

[U.S.LIFE](#) > [People](#) > [Diversity](#) > The African-American Mosaic

The AFRICAN-AMERICAN MOSAIC

A Library of Congress Resource Guide for the Study of Black History & Culture

[Introduction](#) | [Exhibition Credits](#)

Colonization:

[Liberia](#)

[Personal Stories and ACS New Directions](#)

Abolition:

[Influence of Prominent Abolitionists](#)

[Conflict of Abolition and Slavery](#)

Migration:

[Western Migration and Homesteading](#)

[Nicodemus, Kansas](#)

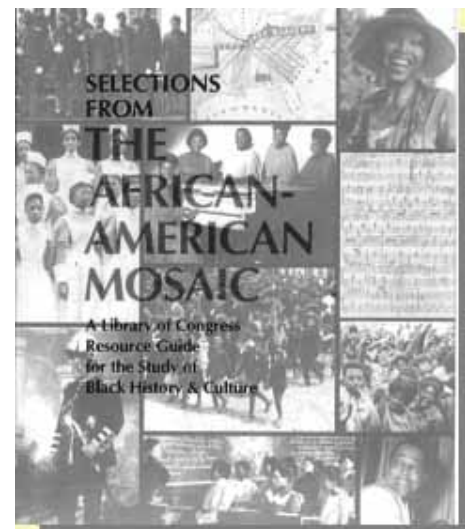
[Chicago: Destination for the Great Migration](#)

WPA:

[Cavalcade of the American Negro](#)

[Authors and the Federal Writers' Project](#)

[Ex-slave Narratives](#)



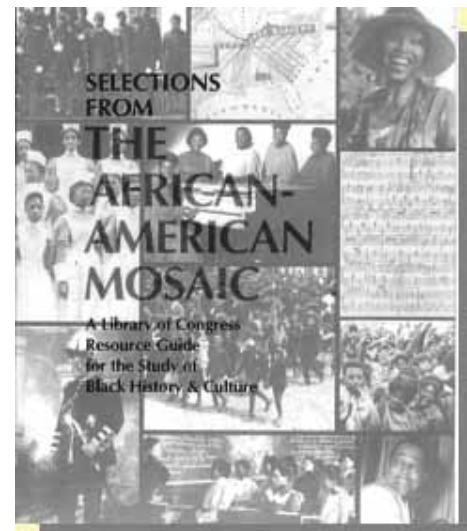
[U.S.LIFE](#) > [People](#) > [Diversity](#) > The African-American Mosaic

The African-American Mosaic

A Library of Congress Resource Guide for the Study of Black History & Culture

[Home](#) -- [Introduction](#) -- [Exhibition Credits](#) | [Colonization](#) >> [Liberia](#) -- [Personal Stories & New Directions](#)
[Abolition](#) >> [Prominent Abolitionists](#) -- [Abolition & Slavery](#) | [Migration](#) >> [Western Migration](#) -- [Nicodemus, Kansas](#)
-- [Chicago](#)
[WPA](#) >> [Cavalcade of the American Negro](#) -- [Authors & Federal Writers' Project](#) -- [Ex-slave Narratives](#)

Introduction



This exhibit marks the publication of *The African-American Mosaic: A Library of Congress Resource Guide for the Study of Black History and Culture*. A noteworthy and singular publication, the Mosaic is the first Library-wide resource guide to the institution's African- American collections. Covering the nearly 500 years of the black experience in the Western hemisphere, the Mosaic surveys the full range size, and variety of the Library's collections, including books, periodicals, prints, photographs, music, film, and recorded sound. Moreover, the African-American Mosaic represents the start of a new kind of access to the Library's African-American collections, and, the Library trusts, the beginning of reinvigorated research and programming drawing on these, now systematically identified, collections.

This exhibit is but a sampler of the kinds of materials and themes covered by the publication and the Library's collections. Many of the exhibit items are featured in the Mosaic. Other exhibit materials, not specifically described in the publication, are also included to illustrate that the Mosaic is an effective guide to the Library's rich collections, not an exhaustive inventory.

The exhibit covers only four areas --Colonization, Abolition, Migrations, and the WPA-- of the many covered by the Mosaic. These topics were selected not only because they illustrate well the depth, breadth, and richness of the Library's black history collections, but also because of the significant and interesting interplay among them. For example, the "back-to-Africa" movement represented by the American Colonization Society is vigorously opposed by abolitionists, and the movement of blacks to the North is documented by the writers and artists who participated in federal projects of the 1930s.

Also, to illustrate that the Mosaic opens avenues for further research, several items are included which, though important for black history, cannot have their full stories told until further research is completed.

Finally, this presentation is a sampler of a much larger exhibit now in progress. In 1998, the Library will mount a major exhibition and cultural program examining the impact of African- American history and tradition in the formation of American national identity. The 1998 outreach program will be this institution's first extended reflection upon its pervasive black holdings, and The African-American Mosaic will be a major resource guide in that program's development and realization.

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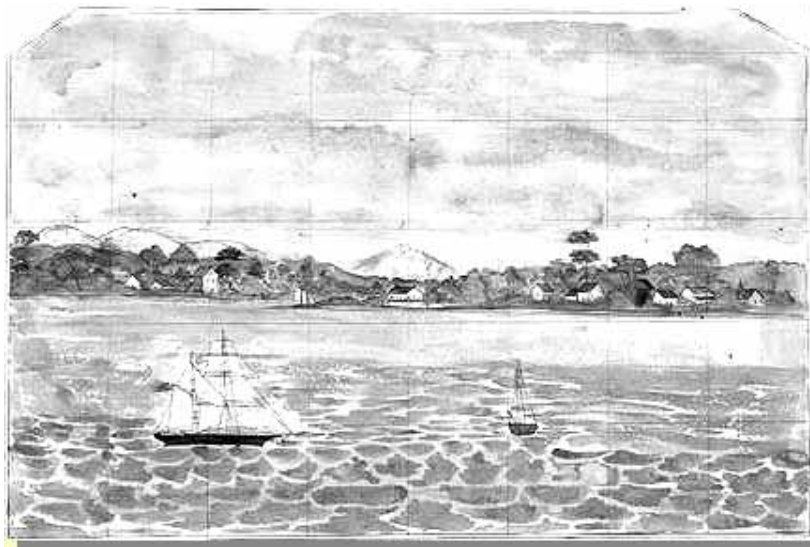
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[U.S.LIFE](#) > [People](#) > [Diversity](#) > The African-American Mosaic



African-American Mosaic

Credits



The African-American Mosaic: A Library of Congress Resource Guide for the Study of Black History and Culture, edited by Debra Newman Ham, is part of a series of Library of Congress Resource Guides. It is available at the Library of Congress Sales Shop and by mail from the Superintendent of Documents, P.O Box 371954, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15250-7954, Fax 202-512-2250. The price is \$24.00. Please cite stock number S/N 030-000-00254-7 when ordering.

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[Table of contents for the African-American Mosaic](#)



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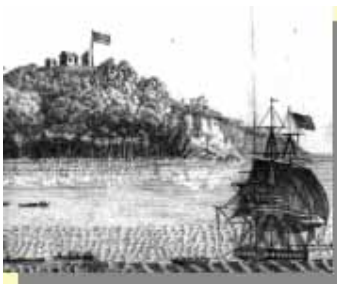
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[U.S.LIFE](#) > [People](#) > [Diversity](#) > The African-American Mosaic



African-American Mosaic

Colonization



Christianizing and civilizing Africa.

The roots of the colonization movement date back to various plans first proposed in the eighteenth century. From the start, colonization of free blacks in Africa was an issue on which both whites and blacks were divided. Some blacks supported emigration because they thought that black Americans would never receive justice in the United States. Others believed African-Americans should remain in the United States to fight against slavery and for full legal rights as American citizens. Some whites saw colonization as a way of ridding the nation of blacks, while others believed black Americans would be happier in Africa, where they could live free of racial discrimination. Still others believed black American colonists could play a central role in

The American Colonization Society (ACS) was formed in 1817 to send free African-Americans to Africa as an alternative to emancipation in the United States. In 1822, the society established on the west coast of Africa a colony that in 1847 became the independent nation of Liberia. By 1867, the society had sent more than 13,000 emigrants.

