirded the institution of slavery and continued through Jim Crow, immigration quotas, eugenics, redlining, mass incarceration, etc.

However, most of the resources I found deal with slaveholding ancestors. What I have learned from this is that even many Northerners & lower/middle class whites were slaveholders. So please verify every possible ancestor (looking at slave schedules & census lists) before assuming that your family wasn't directly involved with slavery! For example, I was surprised to learn that my great-grandfather, who had to drop out of school in second grade in order to support his family, was descended from slaveholders --- and this in a section of Appalachia where we are taught in schools that nobody owned slaves because everybody was poor and the terrain was ill-suited for plantation farming. On a different side of the family, the midwestern grandfather of a long line of northern Methodist preachers (a denomination that split from the southern Methodists over slavery) was also a slaveholder.

## LIMITATIONS

This document primarily addresses white privilege and racism within a Black/White U.S. context, as well as a little bit on native/non-native relationships (particularly around settler colonialism) and immigration restrictions. There are many other areas that could be covered, including Jewish & Muslim sources, international adoption, U.S./Mexican border changes, Asian immigration, etc.

While I would have preferred to lift the voices of non-majority people, the authors I found who are wrestling with my same question (how to be anti-racist white genealogists) were primarily people with similar backgrounds to mine. I am a middle class white Protestant Christian cis woman married to a cis man. I am writing from the United States, where all of my ancestors had immigrated prior to 1880.

I only included free resources. The exception to this are the books and documentaries, both of which are frequently accessible through local libraries.

While I have read each listed website, I have not read all of the books or watched all of the documentaries --- this document was created as my "to read" and "to do" list :)

Due to the limitations of my own perspective, I am very open to adding other resources -- please contact me via email (see next section).

## CONTACT

Additions, suggestions, corrections, and other feedback can be shared via email:  
diane (dot) kenaston (at) gmail (dot) com

## LINK

You can use this shortened link for bookmarking and sharing: [bit.ly/2vQ6ybV](https://bit.ly/2vQ6ybV)

The full web address of this guide is:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/16TtyJTfPsPi7HWJkc4orLrC9SdpXOdGle0mfxZlvWvl/edit?usp=sharing>

## LEARN

### BOOKS

Nonfiction unless otherwise indicated.

#### Family Histories

Mark Auslander, *The Accidental Slave Owner: Revisiting a Myth of Race and Finding an American Family*

John F. Baker, Jr., *The Washingtons of Wessyngton Plantation*

Edward Ball, *Slaves in the Family and Genetic Strand: Exploring a Family History Through DNA*

Karen Branan, *The Family Tree: A Lynching in Georgia, a Legacy of Secrets, and My Search for the Truth.*

Jason Buchholz, *A Paper Son* (fiction)

Peterson, L. Carla, *Black Gotham: A Family History of African-Americans in Nineteenth Century New York City*

Melvin J. Collier, *Mississippi to Africa: A Journey of Discovery and 150 Years Later*

Andrea Cumbo-Floyd, *The Slaves Have Names*

Edmund de Waal, *The Hare with Amber Eyes: a Hidden Inheritance*

Thomas Norman DeWolf, *Inheriting the Trade*

Steve Fraser, *Class Matters: The Strange Career of an American Delusion*

Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing* (fiction)

Alex Haley, *Roots: the Saga of an American Family* (fiction/"faction")

Shirlee Taylor Haizlip, *The Sweeter the Juice: A Family Memoir in Black and White*

Grant Hayter-Menzies, *The North Door: Echoes of Slavery in a New England Family*<sup>8</sup>

Inez Hollander, *Silenced Voices: Uncovering a Family's Colonial History in Indonesia*

Susan Hutchison, *Confronting Slavery in Your Family's History*

Phyllis Lawson, *Quilt of Souls*

Bunny McBride, *Women of the Dawn*

The Memory Keepers (Harris Bailey, Bernice A. Bennett, Ellen L. Butler, Ethel Dailey, and Vincent Sheppard), *Our Ancestors, Our Stories*

Tiya Miles, *The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story* and *Ties That Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom*

Deborah A. Miranda, *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir* (Heyday Books 2013).<sup>9</sup>

Sharon Leslie Morgan and Thomas Norman DeWolf, *Gather at the Table: The Healing Journey of a Daughter of Slavery and a Son of the Slave Trade*

Joe Mozingo, *The Fiddler on Pantico Run*

Ric Murphy, *Freedom Road, An American Family Saga from Jamestown to World War*

LaBrenda Nelson-Garret, *The Source of Our Pride*

Lisa See, *On Gold Mountain: the One-Hundred-Year Odyssey of My Chinese-American Family*

Christine Sleeter, *White Bread: Weaving Cultural Past into the Present* (fiction)

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<sup>8</sup> 50% of royalties go to Coming to the Table, and the other 50% to The Slave Dwelling Project

<sup>9</sup> Thanks to Ellen Fernandez-Sacco for this book recommendation. She writes: "She uses memoir, genealogy, and oral history to reconstruct her history to the Missions, (Ohlone/ Costanoan/ Essalen and of Jewish ancestry)."

Marcia Ann Speth, *One Drop: History of an American Family from the Mayflower to the Millennium*

Jill Strauss and Dionne Ford (editors), *Slavery's Descendants: Shared Legacies of Race and Reconciliation*<sup>10</sup>

Andrea Stuart, *Sugar in the Blood: A Family's Story of Slavery and Empire*

Scott Tong, *A Village with My Name: A Family History of China's Opening to the World*

Luis Alberto Urrea, *The Hummingbird's Daughter / La Hija de la Chuparrosa* and *Queen of America* (fiction)

Henry Wiencek, *Hairstons: An American Family in Black and White*

Anita Wills, *Notes and Documents of Free Persons of Color Four Hundred Years of an American Family's History*

## General Histories Dealing with Race, Culture, and Ethnicity

Theodore Allen, *The Invention of the White Race*

Edward Baptist, *The Half has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*

Douglas Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name*

F. James Davis, *Who is Black? One Nation's Definition*

Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*

Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction*

Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War*

Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*

Bernie D. Jones, *Fathers of Conscience: Mixed-Race Inheritance in the Antebellum South*

Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South*

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<sup>10</sup> Anthology of stories by Coming to the Table participants (both descendants of enslaved people and enslavers), 75% of royalties go to Coming to the Table

Erika Lee and Judy Yung, *Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America*

Beth Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go: Violence, Exclusion, and the Making of the Alien in America*

Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*

Jean O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England*

Ken Prewitt, *What Is "Your" Race?: The Census and Our Flawed Efforts to Classify Americans*

David Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs*

Ilan Stavans, *Becoming Americans - Four Centuries of Immigrant Writing*

Ned and Constance Sublette, *The American Slave Coast: a History of the Slave-Breeding Industry*

Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: a History of Multicultural America and Strangers from a Different Shore*

## Specialized Resources for Genealogists

Arica Coleman, *That the Blood Stay Pure*

Troy Duster, *Backdoor to Eugenics*

Eric Ehrenreich, *The Nazi Ancestral Proof: Genealogy, Racial Science, and the Final Solution*

Kathy Huber (National Genealogical Society), *American Indians of Oklahoma*

Barbara Koenig, Sandra Soo-Jin Lee, and Sarah S. Richardson, *Revisiting Race in A Genomic Age*

Darryl Leroux, *Distorted Descent: White Claims to Indigenous Identity*

María Elena Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico*

Dorothy Nelkin and Susan Lindee, *The DNA Mystique: The Gene as a Cultural Icon*



Alondra Nelson, *The Social Life of DNA: Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation After the Genome*

David Pettee, *Researching Slave Holding and Slave Trading Ancestry*

Ruth Pike, *Linajudos and conversos in Seville: greed and prejudice in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain*

Dorothy Roberts, *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-create Race in the Twenty-first Century*

Angela Saini, *Superior: The Return of Race Science*

Robyn Smith, *The Best of Reclaiming Kin: Helpful Tips on Researching Your Roots*

Kim TallBear, *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science*

Keith Wailoo, Alondra Nelson, and Catherine Lee, eds. *Genetics and the Unsettled Past: The Collision of DNA, Race, and History*.

François Weil, *Family Trees: A History of Genealogy in America*

Heather Andrea Williams, *Help Me to Find My People: The African American Search for Family Lost in Slavery*

Eviatar Zerubavel, *Ancestors and Relatives: Genealogy, Identity, and Community*<sup>11</sup>

## FILM & TELEVISION

13th by Ava Duvernay (documentary)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krfcq5pF8u8>

Slavery by Another Name (documentary)

<http://www.pbs.org/tpt/slavery-by-another-name/watch/>

Traces of the Trade (documentary)

<http://www.tracesofthetrade.org/buy-use-the-film/>

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<sup>11</sup> Professor Eviatar Zerubavel taught a course at Rutgers entitled "Sociology and Genealogy." Syllabus here: <http://www.sociology.rutgers.edu/documents/undergraduate-course-syllabi/spring-2012-undergraduate-courses/193-zerubavel-422-2/file>

Frederick Douglass and the White Negro (documentary)

<http://www.camelproductions.net/frederick-douglass-and-the-white-negro/>

Finding Your Roots with Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (PBS television series)

<http://www.pbs.org/show/finding-your-roots/>

African-American Lives (2006), Oprah's Roots (2007), and African-American Lives 2 (2008) with Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (television series)

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/aalives/>

Shared History (documentary)

<http://www.sharedhistory.org>

The Healing Passage / Voices from the Water (documentary)

<http://www.thehealingpassage-voices.com/>

Free Land (90min performance by Ariel Luckey)

<http://arielluckey.com/free-land/>

Free Land DVD & curriculum here:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20160317041208/http://www.arielluckey.com/shop/>

The Chinese Exclusion Act in the American Experience film series (premiered May 29, 2018 on PBS)

<https://www.pbs.org/video/the-chinese-exclusion-act-eixnlw/>

Finding Kamau with Kamau Bell (3 part series; approximately 30min total; part of United Shades of America)

<https://www.cnn.com/shows/united-shades-of-america>

series overview and excerpts:

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/06/06/us/united-shades-ancestry-finding-kamau/index.html?no-st=1548879542>

interview with host:

<https://www.npr.org/2018/06/27/623820372/comic-w-kamau-bell-on-the-shades-of-america-and-not-feeling-black-enough>

# GENEALOGY'S HISTORY

## Entwined with White Supremacy

Mennonite Genealogy and Racial Privilege by Ben Goossen, November 3, 2016

"Genealogy as we understand it today is quite a recent concept, finding widespread acclaim only in the last hundred and fifty years... And far from an ideologically neutral undertaking, genealogy in the modern era emerged largely in the context of scientific racism and social exclusion... 'racial purity, nativism, and nationalism successfully dominated the quest for pedigree.'"

<https://anabaptisthistorians.org/2016/11/03/mennonite-genealogy-and-racial-privilege/>

Roots of Genealogy Craze: How an Elitist Pursuit Became a Mainstream American Obsession by Gregory Rodriguez, May 12, 2014

"In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with millions of southern Europeans arriving on American shores, white elites sought to maintain their social status by promoting a definition of whiteness that excluded newcomers. Genealogy became a way for them to prove their credentials for membership in such hereditary societies as the Daughters of the American Revolution, which was founded in 1890 and stood for, in the words of its president general, "the purity of our Caucasian blood.'"

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2014/05/12/genealogy-americans-technology-roots-porn-websites-column/9019409/>

The Kallikaks and the Eugenicists by Stuff You Missed in History Class [podcast]

Major misuse of genealogy: trying to prove genetic inferiority.

<http://www.missedinhistory.com/podcasts/kallikaks-eugenics.htm>

Related book on this topic is *Killing the Black Body* by Dorothy Roberts (more on reproductive justice than genealogy).

Eugenics, Identity and the California Genealogical Society's International Congress of Genealogy at the Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915 by Ellen Fernandez-Sacco

"While some may argue that genealogy is not inherently political, the early history of genealogical societies proves otherwise... Ancestry, social location, and origin became personal measures of eugenic progress... [G]enealogy served to assuage anxieties as massive economic and environmental changes set off by industrialization brought social

change. Tracing ancestors back to the start of colonization efforts lent a stabilizing assurance that the force of empire would continue."

[https://www.academia.edu/38225536/\\_Eugenics\\_Identity\\_and\\_the\\_California\\_Genealogical\\_Societys\\_International\\_Congress\\_of\\_Genealogy\\_at\\_the\\_Panama-Pacific\\_Exposition\\_of\\_1915\\_](https://www.academia.edu/38225536/_Eugenics_Identity_and_the_California_Genealogical_Societys_International_Congress_of_Genealogy_at_the_Panama-Pacific_Exposition_of_1915_)

The Language of Genealogy & the Classification of Race in Colonial New Mexico  
by Maria Elena Martinez-Lopez [lecture]

Lecture presented at "Race and Classification: The Case of Mexican America,"  
organized by UCHRI and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, May 1, 2004.

