Research Guides: Genealogy: African American Sources
Genealogy: African American Sources

FAQs
Find Your Librarian
Off-Campus Access
   Off-Campus Access
      General Information
      Eduroam
      Permalinks
      Proxify Button
      Proxy FAQs
      Proxy settings for Papers
      VPN and Proxy Servers
Research Guides
Tutorials
My Accounts
   My Accounts
      Canvas@UD
      My Library Account (DELCAT)
      My Interlibrary Loan Account
      Staff Intranet Login
      UD Webmail
Hours
   Hours
      Morris Library 8am–2am
      View All Hours
Support Us
   Support Us
      Making a Gift
      Friends of the UD Library
         Friends of the UD Library
            2019 Annual Dinner
            Book Collecting Contest
Gifts of Library Materials

University of Delaware Library / Research Guides / Genealogy / African American Sources

Genealogy: African American Sources

Census Schedules
Census Questions
Census Schedules Example:
   1790
Census Schedules Example:
   1930
Census Schedules: Nonpopulation
Church Records
City Directories

Court Records: Delaware
Family Histories
“Hundreds”
Immigration & Ships Passenger Lists
Immigration by Port and Ethnic Groups

Immigration & Naturalizations
Immigration: Filby’s Passenger Index
Journals and Newsletters
Land Records
Libraries, Archives, & Societies
Maps
Medical History

Searching for Medical Information
Military Records
Names: What’s In A Name?
Names: Women
Newspapers
Obituaries & Newspaper Articles
Social and Historical Context
Tax Records
Vital Records

Wills and Probates
Wills and Probates: Legal Terms
World War I
Featured Resources & Tips

Societies
- Delaware Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (DEAAHGS)
  Facebook page for the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, Delaware chapter.
- Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society
### Databases Specifically About African Americans in Ancestry Library Edition

- African American Photo Collection, 1850-2000
- African Americans in Delaware, 1890, U.S. Census
- The African in Canada: The Maroons of Jamaica and Nova Scotia
- Afro-Louisiana History and Genealogy, 1718-1820 (Slave) (Also called Louisiana Slave Records)
- Afro-Louisiana History and Genealogy, 1719-1820 (Free)
- Charleston, Charleston County, South Carolina Black Deaths 1871-89
- Freedman’s Bank Records, 1865-1874
- Freedmen’s Bureau Marriage Records
- Illinois Servitude and Emancipation Records, 1720-1865
- Louis Hughes, Thirty Years a Slave, 1832-62
- Louisiana Slave Records (Also called Afro-Louisiana History and Genealogy, 1718-1820)
- New Orleans, Louisiana, Slave Manifests, 1807-1860 (World Archives Project)
- Slave Narratives
- U.S. Colored Troops Military Service Records, 1861-1865.
  Records of the more than 178,000 men who served in the U.S. Colored Troops regiments during the Civil War
- U.S. Census Records, 1850 and 1860 Slave Schedules
- U.S. Freedmen Bureau Records of Field Offices, 1865-1872

Note: there are many more databases available in Ancestry.com (personal subscription) than in Ancestry Library Edition.

### African American Newspapers

Comprehensive resources or lists of African-American newspapers are difficult to find. The following information offers useful starting points.

**The Colored American** (Washington, DC)
Location: Internet (available in Chronicling America) (1899-1904)

**The Colored American** (New York, NY)
Location: Library Databases (restricted to University of Delaware) (available in Accessible Archives) (1837-1841)

**Freeman** (Indianapolis, IN)
Location: UD Library Microfilm S 2239 (Lib. has:1888-1916)

**Norfolk Journal and Guide** (Norfolk, VA)
Location :UD Library Microfilm S 154 (Lib. has: 1916-1917, 1921-1966)

**Article** about the *Journal and Guide* (PBS).

**Pittsburgh Courier**
Location: UD Library Microfilm S 182 (Lib. has: 1911-1912,1923-1950)

**Article** about the *Pittsburgh Courier* (PBS)

**Richmond Planet** (Richmond, VA)
Location: Internet (available in Chronicling America) (1883-1938)

**The Washington Bee** (Washington, DC)
Location: Internet (available in Chronicling America) (1884-1922)

**Related Newspaper**

**The National Era** (Washington, DC)
Location: Library Databases (restricted to University of Delaware) (available in Accessible Archives) (1847-1860)

An abolitionist newspaper, not an African American paper. Covered many topics related to slavery and current events.
Guides to African American Newspapers


More Information

ProQuest Historical Newspapers — Black Newspapers collection. Not available at the UD Library.


