

DIANE L. RICHARD EXPLORES A GREAT ONLINE GENEALOGY RESOURCE

# In Motion: The African-American Migration Experience

In Motion: The African-American Migration Experience, [www.inmotionaame.org/home.cfm](http://www.inmotionaame.org/home.cfm), was created by The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, [www.nypl.org/locations/schomburg](http://www.nypl.org/locations/schomburg), which is a research unit of The New York Public Library. The web-site presents more than 16,500 pages of texts, 8,300 illustrations and more than 60 maps, and is organized around 13 defining migrations that have formed and transformed African America and the nation.

Each migration is presented using five focal points: 1. Narrative, 2. Illustrations, each with caption, and bibliographical, indexing, and ordering information, 3. Research resources consisting of essays, books, book chapters, articles, and manuscripts, 4. Maps, and 5. Lesson plans for teachers. In addition, each migration has a bibliography (references) and a gateway of related websites.

I discovered this website as I was researching an African-American family which, at some point, migrated from North Carolina to Arkansas — we find them in Ashley County, Arkansas in 1880 and the father is clearly and consistently identified as born in NC. With no clues from the AR records as to where the father could have been born in NC (either about the family, possible extended family or NC born neighbors), I was interested in trying to learn more about what route this family might have traveled and/or an historical connection to where they “landed” in Arkansas to see if this would help in the research objective.

What I learned from this website was that Arkansas is kind of an in-between state — part of the south and yet not what was the plantation south, yet a slave-holding state though not part of what was considered the western migra-

tion destination of free black and ex-slave populations from the south. So, not a migration route studied or researched as much as is true for other locales.

As far as how to best use this

view the original version of it. As mentioned with regard to browsing, besides looking at the wealth of information via the thirteen defining migrations, there is also a timeline feature, [www.inmo-](http://www.inmo-)



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website, Migrations can be reached through “Browse by” Migrations, Geography or Timeline or via the “Search” function found at the top of the page and accessible from all pages. Once a migration has been selected, users can either read the narrative and look at the images, or focus on images only by clicking on “View Image Gallery.” From the drop-down menu, they can elect to see all the images, or only those associated with a particular part of the narrative. In the narrative, highlighted words take users to a glossary definition. The glossary can also be accessed through the Glossary box on the lower bar of each page.

When using the “search” feature, recognize that it enables users to search through texts, illustrations, maps, lesson plans and glossaries for a particular keyword or sentence. All books, book chapters, essays, articles, and manuscripts are presented in their original form as well as in a searchable version. So, once the search engine identifies what you consider a relevant document, map, etc., you can then

view the original version of it. As mentioned with regard to browsing, besides looking at the wealth of information via the thirteen defining migrations, there is also a timeline feature, [www.inmotionaame.org/timeline.cfm](http://www.inmotionaame.org/timeline.cfm), where you can look at historical context and then, at the bottom, click on the relevant Migration topic.

There are also lesson plans under “Educational Materials”. I looked at Geography since that is how I was first introduced to the site, and some of the lesson plans listed include: Mapping the Black Atlantic Lesson Plan, Geography and Runaway Journeys Lesson Plan: The Great Dismal Swamp, Mapping the Many Underground Railroads Lesson Plan, In Our Backyards Lesson Plan: Slave Trading and Small Towns, The Land Promised Lesson Plan: African-American Homesteaders and several others.

I have just scratched the surface of the extensive information found on this site. Whether you are researching an African-American family or wanting to understand better the impact of African-Americans and their forced or chosen migrations upon the US landscape, you will want to explore this fantastic resource!

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