This video is 25min and worth every minute! These are the notes I took from the video:

*Early 15th century:* class tied to lineage and ancestry (nobility/taxpayers vs. commoners) ("raza")

*Late 15th century:* race tied to religion (pure Christian ancestry v "conversos y moriscos" in "limpieza de sangre" laws); Old Christians did not have "raza" --- but Jews, Protestants, Muslims, & New Christians did; legal procedures defined how over time generations of New Christians can become Old Christians; "linajudos" were genealogists who verified (or were bribed to hide) the pedigree of Old Christians --- necessary for honors/positions like going to the colonies

*16th century:* gender/sexuality/reproduction and chastity connect to caste; Spaniards, Native Americans, and Africans were the three main trunks of colonial society --- mixing them created "mestizaje" classification (mestizo [Spaniard + Indian] & mulato [Spaniard + Black] --- both zoological terms for cross-breeding); slavery has religious implications (enslavement was function of religious infidelity or ancestral sin; enslaved Africans were "cursed descendants of Ham")

*Late 16th century:* "casta"/caste more useful category in Americas than "raza"/race (still connected to religion); "casta" = inclusive system used in Americas; "raza" = exclusive system used in Iberia; emergence in Americas of terms "castizo" [Spaniard + Mestizo] & "morisco" [Spaniard + Mulato] --- terms that formerly (in Iberia) meant, respectively, high-class/well-bred/aristocratic and Muslim convert; the term "castizo" allowed for the possibility of indigenous people to become Old Christians; view Indian blood as less damaging to Spaniards than Black blood

*17th century:* "casta" becomes increasingly racialized & essentialized; "raza" begins being used against Africans in the Americas; enslaved people could not establish the lineage necessary to be an Old Christian (i.e., a certificate of "purity of blood" showing that one's ancestors were Old Christians)

18th century: "casta" paintings<sup>12</sup> provide visual taxonomy of humans & enshrine castizo / mestizo / morisco / mulato castes in hierarchy; Enlightenment shifts "race" from religion to (secular) phenotype/biology/color

E.g. the 3-4 generations that it took for a New Christian to become an Old Christian becomes the 3-4 generations to whiten descendants of Native Americans

(note that it was not possible to "lighten" descendants of Blacks)

Video: <https://youtu.be/cwJPJmc7eXo>

Both of these essays by Maria Elena Martinez are good related reading:

<http://usc.academia.edu/MariaElenaMartinez>

For a quick written overview see "Tracing the Roots of Discrimination" by Pamela J. Johnson: <https://dornsife.usc.edu/news/stories/659/tracing-the-roots-of-discrimination/>

## Genealogical Societies

The Problem of the Color Line by Nicka Smith

"[In 1960] A man of color, who happened to be an employee of the National Archives, applied to be a member of one of the oldest genealogy societies in the country, the National Genealogical Society... Many believe he was James "Jimmy" Dent Walker, founder of the Afro American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS). Word on the street is that he was lead to form AAHGS because of his repeated rejection from organizations like NGS. It seemed like NGS had finally gotten itself together by 1999 when Walker was elected to their hall of fame six years after his death. He is the only person of color to hold that designation to this day. The Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) "put a little yeast on it" (in the words of my father) and has a memorial lecture at its conference in his honor. But one can't help but wonder if these honors were bestowed with good intentions or just to save face because of the transgressions of the past?"

<http://www.whoisnickasmith.com/genealogy/the-problem-of-the-color-line/>

For Daughters of the American Revolution, a New Chapter by Sarah Maslin Nir  
More Black Members in the DAR.

"In 1939, the group barred Anderson, a world-famous black contralto, from performing... prompting Eleanor Roosevelt, then the first lady, to renounce her membership, and fomenting a national conversation about race... The first black woman in modern times joined in 1977... But as late as 1984 [Lena S. Ferguson had to sue to be admitted to the DAR]... As part of a settlement with Ms. Ferguson... the group rewrote its bylaws to state expressly that it was open to all types of women."

<https://nyti.ms/LX1GX7>

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<sup>12</sup> View Casta Paintings at <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casta>

People of Color Genealogy Research, can it be done at the DAR Library? by Shelley Murphy

I was glad to read this!

<https://familytreegirl.com/2015/10/04/people-of-color-genealogy-research-can-it-be-done-at-the-dar-library/>

## Enforcing Status

Problematizing the Chinese Experience in America by William Wei

While traditional Chinese genealogies “indicated a family’s higher social status and respectability,” 19th century Chinese-American immigrants did not construct traditional genealogies. and government restrictions limited ability to marry. “Without descendants to safeguard his reputation, Chin Poo, like other Chinese community leaders who could not be normalized as family men, was more likely to be portrayed as a stereotype... [In contrast] Chin Lin Sou had a family and produced sons and daughters who continued his bloodline to the present. His descendants have made it their responsibility to safeguard his legacy. By preserving a record of his genealogy, they have ensured that he and, by extension, they are remembered as respectable members of American society.”

<http://www.mdpi.com/2313-5778/1/1/3/htm>

The Genealogy of Genealogy: Oral history, Alex Haley's Roots and the question of proof by Ellen Fernandez- Sacco

"There is an equivalence in the genealogical field that is beginning to be dismantled, an implicit claim that scholastic levels of genealogy equates to whiteness... One has to go back to the 1880s, when genealogy was part of the toolkit for the pseudoscience of eugenics."

"[The] logic of 'documentary proof as the only valid proof' is part of the problem of structural racism... To continue to claim this kind of proof as the only proof is an exclusionary exercise, in effect that insists on documentation within a context where one side holds the power, one that perpetuates the gap between White Americans and Americans of color. Within the last two decades, genealogists in the field of African American genealogy have developed strategies for working with oral histories and published accounts and have successfully incorporated them within the Genealogical Proof Standard."

<http://latinogenealogy.blogspot.com/2016/10/the-genealogy-of-genealogy-oral-history.html?m=1>

Genealogical Relatedness: Geographies of Shared Descent and Difference by Catherine Nash

"I was... determined to explore the way in which the practice of genealogy can itself trouble genealogical models of relatedness and ideas of ethnic or national purity."

## WHITENESS & GENEALOGY

### White Privilege & Searching for Ancestors

Why Talk about Whiteness? by Emily Chiariello

"As white people become more conscious of whiteness and its meaning, we may simultaneously struggle with two aspects of identity: internalized dominance and the search for cultural belonging. The search for culture draws some white people to multiculturalism and appreciation of other cultures and heritages. Others find roots outside the container of race, woven into proud family histories. A small minority cling violently to their white cultural identity, sometimes with tragic consequences... it is important to note that the ability to trace one's genealogy is an inherited privilege not enjoyed by most African Americans, the majority of whom are descendants of enslaved people."

<http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/u76079/TT53%20Why%20Talk%20About%20Whiteness.pdf>

White People Want to Find Heroes among Their Ancestors by Jessie Daniels

Looking for (white) heroes shapes genealogy marketing campaigns and archival practices.

<http://www.racismreview.com/blog/2015/05/03/white-people-want-find-heroes-among-ancestors/>

America's Ancestry Craze by Maud Newton (Harper's Magazine)

"What would my genome reveal about my father, the 5'7½" amateur eugenicist...? He'd married my mother because he'd thought they would have smart children together, and in the ensuing years he'd catalogued my many shortcomings — from lackluster math skills to a thyroid condition — and accused her of failing to warn him about her "defective genes.""

<https://harpers.org/archive/2014/06/americas-ancestry-craze/?single=1>

Why Family and History? by Christine Sleeter

"Heritage family histories by people of color usually show how racism played out in the family's story, inviting public discussion of racism today. However, heritage family histories by white people tend to do the opposite." The article summarizes "Black and White: American Genealogy, Race, and Popular Response" by Eric Gardner (which I unfortunately could not find for free online).

<http://christinesleeter.org/why-family-and-history/>

The Invisible History of the Human Race by Christine Kenneally

“Totalitarian power thrives when it alienates people from basic information about themselves. When European slavers abducted people from Africa, they essentially took away their history as well. In Canada and Australia in the early to mid-twentieth century, many indigenous children were taken from their communities and raised in settlers’ families or group homes. These acts have since been described not just as abduction but as cultural genocide.”

[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/christine-kenneally/genealogy-eugenics\\_b\\_6367344.html?](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/christine-kenneally/genealogy-eugenics_b_6367344.html?)

## Slaveholding Ancestry

Ben Affleck, Slavery and the Need for Black Friends by Jason Johnson

What NOT to do!

<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/oped-ben-affleck-slavery-need-black-friends-n345591>

Dear Ben Affleck, My Ancestors Were Slave Owners, Too. Here’s What We Can Do About It. by Thomas Norman DeWolf

What TO do! <http://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/7200510>

Dear Ben... by Judy G. Russell

<http://www.legalgenealogist.com/2015/04/25/dear-ben/>

Hidden History by Rev. David Pettee

“Here in the North, we have inherited a powerful historical amnesia when it comes to the memory of slavery.”

<http://comingtothetable.org/stories/stories-facing-history/hidden-history-rev-david-pettee/>

A Case Study in Researching Southern Slaveholding Ancestry by Rev. David Pettee

With help from Susan Hutchison

<http://comingtothetable.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/ResearchingSouthernSlaveholdingAncestry.pdf>

A Case Study in Researching Northern Slaveholding Ancestry by Rev. David Pettee

<http://comingtothetable.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/ResearchingNorthernSlaveholdingAncestry.pdf>



## METHODS & RESOURCES

### Alternative Methodologies

Alternative methodologies like oral history are not always viewed as legitimate authorities within conventional genealogy. Moving outside white Western colonial assumptions, we can expand our understanding of “family history.” Multiple cultural forms of family history, including oral history, family storytelling, and connections to the land can be acceptable and authoritative.

Gathering African American Families’ Oral Histories: The Getting Word Project by Prinny Anderson

The Story of the Getting Word Oral History Project – Part One of Three

The Impact and Aftermath of the Getting Word Oral History Project – Part Two of Three

The Researchers and Their Advice for Oral Historians – Part Three of Three

<https://linkedthroughslavery.com/tag/oral-history/>

Notes from the Field: Reconnecting through Research by Adrienne Keene

<http://nativeappropriations.com/2015/08/notes-from-the-field-reconnecting-through-research.html>

Archival Genealogy & Finding Our Ancestors by Andrea (Andi) Cumbo-Floyd

Responding to white genealogists who say: “But all genealogy is hard!”

This original post has disappeared as of January 2019:

<http://ourfolkstales.com/2017/02/21/archival-genealogy-finding-ancestors/>

But the author’s new work seems to have migrated here:

<https://andilit.com/category/slavery/>

### Census: Inscribing & Defining Race

How Census Race Categories Have Changed Over Time

“Through 1950, census-takers commonly determined the race of the people they counted. From 1960 on, Americans could choose their own race.”

(This is helpful background to the following article, “Racial Reorganization”)

<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/interactives/multiracial-timeline/>

Racial Reorganization and the United States Census 1850-1930: Mulattoes, Half-Breeds, Mixed Parentage, Hindoos, and the Mexican Race by Jennifer L. Hochschild and Brenna M. Powell

“Census racial classification policies... [were] driven by a combination of scientific, political, and ideological motivations... A nation's census is deeply implicated in and helps to construct its social and political order...”

“Why was the Census Bureau’s system of racial categorization so inconsistent and unstable, and why did experimentation in reorganizing the racial order begin [1850] and end [1930] when it did?”

“...They generated a set of categories that enabled the basic hierarchy of white supremacy and nonwhite subordination to be maintained, along with the distinction between actual or potential Americans and perennial outsiders, but that also led to great confusion about who nonwhites and outsiders were, how they would be defined in relationship to other groups, and how much they would be subordinated or excluded.”

<https://scholar.harvard.edu/jlhochschild/publications/racial-reorganization-and-united-states-census-1850-1930-mulattoes-half-br>

The Dark Side by Judy G. Russell

Examples of “race” names on a 1927 school census

<http://www.legalgenealogist.com/2016/03/11/the-dark-side/>

Indians Not Taxed by Judy G. Russell

“Excluding and including the Indian”

<http://www.legalgenealogist.com/2015/03/13/9643/>

Here’s Why The Census Started Counting Latinos (NPR’s Code Switch Podcast)

“For people of color, the push to be accurately counted has always been high stakes because the size of ethnic minority populations directly affects the ability that groups speaking for them have to secure federal funding and to influence the way Congressional and other voting districts are drawn.”

<http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/08/03/541142339/heres-why-the-census-started-counting-latinos-and-how-that-could-change-in-2020>

La Raza: Mexicans in the United States Census by Brian Gratton and Emily Klancher Merchant

“This article traces the rise and disappearance of the “Mexican” racial category between 1920 and 1940... with enumerators [in 1940] instructed that ‘Mexicans are to be regarded as white unless definitely of Indian or other nonwhite race.’”

[https://neukom.dartmouth.edu/docs/16\\_gratton\\_la\\_raza\\_merchant.pdf](https://neukom.dartmouth.edu/docs/16_gratton_la_raza_merchant.pdf)

# DNA & GENETICS

## Ethnicity Testing

### Why You Should Think Twice About Those DNA-By-Mail Results

"Where we make a habit of seeing biologically natural units of some type instead of complex webs of variables at work, there's a risk of highly unscientific thinking — and sometimes worse. 'Scientific racism... often begins by highlighting (and misrepresenting) patterns of difference in the human species...' Humans vary, and our genes vary. But not very much."

