

Neptune Township & Board of Education  
Proudly Present  
The 15th Annual Black History Celebration

# BLACK MIGRATIONS 2019

12 noon Reception in Lobby  
12:30 p.m. Senior Griots' Video  
1-3 p.m. Main Program

**BLACK  
HISTORY  
MONTH**

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**NEPTUNE TOWNSHIP  
SCHOOL DISTRICT**



# What is the Great Migration?

- Started in the beginning of the 1900's
- Involved the mass exodus of millions of African Americans from the South to the North
- Over 1 million were estimated to have migrated north
- Greatly influenced the Harlem Renaissance



# The Great Black Migration

This is a time to reflect about the Great Black Migration.  
It was a time for change that affected the nation.  
Today sit back, learn, as we trace Black History, our history.  
We travel through our town's stories that set us free.  
You see we are a beautiful quilt stitched together with threads of determination.  
Pieced together are patches of family love and devotion.

Economic motivation and promise of more prosperity  
This movement to the North held many great possibilities.  
Widespread racism, lynching, poor employment and education.  
Just a few reasons to head North to pursue a hopefully better situation.

World War 1 created the 1st part of the largest U.S. Migration story.  
It was the beginning of one of the most influential movements in history  
Employment was offered by Railroads, factories, steel mills and such.  
Some offered Blacks incentives, travel expenses, rail passes, as an added special touch.

Smith, Jones, Harris, Johnson, Brown, Jackson, other families too.  
Decided migrating North for better opportunities was the thing to do.  
Talk to your families and friends; I bet you will see.  
The Great Black Migration was a piece of every family's tree.

Let the information you are presented create a spot in your heart.  
May you be inspired to have conversations about any community in which you are a part.  
Be mindful we are here by choice.  
Our ancestors worked hard to give us a voice.  
The Great Migration is a powerful piece of the country in which we live.  
Honor our spirit of greatness and find what strength to others we can give.

Wanda Smith 2019 Celebrate Black History every day!

# Message From The Mayor of Neptune Township

## The Power of a Movement!

Today we celebrate the power of a movement and its impact on American communities, especially the Black community!

What began as a call to action for Blacks to leave the Jim Crow South; became an exodus of Black Americans. In less than 40 years, more than 6 million Black Americans moved northward for a better life and opportunity. And the result sent the southern states into an economic tailspin from which they still have not fully recovered

And they did this with no guarantee of what they might find. Instead, they came with hope of a better life for themselves and their children and their children's children! But while they found jobs, they still found inequality and plenty of racism.

So it is no accident that a son of the south, Martin Luther King Jr., continued that movement; fighting to dismantle the government institutionalized systemic racism that is still experienced by Black communities. That, my friends, is the power of a Movement!

And so today we honor the men and women who, through their courage and belief in themselves and their God, defied the naysayers and changed the course of their own lives and those of many who sit here today! I look forward to hearing our young people as they retell the stories of the Great Migration and learning about its impact on them and their families.

*Carol Rizzo*

Mayor, Neptune Township



## Message From Superintendent of Neptune Township Schools

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to Neptune Township Black History Month celebration. As Superintendent, I very much appreciate the hard work of the Black History Month Committee as well as the contributions of all involved. Their commitment to the continuation of this important community event is to be commended.

We as the Neptune Township School District understand the value of this annual event for our students, their families, and community. Coming together in the spirit of education and celebration sends a powerful message of unity and support to all. This year's theme of "Black Migrations" is a celebration of the rich history of our community members and the uniqueness of the stories of our citizens.

Special events such as this Black History Month celebration, where members of the school community and community at large are present and have participated in designing and planning, serve as models for other communities. It is with great pride that I also invite you to visit our schools and the wonderful events that occur within our schools.

I look forward to this year's event and to sharing in the celebrations of our community.

Again, welcome and congratulations.

Best regards,

*Tami R. Crader*, Ed.D.  
Superintendent, Neptune Township Schools



# **Thank You for your continued support of Neptune's 15th Annual Black History Celebration**

## **Neptune Township Committee**

Mayor, Carol Rizzo; Deputy Mayor Robert Lane, Jr.

Committeemen: Dr. Michael Brantley, Kevin McMillan, Nicholas Williams

## **Neptune Township Public Schools**

### **Board of Education**

President, Dorothea Fernandez; Vice President, Laura Granelli

Members: Brady Connaughton, Nicole Green, Jerome M. Hubbard

Jason A. Jones, Mark A. Matson, Michelle Allen Moss

Donna L. Puryear, Neptune City Representative, Antonio Lopez

Superintendent, Dr. Tami Crader

## **A Very Special Thank You to the Planning Committee**

Chairperson — Dianna Harris

Township Liaison — Kevin McMillan

Brenda Chisum

Kareen Delice-Kircher

Yvonne Earley-Proute

Bridget James

Karen Jefferson

Teretha Jones

Roberta Lerner

Mary S. Scott

Maureen Shaffer

Wanda Smith

Carla Vanzant

To the Community, Teachers, Staff & Students  
of Neptune Public Schools... Thank You For Your Support!

## **“Lift Every Voice and Sing”**

### **The Negro National Anthem**

By: James Weldon Johnson, J. Rosamond Johnson

Lift every voice and sing til earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise high as the listening skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,  
Let us march on til victory is won.

Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod,  
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;  
Yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet  
Come to the place for which our people sighed?  
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered;  
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,  
Out from the gloomy past, til now we stand at last  
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,  
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou who hast, by Thy might, led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,  
Lest our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand, may we forever stand,  
True to our God, true to our native land.



## Carter G. Woodson Father of Black History Month

*In 1984 the U.S. Postal Service issued the Carter G. Woodson commemorative stamp*

Born December 19, 1875 in New Canton, Virginia, Carter Godwin Woodson was the oldest of nine children of former slaves James and Anne Eliza (Riddle) Woodson. Carter worked diligently in coal mines to help his family and was not able to attend formal school until he was 17 years old.

Upon completing his high school education in a year and one-half, he continued his education receiving degrees from Berea College, University of Chicago, and Harvard University. Woodson was the second African American to earn a doctoral degree from Harvard (W.E.B. DuBois was the first).

Dr. Woodson taught in high schools, colleges and universities. During his lifetime, he was the most prolific editor and author of Negro history. An acclaimed American historian, Woodson's books remain in publication today; most noted among the titles are *The Miseducation of the Negro*, and *The History of the Negro Church*.

In 1915 Dr. Woodson was a co-founder of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. This was a time when it was widely held that Black people had no history of significance and had made no noteworthy contributions to the world. The Association focused on historical research, the collection of documents on Negro history, and publication of books about Negro history and culture.

The Association published *The Journal of Negro History*, *The Negro History Bulletin*, and established the Associated Publishers to publish books on the history and culture of people of African descent.



# Why We Celebrate Black History Month

February marks the beginning of Black History Month. It is an event that is celebrated in the United States and was founded in 1926 by an African-American historian, name Carter G. Woodson. He first founded it as Negro History Week but in 1976 it was expanded to a month long celebration.

This month also marks several historical events that happened in February and impacted the lives of African-Americans.

**On February 23, 1868**, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, commonly called the NAACP, was founded by W.E.B. DuBois.

**On February 3, 1870**, Blacks were given the right to vote through the Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

**On February 1, 1960**, in Greensboro NC, college students would have a sit-in at a Woolworth lunch counter that would turn into a civil rights milestone.

The meaning of Black History Month has far exceeded the hopes of Carter G. Woodson. It not only highlights the accomplishments of African-Americans in American History. It also helps people remember the racial inequality which effect more than just Blacks. This month helps everyone see the importance of human rights for all people and is the reason why Black History Month should always be celebrated.



**The Great Migration** was the mass movement of about five million southern Blacks to the north and west between 1915 and 1960. During the initial wave the majority of migrants moved to major northern cities such as Chicago, Illinois, Detroit, Michigan, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and New York, New York. By World War II the migrants continued to move North but many of them headed west to Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco, California, Portland, Oregon, and Seattle, Washington. The first large movement of Blacks occurred during World War I, when 454,000 Black southerners moved north. In the 1920s, another 800,000 blacks left the south, followed by 398,000 Blacks in the 1930s. Between 1940 and 1960 over 3,348,000 Blacks left the south for northern and western cities.

The economic motivations for migration were a combination of the desire to escape oppressive economic conditions in the south and the promise of greater prosperity in the north. Since their Emancipation from slavery, southern rural Blacks had suffered in a plantation economy that offered little chance of advancement. While a few Blacks were lucky enough to purchase land, most were sharecroppers, tenant farmers, or farm laborers, barely subsiding from year to year. When World War I created a huge demand for workers in northern factories, many southern Blacks took this opportunity to leave the oppressive economic conditions in the south.

The northern demand for workers was a result of the loss of 5 million men who left to serve in the armed forces, as well as the restriction of foreign immigration. Some sectors of the economy were so desperate for workers at this time that they would pay for Blacks to migrate north. The Pennsylvania Railroad needed workers so badly that it paid the travel expenses of 12,000 blacks. The Illinois Central Railroad, along with many steel mills, factories, and tanneries, similarly provided free railroad passes for Blacks. World War I was the first time since Emancipation that black labor was in demand outside of the agricultural south, and the economic promise was enough for many Blacks to overcome substantial challenges to migrate.

