African American Research At The Forum Library
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African American family research begins like all genealogy. One starts with what is known and works backwards in time, contacting relatives, collecting family information, and oral history. Censuses are searched, but the census search usually stops at the 1870 census – the first census to list African Americans by name. Vital Records are obtained in order to gather information about the family prior to 1870.

Around this time, the search becomes complicated. Records for the family need to be located, the slave owner needs to be determined, and that family has to be researched also.

How-to book
An important step in any genealogical research project is to locate “how-to” guides. One book mentioned in most African American bibliographies is Dee Parmer Woodtor’s Finding a Place Called Home: A Guide to African American Genealogy and Historical Identity.

Another valuable “how-to” is Tony Burrough’s Black Roots: A Beginner’s Guide to Tracing the African American Family Tree. Both books are in the GFO library collection.

Online sources
Angela Walton-Raji, an African American genealogist, has uploaded a number of videos on YouTube. Web: http://youtube.com/aywalton. Each of the free videos focuses on a different facet of African American research.

AfriGeneas is an online site that is devoted to African American genealogy. Here you can find the databases, AfriGeneas mail list, the AfriGeneas message boards and daily and weekly genealogy chats. The site hosts an interactive guide for beginners. Web: http://www.afrigeneas.com/.

Microfilm at the GFO Library: Slave census schedules
Slaves were enumerated separately during the 1850 and 1860 censuses. Unfortunately, most schedules do not give personal names. Typically, individuals were numbered, and their age and sex was enumerated. This can still provide clues to relationships. While many slave census schedules are on Ancestry.com, a page-by-page reading of the slave owners and their slaves for a community can lead to unexpected clues.

1850 Georgia slave schedules: Newton, Oglethorpe, Paulding, Pike, Pulaski, Putnam, Rabun, Randolph, and Richmond.
1850 Kentucky slave schedules: Jessamine through Woodford Counties
1850 Mississippi slave schedules, Jones, Kemper, Lafayette, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Leeke, Lownds, Madison Counties.
1850 Missouri slave schedules, Shelby County.
1850 North Carolina slave schedules, Amamance to Camden counties.
1860 Delaware slave schedules, entire state.
1860 Kentucky slave schedules, Adair - Casey counties.
1860 Maryland census population schedules: Allegheny - Howard counties and slave schedule.

Books in the GFO Library
As shown by the partial list below, the GFO Library has a number of books that focus on the African American experience and research.


Litwack, Leon F. *Been in the Storm So Long; The Aftermath of Slavery*. 305.96/L782.


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