<http://www.npr.org/sections/13.7/2017/07/06/535767665/why-you-should-think-twice-about-those-dna-by-mail-results>

Deborah A. Bolnick, et al, The Science and Business of Genetic Ancestry Testing

[http://thetarrytownmeetings.org/sites/default/files/discussion/Bolnick\\_etal\\_Science.2007.pdf](http://thetarrytownmeetings.org/sites/default/files/discussion/Bolnick_etal_Science.2007.pdf)

### DNA Testing by Christine Sleeter

"While biology and identity are related, they are not the same thing... For me, the discovery of African ancestry was a surprise, but having been raised white and identified all my life as white, it didn't change my interpretation of who I am. (Prior to 1955, however, it's possible that I could have been treated as Black under Jim Crow laws, had African ancestry been documented while the 1 drop rule was in effect.) Identity is formed on the basis of relationships with people, experiences within those relationships, who others think you are and treat you as, as well as your own interpretation of your experiences in various contexts. DNA gives you your genotype; it doesn't determine your relationships, experiences, and interpretations of your life."

<http://christinesleeter.org/dna-testing/>

### Genetic Ancestry Testing and the Meaning of Race by Wendy Roth [video]

Genes can tell you something about your ancestral background, but they cannot tell you your race. From Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies. 12 minutes.

<https://youtu.be/MQImX7gvYRA>

### Ethnicity Testing – A Conundrum | DNAeXplained - Genetic Genealogy

<https://dna-explained.com/2016/02/10/ethnicity-testing-a-conundrum/>

Ethnicity and Physical Features are NOT Accurate Predictors of Parentage or Heritage by Roberta Estes

Absence of evidence is not always evidence of absence.

<https://dna-explained.com/2017/07/02/ethnicity-and-physical-features-are-not-accurate-predictors-of-parentage-or-heritage/>

Identity and Genetic Ancestry Tracing by Carl Elliott and Paul Brodwin

Originally published in British Medical Journal 325 (2002): 1469-71.

“Genetic ancestry testing is being used to decide claims about ethnic, political, family, and religious identity... [But] the information about identity being revealed by genetics must be weighed against other determinants of identity such as cultural determinants and historical narratives... Genetic ancestry tracing has the potential to disrupt identity claims as well as corroborate them.”

[http://www.academia.edu/24952107/Identity\\_And\\_Genetic\\_Ancestry\\_Tracing\\_British\\_Medical\\_Journal\\_2002\\_325\\_1469-1471](http://www.academia.edu/24952107/Identity_And_Genetic_Ancestry_Tracing_British_Medical_Journal_2002_325_1469-1471)

How DNA Testing Botched My Family's Heritage, and Probably Yours, Too by Kristen V. Brown

“Heritage DNA tests are more accurate for some groups of people than others... Middle Eastern reference populations are not as well represented as European, an industry-wide challenge... Ancestry.com is suggesting—quite heavy-handedly—that your DNA can define your identity... Your specific ancestors actually have relatively little impact on your DNA. Some 99.99 percent of your DNA is identical to every other human's. We're mostly just all the same. But instead of embracing our genetic similarities, we cling to those differences as symbols of what makes us unique. Consumer DNA testing tends to reinforce that—even though the difference that one test reveals might not even exist in another... If the messaging of consumer DNA companies more accurately reflected the science, though, it might be a lot less compelling: Spit in a tube and find out where on the planet it's statistically probable that you share ancestry with today.”

<https://gizmodo.com/how-dna-testing-botched-my-familys-heritage-and-probab-1820932637>

When Markers Meet Marketing: Ethnicity, Race, Hybridity, and Kinship in Genetic Genealogy Television Advertising by Christine Scodari [free pdf]

“Genetic ancestry testing providers are well aware that their enterprise is premised on belief in the superiority of biological kinship and that hybridity is mobilized primarily as a marketing opportunity with ethnic components signified in shorthand by fetishized objects... Categories of race and ethnicity presented in the ads give cover to racist abusers of genetic science, as the ads are consistent with socially constructed racial classifications... Resistance is possible in the use of genetic ancestry by descendants of African slaves to make localized connections to Africa...”

<https://www.scilit.net/article/dcd76fdf345cfe5c2bba2d19fe884d7b>

Members of Whose Tribe? by Code Switch [podcast] (DNA & Judaism)

“Imagine my chagrin when, after my 20-year personal crusade telling people there's no such thing as a half-Jew, these DNA tests become super popular. And then, suddenly,

everyone and their mother can say, down to a percentage point, how Jewish they are.... But it depends on what you mean by being Jewish... when we accept the idea of Jewish genes, we're buying into a very old anti-Semitic idea that Jews are not the same as other humans, which some people think is getting dangerously close to the idea of race science, which we're going to talk about a little later. And Aronel says DNA tests are suggesting that Jews don't come from anywhere, and so they don't belong anywhere.”  
<https://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=602678381>

The Return of Race Science by Code Switch [podcast]  
<https://www.npr.org/2019/07/10/740072055/the-return-of-race-science>

## Indigenous DNA

Narratives of Race and Indigeneity in the Genographic Project by Kim TallBear

“I break this grand narrative [of global human migration over the past 200,000 years] down into five sub-narratives, or “stories,” to demonstrate how Genographic’s 21st-century scientific techniques are linked to racial science dating back to the 17th century.”

These five stories are:

Story 1: “Discover Who You Are (African)”

Story 2: “Genetic Science Will End Racism”

Story 3: “The Vanishing Indigene”

(A Footnote to Stories 2 and 3: “We Are All Related”)

Story 4: “Genographic Is a Collaborative Project with Indigenous People”

Story 5: “We Are What We Were,” or “Native Americans Are Really Mongolians”

<http://gapjunctionscience.org/wp-content/uploads/TallBear+Narratives+of+race+and+indigeneity.pdf>

“Your DNA Is *Our* History”: Genomics, Anthropology, and the Construction of Whiteness as Property by Jenny Reardon and Kim TallBear

<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/662629>

Who's Your Great-Great-Great-Great Granddaddy? (NPR's Code Switch)

“Spit into a tube and get in touch with your ancestors! Or not. On this [podcast] episode we interview the founder of a project that uses DNA tests to talk about race in America. And Kim TallBear, a Native American anthropologist, says why she thinks DNA tests don't really tell you much about yourself.”

<http://one.npr.org/?sharedMediaId=541396822:542332976>

Can a DNA Test Make Me Native American? (All My Relations podcast)

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/262196/992942-ep-4-can-a-dna-test-make-me-native-american>

Putting Science under an Indigenous Microscope (Media Indigena podcast)

Listen to the second and third sections.

<http://mediaindigena.libsyn.com/ep-169-putting-science-under-an-indigenous-microscope>

There is no DNA test to prove you're Native American

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22129554-400-there-is-no-dna-test-to-prove-you-re-native-american/#ixzz5yQAMwkVD>

## Possibilities with DNA

Bias meets DNA: Students at Pennsylvania college asked to learn their ancestry

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-college-class-dna-testing-20161229-story.html>

Your Family May Once Have Been A Different Color

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=100057939>

Years after transatlantic slavery, DNA tests give clarity [5min video with Alondra Nelson]

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/years-transatlantic-slavery-dna-tests-give-clarity>

They considered themselves white, but DNA tests told a more complex story by Tara Bahrapour

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/amphhtml/local/social-issues/they-considered-themselves-white-but-dna-tests-told-a-more-complex-story/2018/02/06/16215d1a-e181-11e7-8679-a9728984779c\\_story.html?tid=ss\\_tw-bottom&utm\\_term=.a647fad5748c&twitter\\_impression=true](https://www.washingtonpost.com/amphhtml/local/social-issues/they-considered-themselves-white-but-dna-tests-told-a-more-complex-story/2018/02/06/16215d1a-e181-11e7-8679-a9728984779c_story.html?tid=ss_tw-bottom&utm_term=.a647fad5748c&twitter_impression=true)

Bridging Discussions of Human History: Ancestry DNA and New Roles for Africana Studies by Bessie L. Lawton, Anita Foeman and Nicholas Surdel

<http://www.mdpi.com/2313-5778/2/1/5/html>

## Alt-Right & Genetics

White nationalists are using DNA ancestry tests to prove 'purity' by The Current

25 minute CBC radio news story by The Current with Anna Maria Tremonti

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-september-4-2017-1.4272026/white-nationalists-are-using-dna-ancestry-tests-to-prove-purity-1.4272100>

How white supremacists respond when their DNA says they're not 'white' by

Nsikan Akpan

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/science/white-supremacists-respond-genetics-say-theyre-not-white>

Will the Alt-Right Promote a New Kind of Racist Genetics? by Sarah Zhang

"Modern geneticists now take pains to distance their work from the racist assumptions of eugenics. Yet since the dawn of the genomic revolution, sociologists and historians have warned that even seemingly benign genetics research can reinforce a belief that different races are essentially different... [and] that races are genetically meaningful categories...

The trouble with the way we talk about race is that our biological differences are by degree rather by category. The borders of a country or continent are not magical lines that demarcate one genetically distinct population from another... Even though geneticists know how messy these racial categories are.. the emphasis on race... [is deeply entangled] in the structure of genetic medicine... There is no gene or set of genes that consistently codes for black, white, or any other race... [but] reading about DNA ancestry tests increased one's belief in essential differences between racial groups."

<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2016/12/genetics-race-ancestry-tests/510962/>

When White Nationalists Get DNA Tests That Reveal African Ancestry by Sarah Zhang

"For white nationalists, DNA tests are a way to prove their racial purity.... Sociologists have long pointed out the categories of race are socially constructed... determined by social rather than biological forces. And DNA is the newest way for white nationalists to look for differences between the races."

<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/08/white-nationalists-dna-ancestry/537108/>

## Shared Genealogy

A Matter of Degree by Judy G. Russell

"The law pigeonholed people into various categories based on the percentage of African ancestry they had, and assigned names to those categories. The language of the law then reflected those distinctions by having names for those the law regarded as non-white."

<http://www.legalgenealogist.com/2015/01/13/a-matter-of-degree/>

Britain's Forgotten Slave Owners by Roberta Estes of DNAeXplain

"The level of chronic, systemic non-consensual sexual exploitation is almost beyond comprehension. Of course, today we can expect to see the results in Y DNA testing."

<https://dna-explained.com/2015/08/01/britains-forgotten-slave-owners/>

Unexpected Cousins

Connected after a DNA test: "I was patient with understanding when she had bogus information and controlled myself."

<http://comingtothetable.org/stories/stories-making-connections/unexpected-cousins/>

Bridging the Gap by Susanna Hutchinson

"I am white, and this was a black family reunion."

<http://comingtothetable.org/stories/stories-making-connections/bridging-gap/>

In First Lady's Roots, a Complex Path From Slavery by Rachel L. Swarns and Jodi Kantor, 7 October 2009

Michelle Obama's ancestors. [Note: Many of our presidents and presidential spouses have complex paths from slavery --- but our news media doesn't publicize the white descendants of enslavers.]

<https://mobile.nytimes.com/2009/10/08/us/politics/08genealogy.html>

Gathering the Community at Monticello by Prinny Anderson

<http://comingtothetable.org/stories/stories-action/gathering-community-monticello/>

Black Ancestry, White Supremacist Confederate Officer by Joe, 6 June 2011

"Some relatively well-off men in the slaveholding South were able to move from being "black" under the later very common one drop of blood rule (that is, some African ancestry) to being treated as "white" because they had some property... Their African origins got "watered down" by more marriages and interactions with whites, and forgotten or hidden, and soon the descendant of a black man, Randall Gibson, became



a raving white supremacist and Confederate Officer... This is a clear example not only of how "race" is socially and societally constructed, but also of how powerful the age-old white racial frame is."

<http://www.racismreview.com/blog/2011/06/06/black-ancestry-white-supremacist-confederate-officer/>

Using New Interracial Family Evidence to Trouble Jim Crow by Sherick Hughes

"I don't like White people."

"Did you know yo' mama was White?"

<http://christinesleeter.org/using-new-interracial-family-evidence/>

There is a Little Bit of Me in a Little Bit of You — A Black Woman Explains to a White Man . . . . "We Are Kin by Blood and Slavery" by Ardis Ligon

<https://linkedthroughslavery.com/2015/03/01/little-bit-of-me/>

Family Racism by Karen Batchelor

On denying family.

<http://extremeancestry.com/family-racism/>

Color Lines: Racial Passing in America by Back Story [podcast]

"We'll explore the people who have bent or just not fit into America's rigid racial rules... [and] what the history of passing has to say about race, identity, and privilege in America."

<http://backstoryradio.org/shows/color-lines/>

The Men Who Left Were White by Josie Duffy

<http://gawker.com/the-men-who-left-were-white-1562473547>

Our Ancestors Willed It and So It Came to Be by Teresa Vega

"...my Lyon cousin Julie Pollock helped me discover what happened to Jack who was sold as a slave in 1796 at the age of 3. Julie later told me that her 3rd great-uncle, Seth Lyon, who along with his first cousin Gilbert Lyon, harbored a fugitive slave, Peter John Lee, for 6 years until he was recaptured... I am currently investigating the social networks of our Lyon ancestors as well as other Greenwich abolitionists and anti-slavery advocates.

"Likewise, I am also researching our Green family and their ties to other free black communities... and how these free blacks may have aided their enslaved brothers and sisters in their quest for freedom...