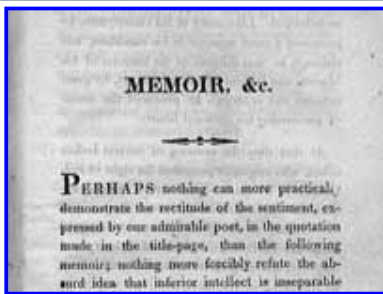
Beginning in the 1830s, the society was harshly attacked by abolitionists, who tried to discredit colonization as a slaveholder's scheme. And, after the Civil War, when many blacks wanted to go to Liberia, financial support for colonization had waned. During its later years the society focussed on educational and missionary efforts in Liberia rather than emigration.

In 1913 and at its dissolution in 1964, the society donated its records to the Library of Congress. The material contains a wealth of information about the foundation of the society, its role in establishing Liberia, efforts to manage and defend the colony, fund-raising, recruitment of settlers, and the way in which black settlers built and led the new nation.

Moreover, opportunities exist for additional research on the collection. For example, map study could reveal new data about settlement patterns, land ownership, and community development in Liberia. Work on the photographs could lead to identification of more of the individuals, locations, and events depicted. From passenger lists and land grants, researchers could glean new knowledge about Liberian genealogy. And, although the early history of the society has been well presented in publications, the post- Civil War period has not been thoroughly examined.

Colonization exhibit checklist:

Beginnings of the American Colonization Society



A Black Colonizationist

Paul Cuffee (1759-1817), a successful Quaker shipowner of African- American and Native American ancestry, advocated settling freed American slaves in Africa. He gained support from the British government, free black leaders in the United States, and members of Congress for a plan to take emigrants to the British colony of Sierra Leone. Cuffee intended to make one voyage per year, taking settlers and bringing back valuable cargoes. In 1816, at his own expense, Captain Cuffee took thirty-eight American blacks to Freetown, Sierra Leone, but his death in 1817 ended further ventures.

However, Cuffee had reached a large audience with his pro-colonization arguments and laid the groundwork for later organizations such as the American Colonization Society.

Memoir of Captain Paul Cuffee, A Man of Colour: To Which is Subjoined The Epistle of the Society of Sierra Leone in African & etc., title page York: W. Alexander, 1812 [1817] Rare Book and Special Collections Division (1)



In July 1820, the ACS published *The African Intelligencer*, edited by Jehudi Ashmun (1794-1828), a young teacher who hoped to become a missionary to Africa. Its thirty-two pages contained articles on the slave trade, African geography, the expedition of the *Elizabeth* (the ship that carried the first group of colonists to Liberia), and the ACS constitution. Upset by the expense and the lack of public support for the journal, ACS managers canceled the monthly journal after one issue.

Ashmun went to Africa in 1822, where he became an early leader of the Liberian colony before dying from a fever in 1828. This copy belonged to William Thornton, architect of the United States Capitol and a supporter of colonization.

The African Intelligencer, vol. 1, no. 1, July 1820, title page Journal Rare Book and Special Collections Division (2)

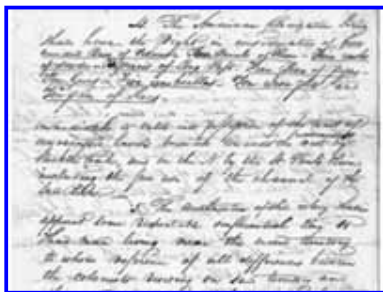
First American Colonization Society Journal



Selling life memberships was a standard fund-raising practice of benevolent societies such as the American Colonization Society. At thirty dollars each, the memberships were a popular gift for ministers. In 1825, one of the agents who sold the certificates in New England estimated that "not less than \$50,000 have in this way been poured into the treasury of the Lord." This certificate bears a facsimile signature of Henry Clay, a founder of the ACS and its strong advocate in Congress. Clay succeeded former president James Madison as president of the society, serving from 1836 to 1849.

[Life Membership Certificate for American Colonization Society], ca. 1840 Certificate American Colonization Society Papers Manuscript Division (3)

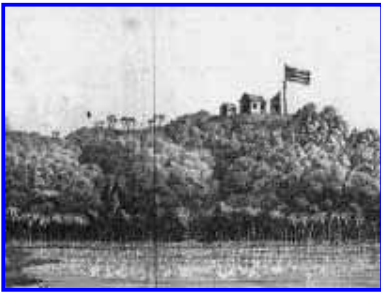
Life-Membership Certificate for ACS



Jehudi Ashmun envisioned an American empire in Africa. During 1825 and 1826, Ashmun took steps to lease, annex, or buy tribal lands along the coast and on major rivers leading inland. Like his predecessor Lt. Robert Stockton, who in 1821 persuaded African King Peter to sell Cape Montserado (or Mesurado) by pointing a pistol at his head, Ashmun was prepared to use force to extend the colony's territory. His aggressive actions quickly increased Liberia's power over its neighbors. In this treaty of May 1825, King Peter and other native kings agreed to sell land in return for 500 bars of tobacco, three barrels of rum, five casks of powder, five umbrellas, ten iron posts, and ten pairs of shoes, among other items.

[Treaty between American Colonization Society and African Kings], May 11, 1825 Holograph American Colonization Society Collection Manuscript Division (4)

Treaty between ACS and African Kings



In March 1825, the ACS began a quarterly, *The African Repository and Colonial Journal*, edited by Ralph Randolph Gurley (1797-1872), who headed the Society until 1844. Conceived as the society's propaganda organ, the journal promoted both colonization and Liberia. Among the items printed were articles about Africa, letters of praise, official dispatches stressing the prosperity and steady growth of the colony, information about emigrants, and lists of donors. This issue shows the first Liberian settlement at Cape Montserado (or Mesurado), which became the capital city, Monrovia.

The African Repository and Colonial Journal, vol. 1, no. 4, June 1825, p. 129 Journal Rare Book and Special Collections Division (5)

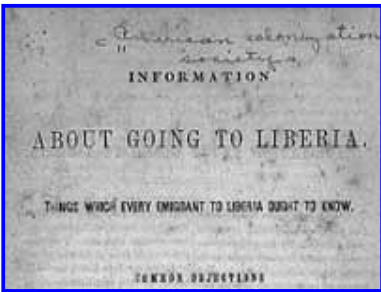
[Second ACS Journal](#)



For many years the ACS tried to persuade the United States Congress to appropriate funds to send colonists to Liberia. Although Henry Clay led the campaign, it failed. The society did, however, succeed in its appeals to some state legislatures. In 1850, Virginia set aside \$30,000 annually for five years to aid and support emigration. In its Thirty-Fourth Annual Report, the society acclaimed the news as "a great Moral demonstration of the propriety and necessity of state action!" During the 1850s, the society also received several thousand dollars from the New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Missouri, and Maryland legislatures.

[Act by State of Virginia making appropriations for removal of free persons of color to Liberia], 1850 American Colonization Society Papers Manuscript Division (7)

[Virginia Legislature Supports ACS](#)



During the 1830s, William Lloyd Garrison's violent condemnations of colonization as a slaveholder's plot to perpetuate slavery created deep hostility between abolitionists and colonizationists. Intended to encourage emigration and answer anti-colonization propaganda, the ACS pamphlet answers questions about household items needed in Liberia, climate, education, health conditions, and other concerns about the new country. Citing abolitionist charges that colonizationists merely wanted "to get clear of the colored people of the United States from their political and social disadvantages . . . to place them in a country where they may enjoy the benefits of free government . . . and to spread civilization, sound morals, and true religion throughout Africa."

Information About Going to Liberia: Things Which Every Emigrant Ought to Know. . . , title page Washington: American Colonization Society, 1848 Rare Book and Special Collections Division (8)

[Information for Emigrants](#)



By the 1840s, Liberia had become a financial burden on the ACS. In addition, Liberia faced political threats, chiefly from Britain, because it was neither a sovereign power nor a bona fide colony of any sovereign nation. Because the United States refused to claim sovereignty over Liberia, in 1846 the ACS ordered the Liberians to proclaim their independence. This map of the newly independent country shows the dates that the various territories were acquired. Settlements were located primarily along the coast and the many rivers leading inland. Inset maps highlight important areas of the country.

