



Researching the Great Northward Migration 1880 – 1970

The movement of 6 to 7
million African Americans

by James L. Tanner

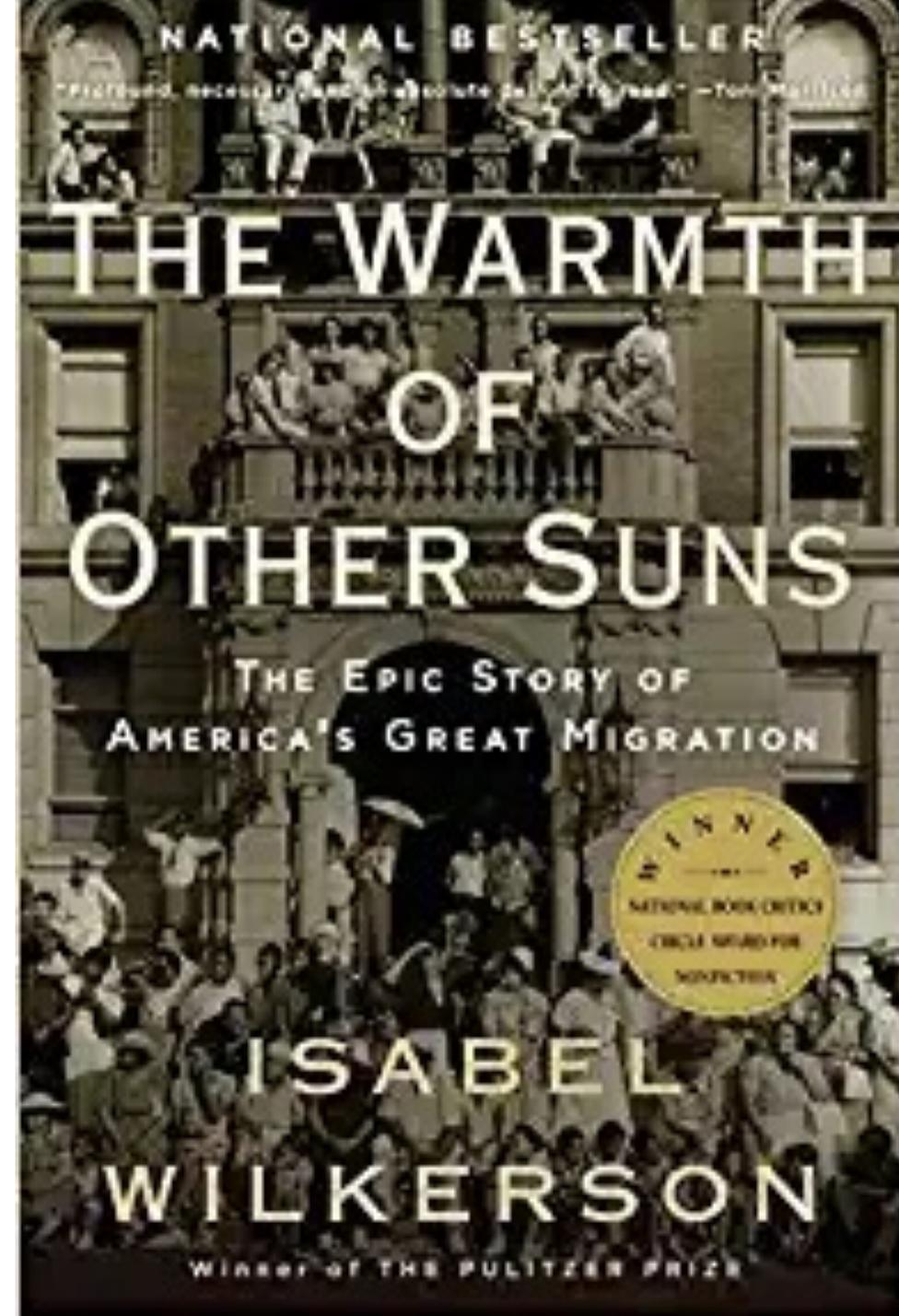
There were two Great Migrations. The first is from Britain to America from 1620 to 1640 and the second from the Southern States to the Northern States began in about 1880 and lasted until 1970