"Our joint history came out of the darkness of slavery personified in Greenwich, CT that was born and bred in Byram. It is my ultimate goal to render visible and bring to light all those good Greenwich people who worked together to make this country far greater than

it was before. They may have been considered ordinary then, but history should remember them as anything but.”

<http://radiantrootsboricuabranches.com/our-ancestors-willed-it-and-so-it-came-to-be/>

A Family Tree With Roots Deep In Slavery by Nabil Ayers

<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2018/11/21/413191794/a-family-tree-with-roots-deep-in-slavery>

## AFRICAN-AMERICANS & GENEALOGY

### Specific Challenges for African Americans

Tracing Your Roots (written articles) by Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

These are written articles with the same name as the tv show that Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. leads. All of these articles are excellent reading:

<http://www.theroot.com/tag/tracing-your-roots>

Ads for Formerly Enslaved Family Members

Tweet thread: <https://twitter.com/ClintSmithIII/status/876935317676339200>

People were still placing ads in the 1900s:

<https://twitter.com/awkgenealogy/status/871047284812685313>

Searching Your Past to Strengthen Your Future: African American Genealogy Workshop by Sharon Leslie Morgan, Founder, Our Black Ancestry

Succinctly presents difficulties facing African American researchers. Includes relevant timelines like:

"1870 was the first census to record African Americans as *people* with surnames. By 1880, many people had moved and changed their names."

<http://comingtothetable.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Genealogy-Workshop-Sharon-Morgan.pdf>

Slave Research: Four Things You Need to Know By Robyn Smith

<http://www.reclaimingkin.com/slave-research-four-things/>

How Do Descendants of Slaves Find Their Ancestors? by Rebecca Onion

"Try harder to make their relevant archives available—and visible and searchable—online, and that white researchers who found evidence of slaveholding in their families would be sure to make an effort to make family documents public, for black researchers to access and use."

[http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/history/2016/09/georgetown\\_reparations\\_how\\_do\\_descendants\\_of\\_slaves\\_find\\_their\\_ancestors.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/history/2016/09/georgetown_reparations_how_do_descendants_of_slaves_find_their_ancestors.html)

Ain't Gonna Take Massa's Name by Melvin J. Collier

"One of the most common and often erroneous presumptions is that when enslaved African Americans were emancipated during and after the Civil War, a vast majority retained the surnames of their last enslavers. Many freed African Americans not only chose different surnames after slavery, but many had surnames on farms and plantations that were concealed from most slave-owners."

<http://rootsrevealed.blogspot.com/2012/04/aint-gonna-take-massas-name.html>

Preparing to Share and Receive Sensitive Family History by Sherick Hughes

"Edmund Hughes, my grandfather was not always a poor Black man in Camden, NC, but Old Jim Crow would see to it that his family would lose so much of what they had gained economically, that there wouldn't even be enough cash for a family photograph. With that, Jim Crow robbed me for years of ever knowing the face of my grandfather, until a chance interaction..." (See "related posts" at the bottom of his article to read more on Jim Crow and critical family history)

<http://christinesleeter.org/sensitive-family-history/>

Unsettled and Unsettling Laws by Judy G. Russell

South Carolina's Vagrant Act "was one of a set of laws enacted in 1865 after the adoption by South Carolina of a new State Constitution that year. Known as the Black Code, the laws were targeted against the newly freed slaves of South Carolina, and applied to anyone who had one-eighth or more Negro ancestry."

<http://www.legalgenealogist.com/2015/05/26/unsettled-and-unsettling-laws/>

Bittersweet Memories by Sharon Leslie Morgan

<https://linkedthroughslavery.com/2013/11/09/bittersweet-memories/>

Restrictive Covenants by Judy G. Russell

<http://www.legalgenealogist.com/2016/08/11/not-so-long-ago/>

## Linked Descendants

Being Linked Through Slavery Means... by Prinny Anderson

<https://linkedthroughslavery.com/2013/10/31/being-linked-through-slavery-means/>

In Franklin, Descendants Of A Slave And Slaveowner Talk About Their Shared History by Emily Siner

"I hurriedly turned to the pages where I could, along with the rest of the world, see my great-great-great-grandmother, finally, as a human being. I'm not sure how long I stared at that picture, holding a baby that was clearly of no relation to her, but probably no one thought of one simple picture of her holding her own grandbaby."

"Ann says she teared up reading Andrea's email. 'Just the lightbulb clarity that I could never see before — that she's holding the wrong baby.'"

<http://nashvillepublicradio.org/post/franklin-descendants-slave-and-slaveowner-talk-about-their-shared-history#stream/0>

We are Standing on Beautiful History by Tiya Miles

<https://uncpressblog.com/2010/08/02/we-are-standing-on-beautiful-history/>

Slave Descendant Unites With Plantation Owner for Heartwarming Dinner 181 Years After Families Lived There by Eliza Murphy

<https://www.yahoo.com/gma/slave-descendant-unites-plantation-owner-heartwarming-dinner-181-193106050--abc-news-house-and-home.html>

Spontaneous Eruptions by Pam Smith and Ann Neel [poetry]

I've buried my rage and disbelief six feet under / the same earth that my grandmother rests... // But dear God, / please don't make me suffer / a friendship. // ... I want to save a space for my ancestors / in a part of me that you can never go

I must have thought I already was / Really Doing Something! / Hot shit. Really teaching, really thinking. / Being real about race and not academic... // I met those descendants / Of slaves my ancestors had owned / And brought history like cookies. / Visited and went away / Without having to listen / To their rage and suffering and hatred... // If I had to answer for all my father's sins / I would be in hell – / Precisely where this tunnel seems to lead. <https://linkedthroughslavery.com/2017/02/26/spontaneous-eruptions/>

## Black Cemeteries: Neglected by Design

Stepping on the Graves of Slaves: The Apathy Toward Black Americans' Burial Sites by Ifath Said, 20 April 2017

Before 2017, the Commonwealth of Virginia "subsidized the preservation of cemeteries that contain graves of confederate soldiers" — but not slaves or free blacks.

<https://sojo.net/articles/stepping-graves-slaves-apaty-toward-black-americans-burial-sites>

For the Forgotten African-American Dead by Brian Palmerjan, 7 January 2017  
Neglected black cemeteries deserve the same level of care that their Confederate counterparts get.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/07/opinion/sunday/for-the-forgotten-african-american-dead.html>

Black Deaths Matter by Seth Freed Wessler, 15 October 2015

“Historic black cemeteries have devolved into trash dumps and overgrown forests, while tidy Confederate memorials still draw public funding.” The cemetery described here is in St. Louis, Missouri, but it connects to patterns across the country.

<https://www.thenation.com/article/black-deaths-matter/>

How Grave Robbers And Medical Students Helped Dehumanize 19th Century Blacks And The Poor by Kristina Killgrove, 13 July 2015

The links on Black cemeteries don't even get into the grave robbing that was common practice by early US medical schools! Guess which race's graves got robbed the most?!?

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/kristinakilgrove/2015/07/13/dissected-bodies-and-grave-robbing-evidence-of-unequal-treatment-of-19th-century-blacks-and-poor/>

We Stand United Still: Memories of The Byram African-American Cemetery in 1890 by Teresa Vega<sup>13</sup>

“All my ancestors matter...The restoration of the Byram African-American Cemetery matters... Its historical designation as an African-American cemetery matters... Above all, the people who are buried there matter...”

<http://radiantrootsboricuabranches.com/we-stand-united-still-memories-of-the-byram-african-american-cemetery-in-1890/>

Related:

My Ancestors Are Now Buried In Someone's Front Lawn by Teresa Vega

<http://radiantrootsboricuabranches.com/my-ancestors-were-buried-in-someones-front-lawn/>

Newspaper article about the struggle to preserve cemetery:

<http://www.greenwichtime.com/local/article/Legal-battle-over-Greenwich-land-near-cemetery-12381681.php>

Freedman Burial Sites by Angela J. Walton-Raji

“Freedmen of Indian Territory... are persons who arrived in the Indian Territory with those relocated on the forced migration from the southeast. Many arrived as slaves of the Five Civilized Tribes, others arrived as free people of color and others were born in Indian

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<sup>13</sup> Thanks to Teresa Vega for suggesting these links — and for fighting to protect these unmarked graves!

Territory, and spent their entire lifetime as citizens of their respective nations.... The Freedmen [were] the most documented group of "Black Indians" in north America. Their historic legacy lies in more than 20,000 historical records from the Dawes Commission to the post Civil War records in the 1860s such as the Loyal Creek claims.... [But] much of their rich history is fading quickly as the true evidence of their presence is being erased as many of these cemeteries are not preserved. Many of the final resting places of the Freedmen are now in serious deterioration, due to neglect, "progress" and passing of time."

<http://www.african-nativeamerican.com/burialsfreed.html>

mulberry fields by Lucille Clifton [poem]

Lucille Clifton describes a "forsaken... field of bones" where slaves buried one another using "marker rocks." These sacred "stones marked an old tongue and it was called eternity." The white slaveholders and their descendants claimed not to know what the burial stones meant: "they say that the rocks were shaped / some of them scratched with triangles and other forms they / must have been trying to invent some new language they say." With dismissive ignorance, these property-owners re-used these sacred rocks for the plantation walls and buildings. With the marker stones removed, Lucille Clifton is left to write down what remains: "somewhere under / here moulders one called alice whose great grandson is old now / too and refuses to talk about slavery." On these hallowed grounds, with the funeral stones removed, "crops refused to grow." Only "wild berries" can bloom in these mulberry fields. But how? There is no answer except — "you must."

<https://m.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/mulberry-fields>

## NATIVE AMERICANS & GENEALOGY

### Racialization

It's Not Just About the Blood by Code Switch [20 min podcast]

If you're Native American, who or what gets to define your identity? We dive into an old system intended to measure the amount of "Indian blood" a person has. We hear from two families about how they've come to understand their own Native identities and how they'll pass that on to future generations.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/code-switch/id1112190608?mt=2&i=1000401652239>

American Settler Colonialism 101 by Dina Gilio-Whitaker

"The logic of settler colonialism is that it destroys in order to replace... One of the ways it does this in the United States is through racialization. Racialization is the process of measuring indigenous ethnicity in terms of blood degree; when indigenous people

intermarry with non-indigenous people they are said to lower their indigenous (Indian or Native Hawaiian) blood quantum. According to this logic when enough intermarriage has occurred there will be no more natives within a given lineage."

<https://www.thoughtco.com/american-settler-colonialism-4082454>

## Indigenous Appropriation and Assimilation

Why Do So Many Americans Think They Have Cherokee Blood? The History of a Myth by Gregory D. Smithers

"The belief in Cherokee ancestry is more common than actual blood ties... White Americans insisted they were descended from Cherokee ancestors. More often than not, that ancestor was an 'Indian princess,' despite the fact that the tribe never had a social system with anything resembling an inherited title like princess... Shifting one's identity to claim ownership of an imagined Cherokee past is at once a way to authenticate your American-ness and absolve yourself of complicity in the crimes Americans committed against the tribe across history."

"The federal government began adopting a system of 'blood quantum'... to determine who was eligible for land allotments... Native American groups sought to define 'blood' on their own terms."

[http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/history/2015/10/cherokee\\_blood\\_why\\_d\\_o\\_so\\_many\\_americans\\_believe\\_they\\_have\\_cherokee\\_ancestry.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/history/2015/10/cherokee_blood_why_d_o_so_many_americans_believe_they_have_cherokee_ancestry.html)

Native American Genealogy: Reconnecting With Your American Indian Heritage

What to do if "your grandparent was part Indian but not a tribal member, or there is a family tradition that you have Indian blood, or you are working on your family's genealogy and have just discovered a Native American ancestor you want to know more about."

<http://www.native-languages.org/genealogy.htm#descendent>

The Pocahontas Exception: The Exemption of American Indian Ancestry from Racial Purity Law by Kevin Noble Maillard

The "First Families of Virginia" (FFV), many of whom claim to be descended from Pocahontas, remained legally white when Virginia exempted them from the "one drop" rule: "Racial protectionism, as ingrained in law, blatantly exempted Indian blood from the threat to white racial purity. In Virginia, the Racial Integrity Act of 1924 made exceptions for whites of mixed descent who proudly claimed Native American ancestry from Pocahontas... With increasing numbers of Americans freely and lately claiming Native ancestry, this openness escapes the triumvirate of resistance, shame, and secrecy that regularly accompanies findings of partial African ancestry... Antimiscegenation laws such as the Racial Integrity Act relegate Indians to existence only in a distant past, creating a temporal disjuncture to free Indians from a contemporary discourse of racial politics... such exemptions assess Indians as abstractions rather than practicalities, which facilitates the miscegenistic exceptionalism..."

<http://law.bepress.com/expresso/eps/1572/>

Of Bloodlines and Conquistadors by Latino USA [35 minute podcast]

<http://latinausa.org/2018/05/18/ofbloodlinesanconquistadors/>

## Settler Colonialism

Peopling a White Nation by Christine Sleeter

"Place European immigration within the context of policies and practices designed to create and people a white nation... We cannot dismantle white privilege without examining closely how our families have participated in its construction (even if they did not realize that), and benefited from it."