Republic of Liberia. Drawn under superintendence of Com. Lynch, USN, 1853 Map Geography and Map Division (9)

[Map of Liberia](#)

[Next section of the African-American Mosaic](#)

[Table of contents for the African-American Mosaic](#)



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[U.S.LIFE](#) > [People](#) > [Diversity](#) > The African-American Mosaic



African-American Mosaic

Liberia



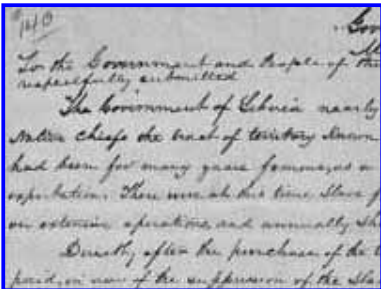
Joseph Jenkins Roberts (1809-1876), a wealthy Monrovia merchant who had emigrated in 1829 from Petersburg, Virginia, became the first black ACS governor of Liberia in 1841. In 1848, he was elected the first president of an independent Liberia. He achieved international recognition for the new country before leaving the presidency in 1856. After many years as president of Liberia College, Roberts again served as Liberian president from 1872-1876. Jane Waring Roberts, (b. 1818), the daughter of a Baptist minister who came to Liberia in 1824, became Roberts's second wife in 1836.



Joseph Jenkins Roberts, ca. 1855 Rufus Anson Daguerreotype Prints and Photographs Division (10a)

Jane Roberts, ca. 1855 Rufus Anson Daguerreotype Prints and Photographs Division (10b)

[First President](#) and [First Lady](#) of Liberia



In this 1849 letter, President Joseph Jenkins Roberts of Liberia appeals to the government and people of the United States for aid in purchasing the territory of Gallinas, enabling Liberia to control the West-African coast from Sierra Leone to Cape Palmas. As incentive, Roberts boasts of the eradication of the slave trade in territories recently acquired by Liberia and points out that adding Gallinas would enable the republic to keep the whole coast "free from the demoralizing and wilting influence of the Slave trade."

[Letter from President Joseph Jenkins Roberts of Liberia], May 19, 1849
Holograph American Colonization Society Papers Manuscript Division (11)

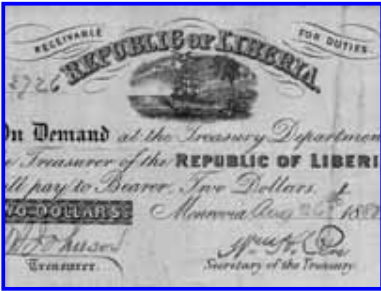
[President Roberts Seeks American Support](#)



In many respects, emigrants to Liberia re-created an American society there. The colonists spoke English and retained American manners, dress, and housing styles. Affluent citizens constructed two-story houses composed of a stone basement and a wood-framed body with a portico on both the front and rear, a style copied from buildings in the southern American states from which most of the emigrants came. Liberia's president lived in a handsome stone mansion that resembled a southern plantation house.

"President Roberts's House, Monrovia" Philadelphia: Wagner & McGuigan's, ca. 1850 Lithograph Prints and Photographs Division (12)

American Architectural Influence in Liberia



Like the United States, Liberia used dollars and cents as its units of currency. Reflecting the many inhabitants engaged in agriculture, early Liberian currency pictured farmers and farm animals. Later currency included a ship and palm trees like those on the national seal. During the 1830s, the Maryland Colonization Society, which had broken away from the ACS, ran its own colony call "Maryland in Liberia" and issued its own currency. The colony joined the Republic of Liberia in 1857.

[Liberian currency from the 1830s to the 1880s] Currency American Colonization Society Papers Manuscript Division (13)

Liberian Currency



Cape Palmas, founded in 1834, was the original settlement of the Maryland Colonization Society, which purchased the peninsula with muskets, powder, cloth, pots, beads, and other items of trade. The peninsula became the site of three missions, established to Christianize and civilize the native Africans. Known as "Mount Vaughan," the Episcopal mission educated many members of Liberia's indigenous tribes.

"Protestant Episcopal Mission, Cape Palmas, West Africa," ca. 1850s Woodcut Prints and Photographs Division (14)

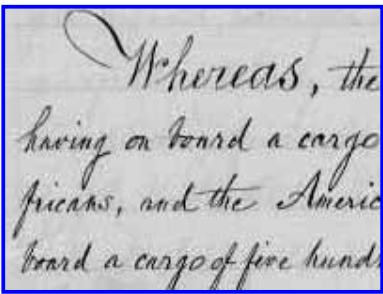
Mission at Cape Palmas



Fishtown was a settlement in the Grand Bass[u]a area of Liberia, south of Monrovia, near the St. John's River. In June 1835, one of the bloodiest episodes in early Liberian history occurred at the nearby Grand Bass[u]a settlement, where unarmed African-American settlers were massacred by native Africans upset by disruption of the local slave trade. A month later, militiamen from Monrovia attacked the area's African villages. A treaty in November 1835 bound African King Joe Harris to submit future disputes to the colonial authorities at Monrovia and to pay for property destroyed in the massacre.

"Fish Town at Bassua, Liberia" Watercolor Prints and Photographs Division (15)

Grand Bass[u]a Settlements



Whereas, the
having on board a cargo
Africans, and the American
board a cargo of five hundred

Congress made the importation of slaves into the United States illegal in 1808. In 1819, Congress passed an "Act in addition to the acts prohibiting the Slave Trade." This act authorized the president to send a naval squadron to African waters to apprehend illegal slave traders and appropriated \$100,000 to resettle recaptured slaves in Africa. At various times, the ACS entered into agreements with the U.S. government to settle these rescued victims of the slave trade in Liberia. By 1867, more than 5,700 people had come to Liberia under this program.

[Agreement to take recaptured slaves to Liberia], 1860 American Colonization Society Papers Manuscript Division (16)

[Settlement of Recaptured Slaves in Liberia](#)

[Next section of the African-American Mosaic](#)

[Table of contents for the African-American Mosaic](#)



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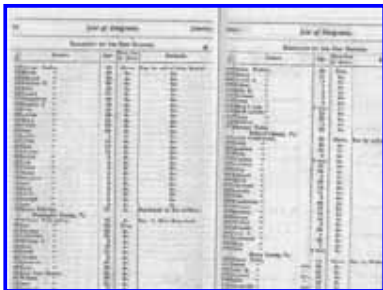
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[U.S.LIFE](#) > [People](#) > [Diversity](#) > The African-American Mosaic



African-American Mosaic

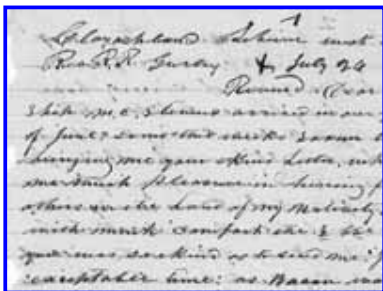
Personal Stories and ACS New Directions



[Robert E. Lee's Former Slaves Go to Liberia](#)

Before the Civil War, Robert E. Lee freed most of his slaves and offered to pay expenses for those who wanted to go to Liberia. In November 1853, Lee's former slaves William and Rosabella Burke and their four children sailed on the *Banshee*, which left Baltimore with 261 emigrants. A person of superior intelligence and drive, Burke studied Latin and Greek at a newly established seminary in Monrovia and became a Presbyterian minister in 1857. He helped educate his own children and other members of his community and took several native children into his home. The Burkes's letters describing their lives in Liberia show that they relied on the Lees to convey messages to and from relatives still in Virginia, and the letters also reflect affection for their former masters.

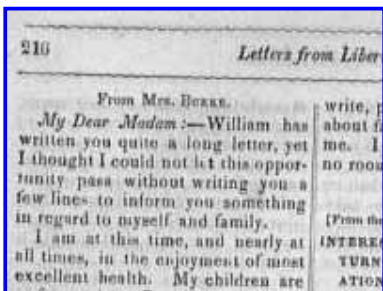
"Table of Emigrants," in *The African Repository and Colonial Journal*, vol. 30, no. 1, January 1854, p. 121 *Journal General Collections* (17)



[Letter from Liberian Colonist William Burke](#)

Despite the hardships of being a colonist, William Burke was enthusiastic about his new life. After five years in Liberia he wrote that "Persons coming to Africa should expect to go through many hardships, such as are common to the first settlement in any new country. I expected it, and was not disappointed or discouraged at any thing I met with; and so far from being dissatisfied with the country, I bless the Lord that ever my lot was cast in this part of the earth. The Lord has blessed me abundantly since my residence in Africa, for which I feel that I can never be sufficiently thankful."

