

African American History Sources
at the
Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society Library

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The library of the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society has a number of sources for searching African American personal history (genealogy) and more general African-American history. This guide lists some of these sources, but the researcher should also check the catalogs in the library under the headings African Americans, Afro-Americans, Blacks, Negroes, Slavery, and Abolition, and under the names of specific persons and organizations.

General Genealogical Materials

Buffalo City Directories

1828 to the present, with some gaps before 1835 and during World War II. The 1828 and 1832 directories include "names of coloured people" in the back.

Federal Census

1790-1930 for the City of Buffalo and towns in Erie County.

New York State Census

1855-1925 for the City of Buffalo and towns in Erie County.

Index to Obituaries in Buffalo Newspapers

Alphabetical by last name, 1811 through 2001, from the major Buffalo newspapers. The index includes death notices from the 19th century, but obituaries only (articles) from the 20th century.

Buffalo Newspapers on Microfilm

1811 to the present, with some gaps before 1840. Includes the major dailies and many other daily and weekly newspapers.

Buffalo Telephone Books

1880 to the present.

Selected Books

- E
185.93
.N56
A39
1989
- Fordham, Monroe, editor.
The African American Presence in New York State History: Four Regional History Surveys: With a Selected List of African American Historic Sites for Each Region.
Albany: New York African American Institute, 1989.
- F
129
.B89
N4
1990
- Taylor, Henry Louis.
African Americans and the Rise of Buffalo's Post-Industrial City, 1940 to the Present.
Buffalo: Buffalo Urban League, 1990.
- E
185
.D72
1968
- Drotning, Phillip T.
An American Traveler's Guide to Black History.
Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968.
- E
185.8
.C35
- Cantor, Milton
Black Labor in America.
Westport, Conn.: Negro Universities Press, 1969.
- E
445
.N56
K62
- The Black Minority in Early New York.**
Albany: Office of State History, 1971.
- E
185
.W81
- Wilson, Joseph T.
The Black Phalanx: A History of the Negro Soldiers of the United States in the Wars of 1775-1812, 1861-'65.
Hartford, Conn.: American Publishing Co., 1890.
- PN
4888
.N4
W6
- Wolseley, Roland Edgar
The Black Press, U.S.A.
Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1971.
- E
185
.S57
1971
- Sloan, Irving J.
Blacks in America, 1492-1970: A Chronology and Fact Book.
Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.: Oceana Publications, 1971.
- Z
1361
.N39
B56
- McPherson, James M., et al.
Blacks in America: Bibliographical Essays.
Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971.

- E
450
.S75
Sperry, Earl Evelyn
The Jerry Rescue, October 1, 1851.
Syracuse, N.Y.: Onondaga Historical Association, 1924.
- E
185.63
.W68
1973
Wilkes, Laura E.
Missing Pages in American History, Revealing the Services of Negroes in the Early Wars in the United States of America, 1641-1815.
New York: AMS Press, 1973.
- HD
8081
.A65
W37
Washington, Booker T.
The Negro in Business.
Boston; Chicago: Hertel, Jenkins & Co., 1907.
- F
128.9
.N3
O74
Ottley, Roi.
The Negro in New York: An Informal Social History.
New York: New York Public Library, 1967.
- E
540
.N3
B8
Brown, William Wells.
The Negro in the American Rebellion, His Heroism and His Fidelity.
Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1867.
- E
540
.N3
Q3
Quarles, Benjamin.
The Negro in the Civil War.
Boston: Little, Brown, 1953.
- E
185.82
.W88
1970
Woodson, Carter Godwin.
The Negro Professional Man and the Community, with Special Emphasis on the Physician and the Lawyer.
Washington: Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1970.
- E
185.6
.M5
Meier, August.
Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington.
Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963.
- E
523.4
.S47
2001
Seraile, William.
New York's Black Regiments During the Civil War.
New York; London: Routledge, 2001.
- HA
542
1960
.A5
Nonwhite Populations in New York State, 1960-1967.
New York: State Commission for Human Rights, 1967.

- F
1035
.N3
W5
Winks, Robin W.
The Blacks in Canada: A History.
Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971.
- F
129
.B853
N64
1986
Noles, Eva M.
Buffalo's Blacks: Talking Proud.
Buffalo: E.M. Noles, 1986.
- E
185.93
.N56
C6
1987
Contributions of Blacks in Western New York at the Turn of the Century.
Buffalo: Buffalo Department of School Integration, 1987.
- E
185
.K28
Katz, William Loren
Eyewitness: The Negro in American History.
New York: Pitman Publishing, 1967.
- PN
4882.5
.F74
1986
Freedom's Journals: A History of the Black Press in New York State: An Exhibition, at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, January 30-April 30, 1986.
New York: New York Public Library, 1986.
- E
255
.M82
Moore, George Henry.
Historical Notes on the Employment of Negroes in the American Army of the Revolution.
New York: C.T. Evans, 1862
- E
445
.N56
M3
McManus, Edgar J.
A History of Negro Slavery in New York.
Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1966
- E
725.5
.N3
J6
Johnson, Edward A.
History of Negro Soldiers in the Spanish-American War, and Other OtherItems of Interest.
Raleigh: Capital Printing Co., 1899
- E
450
.C66
Cockrum, William Monroe
History of the Underground Railroad As It Was Conducted by the Anti-Slavery League: Including Many Thrilling Encounters Between Those Aiding the Slaves to Escape and Those Trying to Recapture Them.
Oakland City, Ind.: Press of J.W. Cockrum Printing Co., 1915.

