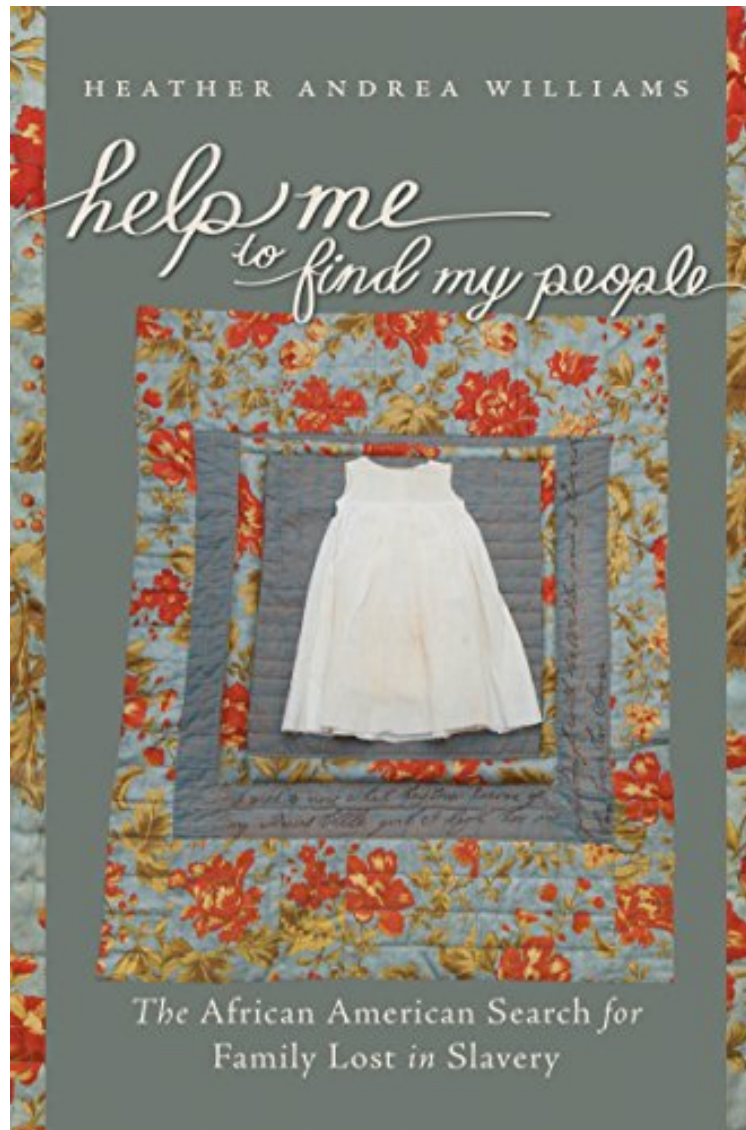


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## Help Me to Find My People: The African American Search for Family Lost in Slavery (The John Hope Franklin Series in African American History and Culture)

Heather Andrea Williams

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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Help Me to Find My People: The African American Search for Family Lost in Slavery* (The John Hope Franklin Series in African American History and Culture):

18 of 18 people found the following review helpful. Eloquently delivers the missing piece of our shared American story. By MamaNitaj Thoughtfully written, well researched, and insightfully crafted. This book connected me to the stories that were handed down in my own family from slavery of my ancestor who, after the slaves were freed, walked from plantation to plantation to gather her children who had been heartbreakingly sold away from her. Her walk, our story goes, took her several summers and across two states. This book gave credibility to our family story in a way that is difficult to describe. I have not stopped talking about this book and have recommended it to everyone I meet. If you are African-American it is a must have in your library. If you live in a Southern state, it is a must have for your library. If you want to better understand race relations and the relationship our history has to our family structures, it is a must have for your library. If you are a civil war buff, it is a must have for your library. If your ancestors owned slaves in the United States, it is a must have for your library. It eloquently delivers the missing piece of our shared American story. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful and evocative history. By PennyHeather Andrea Williams, "Help me to find my people: The African-American Search for Family Lost in Slavery." UNC Press, 2012. Starting with her discovery of advertisements placed in newspapers after the Civil War by freedpeople hoping to find a long lost parent, child, or mate, Williams expanded her study to a wide range of sources to illuminate the separation of families through sales and gifts during slavery time, and family members' impassioned and determined efforts to find their kin after Emancipation. She tells this story in personal and engaging terms--sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes joyful--that will appeal to many readers. She makes wonderful use of brief anecdotes she has found, including first-hand accounts of losses and reunions, as well as a love letter from an enslaved man to his faraway wife and an embroidered bag filled with a mother's love. Excellent book. It will be on my Christmas giving list for more than one friend. Bravissima to Professor Williams. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Find Your People. By NN Grayson A great resource for unravelling the stories of separation of enslaved African Americans and their 'freedom'. Williams does tend to be repetitive, which makes it a longer read than necessary. But, she has done extensive research and provides a comprehensive bibliography of sources. At times difficult to process the inhumanity they suffered, and the ambiguous loss they endured, it is well worth the read to see the strength of the human spirit to survive any hardship or challenge.