The Black Press Held By The Library of Congress

Location: Internet

Caution: created in 1991, so the holdings information is not current. Still useful as a list of titles.

- Accessible Archives

- Chicago Defender
  Includes social columns from a large number of small communities, both in Illinois and in other states. Included were some communities as far away as Connecticut and California.
  Description from Finding and Using African American Newspapers. Pinick, Timothy N.

- Afro-American (Baltimore, MD)
  Also Microfilm S 151 (Lib. has: 1893-1968)

- California Eagle
  Scattered issues available on Internet Archive.

- Colored American (Washington, DC)
  Also available free in Chronicling America (1899-1904)

About African American Newspapers

- Newspapers (PBS.org)
  Describes these important newspapers:
  Chicago Defender, California Eagle, Afro-American (Baltimore), and Pittsburgh Courier. Webpage companion to the film The Black Press: Soldiers Without Swords.

  The Black press: soldiers without swords (video)

Freedmen's Bureau

- Freedmen's Bureau Marriage Records

Highly Recommended: Research Guides

- African American Genealogy (FamilySearch wiki)
  Also see, African American Resources for Delaware.

  Finding a Place Called Home by Dee Parmer Woodtor

- African American Slave Trade: Ships & Records for Genealogy (Genealogy Bank blog)
Slave Genealogy: A Research Guide With Case Studies by David H. Streets

A Genealogist's Guide to Discovering Your African-American Ancestors: How to Find and Record Your Unique Heritage by Franklin Carter Smith; Emily Anne Croom

Ethnic Genealogy by Jessie Carney Smith (Foreword by Alex Haley)

Finding Answers in U. S. Census Records by Loretto Dennis Szucs; Matthew Wright

Not available at the University of Delaware Library. Can be requested through Interlibrary Loan. Includes descriptions of the Nonpopulation censuses and a brief listing of federal and non-federal sources for African Americans.

Black History: A Guide to Civilian Records in the National Archives

Special Issue on African American Research and Federal Records (National Archives)

This issue focuses on the use of federal records in African American historical research. Sixteen articles by NARA staff and other historians explore the depth and breadth of material in the National Archives relative to African Americans. This issue examines the Civil War and Reconstruction, labor issues, civil rights, pictorial records, and research aids.

Special issue of Prologue: The journal of the National Archives Vol. 29, No. 2 (Summer 1997).

- African American Research (National Archives)
- African-American (Cyndi's List)
  See especially, the How To section.
- Digital Library on American Slavery
- African American family research on Ancestry.com
  Also see other Free Research Guides on Ancestry.com; Excellent overview of resources. Note: some features mentioned as available on the Ancestry.com site are not available on the Ancestry Library Edition site.
- Researching Slavery and Freedom (National Archives Philadelphia Region)
- Tracing Your African American Roots (Delaware Public Archives)
  Examples of the kind of records you can find for researching African American ancestors. Great overview of the research process.

Black Genealogy by Charles L. Blockson; Ron Fry

Publication Date: 1977

The classic work in the area of African American genealogy. Though dated, Black Genealogy is a valuable reference to any researcher. Though many Black family records are lost or incomplete, Blockson shows readers how these lost resources might be found.

Living with the Hydra The Documentation of Slavery and the Slave Trade in Federal Records

By Walter B. Hill, Jr.

- Records that pertain to American Slavery and the International Slave Trade
Web Resources

- **African American Genealogy Examiner**
  A collection of columns by Michael Hait.

- **Records of the Slave Claims Commission (examiner.com)**
  Description of the publication: Records of the Slave Claims Commissions, 1864-1867 (available at the UD Library).

- **Slave Girl's Story Revealed Through Rare Records**
  Article appearing in National Geographic News (June 8, 2005).

- **The Freedmen's Bureau, 1865-1872 (National Archives)**

- **AfriGeneas**

- **Reclaiming Kin: Taking Back What Was Once Lost**

- **African American Gateway**
  A bibliography and webography from the Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center.
  Includes sections for each state.

- **Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society**
  See especially the sections on Genealogy, Research and Resources.

- **Slave Manifests (National Archives Mid-Atlantic Region)**
  Covering 1800 through 1861, these records detail the transportation of enslaved men, women, and children between Philadelphia and southern ports.