<http://christinesleeter.org/peopling-a-white-nation/>

Settler Colonialism by Adam Barker and Emma Battell Lowman

<https://globalsocialtheory.org/concepts/settler-colonialism/>

Headright (Wikipedia)

"Headrights were granted to anyone who would pay for the transportation costs of a laborer or indentured servant. These land grants consisted of 50 acres... By giving the land to the landowning masters the indentured servants had little or no chance to procure their own land... Plantation owners benefited from the headright system when they paid for the transportation of imported slaves. This... contributed to the shift towards slavery in the colonies... Many families grew in power in the colonies by receiving large tracts of land when they imported slaves."

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Headright>

How Colonists Acquired Title to Land in Virginia by Charlie Grymes

"The English who settled in Virginia starting in 1607 asserted that they owned the land. The pre-existing ownership rights of the Native Americans, the current occupants, were dismissed... to extinguish Native American claims...."

"It was public policy to encourage population growth through immigration."

"Owning a massive block of land in Virginia generated no profit for the investors unless there were farmers... Virginia planters who imported their labor were awarded 50 acres per slave, just as they were awarded 50 acres per indentured servant... George Menefie was the first to claim a large number of headrights for one shipment of slaves, obtaining 1,150 acres for the 23 slaves he imported along with 37 other (white) servants in 1638. The headright claims for the indentured servants listed the names of the individuals, but the claims for slaves rarely identified individual slaves..."

<http://www.virginiaplaces.org/settleland/headright.html>

(The rest of this website is very helpful historically on settler patterns)



## Why Racial Justice Work Needs to Address Settler Colonialism and Native Rights by Rachel Kuo

"Part of my extended family history includes migrating and settling in order to find opportunities... However, this opportunity comes at the cost of living on land and doing work on land that was stolen from Native communities... Our attempts to transform and improve our own oppressive conditions make us complicit in the oppression of others... "The "one drop rule" created a social structure to prevent anyone with a Black ancestor from accessing the basic rights that White people are given. On the flip side, Native Americans with any amount of "white blood" become "less Native"... Settler colonialism is fascinated with the notion of blood as way to justify who gets what."

<http://everydayfeminism.com/2015/08/racial-justice-native-rights/>

## Settler Colonialism on #StandingRockSyllabus

Scroll down to read "Timeline of United States Settler Colonialism" and  
"Readings by Theme and Topic: Basics of Settler Colonialism"

<https://nycstandswithstandingrock.wordpress.com/standingrocksyllabus/>

The Standing Rock Syllabus also links to a video from the Standing Rock Teach-In:  
Introduction to Settler Colonialism with Anne Spice [15 minutes]

<https://youtu.be/JgybQvHpG4w>

## Why White North Americans Need to Understand Ourselves as "Settlers" by Shannon Weber

<https://thebodyisnotanapology.com/magazine/why-white-north-americans-need-to-understand-ourselves-as-settlers/>

## Homesteading

### The Effect of the Homestead Act on Native Americans by Linda LeBoutillier

"The Homestead Acts were in force from 1862 to 1976 in the lower 48 states, and 1986 in Alaska... It is estimated that the number of descendants of homesteaders alive today equals about 93 million people. In all, about 10% of the total land area of the United States was parceled out to homesteaders... Their effect on Native Americans is not mentioned at all in most articles....

When the Europeans came to the New World, this land was far from empty.... Around 15 million [Natives] were in what is now the United States...

[President Andrew Jackson's] focus was to move all Natives to lands west of the Mississippi River. The Homestead Acts opened up land west of the Mississippi, which meant that land which had been promised to the Natives as an incentive for relocating west of the river was now 'unpromised.'"

<https://mettahu.wordpress.com/2013/11/14/the-effect-of-the-homestead-act-on-native-americans/>

#### Living with the Legacy of White Privilege by Kristl Smith Tyler

“[The money] comes from the wheat-farming land that my great-grandfather Ai acquired in the frenzy that followed the Homestead Act of 1862: A frenzy that he exploited with his hard work and larger-than-life personality. A frenzy that wasn’t really available to former slaves to the degree it was to whites.”

“During the time that my great-grandpa made his money, you could be hardworking, ambitious, and lucky like he was, but if you were black, you almost certainly wouldn’t have gotten rich.”

<http://www.theaustintimes.com/2012/03/living-with-the-legacy-of-white-privilege/>

#### Genealogies of Violence: a White Immigrant History by Alexandra Edwards

“I want to start by owning my family’s place in the historical trauma still playing out on the prairie. I consider this important work—surfacing how whiteness has worked for my family, giving context to the grinding violence of white nationalism and the privileges it confers. Not to absolve, but to understand. Not to dwell, but to ground... That 40-acre farm is a violence done by my family to the indigenous people of the area. It is also a violence done to my family by the United States government. It is both. Neither cancels the other out.”

<https://medium.com/@nonmodernist/genealogies-of-violence-a-white-immigrant-history-a5673830a08f>

#### Race, Reconstruction, and Reparations by Keri Leigh Merritt

“When the failure of land distribution among blacks is judged in the context of the simultaneously-implemented Homestead Acts, the reality of the situation is laid bare. While freedmen waited in vain for any type of recompense – for generations of brutality and violence and toil – millions of whites were given free land by the federal government. The problem was not the radical nature of land reform. The problem was race.”

<http://www.aaihs.org/race-reconstruction/>

#### The Gift of Land by Judy G. Russell

“With the official title of ‘An Act to create the Office of Surveyor-General of the Public Lands in Oregon, and to provide for the Survey, and to make Donations to Settlers of the said Public Lands,’ it’s more commonly known simply as the Donation Lands Act... A federal law, it became law on 27 September 1850, and it caused a major land rush — and validated an earlier one... ‘The consequence was something akin to a race war in 1852 and 1853, with white volunteer forces ruthlessly driving Indians from their traditional hunting and gathering grounds. Regular U.S. Army troops eventually removed most of the surviving bands to the newly established coastal reservation.’”

<http://www.legalgenealogist.com/2017/04/17/the-gift-of-land/>

## Property

Returning What Was Stolen by Christine Sleeter

<https://www.christinesleeter.org/returning-what-was-stolen>

Wars, Indigenous Peoples, and Bounty Land Warrants by Christine Sleeter

<https://www.christinesleeter.org/bounty-land-warrants>

Racism, Inheritance and Family Financial Aid by Christine Sleeter

"Wealth initially came from land from which the Indigenous peoples had been expelled so that Whites could have access to it. Slave labor augmented that wealth. And the wealth was passed down through the family in the forms of inheritance and family financial aid. One cannot rewrite history, but one can author the present."

<http://christinesleeter.org/inheritance-and-family-financial-aid/>

Land Tenure History

"Key factors that have shaped U.S. Indian policy and led to the fractured state of Indian land tenure in Indian Country today include countless federal laws and legislative acts. Perhaps the single most devastating federal policy was the General Allotment Act of 1887, also called the Dawes Act... [which] caused Indian land holdings to plunge from 138 million acres in 1887 to 48 million acres by 1934."

<http://iltf.org/land-issues/history/>

## IMMIGRATION

### History

History of Racism and Immigration Time Line

<http://racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/racismimmigration-timeline.pdf>

Chinese immigrants and the first U.S. immigration laws by Madeline Hsu [3 minute video]

"The legal precedents... the lesser-rights of would-be immigrants, and the enforcement strategies were all built up around the idea that particular races of people were less welcome in the United States. And so there's this long-standing problem when we try to talk about immigration restrictions today."

[https://youtu.be/ctCPcbw\\_Tig](https://youtu.be/ctCPcbw_Tig)

Immigration History Research Center at University of Minnesota

<https://cla.umn.edu/ihrc>

Operation Wetback

<https://newrepublic.com/article/132988/operation-wetback-revisited>

Why Do We Call Asian Americans The Model Minority? | AJ+ (10min video)

The impact of the 1965 Immigration Act + historic & contemporary undocumented immigration (2017 example of reluctance to come forward under DACA)

<https://youtu.be/PrDbvSSbxk8>

On the Outs: Restricting American Immigration by BackStory [podcast]

<http://backstoryradio.org/shows/on-the-outs/>

## “Free White Persons”

How White was White Enough? by Judy G. Russell

“It was only in the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 that the words “free white persons” were removed, for all time, from the naturalization laws. So if you’re sitting there pondering the naturalization status of your ancestors, and perhaps why you can’t find a record, think about the law of the time. And whether, under the law of that day, your folks would have been white enough to be citizens.”

<http://www.legalgenealogist.com/2014/01/06/how-white-was-white-enough/>

Classified as White: Racial Classifications of Americans of Middle Eastern & North African Descent by Randa A. Kayyali at Library of Congress [lecture]

Randa A. Kayyali from the Elliott School for International Affairs at George Washington University spoke about the intersections of religion and race for immigrants in the U.S. during the first half of the 20th century. 1 hour.

<https://youtu.be/Zl0Qk7l8vWY>

Citizen Thind (Seeing White, Part 10) by Scene on Radio [podcast]

Asian immigrants who, in the 1920s, sought to convince the U.S. Supreme Court that they were white in order to gain American citizenship. Thind’s “bargain with white supremacy,” and the deeply revealing results.

<https://documentarystudies.duke.edu/podcasts/citizen-thind-seeing-white-part-10>

To my Jewish, Irish, Asian and Italian friends by Joshua M Brown

“It’s nice that you now view yourselves as ‘Real Americans.’ Just yesterday, your kind were anything but. And I don’t mean in the deep south or in obscure corners of the

country. Your forebears were considered human garbage on the streets of New York, Philadelphia and Boston. It wasn't all that long ago when mainstream politicians were actively seeking ways to get rid of you too."

<http://thereformedbroker.com/2017/01/29/to-my-jewish-irish-asian-and-italian-friends/>

## "Legal"

Your immigrant ancestors came here legally? Are you sure? by Michael Matza

<http://www.philly.com/philly/news/breaking/your-immigrant-ancestors-came-here-legally-are-you-sure-20170625.html>

Yes, your ancestors probably did come here legally — because 'illegal' immigration is less than a century old by Kevin Jennings

"There were no federal laws concerning immigration until well into the history of the United States... Americans who crow about their law-abiding ancestors may want to learn a little more about immigration history before wishing for a return to the 'good old days' — when pretty much anyone could come to the U.S. 'legally.'"

[http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-jennings-legal-illegal-immigration-20180114-story.amp.html?\\_twitter\\_impression=true](http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-jennings-legal-illegal-immigration-20180114-story.amp.html?_twitter_impression=true)

## How a 1965 Immigration Reform Created Illegal Immigration

"Although little had changed in practical terms in the years after 1965 — the same migrants were leaving the same communities to go to the same employers in the same U.S. states in about the same numbers — now the migrants were "illegal" and hence by definition "lawbreakers" and "criminals." Circular / seasonal "legal" migration became permanent "illegal" migration as the US increased patrolling the southern border and the risks for seasonal workers increased exponentially, thus paradoxically encouraging people to settle in the US permanently.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/09/25/how-a-1965-immigration-reform-created-illegal-immigration/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.18be608b4279](https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/09/25/how-a-1965-immigration-reform-created-illegal-immigration/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.18be608b4279)

## To Be a Citizen? by Backstory [podcast]

"The way Americans have defined citizenship has changed over time and many have found their citizenship challenged, undermined, resisted and even revoked."

<https://www.backstoryradio.org/shows/to-be-a-citizen/>

## Reveal Answers Your Questions About Immigration [podcast]

See section 2 on immigration history for an interview with a woman whose father — a Holocaust survivor — came "illegally" to the United States.

<https://www.revealnews.org/episodes/reveal-answers-your-questions-about-immigration/>

Chinese-American Descendants Uncover Forged Family Histories by Hansi Lo Wang

“What if you discovered the last name you've lived with since birth is fake? That's what happened in many Chinese-American families who first came to the U.S. before World War II, when the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 banned Chinese laborers from legally entering the country.”