DT
631
.R38
Remarks on the Colonization of the Western Coast of Africa, by the Free Negroes of the United States, and the Consequent Civilization of Africa.
New York: W.L. Burroughs' Steam Power Press, 1850.

E
540
.N3
C77
1966
Cornish, Dudley Taylor
The Sable Arm: Negro Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865.
New York: W.W. Norton, 1966

DT
515.2
.S4
Delany, M.R. and Robert Campbell.
Search for a Place: Black Separatism and Africa, 1860.
Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969.

E
269
.N3
N43
Nell, William C.
Services of Colored Americans in the Wars of 1776 and 1812.
Boston: Printed by Prentiss & Sawyer, 1851.

E
450
.G23
M32
McGowan, James A.
Station Master on the Underground Railroad: The Life and Letters of Thomas Garrett.
Moylan, Pa.: Whimsie Press, 1977.

F
129
.B89
N48
1999
Williams, Lillian Serece.
Strangers in the Land of Paradise: The Creation of an African American Community, Buffalo, New York, 1900-1940.
Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.

PZ
7
.C5487
Th
Clark, Margaret Goff.
Their Eyes on the Stars: Four Black Writers.
Champaign, Ill.: Garrard Pub. Co., 1973

E
449
.F65
Fogel, Robert William and Stanley L. Engerman.
Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery.
Boston: Little, Brown, 1974.

E
450
.B83
U52
1987
The Underground Railroad Movement: Routes and Roots to Freedom.
Buffalo: Buffalo Public Schools, 1987.

Periodicals and Newspapers

Afro-Americans in New York Life and History.

1989 (v. 2), and 1994-present.

The Buffalo American. (microfilm)

February, 1920 – March 1926.

The Challenger.

September, 1963 – December, 1971. (microfilm)

1967-1975, 1986-present. (hard copy)

The Criterion. (microfilm)

February, 1957 – April, 1972.

Selected Manuscripts

- F69-5 Gutman, Herbert and Laurence A. Glasco.
The Buffalo, New York Negro, 1855-1875: A Study of the Family Structure and Some of Its Implications, ca. 1969.
- A91-33 **Cholera Letter**, 1832.
Discusses the effect of the cholera epidemic of 1832 on the African American population of Buffalo, 1 p.
- A70-8 **Hill Family Papers**, 1802-1865.
Includes a diary and letters to friends and family from Rowena Hill, describing her experiences a teacher to freed slaves in Norfolk, Va., 1863-1864.
- A00-824 Talbert, Mrs. William H.
Michigan Avenue Baptist Church History, 1908, 12 pp.
- F75-31 Hanaka, Linda.
The Negro During the Depression in Buffalo, 1979, 71 pp.
- A74-58 Johnson, Charles.
The Negro in Buffalo: A Social Survey with Emphasis upon Industrial Relations, 1923, 152 pp.
- A65-10 Gredel, Stephen.
Reminiscences on the Past of the Negroes of Buffalo, 1963, 6 pp.

Photographs

The general photograph collection is arranged by broad subject area. Relevant subjects include Ethnic Groups – Blacks; Persons (alphabetical by last name); Buildings by type of business or organization; and Streets (alphabetical by name).

Vertical File

The vertical file consists of printed ephemeral material, such as pamphlets, tickets, programs, etc., arranged by broad subject area. Relevant subjects include Ethnic Groups – Blacks; Persons (alphabetical by name); Underground Railroad; Abolition; and Religion.

Visitor Information

The library of the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society is located on the first floor of the Society's main building at 25 Nottingham Court (at the corner of Elmwood and Nottingham Terrace, just one block north of the Scajaquada Expressway (198) – exit History Museum.

Library hours are Wednesday through Saturday from 1 to 5 p.m. No appointment is necessary. Stop at the lobby reception desk to obtain a library pass. Call (716) 873-9644 for information about admission fees.

No book bags, knapsacks, brief cases, purses, or other containers are permitted in the library for security reasons. Library staff will take them for safe-keeping and return them to you at the end of your visit. We do not use pens or markers in the library; only pencils may be used to take notes.

Limited photocopies can be made by library staff. The charge is \$.25 per page up to 25 copies, and \$.50 per page thereafter. Notetaking is encouraged. Laptop computers are welcome – make sure your battery is charged, since we have limited electrical outlets for public use. Library staff can also make microfilm copies; the charge is \$.50 per exposure. We cannot make copies from rare or fragile materials.