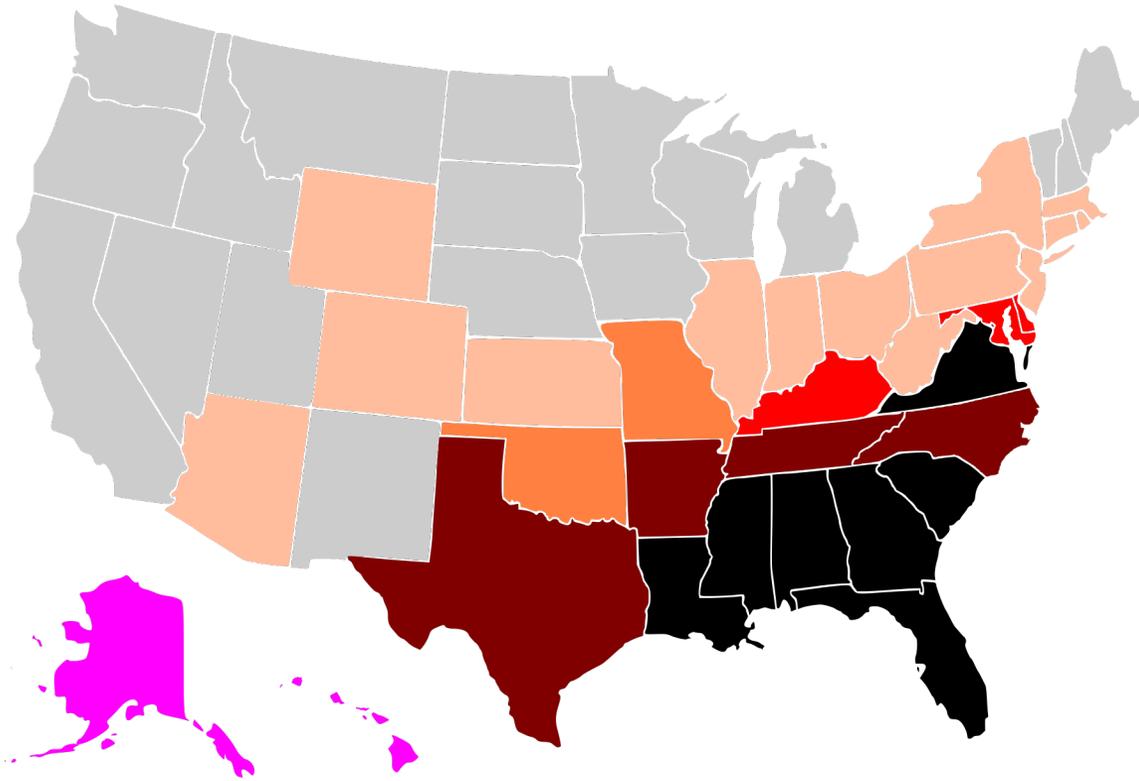
“The story of the Great Migration is among the most dramatic and compelling in all chapters of American history. So far reaching are its effects even now that we scarcely understand its meaning.”

Neil McMillen as quoted in Wilkerson, Isabel. 2020. *The Warmth of Other Suns: the Epic Story of America's Great Migration*, page 20.