<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/12/17/251833652/chinese-american-descendants-uncover-forged-family-history>

Border Patrols: Policing Immigration in America by BackStory [podcast]

<https://www.backstoryradio.org/shows/border-patrols/>

Immigration Nation by Code Switch [podcast]

<https://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=623662992>

## “Nation of Immigrants”

Why I've stopped saying 'We are a nation of immigrants' by Kevin D. Miller

“The standard immigrant narrative... [is a] “myth of origins”... that is... a group-identity story that reflects social and political power arrangements, replete with winners and losers.” <https://themennonite.org/feature/ive-stopped-saying-nation-immigrants/>

Stop Saying This Is a Nation of Immigrants! by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz

“Are ‘immigrants’ the appropriate designation for the indigenous peoples of North America? No. Are ‘immigrants’ the appropriate designation for enslaved Africans? No. Are ‘immigrants’ the appropriate designation for the original European settlers? No. Are ‘immigrants’ the appropriate designation for Mexicans who migrate for work to the United States? No. They are migrant workers crossing a border created by US military force....” <http://www.coloursofresistance.org/334/stop-saying-this-is-a-nation-of-immigrants-2/>

The Melting Pot: Americans and Assimilation by Backstory [1 hour podcast]

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/backstory/id281261324?mt=2&i=1000392298482>

What We Inherit (23 min) by Code Switch [podcast]

Intergenerational trauma, forced assimilation, and resilience

<https://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=617300356>

# ACT

## KEEP LEARNING.

### Twitter

These are people/groups to follow on twitter:

@AfricanAncestry  
@AfriGeneas  
@alondra  
@AYWalton  
@bennettgenie4  
@BlackProGen  
@EFSacco  
@FamilyTreeGirl  
@HenryLouisGates  
@KinBeyond  
@LCAfricana  
@MelJCollier  
@MyTrueRoots  
@Nadasue  
@neeksmith  
@RRBBGenealogy  
@SavingStories  
@SlaveryDatabase  
@sociallifeofdna  
@TalkinGenealogy  
@Tay\_digital  
@Their\_Child  
@Trappacana

Plus check out these hashtags:

#resistancegenealogy  
#allcousins  
#IWelcomeAllCousins  
#reparationalgenealogy  
#justicegen



**Jennifer Mendelsohn** ✓  
@CleverTitleTK

Following



You complain about chain migration, I  
reserve the right to do your tree.  
[#youvebeenwarned](#) [#resistancegenealogy](#)

12:16 PM - 10 Jan 2018

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## Organizations

### Ancestors Unknown

Volunteer (from a distance or in person), Sponsor/Donate, or Promote:  
<http://www.ancestors-unknown.org/get-involved/>

### Linked Through Slavery

<https://linkedthroughslavery.com>

### Coming to the Table

<http://comingtothetable.org>

### Our Black Ancestry

“Non-profit organization dedicated to providing resources for African American genealogical research, preserving historic materials and properties, and promoting the healing of wounds that are the legacy of slavery... We hope to reunite as many African descended people as possible to their family roots. We do this by combining the efforts of African American researchers along with those of descendants of the people who enslaved us.”

<https://ourblackancestry.com>

### African American Genealogy Center (International African American Museum)

<https://cfh.iaamuseum.org/the-international-african-american-museum-launches-groundbreaking-african-american-genealogy-center/>

### Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society

<http://www.aahgs.org>

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<sup>14</sup> <https://twitter.com/hashtag/resistancegenealogy?src=hash>



## Unknown No Longer from Virginia Historical Society

Unknown No Longer offers a constantly growing database from collections about Virginians of African descent. You can search records there, and I think you can contribute new records as well.

[unknownnolonger.vahistorical.org](http://unknownnolonger.vahistorical.org)

## Online Resources

### Latino Genealogy and Beyond by Ellen Fernandez-Saco

<https://latinogenealogyandbeyond.com>

Dr. Fernandez-Sacco also an academia.edu page:

<http://berkeley.academia.edu/EllenFernandezSacco>

### BlackProGen LIVE [live show + episode archive]

“BlackProGen is a group of professional genealogists who research and document African American families. We share research strategies, thoughts, ideas, experiences, and whatever comes to mind while working for clients and in our own research endeavors through conference and webinar presentations, blogs, podcasts, video, interviews, and more. Our twice monthly broadcasts feature a panel from BlackProGen and friends discussing a myriad of topics in the world of genealogy.”

<http://www.whoisnickasmith.com/blackprogen/>

### African Roots Podcast by Angela Walton-Raji

<https://africanrootspodcast.com>

### BlogTalk Radio: Research at the National Archives and Beyond by Bernice Bennett

<http://www.geniebroots.com/>

## DO YOUR EMOTIONAL WORK.

Be prepared for strong emotional reactions.

### Teaching Critical Family History by Christine Sleeter

“This work provokes a range of strong emotional responses, such as **surprise** (for instance when realizing names passed down orally were wrong), **deep dismay, shame, or pain** (for instance when discovering how one’s own family benefited from theft of indigenous land), **pride in claiming a subjugated identity** (such as recognizing one’s Mexican indigenous identity or previously unrecognized Polish ancestry), [or] **startling**

**realization** (for instance discovering the active and rich life of an female ancestor prior to marriage and her inability to continue that life after marriage)... Family history is not a neutral subject. It is very personal, connected to the identity of students and people they are emotionally close to.”

<http://christinesleeter.org/teaching-critical-family-history/>

## Explore your emotional family system through genograms.

Family systems theory looks at the emotional relationships between people, generally covering the three generations closest to yourself. The best sources for learning about genograms and family systems theory are books and workshops. From a religious context, I can recommend Ed Friedman’s *Generation to Generation*, Pete Scazerro’s *Emotionally Healthy Leadership*, and Herb Anderson’s *Becoming Married*. I have heard good things about the secular resource *A Family Genogram Workbook* by Israel Galindo et al (<http://a.co/9kEMS5L>). Here are a few free online resources:

Genogram on Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genogram>

Beyond the Family Tree: The Benefits of Making Family Genograms by AJ Gretz

<https://www.artofmanliness.com/2017/05/03/beyond-family-tree-benefits-making-family-genograms/>

How to Make a Genogram by Wikihow

<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Genogram>

## Connect with your own race and ethnicity -- in all of its complexity.

British, maybe? Irish, I think? by Rachel Shaw

“...as a person with a race and an ethnicity, something many white people in America aren’t aware of... As a white person who has felt ethnicity-less, this research has helped ground me. I feel more connected to the beauty of Welsh culture... At the same time, I feel the loss of my Welsh ethnicity through assimilation and the pain of my complicity in a white supremacist system...”

<http://christinesleeter.org/british/>

## Don’t hide from the bad stuff.

We’re ‘Good White People’ — Aren’t We? by Janet Carter

“*Maybe it was just once*, I thought, scrambling to excuse it, deny its significance. *Maybe my grandfather just went along because, because* — there was no getting around it — because he held racist beliefs, anti-Semitic beliefs. How long had Dad known this about his father? ...I had to know more.”

<https://goodlittlewhitegirl.wordpress.com/2012/06/27/we-are-good-white-people/>

## EXPAND GENEALOGY.

Expand concepts, methods, and outcomes.

Expand your conception of genealogy, including preferred methods and outcomes. Genealogists who insist on rigid methods, standards, and outcomes can create an environment where not everyone is welcome. Rather than insisting on "genealogical proof standards," we can understand and accept "near" proof standards. We can lift oral history as an important and legitimate source of authority. We can also engage family systems and emotional work (see the genogram section under "Do Your Own Emotional Work").

Question assumptions.

Even as you lift oral history and other alternative standards, don't assume that family legends about a "Cherokee princess" ancestor are true:

Beginning Native American Genealogy Research by Angela J. Walton-Raji  
[video]

"One of the most important things to do when researching Native American ancestors, is to avoid the temptation to abandon all standard a proven genealogy methodology in order to find an ancestor on an Indian "roll". All families are important and should be researched with the same discipline, procedures and planning that are used when documenting other nationalities... Follow standard genealogical methods, cite your sources properly and learn the resources that are available for you... Contrary to what is often believed, there are many records that document persons of native ancestry, and cases where there were blended families can be located."

<http://www.african-nativeamerican.com/beginning.html>

Engage Critical Family History.

"Critical Family History" is a term created by author/activist/speaker/teacher Christine Sleeter. It takes genealogy's individual focus and moves to their context, paying particular attention to class (economics), race, and gender.

Critical Family History by Christine Sleeter

"As a white person, I was seeking a conceptual framework that situates individual family stories within a wider analysis of social power relationships and culture. White people, especially those of middle class status and above, tend to think of ourselves and our stories in individualistic terms. But since who we are involves not just the work of individuals, but also how individuals' lives were shaped by local culture and relationships

among social groups, I wanted a framework that would illuminate the social contexts of family lives, and that would help to unearth memories we have lost.”

<http://christinesleeter.org/critical-family-history/>

Points of View by D. Kay Strickland

Genealogical Work as an Act for Racial Justice (example of Critical Family History)

The author commented to me: “I have been working for the last two years particularly to frame my genealogical work as an act for racial justice. I find it challenging to take data, build context, tell story, reframe to examine whiteness, repeat. I post family history pieces on my blog much less often than I used to do, because the questions I have begun to ask of myself are very hard, and uncomfortable, to answer and to write coherently about. This link is to a post that I feel comes closest to expressing where I am right now in expanding my capacity to sit in the discomfort and listen to the ancestors.”

<https://shootsrootsandleaves.com/2017/06/01/points-of-view/>

Decenter whiteness.

"Promised Land" by Wright State [2min video]

“History is not just a collection of facts... The story that I’m interested in is *their* story.”

<https://youtu.be/hXLNFV2YSvs>

Speaking to the Historical Present: Dealing with Genealogy by Ellen Fernandez-Sacco

“What I am hoping for is the delegitimization of whiteness as an invisible standard...

Genealogy and family history should be fields where contentious histories can be dealt with up front... Why is genealogy and family history so important? Because on a personal level, genealogy & historical study enables one to open that identification up, learn about the erasure of people from history, how privilege works and the importance of context.”

<http://latinogenealogy.blogspot.com/2015/01/speaking-to-historical-present-dealing.html>

## CONFRONT SLAVERY.

Deal with slavery in your family's history.

If you are descended from slaveholders, don’t whitewash this history by excusing or ignoring this part of your family story.

Coming to the Table offers a guide on how to confront slavery in your family history.

[http://comingtothetable.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/04-Confronting\\_Slavery\\_Family\\_History.pdf](http://comingtothetable.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/04-Confronting_Slavery_Family_History.pdf)

"Slavery, Freedom and the Babilonias of Puerto Rico: Re-visioning Family History" by Ellen Fernandez-Sacco

Fernandez-Sacco shows how research/writing about a family history of slaveholding can be done. She contextualizes the family in their Puerto Rican context, draws on oral history, identifies written records, names archival limitations, transcribes a slave registry, and connects multiple families.

Part 1:

[https://www.academia.edu/38225474/\\_Slavery\\_Freedom\\_and\\_the\\_Babilonias\\_of\\_Puerto\\_Rico\\_Re-visioning\\_Family\\_History\\_Part\\_1\\_](https://www.academia.edu/38225474/_Slavery_Freedom_and_the_Babilonias_of_Puerto_Rico_Re-visioning_Family_History_Part_1_)

Part 2:

[https://www.academia.edu/38225475/\\_Slavery\\_Freedom\\_and\\_the\\_Babilonias\\_of\\_Puerto\\_Rico\\_Revisioning\\_Family\\_History\\_Part\\_2\\_](https://www.academia.edu/38225475/_Slavery_Freedom_and_the_Babilonias_of_Puerto_Rico_Revisioning_Family_History_Part_2_)

"I Study Slavery to Understand My Family History" by Hilary Anthony

<https://medium.com/@hilaryanthony/i-study-slavery-to-understand-my-family-history-cea8a4063e49>

Follow suggestions from Reclaiming Kin.

Robyn Smith (Reclaiming Kin) is a genealogist descended from enslaved people. She has two essential articles for white descendants of slaveholders.

Original: Suggestions for White Descendants of Slaveholders by Robyn Smith

<http://www.reclaimingkin.com/suggestions-for-the-descendants-of-slaveholders/>

Follow-up: More Suggestions for White Slaveholder Descendants by Robyn Smith

<http://www.reclaimingkin.com/white-slaveholder-descendants/>

Follow recommendations from Bittersweet.

In Support Of African American Family History Research: 27 Actions Descendants Of Enslaver Families Can Take – \*(Pinned Post)

<https://linkedthroughslavery.com/in-support-of-african-american-family-history-research-27-actions-descendants-of-enslaver-families-can-take/>

Don't make excuses.

Don't try to excuse or justify your ancestors' behavior. Unfortunately, some family historians try to gloss over or explain away a racist history. For example, in my own family tree (surname Christian), I encountered this genealogical note: "As with others of their station, the Christians had slaves as part of their domain. Neighbors were known to comment, however, that they didn't know why 'cause all Daddy Jim ever does is pamper them."

Just no. The neighbors doing it doesn't make it right. And being criticized for "pampering slaves" does not mitigate the fact that my family was enslaving other human beings. There's no justifying that.

## Document enslaved people.

Beyond Kin offers "a method for documenting slaveholder (SH)/enslaved person (EP) connections with existing software tools and the ability to share data... While not as elegant as a built-in software solution, this workaround offers a tremendously easier method than attempting to study the EPs outside of our familiar tree applications. Until our software developers modify their applications to handle Beyond Kin links (and agree together to do it in a way that allows GEDCOM transfer), we can do the most good by sharing this common method."

<http://beyondkin.gegbound.com>

and

Enslaved Population Research Directory

<https://beyondkin.org/enslaved-populations-research-directory/>

Reclaiming Kin offers a second method, originally designed to document the slaveholder:

<http://www.reclaimingkin.com/documenting-the-slaveowner/>

## Document even if you don't have slaveholding ancestors.

Again, The Beyond Kin Project:

<http://beyondkin.gegbound.com/if-you-dont-have-slaveholding-ancestors/>

## Publicize.

Henry Louis Gates has an excellent list on The Root on what to do with the information you have about people enslaved by your family. Every link is amazingly helpful.

<http://www.theroot.com/how-do-i-find-descendants-of-my-ancestor-s-slaves-1790877029>

In addition to the resources he mentions, you can contribute to the following:

I've Traced My Ancestor's Slaveholders:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/188373451214240/>

Slave Name Roll Project: <http://slavenamerollproject.blogspot.com>

Example from Steven C Perkins:

<https://scpgen.blogspot.com/2017/08/slave-name-roll-project.html>

## Become a "Linked Descendant."

Join the Linked Descendant Project of Coming to the Table:

"Linked Descendants are people connected to one another through slavery and its legacies; people related through ownership, kinship, or violence. Linked descendants want to know the truth about their ancestors, discover their connections, maybe even heal a bit of the wounded past."

