Newspapers

The library owns local African American newspapers such as The Union (1918-1923), the Cincinnati Herald (1966-present), and the Cincinnati and Cleveland editions of the Call and Post. Citations to death notices and news stories from current issues of the Herald and the Call and Post are indexed in NEWSDEX, our online newspaper index. Retrospective indexing is underway.

For nationwide coverage refer to James de T. Abajian’s Blacks in Selected Newspapers, Censuses, and Other Sources: An Index to Names and Subjects (R016.929373 fA116). In addition, the Pittsburgh Courier is available from 1924 to the present, along with selected out-of-town newspapers on microfilm.

Periodicals

The Genealogy and Local History Department subscribes to several journals that are dedicated to African American genealogy, including the Journal of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, and the Fred Hart Williams Genealogical Society Newsletter from the Burton Historical Collection at the Detroit Public Library. The library also subscribes to over 1300 general family history periodicals, which often include information about ancestors of African American descent. Ask at the Genealogy Desk for indexes to assist with your periodical research.

Local Histories, Family Histories, City Directories

Local histories and family histories are best searched by using a subject search or family surname search in our Library catalog. Search these fields by using county name or family name. If the emphasis of the work is African American, it will often be noted in the catalog record. Besides housing Cincinnati city directories from 1819 to the present, the Genealogy and Local History Department has city directories for other major U.S. cities.

Internet Resources

The growth of the Internet as a genealogical tool has been felt in all fields of the subject, including African-American. While there are a myriad of websites dedicated to the subject, the Genealogy and Local History department has selected a few that will be of help in your search for family history. To view these sites visit our homepage at http://www.cincinnatilibrary.org/ and click on “Sites by Subject” then click on “genealogy.” This link will allow the user to view a wide range of genealogy websites, including those dedicated to African American genealogy.

Some sites of special interest to the African American Genealogist include:

African American Census Schedules Online
Both federal slave schedules and state colored population schedules can be found here.
http://www.afrigeneas.com/aacensus/

AfriGeneas
Links, database of 10,000 plus African-American surnames, slave data
http://www.afrigeneas.com/

Rootsweb: Slave Archival Collection Database
Part of Rootsweb, this database collects slave ancestry information such as dates and places of birth and death.
http://www.rootsweb.com/~ilissdsa/

Other Research Materials

In addition to the materials mentioned above, the Genealogy and Local History Department has dedicated itself to emphasizing African American history. To that end the department has created an extensive research collection of African American culture and history. Some of the items included in this section are: The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography (305.89609 A512) a 19 volume set that includes printed copies of the WPA slave narratives. Papers of the American Slave Trade (MF380.144097 P2143 2005) a microfilm collection that contains log books, business papers, and correspondents of those who were engaged in the African Slave trade in the United States. Runaway Slave Advertisements: A Documentary History from the 1730s to 1790 (975.00496 W765) this multivolume set contains advertisements for runaway slaves from Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, Georgia, and South Carolina which provide insight into the men and women who sought their freedom in dangerous times. In addition to these items there are many more primary sources in the collection including pamphlets, personal papers, and statistical information geared to the researcher in African American history.
The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County has an extensive collection of materials valuable in the search for African American ancestry. Black genealogy presents unique challenges and rewards.

### Get Started

For the beginner, how-to-do-it books and guides specializing in African American genealogy provide a general introduction. The following books are recommended:

- **African American Genealogical Sourcebook** by Paula K. Byers (929.109896 qA258 1995)
- **Black Genealogy** by Charles L. Blockson (929.108996 qA258 1995)
- **African American Genealogy: A Research Guide** by Tony Burroughs
- **Black Genesis** by James Rose and Alice Eichholz (929.1028 B651)
- **Black Roots: A Beginner’s Guide to Tracing the African American Family** by Tony Burroughs (929.10896073 B972 2001)
- **Finding a Place Called Home. A Guide to African-American Genealogy and Historical Identity** by Dee Parmer Woodtor (929.109896073 qW898 1999)
- **The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County has an extensive collection of materials valuable in the search for African American ancestry.**

### Biographical Materials

Biographical information can help locate the time and place that a person lived as well as other essential genealogical information. The most extensive resource, **Black Biography, 1790-1950, A Cumulative Index** (R920.009296073 qB627 1987, 3 vols.) and its accompanying microfilm collection of 297 black biographical dictionaries, provide the best comprehensive sketch of 30,000 African Americans. This set lists date and place of birth, occupation, religion and date of death. Of particular interest to Canadians is its index to Wendell Dabney’s *Cincinnati’s Colored Citizens* (917.717806 D114 1988). Mary Mace Spradling’s *In Black and White: A Guide to Magazine Articles, Newspaper Articles, and Books Concerning More Than 15,000 Black Individuals and Groups* (R920.009296 qS66) offers citations to sources with more in-depth biographical information.

### Census Records

The United States census records are among the most valuable tools available to the family historian. The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County holds census records for the entire United States 1790–1930 and all available Soundex indexes. Of special interest to researchers of African American history are the records for 1850, 1860 and 1870. The 1850 and 1860 schedules contain slave schedules that list the names of slave-holders and the age, color and sex, but usually not the names, of slaves owned. The 1870 census records list most African Americans by name. For many former slaves, the 1870 census marks the first occurrence of a surname in an official record. Ask for brochures at the Genealogy Desk on using the census.

Free African Americans prior to the Civil War can be found in the census by surname and in books such as Debra L. Newman’s *List of Free Heads of Families in the First Census of the United States, 1790* (929.373 qCE1) and Carter G. Woodson’s *Free Negro Heads of Families in the United States in 1830* (R929.373 qW898). Paul E. Nititchman’s seven volume Blacks in Ohio in 1880 (929.308960730771 q728) lists African Americans by county and also includes an overall index to each volume.

### Military Records


Two microfiche sets, *Regimental Histories of the American Civil War and Civil War Unit Histories*, provide firsthand accounts and records of Civil War units. The latter also has a section (Part 5) devoted to the U.S. Colored Troops. Both sets are arranged by state and then by regiment number, which can be obtained by using the *War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. This index is available at the Genealogy Desk.