In addition to migrating for job opportunities, Blacks also moved north in order to escape the oppressive conditions of the south. Some of the main social factors for migration included lynching, an unfair legal system, inequality in education, and denial of suffrage.

The great migration, one of the largest internal migrations in the history of the United States, changed forever the urban North, the rural South, African America and in many respects, the entire nation.

**Sources:**

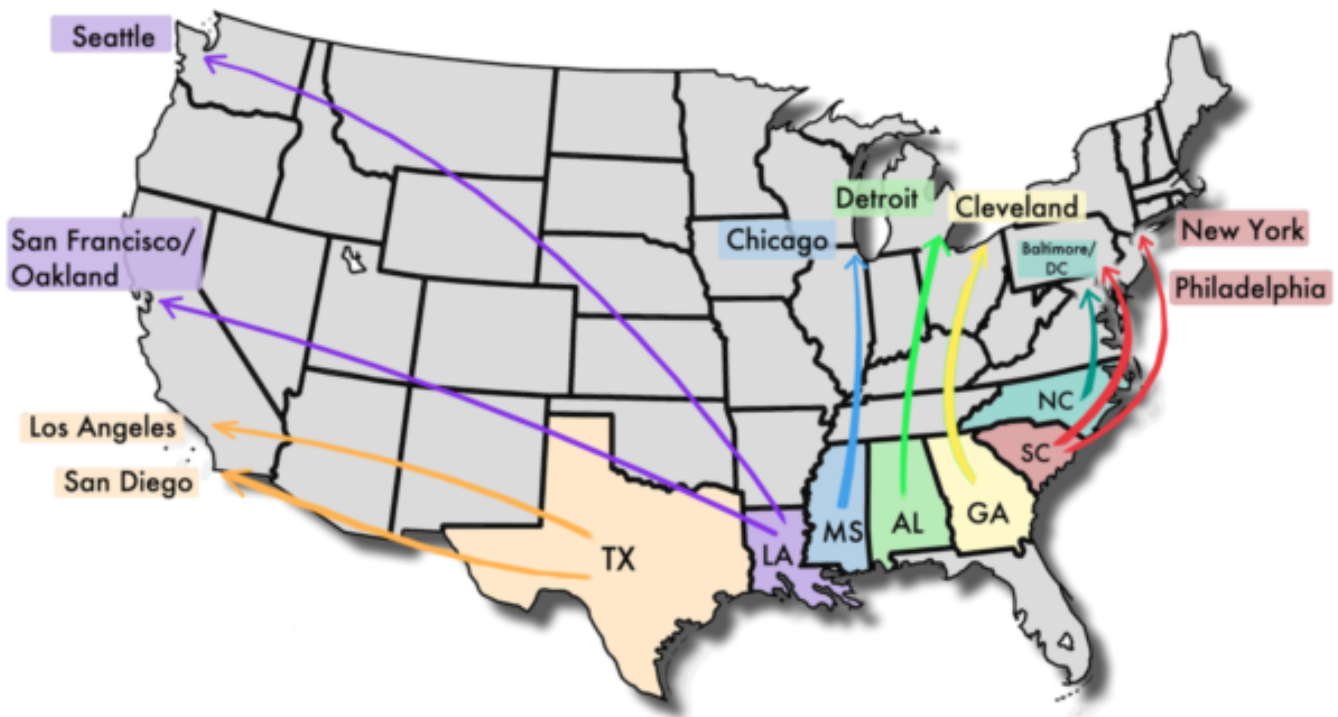
James M. Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Florette Henri, *Black Migration: Movement North, 1900-1920* (Garden City: Anchor Press, 1975); Carol Marks, *Farewell—We're Good and Gone: The Great Migration* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989); Alferdteen Harrison, *Black Exodus: The Great Migration from the American South* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1991); The African-American Mosaic, A Library of Congress Resource Guide for the Study of Black History and Culture. <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/afam011.html>

**Contributor:**

Christensen, Stephanie  
*University of Washington, Seattle*

# The Geography of the Great Migration

The Migration of African Americans from the American South (1910-1970)



## Selected Bibliography on Black Migration

- Malaika Adero, *Up South, Stories, Studies, and Letters of African American Migrations*
- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie *Americanah* (novel)
- Ira Berlin, *The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations*
- James De Medeiros, *The Migration North* (children's book)
- Elosie Greenfield, *The Great Migration, Journey to the North* (children's book)
- Fuller, *The Third Migration, African Americans in Paris*
- Jacob Lawrence, *The Great Migration, An American Story, Paintings by Jacob Lawrence*
- Nicholas Lemann, *The Promised Land, The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America*
- Ayana Mathis, *The Twelve Tribes of Hattie* (novel)
- Catherine Shephard, *Misplaced & Other Stories: New Short Fiction from African Kids*
- Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns*
- Carter G. Woodson, *A Century of Black Migration*

## Jim Crow Laws

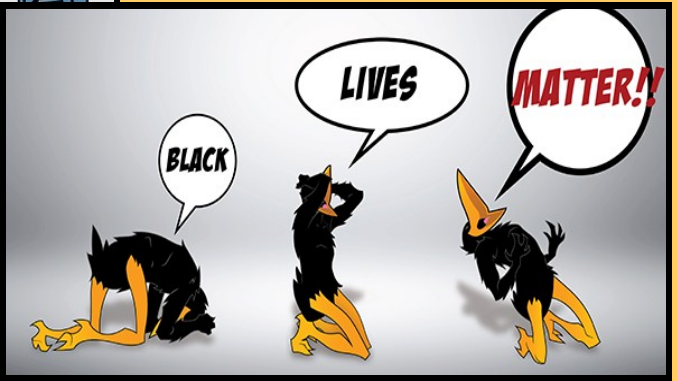
Jim Crow Laws (also called Black Codes) is a commonly used term for racial segregation laws established after the end of the Civil War (1861-1865). The War's end brought about passage of the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the U.S. Constitution that abolished slavery; defined citizenship as anyone born or naturalized in the U.S. and granting every citizen due process and equal protection under the law; and declared voting could not be denied because of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. (Women were not granted the right to vote until 1920 upon the enactment of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment).

Jim Crow was a slave character created by a white comic, Thomas Dartmouth Rice, who performed in black face. The "Jim Crow" songs, dances and jokes were demeaning depictions of black slaves as ugly and stupid because of their race, disregarding the cruelty and inhumanity of the slave system that kept black people oppressed and in bondage for nearly 400 years. Jim Crow became a term used to denote racial segregation laws and customs.

Racial segregation laws were enacted by local and state governments especially in the southern states; however, all the states including New Jersey were engaged in racial segregation through custom and practice. Through these segregation laws and practices every aspect of African American lives were restricted including where to work, live, pray, shop, eat, play, seek medical care, go to school, and who to socialize with and marry.

Segregation signs designating services for "colored" and "whites only" were commonplace. The U.S. Supreme Court confirmed racial segregation lawful in the Plessy vs Ferguson case of 1896 stating that "separate but equal" facilities did not violate the 14<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment. In reality, facilities for African Americans were substandard and not equal. Despite this setback, African Americans continued their fight for equality while also establishing their own businesses, schools, churches, organizations, medical and recreational facilities to help uplift their living conditions.

The first major blow to end segregation laws was the 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education case in which the U.S. Supreme court ruled that separate educational facilities were inherently unequal. Other court rulings continued to strike down segregation laws. The end of the Jim Crow era ended in the 1960s with passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion and sex; the 1965 Voting Rights Act; and 1968 Fair Housing Act.



## Jacob Lawrence — Artist



**Jacob Lawrence** was one of the most important artists of the 20th century, widely renowned for his modernist depictions of everyday life as well as epic narratives of African American history and historical figures.

Born in 1917 in Atlantic City, New Jersey, Lawrence moved with his family to Harlem in 1930, where he came into contact with some of the greatest artistic and intellectual minds of his generation. In the previous decade, Harlem had experienced the remarkably creative period known as the Harlem Renaissance, and the neighborhood was still the focal point of African-American culture. Before he was twenty years old, Lawrence had developed a powerful, concise style that expressed all of the vibrancy and pathos of the neighborhood and its occupants.

Lawrence became a nationally known figure virtually overnight when his *The Migration Series* was shown at New York's Downtown Gallery in 1941. The twenty-four year old artist became the first African-American to be represented by a New York gallery. *Fortune* magazine published a lengthy article on the series that reproduced twenty-six of series' sixty panels, and the entire series was purchased jointly by the Museum of Modern Art and the Phillips Collection.

Lawrence was drafted into the Coast Guard during World War II and was assigned duty as a combat artist. Following his discharge, he returned to Harlem and resumed painting vignettes of neighborhood life. He was invited to teach at Black Mountain College in 1946, the first of many teaching posts he would take over the years. Lawrence received a Guggenheim Foundation grant to paint the *War series* in 1946 and 1947. Also in 1947 *Fortune Magazine* commissioned him to do ten paintings examining postwar conditions in the American south. His next major series was *Struggle: From the History of the American People*, produced in 1955-56.

