I Don’t Even Know My Name

African-American Genealogy

Nancy Richey
“Don’t Forget the Bridge that Carried you Over”

- First Steps
  - Start Listening
  - Start Collecting
  - Start Recording
Going Back

- **Oral History**

  - Interview the living about the dead

  - You are looking for names, dates, places, relationships

  - Document your immediate family and then collateral relatives
Three Major Kinds of Records to Search

• RECENT RECORDS

• TRANSITION RECORDS
  (FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM)

• SLAVE RECORDS
SMOOGER BIO

1870 census, listed as William Helm (black) born abt 1862 living in the white household of Josiah Wade along with a brother Columbus Helm, born abt 1861

1880 census, listed as William A. Moore (black) living in the white household of Obediah Moore, listed as a servant, born abt 1862

1900 census, listed as Smooger Wade living in the Obediah Moore household as a servant, born abt 1862

1910 census listed as Alvis Wade living in the household of John M. Hines and Nancy "Nannie" Moore Hines (dau. of Obediah Moore) as a servant, born abt 1862

1920 census listed in John M. Hines (widowed) household as Smooger Moore, born abt 1862

1930 census, listed as Smooger Hampton living in the Effie Hampton (daughter of John M and Nancy "Nannie" Moore Hines, granddaughter of Obediah) household listed as a servant. listed as born abt. 1866

death certificate listed as born in 1860
Where to Look?

- Newspaper clippings
- Insurance policies
- WW I and II discharge papers
- School records
- Club and organizational records
- Scrapbooks
- Employment records pre-1900
- Black newspapers pre-1900
- Family Records and documents
  - Cemetery Records
  - Church Records
  - City Directories
  - Cemetery headstones (look for slave burial grounds records in owners papers)
  - Obituaries
  - County courthouse registers
  - Funeral home records
  - Institutional records: hospitals, union, factories; black owned insurance companies, College or University records
Where to Look: A Myriad of Places

"Uncle" Jack Taylor
Born about 1830 in Eldred family. When 14 he was purchased by Allen Taylor, great-grandfather of Lassie Taylor, mother of Richardville area.

Jack Taylor married Mason Thacker, a slave girl from the Thacker family.

Information Lavelle F. Vaughan, daughter of
1870 census is the transition from slavery to freedom

The 1870 census is the first U.S. federal census to list formerly enslaved African Americans by name (in previous censuses they were included only as tally marks on a page).

“Researching your ancestors during slavery becomes researching the owners of your ancestors.”
• Don’t trust the index
• Look at adjacent counties and state
• Examine tax rolls
• Use other censuses
• Black children indentured to whites
• Name adoption of whites
• 1850 and 1860 mortality schedules listed slaves
• School censuses
• 1890 schedule of surviving soldiers of the Civil War
• Division of property, with inventories and named slaves
• Slave owner and overseer records, account and day books, showing issuance of clothing, medical treatment, birth registers, death, accounting lists of slaves, daily work records
• Slave owner financial records, mortgaging, selling, insuring, hiring other slaves, paying
• Slave owner diaries
• Slave owner advertisements
• Bills of sale at courthouse
• Slave owner burial records
• Church records and minutes
• Slave owner concubines
Kentucky Military History Museum

Know ye, That William H. Graham, a Private of Captain E. A. Sherman's Company, 5th U.S. Regiment of United States Colored Volunteers, who was enrolled on the Seventeenth day of August, one thousand eight hundred and sixty five, to serve three years or during the war is hereby Discharged from the service of the United States this Fourth day of November, 1865, at Camp...
Born in Slavery

Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938

Project 1936-1
BILLORE
Spartanburg Dist.4
July 15, 1937

390140
Edited by:
Elmer Tur sage

STORIES FROM EX-SLAVERS

"I was born in Newberry County, South Carolina, in the Near Indian Creek above Saluda. My mammy and pa was Charlie and Frances Gilliam. We belonged to Marse Pettus and Harriet Gilliam who had a big plantation. I married George Glasgow in the yard of Reid Plantation, by a nigger preacher. My husband died about 15 years ago.

"I was a young child when de war stopped. And don't remember so much about slavery times. Marse Pettus and Miss Harriet was good to us. I never got a whipping, except massa whipped me once wid just one lick. Dey give us a small patch of 'bout half acre fer us to raise cotton or anything we wanted to on it. De master had a big garden and give his slaves plenty vegetables. We had plenty to eat all de time. My pa, Charlie, was de foreman of a crowd of slaves, and dere was a white overseer, too.

