



Paper Trails: Tracing African American Ancestry

Saturday, February 8, 2020

Clayton Library Carriage House and Holocaust Museum Houston

- 9:00 – 9:50 a.m. **Beginning your African American Family History Research - Franklin Carter Smith**
- Clayton Library Carriage House
- 10:00 – 10:15 a.m. **Check In & Registration at Holocaust Museum Houston**
- 10:15 – 10:30 a.m. **Welcome & Remarks**
- 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. **Incorporating Oral History into your research**
- Ari Wilkins
- 11:30 – 11:45 a.m. ***Break***
- 11:45 - 12:45 p.m. **Hand in the Glove: Researching Ancestors in Wills, Land and Property Records**
- Sharon B. Gillins
- 12:45 – 1:45 p.m. **Lunch on your own (Brown Bag, Café available at the Museum, or area restaurants)**
- Browse tables / Museum Store
- 1:45 – 2:45 p.m. **Using Antebellum Southern Plantation Records**
- Ari Wilkins
- 2:45 – 3:00 p.m. ***Break***
- 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. **Researching African American Family History –The Same and Different**
- Sharon B. Gillins
- 4:00 – 4:15 p.m. **Closing Remarks**
- 4:15 – 5:00 p.m. **Visit Holocaust Museum Houston’s galleries**



Session overview:

The full day of sessions begin with learning about oral history and incorporating stories into your family history research. *Incorporating Oral History into your Research (Ari Wilkins)* will help you to dramatically enhance your genealogical research. Not only can it provide you with names, dates of life events, and places, these narratives can reveal motives for migration, explanations of brief marriage, or description of an ancestor's personality. Stories passed down are the flames that ignite us to wonder more deeply about our family and its history.

The following sessions – *Incorporating Oral History into Your Research (Ari Wilkins)*; *Hand in the Glove: Researching Ancestors in Wills, Land and Property Records (Sharon Batiste Gillins)*; *Using Antebellum Southern Plantation Records (Ari Wilkins)*; and *Research African American Family History – The Same and Different (Sharon Batiste Gillins)* will all provide a deep dive into resources that will introduce you or help you take a next step into your family history research. These records can be used in all types of family history research. Using them takes creativity and an understanding of what these original sources offer within them to help you find YOUR family.

Speaker Biographies:

Ari Wilkins, a graduate of Louisiana State University, has been actively researching family history since 1998. Ms. Wilkins has spoken nationally at the National Genealogical Society, Federation of Genealogical Societies, Texas State Genealogical Society, Ohio Genealogical Society, Samford Institute of Genealogical and Historical Research, Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy, American Library Association, RootsTech, and a multitude of local societies. Ari has been a Library Associate at Dallas Public Library since 2007. She teaches a series of basic research classes using popular genealogical websites. She specializes in African American research

Sharon Batiste Gillins is a native of Galveston, Texas with paternal ancestral roots in St. Mary Parish, Louisiana and maternal roots in Fort Bend County, Texas. A life-long interest in her family's history led to an active involvement in genealogical research over the past 25 years. Ms. Gillins' career spans 40 years in education, retiring as Associate Professor at Riverside Community College, Riverside, California. She frequently calls upon her career background as a college educator to lecture and present at regional and national genealogy conferences, among them the Texas State Genealogical Society, National Genealogical Society, Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research, Federation of Genealogical Societies, International Black Genealogical Summit, Alabama State University Genealogy Colloquium and the Creole Family History Conference. Ms. Gillins' research and teaching emphasize strategies and underutilized record sources that can be used to discover details of Southern life and ancestry during the 19th Century, including that of planter slave owners, enslaved people and free-people-of-color. Favorite record groups and teaching topics include Freedmen's Bureau records, Southern Claims Commission records, land records, wills and probate, and records of incarceration. At present, Ms. Gillins is a Research Associate at the Mary Moody Northen Endowment in Galveston, Texas where she is responsible for the Moody Archive consisting of family and business manuscripts and photographs that date to the early 1800s.



Class Descriptions:

Incorporating Oral History into Your Research – Ari Wilkins

Oral history can dramatically enhance your genealogical research. Not only can it provide you with names, dates of life events, and places, these narratives can reveal motives for migration, explanations of brief marriages, or descriptions of an ancestor's personality. Oral histories can offer information that traditional records may not provide.

The Hand and the Glove...Researching Ancestors in Wills, Land and Property Records – Sharon Batiste Gillins

An exploration of the inextricable link between wills, probate records and land records with case studies that demonstrate how to analyze the records of slaveholding families to identify enslaved family members

Using Antebellum Southern Plantation Records – Ari Wilkins

The Antebellum Southern Plantation Records can offer great insight into many Southern families. This resource documents families' personal and business correspondence, conditions of plantation life (including the elusive names of slaves and descriptions of slave relationships), and much more. Learn about the genealogical value of the Southern Antebellum Plantation Records - how they are organized, how to search the collection, and apply it towards your genealogical research.

Researching African American Family History---The Same and Different

Similarities and differences between African American family history research and that of other ethnicities; includes examples and case studies that demonstrate strategies to locate information in alternate sources and to overcome the absence of direct evidence