[Letter from William Burke to ACS president Ralph R. Gurley], July 26, 1858 *American Colonization Society Papers Manuscript Division* (18)



[Letter from Liberian Colonist Rosabella Burke](#)

Letters from the Burkes to Mary Custis Lee, wife of Robert E. Lee, were published in the 1859 edition of *The African Repository* with Mrs. Lee's permission. This letter from Mrs. Burke to Mrs. Lee demonstrates personal warmth between the two women. Mrs. Burke shows concern for Mrs. Lee's health, tells Mrs. Lee about her children, and asks about the Lee children. The "little Martha" referred to was Martha Custis Lee Burke, born in Liberia and named for one of the Lee family. Repeating her husband's enthusiasm for their new life, Rosabella Burke says, "I love Africa and would not exchange it for America."

[Letter from Rosabella Burke to Mary Custis Lee], February 20, 1859, in *The African Repository and Colonial Journal*, vol. 35, no 7, July 1859, p. 216 *General Collections* (20)

APPLICANTS FOR A PASSAGE TO LIBERIA

No.	Name	Age	Sex	Color	Profession	Place of Birth	Parents	Religion	Remarks
1	John	25	M	Black	Farmer	Virginia	Timothy Rogers	Methodist	Timothy Rogers of Bedford County, Virginia, freed them in his will under the condition that they go to Liberia.
2

The ACS required potential emigrants to complete a form as part of their application for settlement in Liberia. This example lists twelve slaves whose master, Timothy Rogers of Bedford County, Virginia, freed them in his will under the condition that they go to Liberia. A note reveals that one of the group preferred to remain a slave if he were unable to free his wife, the property of another owner, to go with him. Forms like this provide a wealth of demographic and genealogical information about emigrants to Liberia.

"Applicants for Passage to Liberia," ca. 1852 American Colonization Society Papers Manuscript Division (21)

Information on Emigrants to Liberia



Because the soil around Monrovia was poor and the coastal areas were covered in dense jungle, many early emigrants to Liberia moved up the nearby St. Paul's River, where they found land suitable for farming. There they established small communities of people from the same geographic region in America. This photograph gives an idea of the appearance of the countryside in which the settlers began their new lives.

St. Paul's River, Liberia, ca. 1900 Photomural from silver-gelatin print Prints and Photographs Division (23)

St. Paul's River Landscape

TABLE OF EMIGRANTS SETTLED IN LIBERIA

Year	Virginia	North Carolina	Georgia	Other States	Total
1847	100	50	20	10	180
1848	150	100	50	20	320
1849	200	150	80	30	460
1850	250	200	100	40	600
1851	300	250	120	50	720
1852	350	300	150	60	860
1853	400	350	180	70	1,000
1854	450	400	200	80	1,130
1855	500	450	220	90	1,260
1856	550	500	250	100	1,400
1857	600	550	280	110	1,540
1858	650	600	300	120	1,670
1859	700	650	320	130	1,800
1860	750	700	350	140	1,940
1861	800	750	380	150	2,080
1862	850	800	400	160	2,210
1863	900	850	420	170	2,340
1864	950	900	450	180	2,480
1865	1,000	950	480	190	2,620
1866	1,050	1,000	500	200	2,750
1867	1,100	1,050	520	210	2,880
1868	1,150	1,100	550	220	3,020
1869	1,200	1,150	580	230	3,160
1870	1,250	1,200	600	240	3,290
1871	1,300	1,250	620	250	3,420
1872	1,350	1,300	650	260	3,560
1873	1,400	1,350	680	270	3,700
1874	1,450	1,400	700	280	3,830
1875	1,500	1,450	720	290	3,960
1876	1,550	1,500	750	300	4,100
1877	1,600	1,550	780	310	4,240
1878	1,650	1,600	800	320	4,370
1879	1,700	1,650	820	330	4,500
1880	1,750	1,700	850	340	4,640
1881	1,800	1,750	880	350	4,780
1882	1,850	1,800	900	360	4,920
1883	1,900	1,850	920	370	5,060
1884	1,950	1,900	950	380	5,200
1885	2,000	1,950	980	390	5,340
1886	2,050	2,000	1,000	400	5,480
1887	2,100	2,050	1,020	410	5,620
1888	2,150	2,100	1,050	420	5,760
1889	2,200	2,150	1,080	430	5,900
1890	2,250	2,200	1,100	440	6,040
1891	2,300	2,250	1,120	450	6,180
1892	2,350	2,300	1,150	460	6,320
1893	2,400	2,350	1,180	470	6,460
1894	2,450	2,400	1,200	480	6,600
1895	2,500	2,450	1,220	490	6,740
1896	2,550	2,500	1,250	500	6,880
1897	2,600	2,550	1,280	510	7,020
1898	2,650	2,600	1,300	520	7,160
1899	2,700	2,650	1,320	530	7,300
1900	2,750	2,700	1,350	540	7,440

In 1867, the American Colonization Society published this list showing the names of ships, dates of sailing, and number of emigrants by state through December 1866. By that time, more than 13,000 blacks had been settled in Liberia through ACS efforts. The peak years were between 1848 and 1854, when the society chartered forty-one ships and transported nearly 4,000 colonists. After falling to the twenties in 1863 and 1864, the numbers went up again after the Civil War, when 527 people went in 1865 and 621 in 1866. The table shows that the 3,733 Virginia emigrants were the largest group, followed by North Carolina with 1,371, and Georgia with 1,341.

"Table of Emigrants Settled in Liberia by the American Colonization Society," in *The African Repository and Colonial Journal*, vol. 43, no. 4, April 1867, p. 117 General Collections (24)

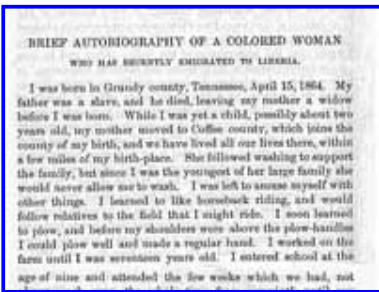
Information on Emigrants Settled in Liberia



In the spring of 1880, a group of 150 African-Americans from Arkansas was living in temporary quarters at Mt. Olivet Baptist Chapel on 37th Street in New York before going to Liberia. Because the ACS had chartered the only ship that regularly went to Liberia, this group, which was going under its own auspices, was trying to charter another ship. The article that described their circumstances, entitled "Colored Exodus from Arkansas," stated that another 50,000 blacks were preparing to emigrate from the Gulf states to Arizona and New Mexico, where they planned to purchase farm land.

"Refugees awaiting transportation to Liberia at Mr. Olivet Baptist Chapel, New York City" From, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated News*, April 24, 1880, p. 120 Photomural from woodcut Prints and Photographs Division (25)

Exodus from Arkansas

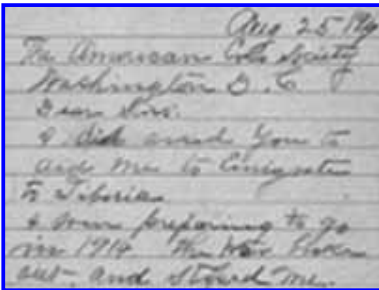


New Directions for the ACS

In 1892, the ACS abandoned publication of *The African Repository* and replaced it with *Liberia*. The name change reflected a new direction for the society, as announced in the first issue of *Liberia*. Instead of aiding emigrants, the ACS turned its attention to the question of "How can the society best help and strengthen Liberia?" The society committed itself to fostering a public-school system in Liberia, promoting more frequent ships between the U.S. and Liberia, collecting and diffusing more reliable information about Liberia, and enabling Liberia to depend more on herself. Future colonists were to be selected with a view to the needs of Liberia, not their own situations. An example of this preferred type of colonist was Miss Georgia Patton, described in an early issue of *Liberia*. Well-educated, Miss Patton planned to practice medicine and teach school in Liberia. She also shared the ACS goals of doing good for others and spreading Christianity and civilization in Africa.