<https://comingtothetable.org/project/linked-descendants-resources/>

## Practice reparational genealogy.

Participate with others in the Reparational Genealogy Project:

<http://ancestorsalivegenealogy.com/the-reparational-genealogy-project/>

Here are instructions for individuals:

<http://ancestorsalivegenealogy.com/reparational-genealogy/>

# CONFRONT SETTLER COLONIALISM & HOMESTEADING.

## Learn and share.

Take what you're learning and share with others. One specific area to share is how "settler colonialism" is the root of all U.S. expansion. Homesteading, for example, is just one specific form of settler colonialism. The Massachusetts Bay Colony was also settler colonialism. In fact, all of us who are non-natives are "settlers." So sharing this knowledge with others in your genealogical networks may help increase awareness. Challenge celebrations of "the frontier," "westward expansion," etc.

## Support Native communities.

Intentionally grow as allies and accomplices of indigenous peoples in all areas (not just in genealogy). A few suggestions for general justice work are here:

From Truth Telling to Land Return: 4 Ways White People Can Work for Indigenous Justice by Jamie Utt with Waziyatawin

<http://everydayfeminism.com/2015/01/truth-telling-land-return/>

## Advocate for the "Carcieri Fix."

Advocate to your members of Congress that they support a full, clean "Carcieri Fix." This mitigates the harmful effects of a 2009 Supreme Court decision by clarifying that the

U.S. Interior Secretary can land into trust for all federally acknowledged tribes -- not just the tribes that were federally recognized in 1934.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20111222011942/https://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2011/12/01/carcieri-indian-countrys-number-one-priority-65291>

Up-to-date news on the Carcieri Fix:

<http://www.pechanga.net/category/issue-tag/carcieri-fix>

## Acknowledge the land.

Download the #HonorNativeLand guide from the US Department of Arts and Culture. Find out whose traditional territory you are on --- and whose territory your ancestors were on. Commit to learning more about the people, history, and contemporary concerns of these indigenous communities. Read the land acknowledgement at family reunions, genealogical societies, etc. Offer reparations.

<https://usdac.us/nativeland>

How to go deeper with a land acknowledgment:

<https://collectiveliberation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Indigenous-Resistance-Home-work.pdf>

## Challenge claims to Native American ancestry.

Urge Elizabeth Warren to publicly acknowledge the “history of cultural appropriation, erasure, and settler colonialism” that her DNA ancestry claim perpetuates.

The Elizabeth Warren Syllabus by Adrienne Keene, Rebecca Nagle, and Joseph M. Pierce

<http://www.criticalethnicstudiesjournal.org/blog/2018/12/19/syllabus-elizabeth-warren-che-rokee-citizenship-and-dna-testing>

## White Settler Revisionism and Making Métis Everywhere

“Moves by some settler communities to insert a Métis identity into places and periods they don’t belong—namely, outside the Prairie homelands of the historic Métis Nation—all in an effort to “self-Indigenize,” don’t just constitute wrong-headed fantasy, but a real and present danger to genuine Indigenous self-determination.”

Episode 72: Part 1:

<https://mediaindigena.libsyn.com/ep-72-white-settler-revisionism-and-making-mtis-everywhere-pt-1>

Episode 73: Part 2: <https://app.stitcher.com/splayer/f/85465/50952556>



# CONFRONT IMMIGRATION RESTRICTIONS

Humanize immigrants.

Watch your language. Do not describe immigrants as “animals” or “invaders.” As genealogists, we excel in humanizing people we’ve never met. Do that here!

Challenge language of “illegal” immigration.

No human being is illegal. *See references under Learn → Immigration → “Legal.”*

Here’s a sample social media post:

We all know that “legal” and “illegal” immigration categories are themselves the product of racism, right? If this is news to you, look up: the 1790 Naturalization Act (which restricted citizenship to “free whites”), the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act (which created the first class of “illegals”), the 1924 National Origins Act (which encouraged white northwestern Europeans to immigrate — but enforced low national quotas on everyone else), and the 1965 Immigration Act (which severely restricts migration from the Western hemisphere). What is “legal” is not the same as what is “moral.” And when we have bad laws, we need to change them.

Say “Angel Island” as much as “Ellis Island.”

And don’t just say that Angel Island is “the Ellis Island of the West” — the purpose, practices, and people were vastly different.

Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation

“They would meet with a reception quite unlike that given to European immigrants on the East Coast... Europeans or travelers holding first or second class tickets would have their papers processed on board the ship and allowed to disembark. Asians and other immigrants, including Russians, Mexicans, and others, as well as those who needed to be quarantined for health reasons, would be ferried to Angel Island for processing... In 1943, Congress finally repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act in consideration of its ally in the Pacific Theater, thus ending 61 years of official Exclusion. But there was a twist: while the repeal finally allowed Chinese to become naturalized citizens at last, it continued to limit immigration from China to a mere 105 people a year until 1965...”

*[read the whole “education” section!]*

<https://www.aiisf.org/>

The 1882 Foundation

The 1882 Foundation seeks to broaden public awareness of the history and continuing significance of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act

<https://1882foundation.org>

## Do #ResistanceGenealogy to point out hypocrisy

### #ResistanceGenealogy

Use the hashtag #Resistancegenealogy on Instagram and X. Follow Jennifer Mendelsohn, creator of #ResistanceGenealogy.  
@jennifermendelsohn1

## EDUCATE.

### Share what you've learned about genealogical history & challenges

Help other white genealogists understand the historical hurdles and contemporary systems that affect our work. If any of the above resources are helpful, please pass them on! You can also share this resource list like you would any other link:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/16TtyJTfPsPi7HWJkc4orLrC9SdpXOdGle0mfxZlvWvI/edit?usp=sharing>

### Advocate for accurate census data

We know about the history, use, and importance of the census, as well as the way that the census defines race in the U.S. We therefore know that it is crucial to eliminate hurdles to full participation (e.g., making sure that undocumented people can safely participate), to prioritize and fund the census, and to use the best research methods. We need to educate others -- including our elected officials -- about this.

### 2020 Census To Keep Racial, Ethnic Categories Used In 2010 by Hansi Lo Wang

"The proposals would change how the Latino population is counted and create a new checkbox on federal surveys for people with roots in the Middle East or North Africa. Research by the Census Bureau shows these revisions could improve the accuracy of the upcoming national headcount in 2020. Any changes would carry wide implications for legislative redistricting, civil rights laws and health statistics."

<https://www.npr.org/2018/01/26/580865378/census-request-suggests-no-race-ethnicity-d-ata-changes-in-2020-experts-say>

### Adding Citizenship Question Risks 'Bad Count' For 2020 Census, Experts Warn by Hansi Lo Wang

<https://www.npr.org/2018/01/10/575145554/adding-citizenship-question-risks-bad-count-f-or-2020-census-experts-warn>

More reporting by Hansi Lo Wang

<https://www.npr.org/people/177498291/hansi-lo-wang>

Intrigue At The Census Bureau by Code Switch [podcast]

<https://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=687956867>

Correct “Lost Cause” historical revisionism and promote alternatives to Confederate monuments.

Share what you know about historiography and the context of “Lost Cause” histories. Educate others about the context in which Confederate monuments were created. Follow the lead of people of color who are advocating for alternatives (like moving to museums, creating new signage, and contextualizing).

Preserve Black historic sites.

The following is excerpted from the Coming to the Table Reparations Working Group:<sup>15</sup>

“Encourage the National Park Service, the National Register of Historic Places, the National Trust and State Historical Societies and State Historic Preservation Officers to proactively identify, preserve and make available to the public historic sites that will tell the *entire* history of the country (i.e. the Fort Monroe, VA Contraband Camp) through historic preservation and interpretative programs such as establishing markers, roadside plaques, museums, monuments and publications documenting historic events related to slavery and achievements of African Americans.”

Write.

Contribute to the *BitterSweet: Linked Through Slavery* blog:

<https://linkedthroughslavery.com>

Teach.

Teach "Lessons of Our Land (K-12) and "Native Land Tenure History Course" (College)

<http://ilrf.org/get-involved/take-action/>

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<sup>15</sup>Coming To The Table’s “We Can Wait No Longer!” (June 2017 draft). Final version issued in January 2018: [http://comingtothetable.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Reparations\\_Guide\\_Jan2018.pdf](http://comingtothetable.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Reparations_Guide_Jan2018.pdf)

Offer a Class on "Healing Together: Addressing Slavery in Our Families' Histories"

Coming to the Table produced this guide on how to offer six two-hour class sessions on the topic "Healing Together: Addressing Slavery in Our Families' Histories."

[http://comingtothetable.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/02-Healing\\_Together.pdf](http://comingtothetable.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/02-Healing_Together.pdf)

Advocate for educational reform to teach racial history.

Support inclusive curricula like Ancestors unKnown, founded by an African-American woman:

<http://www.ancestors-unknown.org/>

The following ideas are excerpted from the Coming to the Table Reparations Working Group.<sup>16</sup> Please see that full document for many more ideas.

- Work with educators individually and/or school boards and state boards of education to reform curricula that will recognize that slavery was the foundation of our country's achievements and wealth.
- Support national, state and local efforts to revise how the history of slavery, segregation and civil rights is taught in U.S. school systems.
- Establish a national government sponsored Day of Healing to acknowledge and honor those African Americans who sacrificed their lives to slavery in the founding and building of this country.
- Revise the curricula of US and World history classes to accept the impact of slavery on the US and of the role slavery played in the development, even survival, of the United States and other countries.
- Promote wider access to museums, lectures and cultural events that represent African Americans. Enhance publicity and marketing. Ensure free admission to schoolchildren. Maintain support of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC. Include the story of slavery and African American experience in all museum exhibits about US history and culture.

## CONTRIBUTE DATA.

Contribute data to Our Black Ancestry.

OurBlackAncestry.com "needs genealogists and historians to contribute data to enlarge the database and help more researchers; input from the ancestral records and documents currently held by descendants of slaveholders, usually white folks; volunteers willing to input data about enslaved people that they find in archives, local history books,

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<sup>16</sup>Coming To The Table's "We Can Wait No Longer!" (June 2017 draft). Final version to be issued in January 2018.

<http://comingtothetable.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/WeCanWaitNoLonger-Draft04June17.pdf>

court records, etc., as well as funds to help with setting up an even richer and even better functioning database (software, programming and data inputting)."

Another "Our Black Ancestry" Miracle! by Felicia Furman

<https://linkedthroughslavery.com/2015/02/23/another-our-black-ancestry-miracle/>

Transcribe.

Last Seen: Information Wanted Ads

Transcribe "Information Wanted" advertisements taken out by former slaves searching for long lost family members. The ads taken out in black newspapers mention family members, often by name, and also by physical description, last seen locations, and at times by the name of a former slave master. On the website *Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery*, grad students find ads, copy them, clean up the images so they are legible, and load them to the site. Then volunteers are needed to transcribe these ads so that genealogists and researchers can begin searching and using them more easily.

Website: [InformationWanted.Org](http://InformationWanted.Org)

Transcription Sign Up: <http://informationwanted.org/sign-up>

Freedmen's Bureau

Transcribe Freedmen's Bureau records for the Smithsonian Museum of African-American History. "With almost 2 million individual records in the collection, the Freedmen's Bureau Transcription Project will be the largest crowdsourcing project ever sponsored by the Smithsonian.. The Freedmen's Bureau Transcription Project will transcribe word-for-word every document in the collection. When completed, the papers will be keyword searchable. This joint effort will help increase access to the Freedmen's Bureau collection."

<http://newsdesk.si.edu/releases/historic-freedman-s-bureau-database-given-national-museum-african-american-history-and-cult>

Transcription sign up: <https://transcription.si.edu>

"Projects" → "Freedmen's Bureau"

Identify Sundown Towns

From the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, African Americans were formally and informally barred from residence in places known as "sundown towns." These have been studied extensively by James W. Loewen in his book *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism*. The website that accompanies the book is here: <https://sundown.tougaloo.edu/sundowntowns.php>

Check the places your ancestors lived against Loewen's list of possible sundown towns in each state:

<https://sundown.tougaloo.edu/content.php?file=sundowntowns-whitemap.html>

There are likely many more sundown towns than are listed here. In your census research, you can help to confirm/deny/identify these sundown towns. Here's more information on sundown towns (and how to identify them):

<http://dneiwert.blogspot.com/2008/01/how-to-out-sundown-town.html?m=1>

## Make records public (and accessible, searchable, and free)

Choose a genealogy tools that are equally accessible accessible. Don't keep your family history behind a paywall. In particular, make public any family documents connected to slaveholding or enslaver families. Contribute slave data here:

<http://www.afrigeneas.com/slavedata/>

Contribute enslaver data here: <https://ourblackancestry.com>

(see more "Confront Slavery" actions below)

## SHARE DNA.

I have not done as much investigation on this area, but it seems to me that if you suspect an ancestor had biracial children (remembering "consent" is not an applicable category for enslaver/enslaved) then submit your DNA to a site where it may be most helpful to others.

