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Research project : The Return Migration of African Americans to the US South since the 1970s: the case of metropolitan Atlanta

My research project focuses on the so-called black return migration to the South that followed the exodus of 6 million African Americans from the South between WWI and the 1970s.

I chose to focus on metro Atlanta as it has been one of most-chosen destinations for African Americans migrating South since the beginning of the migration. Within metro Atlanta, the southern part of DeKalb county has attracted a vast number of black migrants, especially since the 1990s onwards. I therefore decided to specifically work on this county with the help and support of the DeKalb History Center.

With this project, I intend to understand why so many black individuals have decided to move to the South when this used to be a region from which their forefathers and parents fled. To understand the reasons behind this phenomenon, I looked at archival documents, press articles, census data and conducted interviews with black residents of metro Atlanta who lived, for the most part, in DeKalb County.

I was able to spend 7 months in Atlanta (from September 2019 to March 2020) as a Fulbright visiting scholar at Emory University.

Selective bibliography on the reverse migration to the South:

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