"Brief Autobiography of a Colored Woman Who Has Recently Emigrated to Liberia," in *Liberia*, no. 3, November 1893, pp. 78-79 General Collections (26)

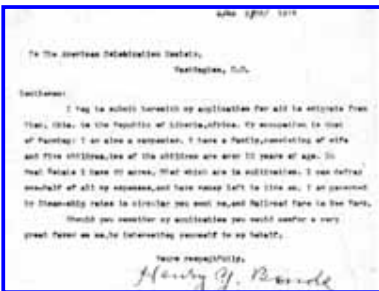
"Dey's Mission, Liberia," ca. 1900 Photomural from silver-gelatin print Prints and Photographs Division (27)



Did Bonds Ever Reach Liberia?

In the summer of 1919, Henry Bonds, still in the U.S. and having moved to Tullahassee, Oklahoma, wrote the society once again about going to Liberia. He pointed out that World War I had stopped him, but that he still wanted to go and wanted to know if the aid promised him was still good. A number of letters between Bonds and the ACS exist, but they do not answer the question whether or not Bonds ever reached Liberia. Perhaps further research could provide the answer and more information about Bonds and his family.

[Letter from Henry Bonds of Tullahassee, Oklahoma], August 25, 1919
Holograph American Colonization Society Papers Manuscript Division (28)



Application for ACS Help in Going to Liberia

In 1912, Henry Young Bonds of Vian, Oklahoma, began correspondence with the ACS about going to Liberia. As part of his application, Bonds sent in this formal, notarized form. Bonds expected to defray half of the \$591 he needed as passage money for himself and his family and asked the ACS for the other part. He planned to sell his land to raise money for support while getting established in Liberia. After a two-year application process, Bond's request was approved by the ACS. He planned to sail in October 1914, but was prevented from doing so by the outbreak of World War I.

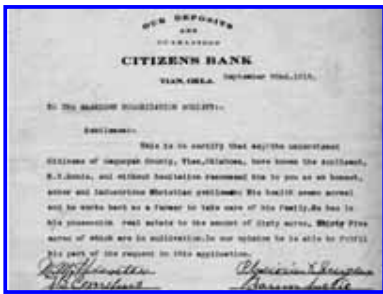
[Formal application of Henry Bonds to emigrate to Liberia], 1913 Legal document American Colonization Society Papers Manuscript Division (29)



Henry Bonds Hopes to Emigrate

As part of his application for ACS aid in emigrating to Liberia, Henry Bonds submitted a postcard with a photograph of his family. Left to right are Catherine, eight; Bonds; Loretta, three; Bonds's wife Mary; and Floyd, six. Not pictured are two unnamed older, married children, perhaps from an earlier marriage, who did not wish to emigrate. Born in 1864 near Guntown, Mississippi, Bonds had come to Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) in April 1890. His wife Mary, thirty, born in Indian Territory near Tahlequah, was educated in the Cherokee colored high school and had taught in the Vian colored school.

[Henry Y. Bonds and family], ca. 1912 Photomural from silver-gelatin print American Colonization Society Papers Manuscript Division (30)



Because the American Colonization Society was very concerned about the character of emigrants they sent to Liberia, applicants had to submit letters of recommendation. This highly favorable letter came from officials of the Citizens Bank of Vian. Bonds also supplied one from J.H. Dodd, M.D., who said that Bonds had "a host of friends in all the races" and that his family was "regarded as one of the very best in the country."

[Letter of recommendation for Henry Bonds], 1913 American Colonization Society Papers Manuscript Division (31)

Recommendation for Liberia Applicant



Beginning in the early 1800s, Cherokees, Choctaws, and other eastern Native American tribes signed treaties giving up southeastern land in return for land west of the Mississippi in what became known as Indian Territory, or even later, Oklahoma. In addition, some tribes were removed to the areas by force. After the Civil War, the United States government confiscated territory from Native Americans who had supported the Confederacy and, in 1889, opened that land to other settlers. This map of the Vian area shows land owned by Henry Bonds's children. A plot in the left corner of section 34 and one in the lower middle are assigned to his daughter Catherine Bonds, "N.B.F.," which stands for "new-born freedman," a term apparently applied to blacks born after Emancipation, as well as former slaves. The plot labelled N.B.F. 457, is also probably part of a Bonds claim. It is unclear why the land was in the children's names.

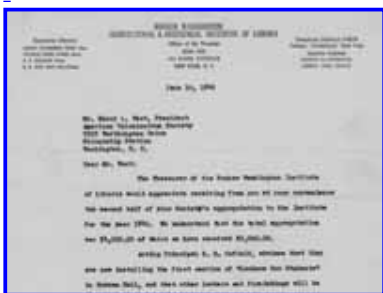
Map showing Vian, Oklahoma, and Surrounding Territory

[Map of Vian area] *Indian Territory: Cherokee Nation Muskogee*, Indian Territory [Oklahoma]: Indian Territory Map Company, 1909 Photomural Geography and Map Division (32)



The Booker T. Washington Institute at Kakata, Liberia, was founded in 1929 by a group of American missionary and philanthropic organizations, including the American Colonization Society. Like Tuskegee Institute, the school emphasized vocational training and prepared many young Liberians for jobs in agriculture, auto mechanics, carpentry, masonry, and other trades. The campus of the institute was built on a 1,000-acre tract of land granted by the Liberian government. As the accompanying letter shows, the ACS provided funding for the institution.

Campus of Booker T. Washington Institute in Liberia, ca. 1940 Photomural from silver-gelatin print Prints and Photographs Division (33)



[Letter about ACS support for Booker T. Washington Institute], June 10, 1940 Typed letter American Colonization Society Papers Manuscript Division (34)

ACS Supports Liberian Education [campus][letter]

[Next section of the African-American Mosaic](#)

[Table of contents for the African-American Mosaic](#)



Library of Congress

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[U.S.LIFE](#) > [People](#) > [Diversity](#) > The African-American Mosaic



African-American Mosaic

Abolition

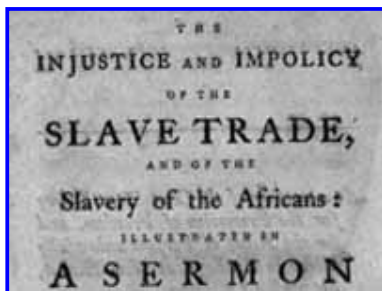
The American Anti-Slavery Society was established in 1833, but abolitionist sentiment antedated the republic. For example, the charter of Georgia prohibited slavery, and many of its settlers fought a losing battle against allowing it in the colony. Before independence, Quakers, most black Christians, and other religious groups argued that slavery was incompatible with Christ's teaching. Moreover, a number of revolutionaries saw the glaring contradiction between demanding freedom for themselves while holding slaves. Although the economic center of slavery was in the South, northerners also held slaves, as did African Americans and Native Americans. Moreover, some southerners opposed slavery. Blacks were in the vanguard of the anti-slavery movement. Abolitionist literature began to appear about 1820. Until the Civil War, the anti-slavery press produced a steadily growing stream of newspapers, periodicals, sermons, children's publications, speeches, abolitionist society reports, broadsides, and memoirs of former slaves.

The Library of Congress has a wealth of material that demonstrates the extent of public support for and opposition to abolition. Broadsides advertise fairs and bazaars that women's groups held to raise money for the cause. Other publications advertise abolitionist rallies, some of which are pictured in prints from contemporaneous periodicals. To build enthusiasm at their meetings, anti-slavery organizations used songs, some of which survive. The Library also has many political and satirical prints from the 1830s through the 1850s that demonstrate the rising sectional controversy during that time.

Although excellent studies of the abolition movement exist, further research in the Library's manuscripts could document the lesser known individuals who formed the movement's core. Other promising topics include the roles of women and black abolitionists and the activities of state and local abolitionist societies.