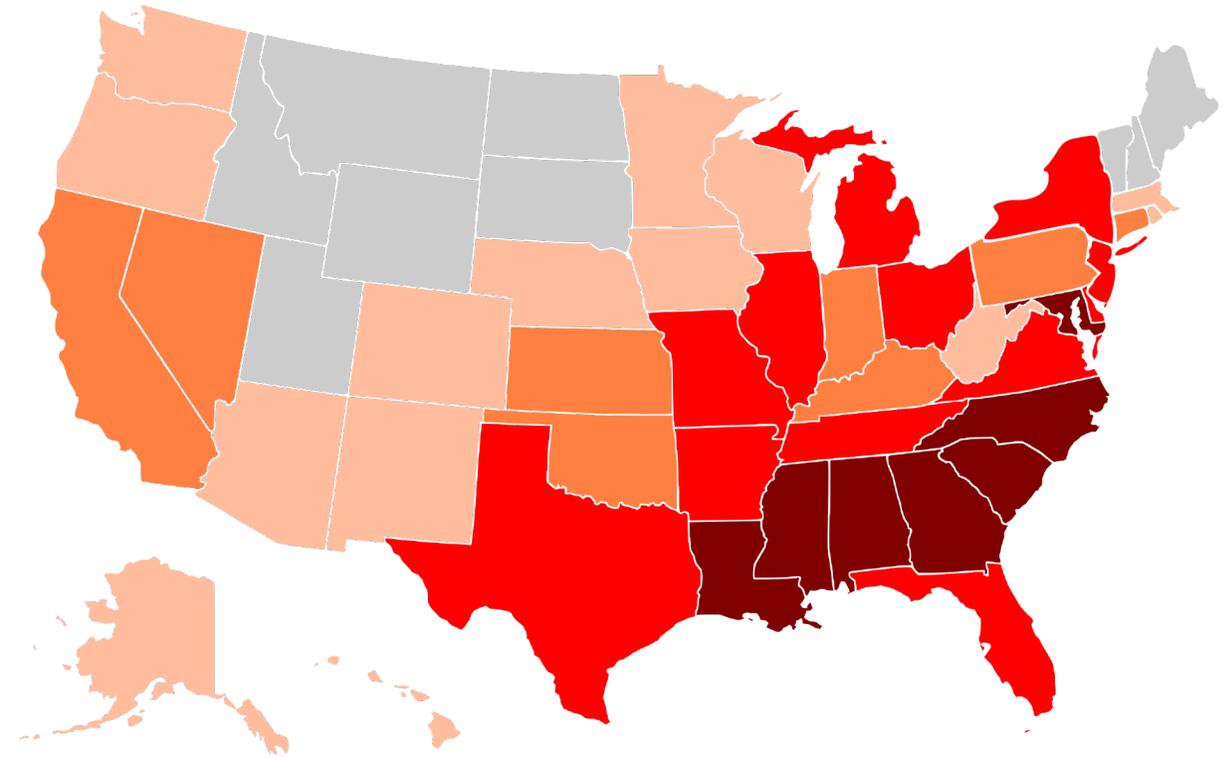
Start your discovery of the Great Migration with this book.



The Great Migration was the relocation of more than 6 million African Americans from the rural South to the cities of the North, Midwest and West from about 1916 to 1970.



A map of the black percentage of the U.S. population by each state/territory in 1900. Black = 35.00+% Brown = 20.00-34.99% Red = 10.00-19.99% Orange = 5.00-9.99% Light orange = 1.00-4.99% Gray = 0.99% or less Magenta = No data available
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A map of the black percentage of the U.S. population by each state/territory in 1990. Black = 35.00+% Brown = 20.00-34.99% Red = 10.00-19.99% Orange = 5.00-9.99% Light orange = 1.00-4.99% Gray = 0.99% or less Pink = No data available
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The causes of the
Great Migration
included:

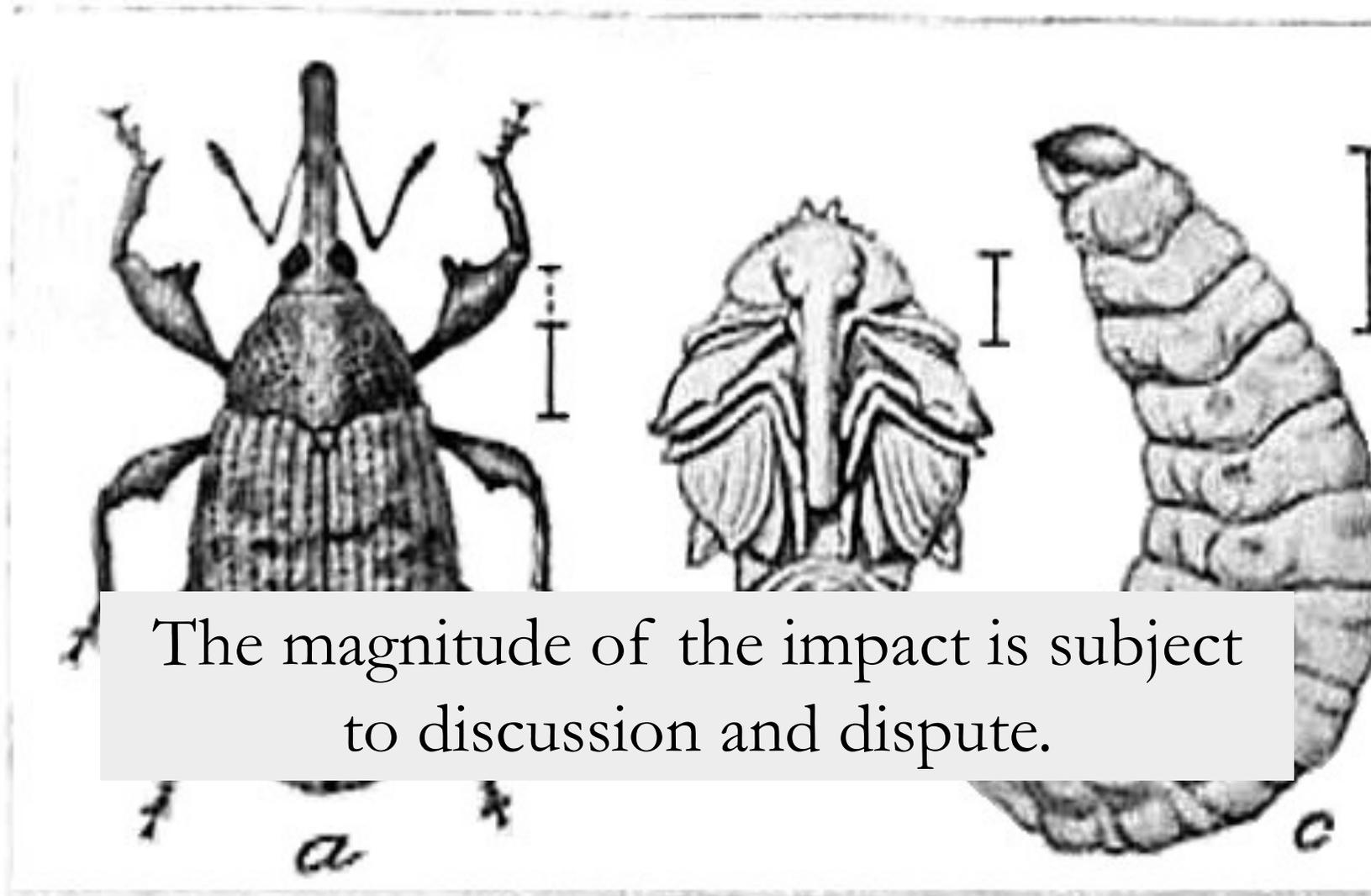
- Economic exploitation
- Social terror
- Political disenfranchisement





Between 1880 and 1950,
an African-American was
lynched more than once a
week for some perceived
breach of the racial
hierarchy.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/long-lasting-legacy-great-migration-180960118/>



The magnitude of the impact is subject to discussion and dispute.

Boll Weevil infestation spread over the South from about 1909 to the mid-1920s reducing the demand for Black farm workers.