During the 1950s and 60s, Lawrence's work was characterized by stylistic experimentation and everyday imagery. In the late 1960s, he returned to a more straightforward style and optimistic outlook. In 1971, Lawrence was offered a permanent position teaching art at the University of Washington, and he and his wife, artist Gwendolyn Knight, moved to Seattle. Thematically, he concentrated on the topic of Builders. Within the wide field of development offered by the Builders subject, Lawrence underscored a life-long vision of man's labor and struggle as his major theme.

Major traveling exhibitions of Lawrence's work have been presented in museums across the country, including *Jacob Lawrence: American Painter*, organized by the Seattle Museum of Art; *Jacob Lawrence: The Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman Series of 1938-40*, organized by the Hampton University Museum in Virginia; and *Jacob Lawrence's The Migration Series*, organized jointly by the Phillips Collection in Washington, DC and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. A major retrospective exhibition *Over the Line: The Art and Life of Jacob Lawrence* originated in 2001 at the Phillips Collection in Washington, DC and traveled to the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Detroit Institute of Arts, the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, GA, the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, Texas, and the Seattle Art Museum.

A definitive two-volume catalogue raisonné and examination of Lawrence's life and work, *Over the Line: The Art and Life of Jacob Lawrence*, was published in the fall of 2000 by the University of Washington Press.

<http://www.dcmooregallery.com/artists/jacob-lawrence>



Paintings from  
The Migration Series



THANK YOU



Since 1914 Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity has supported initiatives in education. It is our sincere belief that education is the key cog in the wheel of success. It is with great pleasure that we have sponsored scholarships to deserving students in the Neptune Township School District over the past few years. This is something we deem as very important as we develop the pipeline of new leadership for the future.

We would like to thank the Neptune Township Black History Month Committee, the Neptune Township School District as well as Neptune Township for all of your support in making this event a success.

As we celebrate Black Migrations In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century let us not forget that we stand on the shoulders of the ancestors and community leaders that have come before us. We are available to the Neptune Community as mentors, for career days and literacy programs.

For over 100 years we still remain true to our motto, "Culture for Service and Service for Humanity". Lastly Congratulations to the 2019 Essay Contest Winners.



Respectfully Submitted  
Kevin McMillan  
Social Action Chairperson





# Students' Family Migration Essay Contest





Do you know how blessed you are? Well, I sure do! When I tell people that I'm culturally blessed because my parents are from the Caribbean, they are often taken back saying, really? After they are reassured that I'm on the up and up, the first question asked is why did they leave such a beautiful place to come to the United States as if the United States was this horrible place. Ultimately, I knew they were referring to the beautiful weather, beaches, palm trees, food and the list goes on. Well, just in case you were also wondering, I'll share some insight on the migration of my parents to Neptune, NJ and why their parents brought them to the United States.

Although they loved their respective homes, they were seeking better education opportunities for their children which they felt were not available in their respective Caribbean islands. It was their love for us that inspired our parents to migrate to the US. My grandmother from my dad's side, migrated to the United States in 1982 from the Island of Montserrat; an island in the Caribbean. She lived in the Bronx for two years before moving to Highland Park, New Jersey. You can trace my dad's roots back to Ireland, France, England and Africa because in 1632 Irishmen first settled in Montserrat but later invited their ally, France to claim it in 1666. It was during this time that slaves were transported to the island which led to the forming of plantations. The slaves revolted in 1768 but was not successful. St. Patrick's Day is one of the biggest holidays in Montserrat because it celebrates the slaves' revolt. In 1782 during the American Revolutionary War France captured Montserrat but later returned it to Great Britain. My dad still tells me stories of picking cotton and not knowing the significance of it until he came to the United States. His memories of Montserrat were always that of family, food, music and dancing. Every New Year's they would slay a pig to make various meals but one of their most popular dishes is Goat Water, which is a soup-based meal made with goat meat. The main desserts are Rum Cake and Carrot Cake which cannot be duplicated when my grandmother makes it because it tastes that good. The main language spoken is English but with a soft version of Patwa.

On the other hand, my grandparents on my mom's side, both migrated to the United States from Haiti in 1984 and settled in Neptune, New Jersey. I guess it was



meant for us to be back here where my mom grew up and went to school. You can trace my mom's roots back to the first inhabitants of Haiti which were the Taino people. Spain claim the island in 1492 and settlements were created. When France took the western portion of the island, african slaves were brought in and plantations were created. During the French Revolution (1789-1799) the slaves had a successful revolt and became the first independent nation of Latin America and the Caribbean on January 1, 1804. This is why New Year's day is so big for Haitians; they are celebrating their independence as well. My mom makes a special dish every new year, Soup Joumou which is in recognition of their independence. There are several dishes that are traditions in our home, Du Ris ak Sos Pwa avec Poul (rice with bean sauce and chicken), Bouillon (vegetable soup), Djon Djon (mushroom rice), Groit (fried pork), Haitian Pate (haitian patty made with various meats) and the list goes on. My mom's traditional Haitian Cake is usually served for dessert.

Although both sides of my grandparents migrated to the United States around the same time it was by divine nature that my parents met. The reason and motivation for the migration with all of my grandparents was solely to provide a better education for their children which brings me to my opening statement and why I believe both my sister and I are blessed to have the parents we do. Our parents' had similar foundations spiritually and mentally. They met in college and after graduating got married and moved to Edison, then Highland Park before eventually moving back to Neptune in 2007 where most of my mom's family resides.

In conclusion, the sacrifice and fundamental reasons for the migration has been made clear to us. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." This quote, from the New King James Bible (Proverbs 22:6), has stuck with my parents, which is why they have always invested heavily in my sister and I. So I'm confident in saying their migration paved the way for us to be influenced and molded into the young man and young lady we are today. My parents often said love is an action word, and and their migration story is a perfect depiction of love.



**Kadidja Braxton**  
Hope Academy Charter School  
WINNER

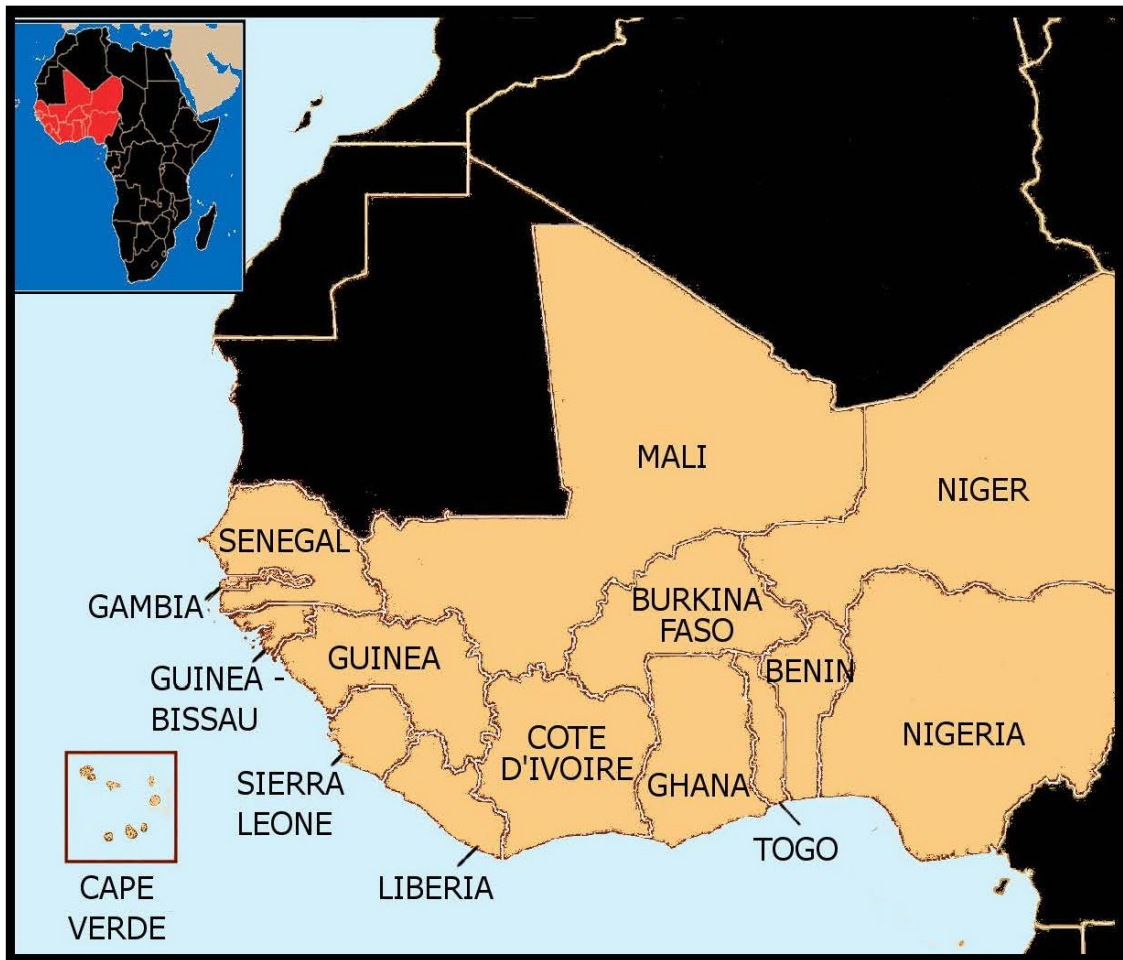
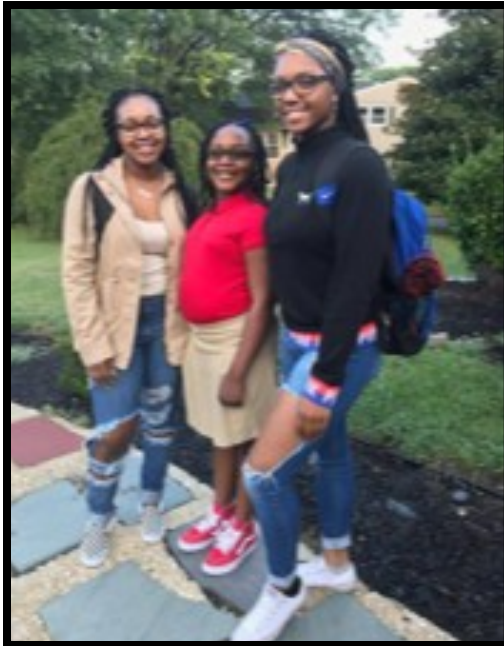
In this essay I will be telling you about how my mom migrated here from West Africa.

