Researchers unravel the puzzle of finding Black data

Throughout history's pages, the term “Black in Appalachia” refers to a census of enslaved people in Washington County, Tennessee in 1860. According to Isom, both because of the historical markers and the method used for the census, there is a way to help discover and educate others on the history of Black history in the Appalachian region.

The Appalachian Region, as defined by Congress and used by the Census, includes all of West Virginia and portions of 12 other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Virginia.

Black in Appalachia has not researched this large an area in gathering historical data. Statistically, the number of enslaved people in Tennessee in 1860 comprised 6.7 percent of the population of the State. It was 6 percent in and Knox County, 18 percent in Tennessee.

According to historian Kathleen Kelley, it is possible that he or she was then required to leave the state – with Washington County in nearby Tennessee an area where he or she was then required to leave the state. The census work on which Isom’s talk was based is being conducted by historian Kathleen Kelley. It is supported by the Tennessee Historical Commission, the library and archives at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Isom also said that when the State of Tennessee abolished slavery and to be a permanent report which listed the district where an enslaved person lived, the dwelling number, the family number in the census, last and first names, age, birth years, gender, race and occupation – for example field hand, servant or blacksmith.

Isom’s research suggests that the history of Black history in the Appalachian region was explained in an earlier article written by Arnold & Thieme Student Writer Warren Mewes in January 2020. Isom said he looked through black and white photos of his ancestors in his personal research.

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