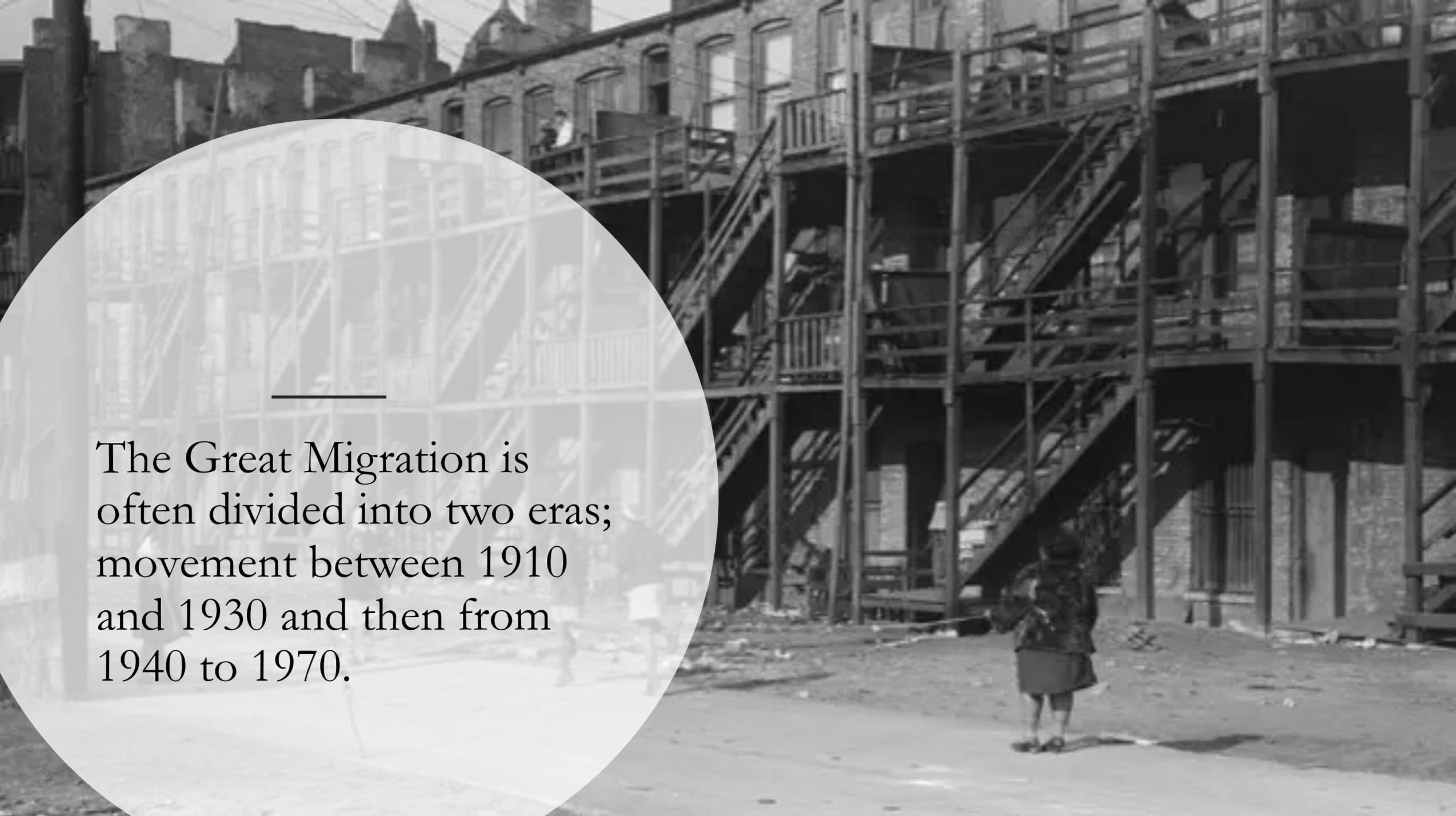
The cotton boll weevil: *a*, adult beetle; *b*, pupa; *c*, larva—enlarged from Farmers' Bulletin No. 130, United States Department of Agriculture



Jim Crow laws were a collection of state and local statutes that legalized racial segregation.

Jobs were paying much more for Blacks outside of the South



A black and white photograph of a tenement building under renovation. The building is covered in scaffolding and has multiple external fire escapes. A woman in a dark coat and skirt stands in the foreground on a dirt street, looking towards the building. The scene is set in an urban environment with other buildings visible in the background.

—

The Great Migration is often divided into two eras; movement between 1910 and 1930 and then from 1940 to 1970.

Demands for labor during WWI and WWII accelerated the exodus.





Migrants during the first phase of the Great Migration traveled to New York, Pittsburgh, Detroit, and Chicago.



During the period
from 1940 to 1970
southern migrants
moved to Los
Angeles, San
Francisco, Oakland,
Seattle, and Portland.



A black and white photograph of a wooden sign with the text "WE WANT WHITE TENANTS IN OUR WHITE COMMUNITY". The sign is made of plywood and is outdoors, with some foliage visible in the background. The text is written in large, bold, black letters.