"Master Gilliam had a boy dey called 'Dub'. He still lives in Arkansas. Dey all moved to state of Arkansas sometime after de war. My master was a good man, a church man, and he was steward in Tranquill Methodist Church. Around de place at home he was always singing and in good humor. I 'member one song he sung dat was like dis:

"Lord, Lord, Heaven --Sweet Heaven,
Lord, Lord, Heaven --Sweet Heaven,
How long will it be? (repeated three times)
• Free because of meritorious service
• Bought their own freedom
• Escaped
• Granted by owner
• Revolutionary War service
• Never enslaved
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Records</th>
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<tr>
<td>American Missionary Association</td>
<td>Freedman Savings and Trust</td>
<td>Register of Violence against Freedmen</td>
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<td>Association Records</td>
<td>Freedman’s Bureau</td>
<td>School and College Yearbooks</td>
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<td>Anniversary Programs</td>
<td>Freedmen’s Schools</td>
<td>School Certificates</td>
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<td>Apprentice Indenture Records</td>
<td>Funeral Programs</td>
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<td>Bills of sale</td>
<td>Homestead Records</td>
<td>Scrapbooks</td>
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<td>Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates</td>
<td>Institutional records: hospitals, etc.</td>
<td>Sharecropper agreements</td>
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<td>Cemetery Records</td>
<td>Insurance Papers</td>
<td>Slave schedules for 1850-1860</td>
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<td>Census</td>
<td>Labor contracts</td>
<td>Social Security records</td>
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<td>Church Records</td>
<td>Memorabilia</td>
<td>Tax lists</td>
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<td>City Directories</td>
<td>Military Records</td>
<td>Voter records</td>
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<td>Cohabitation Records</td>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td>Wills</td>
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<td>Court records</td>
<td>Obituaries</td>
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<td>Deeds</td>
<td>Old Letters</td>
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<td>Divorce Records</td>
<td>Photographs</td>
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<td>Employment Records</td>
<td>Plaques, Awards</td>
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<td>Estate inventories</td>
<td>Poll tax, (Head tax, or Capitation)</td>
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<td>Family Bibles</td>
<td>Probate Records</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of Husband</td>
<td>Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob Harris</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>P. Edwards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emma Lee</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Washington</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Lewis</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry Johnson</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agnes Martin</td>
<td>50</td>
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Record for Henry Hoffs

Date and No. of Application, Oct. 30th, 1867

Name of Master: Louis Hoffs, Munsellville, on land 12

Name of Mistress: Perry's South Fork of Kentucky

Plantaion:

Height and Complexion: 4'4''.

Color: Black

Father or Mother: Married to Jane Hoffs

Name of Children: James 3.12 yrs old, Martha Hoffs

Regiment and Company:

Place of Birth: Madison, 12 miles South of Munsellville

Residence: Munsellville, Ala.

Occupation: Sharecropper

Remarks: Father lives with me in Munsellville and mother lives in Munsellville 6.2 miles from

Mack Hoffs, has a brother, Clayburn Hoffs who

lives about 3 miles from Louis on their plantation, he

lives in 6 miles from Louis on her plantation. He

was born in 1842 at the age of 16, when he was 15, he

lives about 3 miles from Louis on plantation.

Signature: Henry Hoffs
Special Collections Libraries and Archives

For example:

**Avery Research Center at the College of Charleston**

“The Avery Research Center was established to collect, preserve, and make public the unique historical and cultural heritage of African Americans in Charleston and the South Carolina Low country. Avery's archival collections, museum exhibitions, and public programming reflect these diverse populations as well as the wider African Diaspora.”
Online Sources:

- Freedmen’s Bureau Records (http://freedmensbureau.com/)
- http://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/

African American Research at the Library of Congress
• Southern Claims Commission
• U. S. Colored Troops Records
• Freedmen’s Bureau Records
• Freedmen’s Bank Records
• African – American Books Online
• 1865-1878 Charleston, SC Black Deaths
• Freedmen’s Bureau Records of Field Offices
• Illinois Servitude and Emancipation Records
• Review an expanded range of sources.
• Know that genealogy is a process.
• When researching slave genealogy, secondary sources are invaluable.
• Remember researching slave genealogy is similar to putting together a puzzle without having all of the pieces - use these resources to help gather as many pieces as possible and you may solve your puzzle.