- **Slave Data Collection (AfriGeneas)**

- **Using Ship Manifests for Slave Research**
Useful subject words for searching library catalogs

- Freedmen -- United States -- History
- African American families -- History
- African Americans -- Genealogy
- African American loyalists
- Free African Americans
- Slavery Law
- black indians
- slave records

Black Genesis: A Resource Book for African-American Genealogy by James M. Rose; Alice Eichholz

Black Family Research: Records of Post-Civil War Federal Agencies at the National Archives


Free African Americans of North Carolina, Virginia, and South Carolina from the Colonial Period to About 1820 by Paul Heinegg

Encyclopedia of African American History, 1619-1895: from the colonial period to the age of Frederick Douglass by Paul Finkelman (Editor)
Print and online.

Deliver Us from Evil by Lacy K. Ford

Forging Faith, Building Freedom: African American Faith Experiences in Delaware, 1800-1980

- Forging Faith, Building Freedom: African American Faith Experiences in Delaware, 1800-1980 (online exhibition) (Delaware Historical Society)

Records of the Slave Claims Commissions, 1864-1867

Records of the Slave Claims Commissions

Register of Claims of Kentucky Commission

Library has v. 1: Register of claims of Delaware Commission. The Register of Claims of Delaware Commission contains 114 claims entered before the Delaware Slave Claims Commission in 1864 and 1865. Each claim provides at least the name of the claimant/slave-owner and the name of the slave, providing direct evidence of the final slave-owner of each of the slaves thus claimed. Each entry may include additional information including date and place of enlistment of the slave, events in the processing of the claim, and the amount of award, if any. For rejected claims, one might learn that the claimant was considered disloyal, for example, or that the slave being claimed was not a chattel slave but a free black apprentice. Other information may also be found among the claims. This is a transcription of records at National Archives: Register of Claims of Delaware Commission, 1864-1865. Records of the Slave Claims Commission, 1864-1867. Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1762-1984, Record Group 94.

Freedman's Bank Records (CD-ROM) (Family history resource file)

- Black History: Remembering Struggle, Sacrifice, and Service (fold3.com)
- Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database
- Slave Biographies
Law and Legislation


Slave Law in the Americas by Alan Watson

Laws of the state of Delaware on slavery, free blacks & mulattoes: volumes 1-14, 1700-1874 by Robert C Barnes; Judith M Pfeiffer

After 1723, Manumission Takes Careful Planning and Plenty of Savvy (webpage)

Wills, Property Tax Rolls, Inventory Lists, Reports (webpages)
Selected transcriptions and lists. From Christine's Genealogy Website.

Will of Isaac Varn, Duval County, Florida (webpage)
Transcription of a will which emancipated slaves.

Digital Library on American Slavery (website)

Genealogy Resources at the University of Delaware Library

Although not aimed at genealogy and family history, the collections of the University of Delaware Library (Morris Library) include materials useful to genealogists and family historians. This Genealogy Research Guide is provided as a service for genealogists. It presents topics and resources to assist researchers.

The UD Library does not specialize in genealogy and does not have staff responsible for genealogy. Library staff cannot conduct research.

For questions about library resources and holdings, use the Ask the Library service.

For questions about getting research assistance, see the suggestions on the home page of this guide or on the topic/resources pages.
List of selected African Americans from the 1890 and 1900 federal population censuses of Delaware and related census publications: "Agriculture in the State of Delaware" (1901) and "Negroes in the United States" (1904) (Microfilm)

Call Number: UD Library - Microforms (no. 6615)

The names of African American ("Negro") farmers in the Twelfth Census of the United States (1900) for Delaware and in the Eleventh Census of the United States (1890) for Delaware. This information was gathered because data was disputed in the draft of a statistical report to be published in 1901. (National Archives microfilm M1919).

It is significant that the 1890 list of names survived because the 1890 census schedules for Delaware were subsequently destroyed in a fire in 1921.

The 1890 information is available in Ancestry Library Edition, under the title: Selected African Americans in Delaware.

The report which was questioned in its draft phase was completed and is available online. Agriculture in the State of Delaware (Census Bulletin No. 100; September 30, 1901).

- Selected African Americans in Delaware, 1890, U.S. Census (in Ancestry Library Edition)
  The names of African American "Negro" farmers in Delaware from the 1890 Census schedules. In Ancestry Library Edition, select "Search" on the home page, select "Card Catalog" then type the title. The database can be searched by name and browsed by location. For the browse option, scroll to the bottom of the page.
  This is a very small list, consisting of 29 handwritten pages containing names, the enumeration district number, the county and hundred where the person lived, and their occupation. Since this is an agriculture list, the occupations are mainly farmer or farm laborer. Some females are listed. More than 400 names are included.
- 1890 Census, Delaware (National Archives)
- Descriptive Pamphlet for M1919: List of selected African Americans...
  Description of National Archives collection: microfilm M1919: List of selected African Americans From the 1890 and 1900 Federal Population Censuses of Delaware and Related Census Publications: Agriculture in the State of Delaware (1901) and Negroes In The United States (1904).