My mom, Adja “Jazzy” Fofana Braxton is from West Africa, Ivory Coast (Côte D’Ivoire). She came to the United States when she was 16 years old, and her first stop was New York City, where she lived with her family and friends. She wanted to move to the United States to have a better life, get married, buy a house and start a business.

After working in New York as a hair braider, she married my father Don Braxton, and moved to Asbury Park, New Jersey in 1999 with my two sisters. She continued to work at home braiding hair before opening her business, Jazzy’s Hair Braiding in Asbury Park, NJ in 2002. When she found out she was pregnant with me, my parents realized they needed a bigger home and moved to Neptune, New Jersey.

The traditions my mom brought with her from West Africa are African dishes such as fufu, okra soup, and peanut butter stew. She also brought dashikis, an African clothing style and print that could also be made into dresses. She continues to speak Mandinka, West Africa’s native language.

The last time my mom visited Africa was 4 years ago with her 3 children. While raising her daughters and running her business, my mom continues to send things back to her village and family in West Africa such as clothes, books, and toys.



**Dionne Bowers-Nicks**  
**Red Bank Catholic High School**  
**WINNER**



My grandfather is 88 and has dementia. He is my favorite person. He can be annoying because he repeats the same stories over and over, but now I realize that he has drilled into my brain the history of our family. My grandfather is James Edward Bowers. He was born and raised in Tennessee in Oakland which is a small town outside of Memphis. He had 11 siblings, 9 brothers and 2 sisters total. Only one is a full blood sibling which is Dorothy. She is 97 and still alive and living in Tennessee. Amazingly enough, he and Dorothy have the exact same birthday which is December 31, nine years apart.

When my Grandpop was seven or eight, he used to sit on the porch and watch his grandmother smoke a pipe and put snuff in the pocket of her bottom lip. He said she was a very petite Chickasaw Indian. He must have really loved her because he talks about her all the time. He showed me a picture of his father who is named Laddie. Laddie doesn't look like he's black. He looks like he's from another country but I don't know. His father wasn't around long. I think he died early.

My Grandpop's mother was named Ophelia. She was married 3 times. She always lived in Tennessee. So Grandpop has so many brothers and sisters because some are half siblings and some are step siblings, but only one is full blood and that is Dorothy. Dorothy and all of my dad's siblings are tall, like 5'10" to 6'2". That explains why I am tall.

When my Grandpop was eleven, he was left alone on the farm. He said everyone went off to make money. His Mom was a teacher somewhere. The other brothers and cousins that were men, joined the military or moved to Memphis to shine shoes and do whatever they could to work. My Grandpop was left alone on the farm to raise himself for a while. He learned how to cook basic meals. He ate a lot of cornbread with buttermilk. He tells us a lot of stories about how hard life was for black people. There were some really tough times that my Grandpop will never let go of.

Eventually he went to Memphis and lied about his age to get hired. He was always tall for his age so he got away with it. He got a job at the bus station carrying people's luggage to the bus and they'd tip him. He did this for a long time. He made about ten dollars a week he said which he saved up and kept in a bus station locker. When he saved up a lot, he would give the money to his mother.

One day the police came and they were checking lockers. They came across my Grandpop's money and they were looking for him to confront him about it. He knew he was about to be in big trouble because black people weren't supposed to have anything and they found the amount of money he saved up to be suspicious. So he hid. When he left there he needed to eat and live so he decided to join the army.

My Grandpop was in the army for 20 years. He fought in the Korean War and the Vietnam War. He was stationed all over, like Germany, Texas, Arizona, and New Jersey. He met Grandma in New Jersey. Grandma is half Cherokee Indian and half black. Her name is Elizabeth. She lived in Durham, North Carolina most of her life before she moved to New Jersey where she met and married Grandpop. Then they moved to all the other places while he was in the army. My Grandma's mother was married 3 times just like Grandpa's mother. My Grandma's father, the Cherokee Indian didn't stick around. He was abusive and drank a lot. He left when my grandmother was 3 years old.

They had two kids. One is my mother, Michele. The other is my uncle Michael who lives in Detroit now. My Mom and I live back here in Neptune in this same town where my Grandparents met. We even live on the same street that my Mom and brother grew up on. My Grandparents also live on this street to this day.

My father lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico. His name is Ron. My father's side of the family is super large. They probably make up the 2% of the blacks that live in New Mexico. There are not a lot of black people there. His father was in the Airforce. We called him Pop-pop. He is no longer alive. My Granny is still living in the same house that she raised her 5 children in. They all still live in New Mexico too. We have really big get-togethers when I visit there on holidays. My father was married before so I have 2 sisters and one brother that are all older than me. My oldest sister lives in Atlanta, Georgia. My other siblings still live in Albuquerque.

Well , I will one day see where I will end up on this planet and who I will marry to continue this story.

# Candace Howe

*Neptune Middle School - Honorable Mention*

## Poem — Marriage is Made in Heaven But Maintained On Earth

We wanted a better life  
Where I came from polices officers beat up citizens and it was okay  
My mom wanted a new life for my siblings and I  
So we moved to the USA

Haiti will always be my home  
But America is where my family lies  
We began a new life  
But I continue to celebrate my heritage ties

Went to Neptune Middle and High School  
Not born...just raised  
Got bullied for how I talked  
Was unhappy to move here, I wanted to leave for days

Life passed and I moved on to college  
Kean college; Cougars forever  
I not only found myself but the love of my life  
And we are now still together

The first time we met he said we were going to get married  
I thought he was crazy  
He was crazy  
But little did I know I would fall for him hazily

Got engaged on New Years Eve  
It came as such a surprise  
I complained all the way there about marriage  
Not knowing what my future lies

We eloped in 1998  
It followed the plan I made for my future accordingly  
I later threw it out the window  
And allowed my new and bright life to guide me

Had a baby boy at 27  
Had a baby girl at 30  
Moved back to where my roots grew  
Happy as can be



Neptune is where we now stand  
And we go by our wedding vows everyday  
Marriage is made in heaven but maintained on Earth  
Marriage is made in heaven but maintained on Earth  
And we go by our wedding vows everyday  
Neptune is where we now stand

And where my children shall grow up too  
Moved back to where my wife grew up  
Had a girl at 32  
Had a boy at 29

Where I appreciate my life in glory  
It built the building blocks that lead me here  
Montserrat was the beginning of this story  
I continue to celebrate my roots

That soon a wedding dress she will wear  
But little did she know  
She complained all the way there  
I took her to church on New Years Eve

But fate did the rest  
She looked at me like I was crazy  
So I walked up and confessed  
I knew she was the one

That party was where I met my wife  
Kean college; Cougars forever  
Where I met the love of my life  
Continued to be like this until college

So began my rebellious ways  
But all I was missing was my fathers love  
And I loved it all the way  
Went to Highland Park High School

For saying fecked instead of flecked  
I didn't know I'd be bullied  
I didn't know what to expect  
It was all so new

Where I get rewarded for all my work  
So moved to the United States  
Tired of getting hurt  
Tired of dropping feces in the ground

## **Milania Coleman-Bray**

*Neptune Middle School - Honorable Mention*

Mary Salista and Sampson Coleman met in Jacksonville, Florida. They are my great grandparents. Mary's parent's did not want her to date Sampson. Mostly because they are different nationalities. Sampson are Cuban African American and as for Mary, she was Irish American.

