



A local organization is tracing the lineage of enslaved Americans to their present-day ancestors

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From the 1500s through the Civil War, more than 10 million Black men, women and children were enslaved in America.

Slavery deemed them property. They were listed on bills of sale; their family members were sold away and their names were changed. After emancipation and the Civil War, the formerly enslaved found many of the familial threads of connection buried or lost. It's why their African-American descendants have difficulty tracing their lineage.



Now, a local organization is leading a national collaborative project to identify each of the 10 million people, stories, and names of those who were enslaved in pre- and post-colonial America.

Danyelle White, who has been restoring her personal Black lineage for 6 years, highlights the need for this project: "I'm almost doing this for the sake of justice...I am very interested in uncovering stories and creating a full picture, not just for myself, but [for] the rest of my family, and for everyone else. We all deserve to understand where we come from."

Dr. Kendra Taira Field, chief historian of 10 Million Names, says that this is just the beginning of many years of hard work that must go into heritage recovery and restoration: "We're at a really powerful and beautiful moment of great potential and possibility... As we bring together the tools of historians, genealogists, and descendants, I think we have a great, great future ahead."

"It's pretty hard to tell the history of slavery without talking about the white folks and their involvement," said Richard Cellini, founding director of 10 Million Names. He emphasizes that this work is necessary for all of America, regardless of whether you are Black or not: "This is not Black history and it's not white history. This is American history."

GUESTS

Dr. Kendra Taira Field, chief historian of 10 Million Names, associate professor of history and director of the center for the study of race and democracy at Tufts University

Richard Cellini, founding director of 10 Million Names, director of the Harvard Slavery Remembrance Program and founder of the Georgetown Memory Project

Danyelle White, vice president of strategic initiatives & community engagement at the Salt Lake Tribune, she has been tracing her Black family heritage for 6 years

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