WE WANT WHITE
TENANTS IN OUR
WHITE COMMUNITY

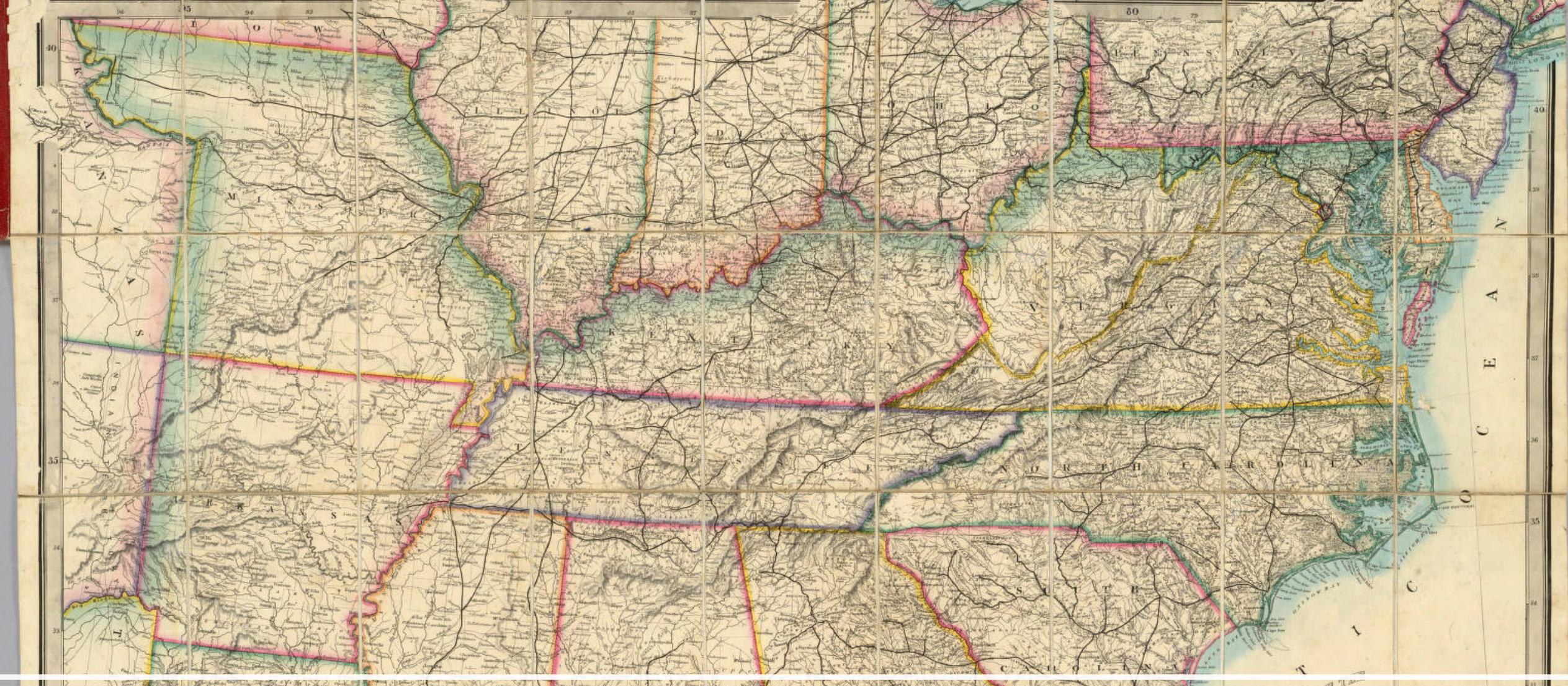
Unfortunately, the migrants received a similar response to their efforts to obtain housing and education as they had in the South.

We begin with the same basic rule as the one used for immigrants: research begins in the place of arrival not the place of departure.





Remember to focus on locations as well as names and dates. You may have to track the families across the country.



The basic question: Where did your ancestors come from before they moved north?



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GOVERNMENT, THE CITY OF CHICAGO, COUNTY AND
CITY GOVERNMENTS, A STREET AND SQUARE
INDEX, ETC.

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PREPARED AND ISSUED BY THE CHICAGO ASSOCIATION OF COMMERCE.

VOL. LXXI



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Check city directories for businesses
and individuals.

Form 1 **REGISTRATION CARD** No. 3077 85

1 Name in full Howard Alston Smith Age, in yrs. 25
(Given name) (Family name)

2 Home address Rutherford Ala.
(No.) (Street) (City) (State)

3 Date of birth Feb 10th 1892
(Month) (Day) (Year)

4 Are you (1) a natural-born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)? born citizen

5 Where were you born? Springfield Ala American
(Town) (State) (Nation)

6 If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject?

7 What is your present trade, occupation, or office? Rubber worker

8 By whom employed? Good Year Tire & Rubber Co Akron
 Where employed? Akron

9 Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 12, or a sister or brother under 12, solely dependent on you for support (specify which)? Mother & Aunt

10 Married or single (which)? single Race (specify which)? American

11 What military service have you had? Rank none; branch _____
 years _____; Nation or State _____

12 Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)? _____

I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

34-1-5 A
 REGISTRAR'S REPORT

1 Tall, medium, or short (specify which)? medium Slender, medium, or stout (which)? Stout

2 Color of eyes? dark Color of hair? dark Bald? no

3 Has person lost arm, leg, hand, foot, or both eyes, or is he otherwise disabled (specify)? no

I certify that my answers are true, that the person registered has read his own answers, that I have witnessed his signature, and that all of his answers of which I have knowledge are true, except as follows:

F. D. Hancock
(Signature of registrar)

Precinct 1
 City or County Akron
 State Ohio

1917
June 5th
(Date of registration)

LOCAL BOARD No. 5
 AKRON, O.
 C. C. DAVIS, Chr'm
 W. G. Raymond, Sec'y

Check for Draft Registration cards for both World War I and World War II



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<https://aprpullmanportermuseum.org/national-registry/>

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Pullman Porter National Historic Registry of the African-American Railroad Employees

* Please note that our registry page is in progress. At this time you may access the registry and your search will yield the following: First name Last name



Mapping The Stacks

A Guide to Black Chicago's Hidden Archives



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Dolores Kendrick, who launched her career in Washington, D.C.'s experimental poetry circles in the late 1950s, published Through the Ceiling with London-based Heritage Press in 1975.

Scholars agree that Black Chicago decisively shaped 20th century African American and American culture. Home to the most advanced, Black-owned mass media network in the U.S. by mid-century, Chicago not only thrived as a mecca for the literary arts and sustained a cutting-edge visual arts scene, but Black Chicago transformed the blues, gospel, and avant garde jazz music as well.

Evidence of this cultural ferment abounds in the city's numerous archives, museums and community institutions. However, these materials are hidden from the public's view: archivists' efforts to catalog such primary sources often can't keep pace with the amount of material that exists.

Mapping the Stacks (MTS) aims to identify and organize uncatalogued archival collections that chronicle Black Chicago between the 1930s and 1970s, in order to increase their use by researchers and the general public.

News

[University of Chicago: Scholars work to make Defender collection public](#)

<http://mts.lib.uchicago.edu/>

This website offers access to the finding aids we've prepared thus far and our plans for the years to come.

Learn about the history and the cultural impact of the migration.



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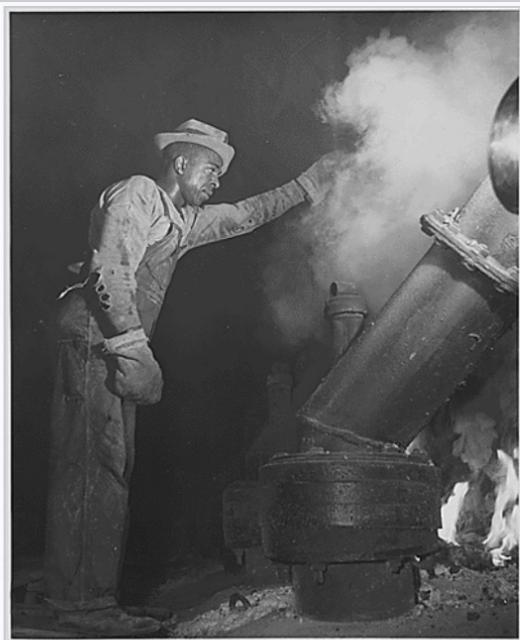
Welcome to the African American Research page

Its most unique genealogical features:

- Family name changes were common after the Civil War
- Slavery research is usually challenging
- Freedman's Bank Freedmen's Bureau Records
- Researching African American Genealogy
- Join the Facebook African American Genealogy Research Community.

[African American Online Genealogy Records](#)

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A Tennessee Valley Authority African American worker

African American Genealogy Wiki Topics



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- Record Finder
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State African American Pages [edit | edit source]

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African American Funeral Home Records

United States → *African American Genealogy* → **Funeral Home Records**

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- 4 Searching Funeral Home Records
 - 4.1 Tips

Online Resources [edit | edit source]

- [Virginia, African-American Funeral Programs, 1935-2009](#) at FamilySearch — images
- [Virginia, Fluvanna County Colbert Funeral Home Records, 1929-1976](#) at FamilySearch — images
- [Virginia, Lynchburg, Diuguid Funeral Home records, 1820-1971](#) at FamilySearch — images
- [California, San Francisco Area Funeral Home Records, 1835-1979](#) at FamilySearch — images
- [Maryland, Baltimore, Locks Funeral Home Records, 1936-2007](#) at FamilySearch — images
- [www.funeralhomesdirectory.com](#)
- [africanamericancemeteries.com/funeralhomes.html](#)
- [www.purpledirectory.com](#)

Introduction [edit | edit source]

Funeral home records may give details about the deceased, such as his or her death and burial date and place, birth date and place, parents, spouse, maiden name, other family members, and religion. The records also indicate those responsible for the funeral expenses. It is common for a funeral home to include a biography or obituary and the names and residences of surviving relatives. Morticians frequently file the death certificate and have a copy of the obituary published in one or more newspapers as requested by the family.