They traveled to New Jersey, despite their differences. Where they built a home, married, and went on to have thirteen children. Their youngest child was my grandmother. After high school my grandmother got married to my grandfather. They moved to Neptune in the New Jersey Shore. They had six children.

There second born child [is] my mother. She went to college and graduated. She then met my father. They gave birth to two twins, one boy, the other a girl. That girl so happens to be me, Milania Coleman-Bray.

# Christian Gerencser

## *Neptune Middle School - Honorable Mention*

Cities fell, families collapsed, and the army was corrupted. The Hungarian country was falling and my grandfather had to join the fight before it was too late. My Grandfather Joseph James Gerencser was a civil rights fighter in Hungary and a soon to be immigrant to the United States. It was 1956 and my grandfather had been living in a world with Soviet imposed policies. The Hungarian people couldn't take it anymore, there was constant bombings and constant deaths. My grandfather lived in such a corrupted world that as a child he found a nuke, picked it up and took it to his father, who obviously panicked and made him put it back in the hole. Many of my grandfather's friends have died and he had enough.

My great grandfather was taken by the enemy and put into a labor camp to do harsh work. People wanted to fight back, the revolt spread quickly across Hungary, and the government collapsed. Thousands organized into militias, battling the ÁVH and Soviet troops. "Pro-Soviet communists and ÁVH members were often executed or imprisoned, and former political prisoners were released and armed." "On November 4th, a large Soviet force invaded Budapest (the capital of Hungary) and other major places along the border. Over 3,000 Hungarians died fighting for their land and only a mere 800 Soviets. After the battle over 200,000 Hungarians fled the country in search of a better life and my grandfather was one of them.

My grandfather had to leave, he was a main target by the Soviets after constructing many plans of revolts against them. He gave his family no goodbye, and set out to get past the border. At only 17 years of age he was out on his own to play a role in a new life. It was night, roughly 10 and my grandfather put on all black and set out for the border. It took him 2 hours on foot, walking over big hills, and rough terrain. Once he got to the border he was expecting a fight, a fight for freedom, but that's not what he got. The Soviet soldiers were secretly against their own people, and knew what they were doing was wrong. They let my grandfather through the walls without even a drop of a pin's thought.

My grandfather was out of Hungary and out to a new land, America. It took him 8 days to get to America from his destination, and after he reached America it wasn't much easier. He had to go to Ellis Island. Here he would create a new life. This he did, he became an American citizen. His name will forever be carved in Ellis Island.



## **Emily Fleming**

*Neptune Middle School - Honorable Mention*

### **Shamrocks**

Look out my window  
Shamrocks fading  
look to my past  
Shamrocks fading  
Look at my journey  
Shamrocks fading  
out on my own  
Shamrocks fading  
having a new future

Shamrocks are gone  
out of my window  
I see my new home  
America

*Although Black History Month's focus celebrates people of African descent, we want to recognize essays submitted by Emily Fleming and Chris Gerenscer understanding that we all have family migration stories that define who we are as Americans.*

# Family Migration Stories



Union Terminal  
Colored Waiting Room



Library of Congress

**2019 Neptune Township Black History Month  
Family Migration Essay**



Elorie Brown, the mother Bishop Paul L. Brown, migrated to the United States of America through the assistance of an international employment agency in 1972. The agency helped relocate foreigners to the United States by finding them a job and a place to live. She was thirty years old, the mother of five, and

living in poverty in her native island of Jamaica. All she had was a dream for a better life for her and her five children.

She was able to cover the full payment for the program using the cash settlement she received from a bus accident (a miracle according to her) in which she was not seriously injured. She paid for her ticket to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and left Jamaica with nothing but hope and a dream.

When she finally made it to America, she had left her five children, Paul, Hopeton, Audrey, Joy, and Wayne with the determination to eventually bring them to America to join her. Elorie continued working toward her dream. She worked seven days a week to cause this to happen. During the week, she worked as a caregiver for several families tending to young children and caring for the elderly. Then, on weekends, she worked in the housekeeping department at The University of Pennsylvania Hospital.

During the first couple years in America, her income was such that it would take a while before she would save sufficient funds to sponsor her five children. She contacted her brother Emsley, who was living in New York to explore the option of relocating to New York where she believed that she could make more money. Her employer dissuaded her from moving to New York. They contacted the agency and switched her to a much higher paying assignment. The salary increase allowed Elorie to increase her savings significantly, which sped up the sponsorship of her children. In 1977, Paul joined Elorie in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and all of his remaining siblings in the following two years.

2019 Neptune Township  
Family Migration Essay  
Submitted by Bishop Paul Brown

Elorie only made it through the fifth grade in Jamaica but made it a priority that all of her children would obtain a good education. Paul who is the recipient of the 2018 Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award and was consecrated a Bishop in 2017, graduated from Drexel University with a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Electrical Engineering in 1982; Hopeton graduated from Drexel with a Bachelor's in Chemical Engineering; Audrey left Drexel University in her senior year to join the United States Army and later graduated from college with a Bachelor's degree in the field of healthcare; Joy graduated with a Bachelor's degree from Drexel University with an Information Technology (IT) degree; and Wayne, after studying at Case Western Reserve University graduated from Temple University and also earned a masters degree in Theology from Palmer Theological Seminary. Elorie instilled in her children that education was a nonnegotiable.



Bishop Brown, the senior pastor of the First Pentecostal Church, Neptune, who has retired from Telcordia, formally known as Bell Laboratories after thirty years of service. has also made education one of the nonnegotiables in his household. He pastors full-time at the First Pentecostal Church, Neptune and he is a dedicated community servant. He currently serves on the Neptune Township Planning Board as Vice Chairperson and partners with Ms. Diana Harris and the Midtown Urban Renaissance Corporation. He and Mrs. Brown have three children; Taphenese graduated from Brookdale Community College with an AA degree, Rowan University with a Bachelors of Arts degree and from Grand Canyon University with a Master's degree. She currently teaches third grade in the Neptune School System; Tashelle graduated with a Bachelor's and a Master's from Kean University and she currently works in the Franklin School System as a Behaviorist; Terrell graduated with a Bachelor's degree from Kean University with a degree in Criminal Justice. He works in the Neptune Township Police Department as a SLEO II Officer, with the dream of becoming a police officer in the near future.

2019 Neptune Township  
Family Migration Essay  
Submitted by Bishop Paul Brown

2019 Neptune Township  
Black History Month  
Family Migration Essay



Sand Hill Indians of Monmouth were comprised of local Lenape Indians and Cherokee Indians who migrated to New Jersey from Georgia in the late 18th century. Property records, deeds, tax records, military records, marriage, death and birth records give an account of the Revey and Richardson families that acquired the name Sand Hill Indians when they purchased fifteen acres of land west of Asbury Park, New Jersey in 1877, now know as Neptune Township.

The Richardsons are recorded buying property in the 1820s. Records show over a dozen marriages between the two families during the 1800s in the Monmouth County area. The Sand Hill Indians were builders, carpenters, masons, farmers and contracted to construct many houses, schools, churches, barns and fences that were needed in growing shore towns of Neptune, Eatontown, Long Branch, Tinton Falls, Asbury Park and Ocean Grove including the Asbury Park boardwalk according to the 1855 account of Isaac Richardson. The families became prosperous and owned over a hundred acres in Tinton Falls and Neptune.

They kept their traditional way of living by building a community where several generations lived together. As new families formed, land was divided, houses built and another generation learned the ways of the past from grandparents and kin. Barns, corn cribs, gardens, water from springs were shared by the entire family. The family village was supported by the whole community.

Our Sand Hill Indian grandparents were part-time farmers in the early 1900s, who kept farm animals, chickens, cows, hogs, horses, a corn crib, gardens and were self-sufficient living in small communities where everyone nearby was related to



the Sand Hill community. The Sand Hill Indian women became skilled seamstresses including beading clothing and moccasins and were self-employed and owned their homes and properties. They also baked goods which were sold locally. Their traditions were mainly family and all things related to family survival. They had to make a new home here in NJ and had no plans to return to Cherokee lands in the south.

In the summers I attended gatherings called pow-wows, a weekend of cooking, eating, smoking the peace pipe and having family come from near and far to celebrate our heritage. The Sand Hill Indians today meet twice a year to inform and teach the next generation about our heritage and family history. Handmade leather clothing, moccasins, head gear, a piece pipe, turkey fan and beaded items are displayed during these events.

Our traditions trace back to our Cherokee roots where the tribes lived in a village setting surrounded by gardens and fields of corn, squash and beans. They kept community storehouses for the survival of the entire village and had a community space for religious gatherings and special events. They piped water from two nearby springs so that each home was supplied with fresh water (as kids we used to catch tadpoles and play during the pow wows). They had their own fire wagon located in their own fire company barn.

We had our own Sand Hill Indian Marching Band and continue to participate in local parades. Back in the day many of them became skilled musicians and were able to earn livings playing in resort hotels and with traveling bands.

Knowing one's roots makes history more understandable. Knowing where and when your ancestors lived helps you see the economic impact of events on their lives. It is important to share our ancestor's traditional ways with our Sand Hill Indian descendants and those who are interested in Native American culture. In the early 1960's the corner of Springwood Avenue (now known as Lake Avenue) and Springdale Avenue (now known as Neptune Boulevard) was named Richardson Heights due to the positive impact my ancestors made in this community.

