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2014 Winner:  
Family History Writing Contest

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From Slavery to Society:  
The Jerry Moore Family of Virginia and Pennsylvania

By William A. Cox

*Jerry Moore and his family were born enslaved in Virginia. In 1850 they lived free in urban Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, where they thrived.*

Genealogists struggle to identify enslaved Southern families. Even the origin of Northern families emancipated before 1865 may be obscure, especially when the family's prior Southern residence is unknown or generally stated. A Moore family of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, provides an example.

IDENTIFYING A FAMILY

In 1850 ten Moores, identified as black natives of Virginia, lived in Allegheny County's Manchester Borough:

Jerry Moore, age 63  
Henry Moore, 29  
Nimrod Moore, 26  
James Moore, 22  
Jerry Moore, 21  
Mary Moore, 16  
Martha Moore, 14  
Phebe Moore, 12  
Florinda Moore, 10  
Thomas Moore, 8<sup>1</sup>

The group's common surname, birth state, and ages, suggest a father with nine children. Though the 1850 census specifies no relationships, other sources show that five household members were siblings:

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1. 1850 U.S. census, Allegheny Co., Pa., population schedule, Manchester Borough, fol. 320, dwelling/family 94, Jerry Moore household; National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) microfilm M432, roll 744.