Abolition Checklist

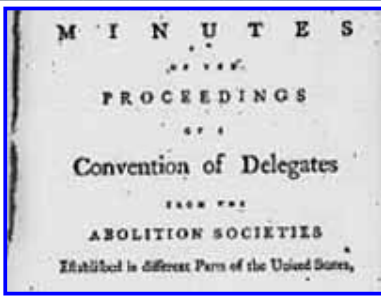
Abolition as a Social Movement



[Early Anti-Slavery Publication](#)

Jonathan Edwards, Jr., (1745-1801), was, like his more famous father, a Congregationalist minister. He served at the White Haven Church in New Haven, Connecticut, and later became president of Union College in Schenectady, New York. In this sermon, Edwards presented forceful arguments against ten common pro-slavery positions. One of the earliest anti-slavery publications in the Library of Congress collections, the sermon demonstrates the existence of strong anti-slavery feeling in the early days of the republic.

Injustices and Impolicy of the Slave Trade and of the Slavery of Africans . . .,
Title page Jonathan Edwards [Jr.], Author New Haven: Thomas & Samuel Green, 1791 Rare Book and Special Collections Division (35)



Minutes of Early Anti-Slavery Meeting

On January 1, 1794, delegates from the abolition societies of Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland met in Philadelphia, a stronghold of the anti-slavery Quaker religion. The group voted to petition Congress to prohibit the slave trade and also to appeal to the legislatures of the various states to abolish slavery. The petitions pointed out the inconsistency of a country that had recently rejected the tyranny of kings engaging in "domestic despotism." Delegates published an address urging on U.S. citizens "the obligations of justice, humanity, and benevolence toward our Africa brethren, whether in bondage or free." The group planned to meet each January until slavery was abolished.

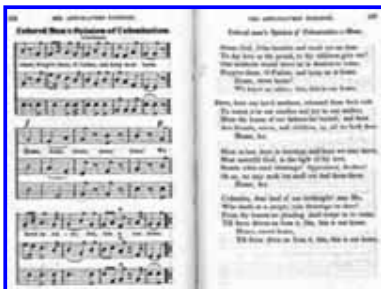
Minutes of Proceedings of a Convention of Delegates from the Abolition Societies..., Title page Philadelphia: Zachariah Poulson, 1794 Rare Book and Special Collections Division (36)



Anti-Slavery Publication for Children

The American Anti-Slavery Society produced *The Slave's Friend*, a monthly pamphlet of abolitionist poems, songs, and stories for children. In its pages, young readers were encouraged to collect money for the anti-slavery cause. Here a picture of the coffee-yoke used to chain groups of slaves together illustrates a dialogue about the horrors of slavery between a girl named Ellen and her father, Mr. Murray. A shocked Ellen concludes that "I will never boast of our liberty while there is a slave in this land."

The Slave's Friend, Volume II, p. 3 New York: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1836 Rare Book and Special Collections Division (37)



Anti-Colonization Song

Anti-colonization sentiment was common in abolitionist publications such as *The Anti-Slavery Picknick*, a collection of speeches, poems, dialogues, and songs intended for use in schools and anti-slavery meetings. A song called the "Colored Man's Opinion of Colonization" denounces plans to transport free blacks out of the United States. Many African-Americans opposed colonization, and, in 1831, a convention of free blacks meeting in New York asserted, "This is our home, and this is our country. Beneath its sod lie the bones of our fathers; for it some of them fought, bled, and died. Here we were born, and here we will die."

The Anti-Slavery Picknick, pp. 106-107 Boston: H.W. Williams, 1842 Rare Book and Special Collections Division (38)



Anti-Slavery Fair Advertisement

Although women were heavily involved in abolitionist activities, opinion was divided as to their proper role. Some people believed that women should serve in auxiliary roles that did not expose them to competition with men. However, many women played a highly visible role as writers and speakers for the cause. Some of them gained activist experience that they later used in support of women's rights. In this circular, the women of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society advertise a fundraising event to support an agent. Well-known abolitionists such as Maria W. Chapman, a spirited speaker, song writer, and editor of many volumes of *The Liberty Bell* songbook, and Helen E. Garrison, wife of William Lloyd Garrison, were involved in the event.

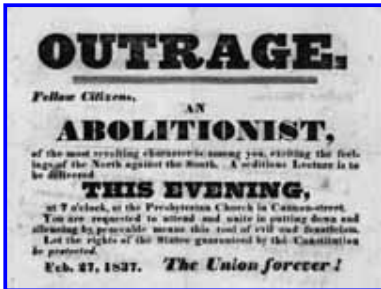
"Anti-Slavery Fair" Boston: Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society Broadside Rare Book and Special Collections Division (39)



[Slavery in the Washington, D.C., Area](#)

This broadside condemns the sale and keeping of slaves in the District of Columbia. The work was issued during the 1835-1836 campaign to have Congress abolish slavery in the Capital. At the top are contrasting scenes: a view of a reading of the Declaration of Independence, captioned "The Land of the Free," with a scene of slaves being led past the Capitol, captioned "The Home of the Oppressed." Also shown is the infamous Franklin & Armfield Slave Prison, still standing on Duke Street in Alexandria, Virginia. Opened in 1828, this center soon gained control of nearly half the sea trade in slaves between Virginia and Maryland and New Orleans. Most area slaves "sold South" were held there before being shipped to a dreaded future on a rice, cotton or indigo plantation.

"Slave Market of America" New York: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1836 Broadside Rare Book and Special Collections Division (40)



[Anti-Abolitionist Handbill](#)

This handbill urging opponents of abolitionists to obstruct an anti-slavery meeting demonstrates the depth of pro-slavery feeling. Although the handbill advocates peaceful means, violence sometimes erupted between the two factions. An emotion-laden handbill was a factor in the well-known Boston riot of October 21, 1835. In that incident, a mob broke into the hall where the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society was meeting, and threatened William Lloyd Garrison's life.

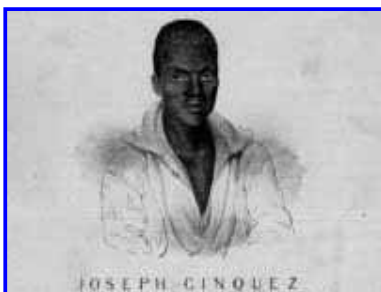
"Outrage," February 2, 1837 Handbill Rare Book and Special Collections Division (41)



[Anti-Slavery Almanac](#)

Each year the American Anti-Slavery Society distributed an almanac containing poems, drawings, essays, and other abolitionist material. This issue was compiled by Lydia Maria Child (1802-1880), a popular writer recruited to the abolitionist cause by William Lloyd Garrison. In 1833, Mrs. Child produced An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans, a sensational anti-slavery publication that won converts to the movement. From 1841 to 1849, she edited the New York-based National Anti-Slavery Standard newspaper.

[Lydia] M[aria] Child, comp. *The Anti-Slavery Almanac for 1843*, cover New York: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1843 Rare Book and Special Collections Division (42)



[Slave-Revolt Leader Joseph Cinquez](#)

Joseph Cinquez (or Cinque) was one of a group of Africans from Sierra Leone who had been kidnapped and sold into slavery. In July 1839, Cinquez led a revolt on the slave ship Amistad, off Cuba. The slaves took control of the ship and killed the crew, but were soon captured and charged with piracy. Their subsequent trials in New Haven, Connecticut, were causes celebres, pitting abolitionists against President Martin Van Buren's administration. In March 1841, the Supreme Court upheld the lower court's decision to return Cinquez and his surviving friends to Africa. John Quincy Adams had represented the Africans before the Supreme Court, and they were set free largely as a result of his eloquent pleading.

"Joseph Cinquez, the brave Congolese Chief, who prefers death to Slavery, and who now lies in jail..." James or Isaac Sheffield, Illustrator New York: Moses Beach, 1839 Lithograph Prints and Photographs Division (43)



Abolitionist Song

The illustration on this sheet-music cover is an allegory of the triumph of abolitionism. A railroad car called "Immediate Emancipation," is pulled by a locomotive named "Liberator." These two names refer to William Lloyd Garrison, whose demand for immediate emancipation was expressed in his newspaper *The Liberator*. "Repealer," the second locomotive, probably refers to the Irish insurgent movement, a cause with which many U.S. abolitionists were allied. Flags bearing the names of two other abolitionist publications, the *Herald of Freedom* and *American Standard* (or *National Anti-Slavery Standard*) fly from the "Emancipation" car. In the distance, two other trains, one marked "Van," the other "Clay," crash, and their passengers flee. These trains allude to Democrat and Whig presidential hopefuls Martin Van Buren and Henry Clay.