2019 Neptune Township  
Family Migration Essay  
Submitted by Sharon Coleman Davis

# Daniel & Marion Harris Family Migration Story

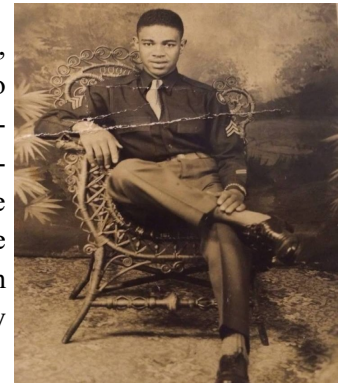
As noted by Dianna Harris and Written by Rachel Harris Hughes (Niece)

Washington DC during the reconstruction era was a time of immense opportunity for Black Americans. Recently emancipated African Americans and their children migrated north in search of what they could only hope was the American dream. Albert Harris was one of those hopefuls. He migrated from Bald Eagle, Virginia to Washington DC and found work building the Tidal Basin. By 1880 he had married Sarah Brown and owned a home, which was a rare feat for an African American so soon after the Emancipation. Albert and Sarah had three children, Leroy, born around 1898; Daniel, born 1900, and Benjamin who was born in 1902 but died soon thereafter due to pneumonia.

Tragedy struck once more when Albert was killed in an accident while working on the Tidal Basin. He left behind Sarah and their two surviving sons. Being a widow and a homeowner, Sarah was quite popular among potential suitors. She remarried but her new husband stipulated that her children through Alfred be put into foster care. Daniel and Leroy were sent back to Bald Eagle, VA to live with a foster family and help work the fields.

While in Virginia, Daniel met Pauline Turner. At the age of 16, Daniel left his foster family and migrated with Pauline to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where Pauline gave birth to Daniel Alonzo Harris, Jr. on May 11, 1924. Unfortunately, the family was divided once more when Pauline and Daniel Sr. divorced and much like his father before him, Daniel Jr. was sent to live with his maternal grandmother, Martha Turner, a sharecropper in Virginia. He attended grade school and finished three years of high school when he decided to enlist in the military.

Determined to serve our country in World War II, but not yet old enough to enlist, Daniel, claimed to be born in 1923 so that he would be considered old enough to serve. He served as a driver for General George Patton. Daniel was wounded in action and was honorably discharged in 1945. He received a Purple Heart for his service. Upon discharge from the service, Daniel returned to Philadelphia where he reconnected with his father and stepmother. He soon moved to Neptune, NJ where he purchased a two-family home at 1210 Heck Avenue through the GI Bill. It was in Neptune, that he would meet his future wife, Marion Harris who had only recently relocated to the area.



Nearly a century after the emancipation, although sharecroppers were considered free people, they were still beholden to the owners of the land on which they worked. In the mid-1940s, after World War II, a sharecropper named Turner Hill left his Scotland Neck, NC farm under the cover of night so as to not alert the owner of the land that he worked on that his family was leaving. He boarded a train with his oldest sons, leaving behind his wife Maude Applewhite Hill, and their youngest daughter Marion. Once settled in Matawan, NJ, Turner sent for Maude and Marion.

Marion Harris grew up as a sharecropper in Scotland Neck, NC. She attended grade school and completed 3 years of high school. She worked the fields, sang, and played piano in the church choir. After the family migrated to New Jersey, Marion held tightly to her love of song. She continued to sing and play piano. She traveled to New York for singing lessons, made a demo recording, and sang background with Count Basie in Red Bank, NJ.



Marion and Daniel Jr. met at the American Legion Post 266 on Drummond Avenue in Neptune, NJ. They married on October 2, 1949 at Marion's parents home in Matawan, NJ. They had four children, twins Daniel and Dianna, Velda, and the youngest child Timothy. Together Daniel and Marion built a family rooted in the values and lessons learned from those who came before them. Daniel embodied the entrepreneurial spirit of both Albert and Daniel Sr in all he did. After retiring as supervisor of the Motor Pool at Camp Evans in 1957, Daniel opened his own business, Harris Auto Body in a garage in the back of his Heck Avenue home. The shop soon moved to Lincoln Place in Neptune, which is now known as Memorial Drive, and then moved once more to highway 35 in Neptune, a prime location near other auto businesses. All four of Daniel and Marion's children worked at Harris Auto Body. Daniel III and Timothy working in the shop and Dianna and Velda working in the office. After a fire ravaged their family home, Daniel branched out into prefabricated building, in hopes of providing African Americans a more economical shot at home and business ownership, as well as providing jobs for skilled African American laborers. Daniel also was politically minded. He was a proud Republican, President of the Monmouth County Black Republican Assembly.

Marion continued to sing in the church choir at Second Baptist Church in Asbury Park, and was an active community member. She was a member of the Monmouth County Civic Chorus, President of the ridge Avenue School PTA, opened M&D Deli and Velda A Boutique on Bond Street. She instilled a love of music and song in their children, all of whom learned to either sing or play an instrument. Their youngest son, Timothy, recalls how the entire family would sit on the porch harmonizing to Motown and other hits. Marion always reminded the family of their history and spoke of the parts of black history that was not being taught in schools, such as Emmitt Till, Fanny Lou Hammer, and others. She recalled what it was like during the Great Depression saying, "We were poor, but we didn't know it. My father was a butcher, so we ate meat when other people couldn't." Dianna recalls Marion's warm and loving nature as a mother, stating, "My mother was a warm, compassionate, and loving person that I enjoyed cuddling up next to whenever I had the chance. She made sure we had balanced meals, made us sound out words we couldn't pronounce when we were reading, and always corrected our English when we 'cracked a verb,'"



Most of all, Daniel and Marion instilled in their children the importance of sticking together as a family. With both Daniel Sr. and Jr. having experienced growing up apart from their immediate family, Daniel Jr. did not want to see that happen to any more generations of the Harris family. When Daniel III was born, Daniel Jr. sat over his crib one night praying and speaking to the infant saying something "You're going to stay with your family. You're going to be a good father to your children." Daniel and Marion's prayers were certainly answered, as the Harris family and their children and now their children's children continue to get together, work together, and sometimes even sing together, even though they reside across New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

## Agnes Jefferson – Southern Roots



**Agnes Jefferson** moved to Neptune in 1964. She was born in Florida, the oldest daughter of Sarah Louise Jackson McLean and Harrison Collins McLean. Her mother was a teacher, and her father built and rented houses and provided funeral services for African Americans. Harrison served in World War I, where his name was misspelled as McLean, which is a genealogical challenge as his family's name is spelled McClain. Despite the economic hardship and the ever-present possibility of racial violence living in the segregated south, Harrison and Sarah were able to provide a stable and happy life for their family. Harrison only had a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade education, however, he and his wife valued education. Three daughters completed college at Florida A & M College

(now University). The two sons served in the Army during WWII. Harrison trained one son to be a carpenter, and the other son went to school to learn embalming and became a funeral home director.

Agnes was raised during the time of racial segregation, the 1930's economic depression, and World War II. After completing college, she became a teacher and married Henry Smith Jefferson, from Virginia, who was stationed at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. He served in the Korean War and progressed to the rank of Master Sergeant. They had three children, Jeffrey, Karen, and Harrison. At age 36, Agnes relocated to New Jersey to be near her Aunt, and began a new life to raise her three children after the death of her husband.

Agnes' first visits to New Jersey were during the summers when she was a student at Florida A & M College. Her maternal Aunt, Ida Jackson Scott - a Floridian, and her Uncle James P. Scott - born and raised in Pennsylvania, had moved from Florida when James was hired to work as an engineer at Fort Monmouth Army base. Opportunities for African Americans to work in engineering were limited at that time. Ida taught during the school year and in the summers she worked at Fort Monmouth as a supervisor in a cafeteria. During those summers, she hired African American students from historically black colleges in the south, including her niece Agnes.

Ida taught kindergarten for several decades at Sycamore School in Tinton Falls , now Mahala F. Atchison School. Originally the Scott's lived in public housing in Long Branch, New Jersey. After a few years they were able to obtain a mortgage and bought a house in Reevytown, NJ. They had two sons – Jimmy, who became a pilot, and Raymond who is an accountant.

James and Ida were very active in African American community groups and organizations. James' membership in the NAACP, led to his and numerous other African Americans losing their jobs. This was the 1950s during the McCarthy era, when those fighting for equal rights were accused of being communists; subsequently losing their jobs and making it near impossible to find other employment. Some of their friends and neighbors were afraid to interact with them because they had been wrongly accused as being communists. This firing kept James from being hired to work as an engineer and this loss of professional status significantly lessened the family's income. James worked in menial jobs and Ida took on additional work to meet the family's needs. James fought the firing in court for years; and through his perseverance, he was reinstated as an engineer at Fort Monmouth. James was a long-time member of St. Augustine Episcopal Church in Asbury Park, and Ida was a member of the Martin Luther King Jr. Presbyterian Church in Neptune.