Special Topics

Genealogy Notes: Exodus to Kansas
Article by Damani Davis. In Prologue: The journal of the National Archives, vol. 40, no. 2 (Summer 2008), pages 52-58.

Free Negro Owners of Slaves in the United States in 1830, Together with Absentee Ownership of Slaves in the United States in 1830 by Carter G. Woodson
Also available online in Hathitrust.


African American Lives by Henry Louis Gates (Editor); Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham (Editor)

New Orleans Slave Manifests, 1807-60

Lynching: Ida B. Well-Barnett and the Outrage over the Frazier Baker Murder

Slave Manumissions in New Castle County Delaware by Robert C Barnes; Judith M Pfeiffer

List of Free Black Heads of Families in the First Census of the United States, 1790 by National Archives
Special list no. 34
Scott’s Official History of The American Negro in the World War by Emmett J Scott
Publication Date: 1919
Also available online.

The American Foreign Legion by Frank E. Roberts
Still segregated in World War I, the U.S. Army was reluctant to use its 93d division of black soldiers in combat and instead assigned the division’s three National Guard and one draftee regiments to the French Army.

Freedom Struggles by Adriane Lentz-Smith
For many of the 200,000 black soldiers sent to Europe with the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I, encounters with French civilians and colonial African troops led them to imagine a world beyond Jim Crow.

Race and War in Delaware: The Story of Delaware’s African American Veterans of World War I by Joseph Hickey

- African Americans and World War I (Africana Age)
- Forgotten Legacy: Soldiers of the Coalfields
  Online exhibit relating to the Kimball World War I Memorial in Kimball, West Virginia. Opened in 1928, the Kimball memorial was the first memorial built in the U.S. to honor African-American veterans of World War I.

"Black WWI Vets Fought Bias, Foes" by Kenney, Edward L.
The News Journal, Feb 11, 2005. B.1

There is a growing number of resources on this topic, both in print and on the web. Recommended search term for library catalogs and for internet searching:
african americans “world war i”
The space after "world war i" eliminates "world war ii" from the search

Why Genealogy?
In all of us there is a hunger marrow deep to know our heritage—to know who we are and where we came from. Without this enriching knowledge there is a hollow yearning. No matter what our attainment in life, there is still a vacuum, an emptiness, and the most disquieting loneliness.

Alex Haley

Superintendent of Documents Collections
Freedman's Hospital I 1.12:
Freedman's Savings and Trust Company  FST

African American Military Research
- Blacks in the Military (National Archives)
  Articles and guides to research.

Last Updated: Apr 11, 2019 12:06 PM
URL: https://guides.lib.udel.edu/genealogy
Print Page
Login to LibApps

Subjects: Delaware, Genealogy & Biography
Tags: african american, Agricultural schedules, ancestry library edition, bible records, black history, blog, cemeteries, census, census of manufacturers, census schedules, city directories, court records, courts, deeds, delaware history, genealogy, Genogram, immigration, Mortality Schedules, names, naturalization, newspapers, Obituaries, ship lists, Slave Schedules, tax assessment, taxes, tombstones, wills
At Family Tree we have African-American genealogy books, research guides and more to help you research your African-American ancestors. Research your African-American ancestors by starting with our concise and affordable downloadable guides, then dive deeper into your African-American heritage with the help of these books, ebooks, and video classes created by expert genealogists and the editors of Family Tree Magazine. Items 1 to 20 of 36 total. For any one researching African American genealogy, “Finding A Place Called Home” is a must read, simply because of the fact that before 1870, African Americans were not listed in federal censuses (the most accessible resource available to the African American Researcher) by name, but rather as property, the same as a horse, cow or pig. As with any property, whether realestate or personal, the owner was by law required to pay taxes on his property, since the African American was his property, the transacation left a paper trail, as well did the owner's wills, bills of sales and purchases, also in his estate and family records, his human property was often his greatest asset and therefore. The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy. Rev. ed. Salt Lake City, UT: Ancestry, 1997. Manuscript Sources and Guides. 1. General. National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections. Musick, Michael P. “African American Genealogical Research in U.S. Military Records Before World War I.” Journal of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society 18:1 (Spring 1999). Call # CS1.A37 (open shelf). Penn, Lisha B., comp.