

Letter from the Librarian, Ms. H. Williams

Welcome to the 2021 Black History Month Virtual Celebration. The theme for this occasion, **The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity**, explores the African diaspora and the spread of Black families across the United States. This theme forces us to look at their involuntary and voluntary patterns of movement and the historical effects and implications derived from their migration. To understand the depth and breath of this theme we must first examine their involuntary arrival to the shores of this nation having been torn from their families and motherland. We must look to family separation at the auction block with its lost connection and identity. We must look at the intermingling of cultures producing the different hues of blackness. It asks us to explore the effects of the Civil War, Reconstruction, the Constitutional Convention of 1868, Jim Crow and the Civil Rights era on family stability in the wake of immense and impacting governmental decisions.



And yet, it also gives insight into the voluntary migration of Black families in search of a better life, in the wake of painful separation from mothers, fathers, and grandparents to set on a journey with no more than a suitcase and the clothes upon their bodies. This is the undeniable strength and courage demanded of a people laden with only hope and sheer will.

But let us look to this family, for embedded within this core structure is the interconnecting relationships between husband and wife partners as well as parents and children, who face much controversy and retaliation for wanting more from life, only to be denied by others. For many, their connection to each other is steeped in religious conviction and belief in Him who carried the cross and saved the world. This virtual celebration praises the family through song and poetry offering a resounding remembrance of what it means to be a Black Family today and the yoke we carry.