After the Civil War, African Americans placed poignant "information wanted" advertisements in newspapers, searching for missing family members. Inspired by the power of these ads, Heather Andrea Williams uses slave narratives, letters, interviews, public records, and diaries to guide readers back to devastating moments of family separation during slavery when people were sold away from parents, siblings, spouses, and children. Williams explores the heartbreaking stories of separation and the long, usually unsuccessful journeys toward reunification. Examining the interior lives of the enslaved and freedpeople as they tried to come to terms with great loss, Williams grounds their grief, fear, anger, longing, frustration, and hope in the history of American slavery and the domestic slave trade. Williams follows those who were separated, chronicles their searches, and documents the rare experience of reunion. She also explores the sympathy, indifference, hostility, or empathy expressed by whites about sundered black families. Williams shows how searches for family members in the post-Civil War era continue to reverberate in African American culture in the ongoing search for family history and connection across generations.

I highly recommend [this book] for shining its spotlight on a seldom-considered source, the 'Information Wanted' advertisements, and for Williams' masterful focus on the emotional toll of U.S. slavery on those held in its thrall.--Afrigenias.com A stirring account of the emotional cost of separation during slavery. . . . Williams's richly textured analysis contributes greatly to the history of emotions, slavery, the Old South, and family history studies.--H-Net s An excellent book. . . . [that] should be added to everyone's library in the hope that these sad events will act as a constant reminder that we need to be kind and thoughtful to everyone as we are all Americans now.--Lone Star Book Williams examines the historical fact of family separation and renders its emotional truth. She is the rare scholar who writes history with such tenderness that her words can bring a reader to tears. . . . [The book] has a propulsive narrative flow, and with each successive chapter the suppleness of Williams's prose grows.--New York Times Book Editors' Choice [Williams] retraces the journey of freed African-Americans through one of their most harrowing experiences after emancipation--finding their family members.--Carolina Alumni [A] fine new book. . . . A broadly ranging study. . . Help Me to Find My People. . . provides opportunities for remembering that the continued existence of slavery for centuries depended on whites learning to rationalize guilty feelings by pretending (or even believing) that African Americans did not feel family separations deeply.--Women's of Books William's descriptions of scenes of mother and children being separated and sold to different owners are heartrending persuasion that the worst part of the horrible American system of slavery was not the backbreaking work.--North Carolina Bookwatch [Help Me To Find My

People] deserves an important place in [the Black History] annals.--DG Martin, Durham Herald-Sun Williams has uncovered evidence with emotional heft that will help modern readers understand the toll slavery took upon families and individuals. She examines these losses from the perspectives of enslaved peoples and seeks to answer how they dealt with--and how they felt about--what was done to them.--Marie Jenkins Schwartz, University of Rhode Island Williams speaks to scholars and to everyone interested in African American roots and family history as she delves into the short-run and long-run impact of family instability and disruption. This is a study of real importance.--Michael Tadman, University of Liverpool A stunning narrative. Relying upon an astonishing variety of sources, Williams documents one of the deepest prices paid by those subjected to enslavement--forced separation from their loved ones--and chronicles the long and difficult journeys they undertook to search for loved ones after the Great War.--William Darity Jr., Arts and Sciences Professor of Public Policy, African and African American Studies, and Economics, Duke University From the Inside Flap After the Civil War, African Americans placed poignant "information wanted" advertisements in newspapers, searching for missing family members. Inspired by the power of these ads, Heather Andrea Williams uses slave narratives, letters, interviews, public records, and diaries to guide readers back to devastating moments of family separation during slavery when people were sold away from parents, siblings, spouses, and children. Williams explores the heartbreaking stories of separation and the long, usually unsuccessful journeys toward reunification.