



THE
PUBLIC
LIBRARY
of Cincinnati
and
Hamilton County

Connecting people with the world of ideas and information

For Immediate Release

800 Vine Street
Cincinnati, Ohio
45202-2071
www.CincinnatiLibrary.org

Phyllis Hegner
Assistant Manager
Phone (513) 369-4571
Fax (513) 369-4565
Phyllis.Hegner@
CincinnatiLibrary.org

Richard Helmes
Public Information
Officer
Phone (513) 369-6959
Fax (513) 369-4565
Rick.Helmes@
CincinnatiLibrary.org



January 7, 2005

February is Black History Month, a time to commemorate African Americans who have changed the world. This year the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County brings together the past and the present through a fascinating lineup of guest speakers, historians, genealogists, and authors—each sharing a different perspective on African American life.



THE CHURCH & AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY SERIES

Main Library - Sundays in February
at 3:30 p.m.

Historically, churches have served as centers of African American life. Carter G. Woodson wrote, “a definitive history of the church would leave no phase of African American history untouched.” For the black community churches offered a place of worship and spiritual guidance, but also served as a forum to work for civil rights, social justice, and community benevolence and improvement. Friends and families gathered in churches and recorded important events in their lives. Join us for this fascinating three-part series in the Main Library’s Huenefeld Tower Room (south building, third floor) to explore the church and African American history.

FEBRUARY 13

History of Union Baptist Church and the Cincinnati Community - The 1900 *City Directory* lists more than 30 African American congregations, many which still survive to the present. In fact, at least three churches pre-dated the Civil War. One of the oldest and most influential, Union Baptist Church, was founded in 1831.

Lillian Dean of the Union Baptist Church and a retired teacher from Stowe School will present a program on the role of Union Baptist Church in Cincinnati’s history.

Nicholas Finke, librarian at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, will also join her to discuss the Union Baptist Records housed at the Freedom Center.

FEBRUARY 20

Grace L. Bonner: Cincinnati's "Sweet Gospel Singer" - Prior to Grace Bonner's arrival in Cincinnati in 1916, most of the city's mainstream Black churches considered gospel music unacceptable with its heavy beat and "blues" chord structure. Credited with launching the gospel music movement in Greater Cincinnati, Grace Bonner met gospel music pioneers Sallie Martin and Thomas A. Dorsey, who had just founded the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses, and organized the local chapter, which today is known as the Cincinnati Choral Union.

Hasker Nelson, Jr., author of *Listening For Our Past: A Lay Guide To African American Oral History Interviewing*, is also a retired Public Affairs Director for WCPO-TV and the founder, producer and host of "Black Memo." Based on his original research he will recount the story of Grace Bonner's life through photographs and narration.

FEBRUARY 27

Tracing Your Family History Through Church Records - Church records extend beyond recording business transactions. Church logs, registers and minutes chronicle the personal lives of its members from birth to death and even track migration patterns.

Larry Hamilton, a founding member of the African American Genealogy Group of the Miami Valley, is also an editor and indexer of Ohio church records. He will demonstrate ways to utilize church records for family history research. Following his presentation, librarians from the History & Genealogy and Education & Religion departments will discuss the extensive collection of African American Church records available at the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. These collections include local materials and those from across the nation.

Photo caption for collage: Clockwise: Sketch of the first Union Baptist Church in Cincinnati; early church record; minutes from the Loveland Church in 1909; Grace L. Bonner, a gospel singer who was credited with launching the gospel music movement in Greater Cincinnati; and the Union Baptist Church today.

✓ **Information about events at the Main Library and 41 branch libraries is available on the Internet site: www.CincinnatiLibrary.org.**

✓ **Our goal is to make our programs accessible to everyone. Please request ADA services one week in advance at 513-369-4406 (TTY 369-4409).**