"Get Off The Track: A Song for Emancipation...," cover Jesse Hutchinson, Author Boston, 1844 Sheet music Prints and Photographs Division (44)



Like many other reformers, abolitionists felt that good crusades required singing. Hence, many abolitionists expressed themselves in verse and songs. The cover of this sheet-music shows a fictionalized and inaccurate version of the escape from slavery of Frederick Douglass (1817-1895), who actually fled by ship. The song is dedicated to Douglass "for his fearless advocacy, signal ability, and wonderful success in behalf of His Brothers in Bonds."

"The Fugitive's Song...,"cover Boston: Henry Prentiss, 1845 Sheet-music Prints and Photographs Division (45)

Abolitionist Sheet-Music



Abolitionist materials aimed at women often appealed to their sympathetic feeling as wives and mothers for the plight of slave women who might be separated from their husbands or children.

"The Negro Woman's Appeal to Her White Sisters" Richard Barrett, ca. 1850s Broadside Rare Book and Special Collections Division (46)

Abolitionist Appeal to Women

[Next section of the African-American Mosaic](#)

[Table of contents for the African-American Mosaic](#)



Library of Congress

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[U.S.LIFE](#) > [People](#) > [Diversity](#) > The African-American Mosaic



African-American Mosaic

Influence of Prominent Abolitionists



The abolitionist movement took shape in 1833, when William Lloyd Garrison, Arthur and Lewis Tappan, and others formed the American Anti-Slavery Society in Philadelphia. The group issued this manifesto announcing the reasons for formation of the society and enumerating its goals. The broadside includes the names of delegates from ten states, to the Anti-Slavery Convention.

"Declaration of the Anti-Slavery Convention Assembled in Philadelphia, December 4, 1833" R[ueben] S. Gilbert, Illustrator Philadelphia: Merrihew & Gunn, 1833 Broadside Rare Book and Special Collections Division (47)

[Declaration of the Anti-Slavery Convention, 1833](#)



Each year the American Anti-Slavery Society distributed an almanac containing poems, drawings, essays, and other abolitionist material. This broadside groups together illustrations of the horrors of slavery that were used in the 1840 edition.

"Illustrations of the Anti-Slavery Almanac for 1840" New York: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1840 Broadside Rare Book and Special Collections Division (48)

[Illustrations of the Anti-Slavery Almanac](#)



[Frederick Douglass's North Star](#)

From 1847 to 1863, escaped slave and abolitionist Frederick Douglass (1817-1895) published the *North Star* with the aid of money and a press provided by British philanthropists. The paper was published in Rochester, New York. Douglass's goals were to "abolish slavery in all its forms and aspects, advocate UNIVERSAL EMANCIPATION, exalt the standard of public morality, and promote the moral and intellectual improvement of the COLORED PEOPLE, and hasten the day of FREEDOM to the Three Millions of our enslaved fellow countrymen." The paper also advanced women's rights, a cause that Douglass had championed since his participation in the first women's rights convention of 1848. Douglass also published another abolitionist paper, the Frederick Douglass Paper.

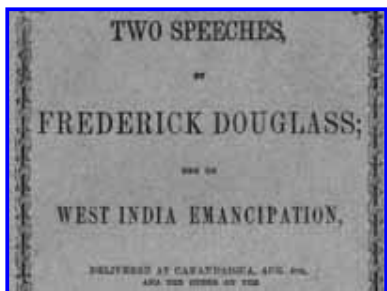
North Star, June 20, 1850, p. 1 Newspaper Serial and Government Publications



[Fugitive Slave Anthony Burns](#)

This broadside shows Anthony Burns, whose arrest and trial under the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 touched off riots and protests by abolitionists and citizens of Boston in the spring of 1854. A bust portrait of the twenty-four-year-old Burns is surrounded by scenes from his life. These include the sale of the young Burns at auction, his escape from Richmond, Virginia, his arrest in Boston, his trial, and his departure from Boston escorted by armed marshals, to be returned to slavery in Virginia. The Burns case became a rallying point for opponents of slavery, who produced this broadside to remember his unjust treatment.

"Anthony Burns" Boston: R.M. Edwards, 1855 Broadside Prints and Photographs Division (50)



[Publications of Frederick Douglass](#)

Frederick Douglass (1817-1895) was born a slave, but escaped North to freedom in 1838. He became a celebrated abolitionist speaker, and his speeches were widely circulated in print. Douglass used his lecture fees to aid fugitive slaves and headed the Rochester station of the underground railroad. One of the speeches in this pamphlet was delivered at a celebration of the anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the West Indies on August 1, 1834. Before emancipation in the United States, West Indian emancipation day was widely celebrated by opponents of slavery. In the second speech, Douglass denounces the controversial Dred Scott decision of March 6, 1857, in which the Supreme Court, under Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, denied Scott's claim that he was free because he had been taken into free territory and declared that no black could be a citizen under the Constitution.

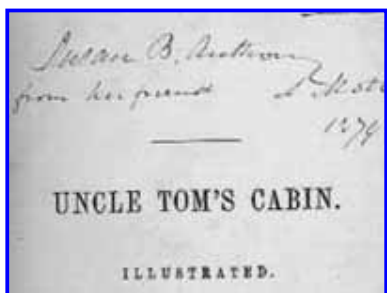
Two Speeches by Frederick Douglass, Rochester, New York: C.P. Dewey, 1857 Manuscript Division (51)



[Wendell Phillips Speaks Against the Fugitive Slave Law](#)

The illustration is from a popular nineteenth-century publication. It shows reformer Wendell Phillips (1811-1884) addressing an April 11, 1851 meeting to protest the case of Thomas Sims, a fugitive slave being tried in Boston. A fiery and persuasive orator, Phillips was a member of the Boston Committee of Vigilance that tried to prevent Sims from being returned to slavery. The attempts failed and on April 13, United States marshals marched Sims to a ship that returned him to Savannah, where he was publicly whipped.

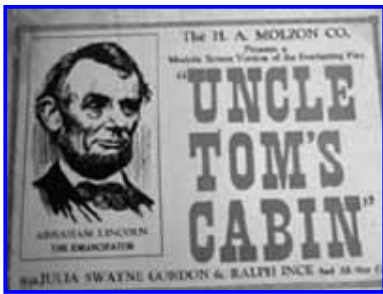
Anti-Slavery Meeting on the [Boston] Common From *Gleason's Pictorial*, May 3, 1851 Photomural from woodcut Prints and Photographs Division (52)



[Copy of Uncle Tom's Cabin Owned by Noted Abolitionists](#)

In 1903, women's rights activist Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) gave her personal book collection to the Library of Congress. Before sending the books, Miss Anthony inscribed many of the volumes. Her notations explain that this copy of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was originally given to well-known anti-slavery and women's rights advocate Lydia Mott by her friend William Topp, a tailor and black abolitionist from Albany, New York. In 1874, Miss Mott gave the book to Miss Anthony. Published in 1852, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* sold 300,000 copies in its first year and intensified significantly the polarization of abolitionist and anti-abolitionist sentiment that contributed to the Civil War.

Uncle Tom's Cabin, Half title page Harriet Beecher Stowe Boston: John P. Jewett & Company, 1853 Susan B. Anthony Collection Rare Book and Special Collections Division (53)



[Film versions of Uncle Tom's Cabin](#)

Uncle Tom's Cabin was often produced as a play and later as a film, and many people who did not read the book saw it dramatized. Although white actors usually played the parts in blackface, some productions starred African-American actors and singers. At least seven silent versions had been made by 1927, and a black actor, Sam Lucas, first played the title role on film in 1914. This title card, used in theater lobbies to advertise the film, is from a rare issue of a thirty-minute silent film originally released by Vitagraph Studio in 1910. Directed by J. Stuart Blackton, a noted director of the period, this version featured Maurice Costello, Clara Kimball Young, and Norma Talmadge, all of whom became major stars.