Agnes and her children, Jeffrey, Karen and Harry, first lived in Reevytown, near the Scott's. Through the GI Bill (legislation that authorizes benefits for military servicemen, veterans and their families), Agnes was able to purchase a home and moved “up the hill” in Neptune, in 1964. Now at age 91, Agnes has lived in Neptune for 55 years. Agnes' first jobs upon moving to Neptune included maid service at homes and hotels and as a clerk at the S & H Green Stamps store. Eventually she was able to get a professional job as a social worker. She worked for 16 years for the Monmouth County Board of Social Services, retiring in 1995. She now has 8 grandchildren – Erika, Heru, Kyle, Cakkiyah, Jermaine, Mia, Ayanna and Aliyah; and 7 great grandchildren; Yvonda, Mekai, Kashai, Isaiah, Kai'Leel, Ny'zhire, Aiden, and Calisse. All but two live in New Jersey. A long-time residence of Neptune, Agnes maintains close ties with her family and friends in Florida and she still retains her southern accent!



## My Family Story

I am Teretha. My family migrated to New Jersey from Mississippi. Some of my ancestors were Europeans from Britain, Native Americans from a couple of Southeastern Indigenous tribe and an unknown African region, most likely Western African. I am the descendant of these paternal and maternal immigrants and pioneers.

My parents, a brother and I migrated to Camden, New Jersey and later Neptune NJ, in 1960. Most Mississippians moved into Chicago, Detroit, Ohio, Texas and California. However, we followed other maternal and paternal relatives who had come to New Jersey for industrial jobs.

My family ancestry has been relatively easy to follow. We learned from stories told by our elders. My people could read and write during a time when many could not. Many were farmers, teachers and builders. Military service was common, spanning three centuries. Some were free. Some were enslaved. Some indigenous members are only identified from oral because they were erased by racist governmental paper genocide policies. Land ownership was common for most of them. We still hold more than 130 acres of heir property in Mississippi.



In 1860, James Monroe Dampier owned 38 slaves. He was my great great grandfather. There is a Freedmen Labor Contract for Simpson County which list L. N. Geigher as the planter and the plantation was J. M. Dampier. Only one laborer was named, Lizza (aka Lucy) Blackwell and her two children. Those children were my maternal great great grandfather, Alex Blackwell and his brother Willis, and later a brother Adam. James Monroe Dampier was their father.

Great grandmother  
\\ Cordelia  
Daughter of Alex Blackwell

Early American colonial and post-Civil War migration moved down the east coast south and west. James Monroe Dampier was born on July 12, 1812, in Tattall, Georgia. His father, Stephen, and Grandfather Daniel, born in North Carolina in 1715, were descendants of the buccaneer, William Dampier. Their ancestors migrated from Britain down the Eastern coast of the U.S. They were Loyalists to Britain during the American Revolution who later branched into Kentucky, North Carolina, Georgia, Florida and Mississippi.



William Dampier 1651-1715

Lucy Blackwell's story is not clear. She may have been moved from the Maryland and Virginia areas, through Kentucky, into Mississippi. There are some reports of her connection to the Eastern Cherokee and Mississippi Choctaw tribes. We may never know. Records were not well kept for coloreds, mulattoes or Indians prior to 1870 unless you were herded onto the Trail of Tears across lands into Indian Territory, now called Oklahoma, after 1830s on several rolls or lists. People of color were not counted individually on a census until 1870.



Me, Mother and Blackwell cousin



Left: Unknown Mississippi Choctaw woman  
Right: Current chief, Phyllis Anderson

The descendants of my great great grandfather's brothers migrated in Boston during the later 1970s. Others migrated into California during the 1950s and 1960s. They moved from farming and picking cotton during teenage years in the Deep South, to teaching, clerical jobs and business ownership in northern and western states.



Grandsons of James M. Dampier – My Blackwell Cousins

## Kareen Delice-Kircher

### “Magical Realism—My Family’s Reality”

Magical Realism. It is my family’s reality, not simply a style of writing.

*Corlies Avenue* in Neptune, New Jersey is the equivalent of *Ruelle Romulus* in Martissant 7, Haiti in my memory. Nothing quite defines someone’s experiences like childhood memories, and I was lucky to have what I consider two childhoods.

Back in Haiti, our migration journey began in the countryside, in different parts of the southern port province of Jacmel. Grandma sent my mom and her twin to live in the capital with their dad. Dad also left Jacmel, to go the capital, where he met Mom years later. He then started doing something that every migrant or immigrant does--work, and send every penny possible back home to relatives. At first, he was a day laborer. Can you imagine going for 7 years without a steady job? Well, he didn’t have to imagine. To me, that story is just a story...



By the time my last sibling was born, we were living very comfortably in a three-story home, surrounded by books, being cared for by cooks, maids, and others servants. In the evening, we frantically finished all the homework assigned by our private school teachers and by our private tutors. Yet every summer, my heart found its place in Jacmel, where we vacationed after the school year ended.



In our top private school in the capital, we were definitely the poor-ish kids, since some of our classmates were kids of diplomats, Haitian actors, etc. As I described in my book, “*Waking Up From Your Parents’ American Dream*,” we were kind of a big deal in our neighborhood of Martissant, after Dad paved our street and beyond. We were definitely a huge deal in Jacmel. Yet we were the same people on the inside. We simply lived different experiences, depending on which alternative reality we found ourselves in at any given moment.

Fast forward many years later, Mom and our older sister moved to the US...living with family friends on Atkins Avenue in Neptune. Two years later, our family’s migration became an outright immigration after the dictatorship fell. When talk of us moving here became more than just talk, my sister Marie, then 6, wondered how she could bring lots of Colgate toothpaste with us, so that we would never run out. Why? American TV shows that were broadcast in Haiti showed people getting out of bed and going about their day...without brushing. Dad was adamant about oral hygiene, and Marie feared that American stores may not sell toothpaste.



As a family we all first lived together on Corlies Avenue. Marie remembers how we would walk to Shop Rite as a family, then walk back home carrying all our groceries. My brother loved the Dick Tracy comics he got from the Neptune Library; to this day that's still his favorite. He also thinks of the hours he spent there with fondness.

Remnants of that childhood in Neptune remains; the auto body shop; Parke Warner Pharmacy, etc. Other landmarks in and around Neptune, like EJ Roberts clothing store, are long gone. Our last home in Neptune on Sixth Avenue was our fondest memory: lots of space for our family; Dad remembers our neighbors to the right, Norma and her husband, who always served up good tea and a listening ear; the neighbors across the street were fantastic.



I visited Haiti in Mid-December 2018: my neighborhood had changed, while other parts of my childhood were vividly the same. Where we once lived in peace now is a no-man's land because of unrest. Our private school still bears some of the same magical features that made us love going to school every day. Looking in the courtyard of that school brought me back to the first time I visited Neptune High School after I graduated. Both times I wondered: "Were the ceilings always so low?" No, I was the one who had changed.

When I drive down Corlies Avenue today, I glance at the building that used to be a mom-and-pop convenience store owned by an immigrant Italian family. I smile, remembering when one of my sisters and I went back into the store, telling them they had given us too much change. Instead of being mad at us, as we had feared, they were overjoyed at our honesty, and they gave us a box of Triscuit to say thank you.

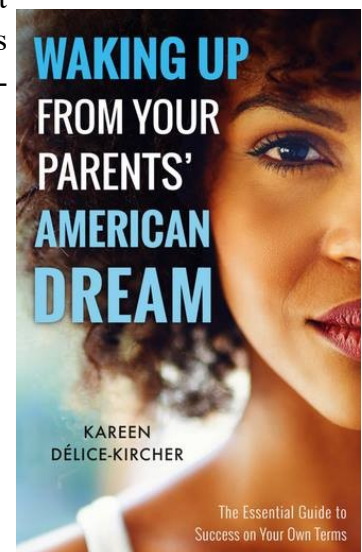
While our old stomping grounds have changed, the way they used to be is still engraved in my mind's eye. The old reality is blended with the new one. How can it not be that way? Strip away the color of anyone's skin, the names of the countries where we are from, and what are we left with? Nothing but a true American story.

Mrs. Kareen Delice-Kircher

Owner, DevOps Advisors

Author of "Waking Up From Your Parents' American Dream"

Founder, Celebration of Haitian Heritage Month at the Jersey Shore



## Owens Family Migration to Neptune, NJ

(Oral History as shared by my cousin, Lawrence Owens, Jr. of Neptune, NJ to  
Mary S. Owens Scott of Neptune, NJ)



Bennett Owens, my paternal great, great grandfather of Goochland County, a suburb of Richmond, Virginia had 18 children, one of which was my paternal great grandfather, Bryce Owens. Bryce married Sophie Brown, from Hanover, Virginia. In the summer of 1930, being a widow, Sophie came to Neptune to do seasonal work as many southerners did. She worked as a maid. Her three sons, Carter, Lawrence and Edward accompanied her. The brothers worked at the Grand Atlantic Hotel in Ocean Grove, NJ. This is where Carter, my grandfather learned his chef skills. They all de-

ecided to stay in Neptune, at the end of the summer season. They all lived in the same house. They lived in a duplex on Embury Avenue and then Harrison Street, somewhere in the area of the current Midtown Community Elementary School. Sim's Cottage, an area hotel for people of color was located on Division and Harrison Streets. Sophie's sons had children, while they were living together.