Some funeral home records start as early as the mid-1800s, although many early records have been lost or destroyed. Old records may be in the custody of a funeral home currently in business in the area, because mortuaries that changed hands or relocated frequently saved the old records. Some records have been given to local libraries or societies. An example of funeral home records is:

Funeral home personnel are generally familiar with the locations of active cemeteries and sextons or caretakers you can contact.

African American Genealogy Wiki Topics



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Introduction [\[edit | edit source \]](#)

Welcome to the African American Digital Bookshelf!

This is a curated list of virtually accessible books that provide information on specific African American ancestors, historical context, and guidance to other resources.

The digital books are organized geographically, with books pertaining to the entire U.S. or multiple states listed under "U.S." followed by books for particular states. The digital access to these books may come from FamilySearch or elsewhere (see the "Access" column in the table). To access the FamilySearch books, users must have an account [here](#). The books from the other websites do not require an account to read them, except for a few located at Internet Archive. You can create your free Internet Archive account [here](#).

This table will continue to grow, so please come back often. The Family History Library also houses hundreds of books on the shelves that contain valuable information for African American genealogy and research.

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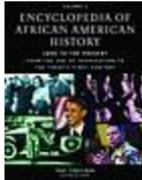
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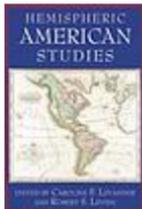
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by Michael Hait
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Language: English
Publisher: [Baltimore, MD] : Genealogical Pub. Co., ©2011.
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2.  [Encyclopedia of African American history, 1896 to the present : from the age of segregation to the twenty-first century](#)
by Paul Finkelman;
Print book : Biography [View all formats and languages »](#)
Language: English
Publisher: New York : Oxford University Press, 2009.
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3.  [Hemispheric American studies](#)
by Caroline Field Levander; Robert S Levine;
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Language: English
Publisher: New Brunswick, N.J. : Rutgers University Press, ©2008.
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African American

Goal 1: Get Started



Goal 1: Get started with African American research.

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America's Great Migrations Project

The Great Migration (African American)

by James Gregory

Over the course of the 20th century, more than seven million African Americans left homes in the South to resettle in northern and western states. Historians have long described this exodus as the Great Migration, great not just because of the numbers of people who moved but also because of the social and political consequences. Once a people of the South, Black Americans became increasingly part of the big cities of all regions and in those urban settings steadily

https://depts.washington.edu/moving1/black_migration.shtml

migration, including several sets of [interactive maps and tables](#) showing where people settled and where they came from decade by decade.





African American Heritage

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Research at the National Archives

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The Great Migration (1910-1970)



The Great Migration was one of the largest movements of people in United States history. Approximately six million Black people moved from the American South to Northern, Midwestern, and Western states roughly from the 1910s until the 1970s. The driving force behind the mass movement was to escape racial violence, pursue economic and educational opportunities, and obtain freedom from the oppression of Jim Crow.

The Great Migration is often broken into two phases, coinciding with the participation and effects of the United States in both World Wars. The [First Great Migration \(1910-1940\)](#) had Black southerners

<https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/migrations/great-migration>

Americans faced injustices and difficulties after migrating. The [Red Summer of 1919](#) was rooted in



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Lakisha Odlum, New York City Department of Education

Time Period

The Emergence of Modern America (1890-1930)

Subjects

US History
African Americans
Migration

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The turn of the twentieth century is often referred to as the nadir of race relations in the United States. Jim Crow laws, lynchings, and other forms of racial violence plagued the southern region of the country. Moreover, the cotton industry was

[Show full overview](#)

SOURCE SET

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

TEACHING GUIDE

<https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/the-great-migration>

Talk to your relatives and do oral histories but beware of privacy issues.



Thanks for Watching

