

# Utilizing A.I. and Full-Text Search to Advance Your African American Research

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## Objectives

- Review key methodology for African American genealogical research
- Introduce FamilySearch A.I. and Full-Text Search tools
- Explain best practices for using Full-Text Search
- Demonstrate ways to find enslaved persons and Free People of Color with Full-Text Search
- Enable you to gather and connect your family members in FamilySearch Family Tree

## 10 Steps to Reclaiming Your African Roots

1. Write down what you know.
2. Find artifacts around the home.
3. Interview relatives.
4. Create a FamilySearch account.
5. Create your own family tree.
6. Search for existing ancestors.
7. Look for blanks in your family tree.
8. Search for historical records.
9. Add photos and stories.
10. Work together as a family.



Scan this code to  
download the booklet

<https://familysearch.brightspotcdn.com/83/76/5a3373aac7085cb650d7bcb870b0/a-guide-to-navigating-african-american-genealogy.pdf>

## Methodology

- **After 1865**
  - Follow the standard research process
- **Before 1865**
  - If your ancestor was free, follow the standard research process for your ancestor
  - If your ancestor was enslaved, *identify the slaveholder*, then follow the standard research process *for the slaveholder*



## The Standard Research Process

- **Gather** known information—start with yourself, then ask your relatives
- **Choose** a research goal—ask a specific question
- **Find** new information—search historical records
- **Evaluate** new information—decide what the evidence means and whether it is reliable
- **Share** new information—learn even more

## African American Sources

Seek out records that specifically mention African Americans

- Newspapers
- Slave narratives
- Records of the Freedmen's Bureau
- Records of the Freedman's Bank
- Census records (especially 1870-1950)
- Vital records
- Land and property records
- Military records
- Probate records
- Church records
- Cemetery records
- Court records
- Manuscript collections

## Key Records by Century

<b>20<sup>th</sup> Century (1900s)</b>	U.S. federal census records (1900-1950) Vital records Military records Social Security records (after 1937) Newspapers
<b>19<sup>th</sup> Century (1800s)</b>	U.S. federal census records (1870-1880) Vital records Military records Freedmen's Bureau Freedman's Bank Land and probate records Manuscript collections
<b>18<sup>th</sup> Century (1700s)</b>	Land and property records Probate records Tax records Manuscript collections

## FamilySearch Resources – Highlights

African American Genealogy (includes links to many collections housed in the library)

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/African\\_American\\_Genealogy](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/African_American_Genealogy)

Southern States Slavery and Bondage Collections (library collections listed by county and state)

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Southern\\_States\\_Slavery\\_and\\_Bondage\\_Collections](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Southern_States_Slavery_and_Bondage_Collections)

African American Online Genealogy Records (links to many online databases)

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/African\\_American\\_Online\\_Genealogy\\_Records](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/African_American_Online_Genealogy_Records)

The Quick Guide to African American Records

[https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Quick\\_Guide\\_to\\_African\\_American\\_Records](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Quick_Guide_to_African_American_Records)

The Freedmen's Bureau records

<http://www.discoverfreedmen.org/>

The Freedman's Bank records

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1417695>

African American Digital Bookshelf (digital copies of books to aid in your search)

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/African\\_American\\_Digital\\_Bookshelf](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/African_American_Digital_Bookshelf)

Full-Text Search in FamilySearch Labs

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/full-text>

## A.I. and Full-Text Search

### Filter by race

- African descent landing page: <https://www.familysearch.org/en/united-states-canada/ethnicities/african-descent>
- Filter by race under “Add Ancestor Information” in the right-hand search menu in search results
- Filter by race under “Filtered results” in top left corner of search results.

**Add Ancestor Information**

NAME	ALTERNATE NAME	SEX	<b>RACE</b>
MARITAL STATUS	RELATIONSHIP TO HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD		

**Filtered Results (2)**

Collection: Censuses & Lists, United States Census, 1900 (2) ×

Collection Sex **Race** Birth Marriage Residence



Record Hints icon

### Record hints

- View on FamilySearch Family Tree pedigree and person pages

### Search everything

- FamilySearch not-logged-in home page
  - Historical records
  - Family Tree profiles
  - Memories
  - Last name information
  - All of the above

### FamilySearch Labs

- Find help with A.I. Search
  - Explore how an AI-assisted search might provide better guidance and help for doing research and using the FamilySearch website.
  - How can I help you today?
    - Help center
    - FamilySearch Research Wiki
    - RootsTech
- Expand your search with full text
  - Direct link: <https://www.familysearch.org/search/full-text>
  - Access to over 500,000,000 un-indexed document images
  - Search every word in the text
  - Use different parameters to find exact words and phrases
  - Focus search to include specific years, record types, locations, and collections

## Best Practices for Using Full-Text Search

### Find words or phrases:

- Elijah Taylor = Elijah OR Taylor
- “Elijah Taylor” = Elijah AND Taylor within a word or so of each other
- +Elijah +Taylor = Elijah AND Taylor on the same image
- +Elijah -Taylor = Elijah BUT NOT WITH Taylor on the same image
- +(Elijah Taylor)= Previous search term WITH Elijah OR Taylor

## Wildcards replace certain letters:

- ? replaces one letter (Ta?lor = Taylor, Tailor, Taelor)
- \* replaces multiple letters or no letters (Ta\*r = Tar, Taylor, Tamer, Tanner, Taber, Tapper)

## Additional tips:

Try searching for the name of the person you are interested in by putting their name in quotes in the name field and leaving all other fields blank. Then, filter by place – country, state, county. If you still have too many results, filter by years. Then, try adding additional words or phrases or searching with wildcards. Look at every result. You never know when your ancestor might be mentioned!

When searching for enslaved individuals, use the enslaver (or potential enslaver) as the main search. Put his or her name in quotes, then filter by place. Add +(negro slave) or other search terms. You can also try adding the first name of the enslaved person after the + sign.

When searching for Free People of Color, try putting that in quotes in the keyword field. Add + and their first name. Remember that it is very important to filter by place. Try searching court records, especially.

### Search Tips

To reduce the number of search results, use the filters in the upper left under the Results number. You can also include the following in your searches:

#### Find an exact word or phrase

Use quotation marks. Example: "Henry Jones"

#### Include a specific word or phrase

Use the + symbol. Example: +Judith

#### Exclude a specific word or phrase

Use the - symbol. Example: -John

#### Find different spellings

Use the ? symbol. Example: Jens?n will return Jensen and Jenson

#### Find different forms of a root word

Use the \* symbol. Example: Car\* will match car, cars, carriage, carpenter, etc.

## Gather and Connect Your Family in FamilySearch Family Tree

Use the "Other Relationships" feature to add enslaved individuals mentioned in historical records to Family Tree, even if you don't know their full names. This will allow the computer to assign a personal identification number to them so you can link people together if you know their relationships. You can also add source material and memories.

### Other Relationships

[+ ADD OTHER RELATIONSHIP](#)

#### Enslavement



Enslaved Person

**Daniel**

Deceased • GYNC-7RF

## Schedule a Free Online Genealogy Consultation

If you would like help with a specific research problem, we invite you to sign up for a free online genealogy consultation. Go to: <https://go.oncehub.com/ResearchStrategySession>, then select "United States and Canada," then select, "United States African American Ancestors." Select your time zone, then choose a consultation time that works for you! You will receive a link to a Zoom meeting for your selected time. During your meeting, you will have 20 minutes to discuss your research question with a research specialist. The specialist will outline some next steps you can take in your research journey.