In 1935, now being married, Lawrence, his wife Florence, also from Virginia and their children moved to Ridge Avenue in a house which border lined Neptune and Asbury Park. In my early teens, I often visited them on the weekends. They always had change or a treat for me. Sophie and her other sons and their families moved further down Embury Avenue to Atkins Avenue and Boston Way.

Years later, Sophie's son, Carter purchased a home at 1005 Sewall Avenue, Asbury Park. Sophie moved in and lived with Carter and his second wife, Bessie until her death in the 1970's. Sophie's other son, Edward and his wife, Mildred purchased a home on Greenwood Ave. in Neptune. Family members live in that home today.

In the 1940's Carter's sons, Carter Jr. and Edward moved to Neptune from Richmond, Virginia. They moved in with their grandmother Sophie and father, Carter, Sr. Their mother, Ida came too. She also moved in with the family. Ida was previously employed by a Chinese Laundry in Richmond, so when she came to the area, she was hired immediately, because of the expertise.

The majority of Owens generations continue to live in Monmouth County or nearby areas.

Foot Note – My father, Edward, Sr. married Dorothy Hayward of Division Street, while they were in their teens. To this union, nine children were born. I am the baby! In 1963, when I was seven years old, my father died. In the late 1960's my mother, a maid for a white, Irishman, Wesley V. Robinson of Ocean Grove became his bride. "Robby", as we affectionately called him, moved Dorothy and her nine children from the Lincoln Village, Bldg. 6, Apt. 362 Asbury Park to 61 Abbot Avenue! The following are the encounters that are etched in my heart and mind forever: "NIGGER" in nine foot gold letters spray painted on the side of the house; the front porch being set on fire and my older brother being arrested regularly, while walking home from his job, Monmouth Plastics, Asbury Avenue, Asbury Park. This past Fall, I slowly drove my adult son past the house at 61 Abbot Avenue, while sharing memories!

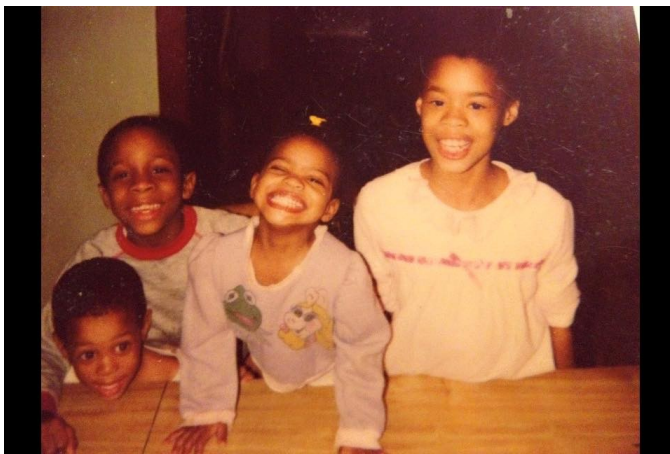
## My Migration Story: Carla R. Vanzant (Cook)



Like so many of my African-American brothers and sisters, much of my family's history was lost when my ancestors were kidnapped from our homeland and forcibly brought to North America to work as slaves. At times I find myself dreaming about what it must have been like for my ancestors to experience living in community with each other in Africa. They had already accomplished so much - they were the most brilliant mathematicians, architects, scientists, and artists. My forefathers and foremothers were innovators and warriors; they were some of the greatest people to ever live. In separating us from our homeland, the colonizing Europeans tried to strip us of the legacy and rich history from which we originate. Even though there is no clear connection to my lineage that stretches back to the Motherland, as Maya Angelou said in her poem *Still I Rise*, "...I walk like I've got oil wells pumping in my living room." I know where I come from.

I never met my great grandfather, but I have memories of "Big Ma," my great-grandmother (Mary Lee Huddleston). Big Ma spent most of her life on a farm in Houston, Mississippi. Later, she migrated to Erie, Pennsylvania to join my grandmother, Annie Hanson Thornton-Norton, and her husband "Willie T.," who had moved there from Houston in search of work. My great-grandmother, grandmother and my grandfather spent the rest of their lives in Erie, Pennsylvania. All of my grandmother's children, including my mother, Min. Joann Cook, stayed in Erie, Pennsylvania and raised their children. My Aunt Regina was the exception. She moved to Atlanta, GA for a fresh start.

My great-grandparents, Thomas Cook and Ada Breedlove Cook, settled in Stotesbury, West Virginia where they had 10 children, including my grandfather, Darnell Cook, Sr. My grandmother, Lola (Dodson) Cook was born in a town in a small town in West Virginia about 30 minutes from Stotesbury. My grandparents, who were childhood sweethearts, married and moved to Tams, West Virginia where my father was born. Later, my grandparents and their children migrated to Cleveland, OH for work. Three of their 5 children stayed in Cleveland and raised their families. My Uncle Rodney moved to Baltimore, Maryland and my father, Darrell Cook, migrated to Erie, Pennsylvania both looking for work. During this time, my father met my mother. They



married and had 4 children. Only my brother Corey continues to reside in Erie and is raising his children there. My brother, Darrell, lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with his wife. My sister, Erica, lives in Monroeville, Pennsylvania with her husband and three children

I was born and raised in Erie, Pennsylvania and spent 20 years of my life there. At the age of 21, I made the decision to leave my home and move to West Chester, PA to complete my schooling. 3 years later, I married my husband, Semaj Vanzant, and moved to Brooklyn, New York where I birthed our oldest son, Semaj Jr. After living in Brooklyn for 1.5 years, my family relocated to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, where my husband pastored a church. Our second son, Seth, was born in Edmond, Oklahoma. After living in Oklahoma for nearly 4 years, we were sent on assignment by God to a church and community called Asbury Park, New Jersey where we currently serve.



**The Vanzant Family**

# Celebrating Our Senior Griots



**Carolann Ashby Nicholas**



**Shirley Ingram Booker**



**Arden Thorne**



**Dorian Parreott**



**David Parreott**

The Asbury Park Technical Academy of Dance (APTAD) is a cultural education center for the Arts, providing a safe, family atmosphere. The school exposes its students to many different forms of dance. This Inspires our children to expand their knowledge of different cultures, countries, and the traditional forms of dance. The students are challenged to embrace the richness of their heritage and the passion of dancers who paved the way before them. The school has become a village of it own where each student can flourish and grow. We help children who normally would not have the opportunity or the finances, not only to learn an art form, but to gain discipline and self respect.



The APTAD has grown from 35 students at its inception, to hundreds of students over the years. The school celebrated its 20th year anniversary in June 2018.

Michele Burrell is the founder, owner, choreographer, and teacher at the APTAD, teaching dance for over thirty years. She is certified as a dance instructor by the Dance Educators of America and is a dance teacher extraordinaire. Ms. Burrell tries to foster the love of dance in the community by teaching at local community centers, schools and the City of Asbury Park's summer recreation programs. She has also been employed by the Asbury Park Board of Education.



Ms. Burrell teaches local, multi-cultural students classical ballet, modern dance, and jazz. Students have also studied tap under the training of the famous internationally known Abron Glover, Maurice Chestnut and her own former student Malcolm Jones, all dancers extraordinaire.

Many of her students have continued their arts education in college and competitive, prestigious performing arts schools, including the American Ballet Theater, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ballet Hispanico, Joffrey Ballet, Princeton Ballet, Bolshoi Ballet School, The Dance Theater of Harlem, Complexions Contemporary Ballet, Koresh Dance, NJ Tap Ensemble and others. Many are now professionals in dance, stage, theater, broadcasting, education, medicine, nursing, engineering and other areas. Ninety-eight percent of the Asbury Park Technical Academy of Dance students obtain advanced degrees.

The annual APTAD dance recitals are legendary. Many years have been sold-out performances at the Asbury Park's Paramount Theater. Painted over the door of the dance room is a sign that exemplifies the philosophy she tries to instill in her student..."Strive for Excellence".

***The Asbury Park Technical Academy of Dance is truly a multicultural experience!***

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Phone: 732-774-4557  
www.apdance.org









## **BLACK MIGRATIONS VIDEO RESOURCES**

Brief History: The Great Migration

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ak1Uk8-3EE8>

Black Migrations: Why African Americans left the south and why they are returning to the south today

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCdTyl141bA>

Jacob Lawrence (artist) Migration Series

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLC8xRNcJvE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4lgvB5cV5E>

Jacob Lawrence Migration Series (60 art panels)

<https://lawrencemigration.phillipscollection.org/the-migration-series>

Jim Crow Laws

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2Iwa9LeuFM>

The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ChWXyeUTKg8>



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TO NEPTUNE'S BLACK HISTORY  
CELEBRATION  
February 16, 2019**

*Our program booklet was printed courtesy of NJNG*

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