I signed up for 23andMe before learning that their Black ancestry results are extremely limited. If I were doing it over again, I would investigate how committed a DNA tester is to providing quality results to people with African ancestry (i.e., African ancestry in the past several thousand years!). I would also investigate the actual levels/forms of collaboration that DNA testers have with indigenous groups and their commitment to hearing postcolonial critiques -- even (and especially) at the expense of profit.

20 Do's and Don'ts of DNA by Melvin J. Collier

<http://rootsrevealed.blogspot.com/2015/01/20-dos-and-donts-of-dna.html>

A Primer on How to Approach your DNA Cousins of Color by Teresa Vega

Part of "DNA Doesn't Lie: The Denial of the Pepper in Salted Histories"

<http://radiantrootsboricuabranches.com/dna-doesnt-lie-the-denial-of-the-pepper-in-salted-histories/>

## PRESERVE BLACK CEMETERIES.

### Submit a Burial

Submit burials or burial grounds to the National Burial Database of Enslaved Americans (The Periwinkle Initiative). This will be the first national repository to document individual burials and burial grounds of enslaved Americans. The database is in its initial stage of development and is not available for public searches -- but you can make a preliminary submission if you have information on a burial or burial ground of an enslaved American to be included in the future database. <http://www.memorializeamericanslavery.com>

### Connect Locally

Connect with your local African-American cemeteries to see what on-the-ground assistance they need. Then go get your hands dirty!

### Advocate with your Legislature

Advocate to state legislatures to budget at least as much for 19th century Black graves as they do for Confederate graves.

### Create a national society to preserve graves in slave cemeteries.

The following idea is excerpted from the Coming to the Table Reparations Working Group:<sup>17</sup>

“Create a national society/commission to locate, honor, memorialize and support the preservation of the marked and unmarked graves in slave cemeteries in honor of the lives of people buried there with appropriate public and private memorials.”

## INVEST MONEY.

### Hire.

Hire genealogists/historians from communities of color to speak at local/national historical societies and genealogical chapters. Compensate them fairly. Recommend them to other researchers.

There are so many authors in this document I would ask to present. Here's just one:

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<sup>17</sup>Coming To The Table's "We Can Wait No Longer!" (June 2017 draft). Final version issued in January 2018: [http://comingtothetable.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Reparations\\_Guide\\_Jan2018.pdf](http://comingtothetable.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Reparations_Guide_Jan2018.pdf)

Robin Foster of Saving Stories

<https://www.pinterest.com/savingstories/ask-me-to-present-robin-foster/>

## Make grants.

Push historical societies (e.g., local/regional) to prioritize research for, by, and/or about people of color. One excellent example:

Slavery Inventory Database, LLC

Slavery Inventory Database conducts research that helps to establish the identities of enslaved African Americans neglected or forgotten by history. This was originally a volunteer project that then received a grant from the Fairfax County History Commission.

<http://www.slaveryinventorydatabase.com>

and <https://historicwanderings.blogspot.com/p/about-fairfax-county-va-slavery.html>

## Only patronize organizations committed to inclusivity.

Sponsor genealogical scholarships and research grants for researchers of color. If you are part of a local genealogical society, urge them to prioritize people of color in awards and other incentives.

This Started Way Before Ferguson by Nicka Smith

“If the genealogy community at large remains silent about issues of racism that exist within it, it is in fact supporting exclusionary behavior.”

“While adding new record sets is fabulous, if a society, library, or repository calls itself progressive or inclusive, their board or governing body should consider allocating a certain amount of funds towards a diversity expansion budget or line item. This budget would be used to update their older exclusionary records OR to obtain record sets that are specific to minority groups that exist in the U.S. Not only will it appear as though they care about being inclusive (which would likely help to increase membership), but it would also send a message to other similar groups that they need to get on the bandwagon.”

“If you are in charge of planning a conference, you NEED to have if not tracks at least sessions for people of color. Period. It is absolutely unacceptable to call yourself a premiere organization or consider yourself one of the industry’s front runners if you are not doing this at this point. There is NO excuse. Many can’t say that they “just don’t get submissions for speakers” either. You ARE getting submissions, but it appears as though you are just placing them in the garbage in favor of doing something else.”

<http://www.whoisnickasmith.com/genealogy/this-started-way-before-ferguson/>



Support reparations.<sup>18</sup>

Educate yourself and others about reparations.

Read *Belinda's Petition: A Concise History of Reparations For The TransAtlantic Slave Trade* by Raymond Winbush (2009), *Capitalism & Slavery* by Eric Williams (1944), and *Killers of the Dream* by Lillian Smith (1949).

Read and share “The Case for Reparations” (*The Atlantic*, June 2014), <http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/05/the-case-for-reparations/361631/> and “The Case for Considering Reparations” (*The Atlantic*, January 27, 2016) <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/01/tanehisi-coates-reparations/427041/>, both by Ta-Nehisi Coates

Use genealogy to argue for reparations.

Did your slaveholding ancestors receive reparations through the Southern Claims Commission?



**Nicka Sewell-Smith**

@neeksmith

The reparations former slaveholders got following the Civil War can be found in the records of the Southern Claims Commission. My ancestors slaveholder received the equivalent of more than \$15,000 today. They got not a dime from the federal government.

[#BlackProGen](#)

<https://twitter.com/neeksmith/status/1141367568491515905?s=21>

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<sup>18</sup> This section is highly indebted to the June 2017 draft of Coming To The Table’s “We Can Wait No Longer!”

The draft notes: “This list of possible reparations for slavery and its legacies was primarily created for action or consideration by European Americans when requested and endorsed by African Americans.”

The full report was released in January 2018 and can be found here:

[http://comingtothetable.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Reparations\\_Guide\\_Jan2018.pdf](http://comingtothetable.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Reparations_Guide_Jan2018.pdf)

## Lobby for societal reparations

The following ideas are excerpted from the Coming to the Table Reparations Working Group.<sup>19</sup> Please see that full document for many more ideas.

- Listen authentically to African Americans' ideas about societal reparations and develop a joint recommendation regarding what reparations might be pursued together on the societal level.
- Support HR40 in the U.S. Congress ("House Resolution 40 - Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act") to compile existing and new studies/surveys for repairing the harms of slavery.
- Lobby for and support legislation for a National Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- Create a national program that encourages European Americans who are descended from enslavers to create scholarship funds for descendants of the people who were enslaved on their plantations and other property.
- Promote the provision of a Federal income tax credit for descendants of persons enslaved in the U.S.
- Create a reparations philanthropic fund under the umbrella of a large national community foundation that will use skillful media and publicity to encourage gifts and bequests. Seed the fund with pre-arranged commitments of funding. Invite high profile European American descendants of slaveholders to make contributions, and high profile African American descendants of slaves, especially those with philanthropic expertise, to serve on an advisory board for grant-making.
- Issue cash reparations to adult descendants of those who were enslaved. For those recipients in the lower third of income and wealth, provide for debt forgiveness so that reparations are not taken to repay debts.
- Create a government or non-profit program to provide one-time mortgage down payment assistance to enable African Americans to purchase a home at a low interest rate. Provide education, home loans and other G.I. bill-like programs to descendants of enslaved people.
- Ensure that formerly incarcerated individuals are eligible for reparations.

## Work for individual and group reparations

The following ideas are excerpted from the Coming to the Table Reparations Working Group.<sup>20</sup> Please see that full document for many more ideas.

- Ask lineage societies (like the General Society of Mayflower Descendants and Daughters of the American Revolution) about reparations, encouraging them to do so.
- Encourage students attending colleges that participated in slavery to document and publish the history of their schools' connection to slavery. Work with

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<sup>19</sup>Coming To The Table's "We Can Wait No Longer!" (June 2017 draft). Final version issued in January 2018: [http://comingtothetable.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Reparations\\_Guide\\_Jan2018.pdf](http://comingtothetable.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Reparations_Guide_Jan2018.pdf)

<sup>20</sup>Coming To The Table's "We Can Wait No Longer!" (June 2017 draft). Final version issued in January 2018: [http://comingtothetable.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Reparations\\_Guide\\_Jan2018.pdf](http://comingtothetable.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Reparations_Guide_Jan2018.pdf)

administrations to create a plan for providing reparations to the people whose ancestors were enslaved at the school.

- Hold corporations accountable for their profits accrued through association with slavery and develop ways to provide reparations.
- Use reparations website that allows white people to offer 'reparations' directly to people of color: <http://www.reparations.me/>

## Donate.

Many of the organizations listed above receive donations. Give generously -- and prioritize organizations that are owned and run by people of color. Personally, I'm prioritizing Our Black Ancestry, The Root (which I like for more reasons than just the "Tracing Your Roots" series!), and Greenwood Cemetery in north Saint Louis.

To address settler colonialism and indigenous rights, donate through The Indian Land Tenure Foundation, which works with various organizations to address loss of land in Indian Country: <http://iltf.org/get-involved/contribute>

You can also give to the Lakota Lands Recovery Project (Pine Ridge Reservation): <http://villageearth.org/global-affiliates/pine-ridge-reservation>

## BE AN ALLY — IN GENERAL!

### Speak up.

Speak up when you are in a group of genealogists defending the Confederate flag.

Speak up in explaining the deliberate use of "enslaved person" or "enslaved people" instead of "slave." (ditto for calling people "enslavers" rather than "slave owners").

### Challenge nativism.

Don't boast about the length of time your ancestors have been in the United States or how far back your records go.

Use what you know about immigration, indentured servitude, chattel slavery, and treatment of indigenous peoples to speak against contemporary injustices.

### Reshape narratives of "privilege."

Raymond Person, Jr. offers a very brief example of how to reshape narratives of privilege: "I could excuse my family because we were mostly 'working class.' That is, it appeared that my family profited less from white privilege than wealthier white families...

[Through genealogy] I now know that this 'working class' story is only partially true."  
<http://www2.onu.edu/~r-person/Reflections.html>

## Use the Transforming Historical Harm model.

The following excerpts from the website Coming to the Table explain and elaborate the "Transforming Historical Harm" model:

1. **Facing History** (researching, acknowledging, and sharing personal, family and community histories of race with openness and honesty)
2. **Making Connections** (connecting to others within and across racial lines in order to develop and deepen relationships)
3. **Healing Wounds** (exploring how we can heal together through dialogue, reunion, ritual, ceremony, the arts, apology and other methods)
4. **Taking Action** (actively seeking to heal the wounds of racial inequality and injustice and to support racial reconciliation between individuals, within families, and in communities)

### Connect before acting

Regarding the fourth point, taking action should occur *after* you make connections with others. Don't just assume you know what others want. Convene a diverse group to discern the best ways to make amends.

### Action examples

"Taking action to address historical harms can be a long, ongoing process... [involving] memorializing historical incidents... re-enactments... memorials or plaques... Public acknowledgement and apology... Correcting historical records, introducing more representative curriculum in schools... When a current law or policy is identified as a remnant from historic or ongoing discrimination, changing the law or policy, is a significant step..."

<http://comingtothetable.org/about-us/coming-table-approach/>

### Keep facing history and healing wounds

This Transforming Historical Harm model is elaborated on pages 29-51 of this pdf from Coming to the Table (the healing questions on pages 89-92 could also be helpful):

[http://comingtothetable.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/01-Transforming\\_Historical\\_Harms.pdf](http://comingtothetable.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/01-Transforming_Historical_Harms.pdf)

### Don't make it about you.

Learn about "white tears," "white guilt," and "white saviors." There are no white saviors. And your tears aren't helping. Then center people of color, and truly listen (and respond) to what they say they need and want. Follow their lead. Stay accountable. Stay humble.

Keep learning. Admit your mistakes (we will mess up!). This isn't about you or me. This is about generational change. So let's examine our whiteness and then decenter it.

Resources that can help include:

Me and White Supremacy by Layla F. Saad

<https://www.meandwhitesupremacybook.com>

White Supremacy Culture by Tema Okun

[http://www.dismantlingracism.org/uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/okun\\_-\\_white\\_sup\\_culture.pdf](http://www.dismantlingracism.org/uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/okun_-_white_sup_culture.pdf)

## CONCLUSION

I started this resource list worrying that I would need to give up genealogy because it was so closely tied to racism, nativism, racial privilege, and eugenics. And yes, genealogy does mirror the systemic injustices faced by people of color in the United States. It can be used to deepen those divides.

We white genealogists need to know this history and this danger. We need to avoid genealogical societies and businesses that do not demonstrate a commitment to racial justice.

Like every ally, we will need to grow as anti-racist allies in all parts of our lives. We vulnerably recognize that we are works in progress. We exist with the good and bad mixed together, just as our ancestors were.

Fortunately, we can use our genealogical tools to support others. The desire to know one's ancestry is not a "whites only" issue. We can share what we learn with other genealogists. We can name settler colonialism and change the national conversations on indigenous peoples and immigrants. We can hold our own research with an open hand, inviting others to engage. Open-access database contributions and transcriptions are easy ways to make a difference. Black cemetery maintenance and advocacy require slightly more sweat.

Most difficult—and most rewarding—may be changing the narratives within our own families. After self-examination, we can then build relationships with linked descendants.

Because when we ask, "How can I be an ally?" or "How can I be anti-racist?" we're really asking, "How can we positively shape what we hand down to the next generation?"

And that's the best genealogical question to answer.

