

Dianna Johnson searching for her mother Hannah Hilliard, sisters, and brothers

Dianna Johnson placed this ad in the *Southwestern Christian Advocate* in 1885. The Methodist Episcopal Church published the *Southwestern Christian Advocate* every week from 1877 to 1929. This African American newspaper published thousands of "Lost Friends" ads between November 1879 and November 1896, as formerly enslaved people tried to reconnect with their families and friends.

Dianna Johnson placed at least four ads in three different newspapers over the span of five years looking for her parents and family members. Each ad contains different information (including the spelling of her name and Rowan County, NC) and provides historians incredible insight into how her family was torn apart through the Domestic Slave Trade and her quest, that likely spanned decades, to put it back together.

MR. EDITOR—I desire to inquire for my relatives. My mother was named Hannah Hellard; my father was John Hellard; my sisters are as follows: Jencey, Flora and Lucy; brothers are John, Benjamin and Miles Calvern; my mother had twins, but I do not remember their names. I was sold to a man named Bill Haden, and brought to Alabama, from there to Texas. I left my parents in North Carolina; and the last time I heard from them they were in that State. My name was Dianna Hellard; my name is now Dianna Johnson. Any information concerning them will be very thankfully received. Address Dianna Johnson, Goliad, Goliad county, Texas.

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