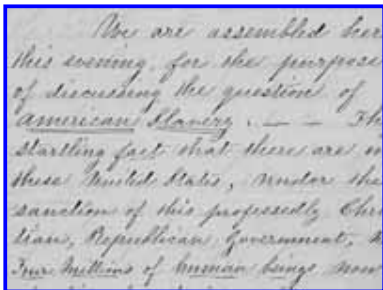
Title card for "Uncle Tom's Cabin," ca. 1910 H.A Molzon Company [Motion Picture, Broadcast, and Recorded Sound Division](#) (53.1)



[Anti-Slavery Broadside](#)

The large woodcut image of a slave in chains was originally adopted as the seal of the Society for the Abolition of Slavery in England in the 1780s and appeared on medallions made by Josiah Wedgwood as early as 1787. A popular image, it often appeared in anti-slavery publications. On this broadside of 1837, the image is coupled with "Our Countrymen in Chains," a famous poem by Quaker author John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892). Among his many anti-slavery publications was an entire volume, *Poems Written During the Progress of the Abolition Cause in the United States* (1837). In 1833 Whittier acted as secretary of the Anti-Slavery Convention at Philadelphia and was one of the committee that drafted its declaration of principles.

"Our Countrymen in Chains" John Greenleaf Whittier, Author New York: Anti-Slavery Office, 1837 Broadside Rare Book and Special Collections Division (54)



[Susan B. Anthony Attacks Slavery](#)

Susan B. Anthony, a powerful speaker and writer, campaigned for temperance and abolition as well as women's rights. Like many suffragettes, she saw parallels between the lack of rights and opportunities for women and the bondage of slavery. When the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution granted the vote to black males, Anthony fought unsuccessfully to have women included. In this speech from 1859, Miss Anthony urged her audience to "make the slave's case our own." She further entreated, "Let us feel that it is ourselves and our kith and our kin who are despoiled of our inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, that it is our own backs that are bared to the slave-driver's lash... that it is our own children, that are ruthlessly torn from our yearning mother hearts."

"Make the Slave's Case Our Own," 1859 Susan B. Anthony, Author Holograph Manuscript Division (55)

[Next section of the African-American Mosaic](#)

[Table of contents for the African-American Mosaic](#)



Library of Congress

[U.S.LIFE](#) > [People](#) > [Diversity](#) > The African-American Mosaic



African-American Mosaic

Conflict of Abolition and Slavery



This map compares statistics on free and slave states. Issued during the presidential election campaign of 1856, it pictures famous Western explorer John C. Fremont (1813-1890), the first presidential candidate of the Republican Party, and his running mate, William L. Dayton (1807-1864). The Republican Party had been created in 1854 by opponents of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, which allowed for extension of slavery into free territory in the West. Despite gaining thirty-three percent of the popular vote, Frémont lost the election to James Buchanan (1791-1868). Four years later, however, the Republican Party succeeded in electing Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865).

[Map Comparing Slave and Free States](#)

Reynolds Political Map of the United States, designed to exhibit the comparative Area of the free and slave states New York and Chicago, 1856 Map Geography and Map Division (56)



This map, entitled Historical Geography, portrays American history as a conflict between two opposing trees struggling to dominate the land. One was the tree of slavery, planted at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619; the other, planted by the Pilgrims at Plymouth in 1620, was the tree of liberty. The text at the bottom of the map explains the allegory and associates the Republican Party with the liberty tree.

[Conflict between Trees of Slavery and Liberty](#)

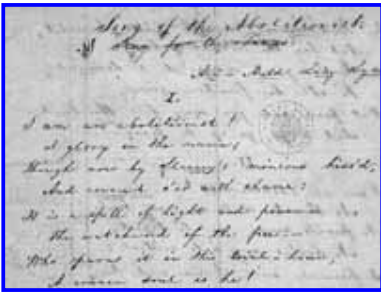
Historical Geography, by John F. Smith Chicago, 1888 Map Geography and Map Division (57)



[Early Copy of The Liberator](#)

William Lloyd Garrison (1805-1879) issued the first number of *The Liberator* on January 1, 1831. The radical tone of the paper was unprecedented because it labelled slave-holding a crime and called for immediate abolition. When the Nat Turner rebellion of August 1831 escalated Southern fears of slave uprisings, some Southern states passed laws making circulation of *The Liberator* a crime and called for prosecution of Garrison. Although he had detractors, Garrison quickly became a noted leader of the anti-slavery movement and helped launch the American Anti-Slavery Society in Philadelphia in 1833. Until he ceased publication in 1865, Garrison employed the *Liberator* to advance militant anti-slavery views. He especially opposed African colonization, as is shown in the article entitled "Emigration" in column one of this issue.

The Liberator, May 21, 1831, p. 1 Newspaper Rare Book and Special Collections Division (59)



Beginning in the 1840s, abolitionist societies used songs to stir up enthusiasm at their meetings. To make the songs easier to learn, new words were often set to familiar tunes. This 1841 song by William Lloyd Garrison has six stanzas set to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne."

"Song of the Abolitionist," 1841 William Lloyd Garrison, Author Holograph Manuscript Division (60)

Abolitionist Song



On April 19, 1866, the African-American citizens of Washington, D.C., celebrated the abolition of slavery. A procession of 4,000 to 5,000 people assembled at the White House, where they were addressed by President Andrew Johnson (1808-1875). Marching past 10,000 cheering spectators, the procession, led by two black regiments, proceeded up Pennsylvania Avenue to Franklin Square for religious services and speeches by prominent politicians. A sign on top of the speaker's platform read: "We have received our civil rights. Give us the right of suffrage and the work is done."

Abolition Celebration in Washington, D.C.

"Celebration of the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia by the colored people in Washington, April 19, 1866," From *Harper's Weekly*, May 12, 1866, p. 300 Photomural from woodcut Prints and Photographs Division (62)



John Brown (1800-1859) was an abolitionist who took direct action to free slaves by force. Following his raid on the arsenal at Harpers Ferry, in mid-October 1859, he was convicted of treason, conspiracy, and murder. One of the most controversial abolitionists, Brown was regarded by some as a martyr and by others as a common assassin. Brown's dignified bearing in prison and at his trial moved many spectators. Ralph Waldo Emerson said that Brown's death would "make the gallows as glorious as the cross." This image shows a heroic Brown being adored by a slave mother and child as he walks to his execution on December 2, 1859.

Idealized Portrayal of John Brown *John Brown, The Martyr* New York: Currier and Ives, 1870 Prints and Photographs Division (127)

[Next section of the African-American Mosaic](#)

[Table of contents for the African-American Mosaic](#)



Library of Congress

[U.S.LIFE](#) > [People](#) > [Diversity](#) > The African-American Mosaic



African-American Mosaic

Migrations



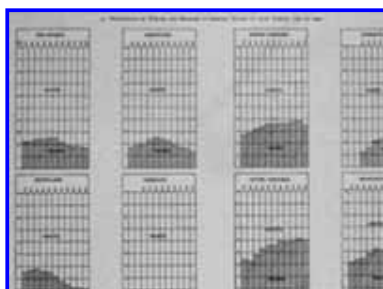
When the Emancipation Proclamation was signed less than 8 percent of the African-American population lived in the Northeast or Midwest. Even by 1900, approximately 90 percent of all African-Americans still resided in the South. However, migration from the South has long been a significant feature of black history. An early exodus from the South occurred between 1879 and 1881, when about 60,000 African-Americans moved into Kansas and others settled in the Oklahoma Indian Territories in search of social and economic freedom.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, movement of blacks to the North increased tremendously. The reasons for this "Great Migration," as it came to be called, are complex. Thousands of African-Americans left the South to escape sharecropping, worsening economic conditions, and the lynch mob. They sought higher wages, better homes, and political rights. Between 1940 and 1970 continued migration transformed the country's African-American population from a predominately southern, rural group to a northern, urban one.

The movement of African-Americans within the United States continues today. Further research in the Library's general and special collections could help assess how migration affected social and economic changes in individual cities, towns, neighborhoods, and even families.

Migrations Checklist

Statistical and Geographical Patterns



Maps and atlases are useful tools in tracing migration patterns. Probably the first atlases to include maps portraying the distribution of blacks in the United States were statistical ones based on United States censuses. The bar graph from the eleventh census shows the percentage of whites and blacks for sixteen states at each census from 1790 to 1890. The map shows the proportion of colored people (a term used to include blacks, Chinese, Japanese, and Indians) and their distribution and density per square mile.

Statistical Atlas of the United States, Based upon the Results of the Eleventh Census, p. 18 Henry Gannett, ed. Washington: GPO, 1898 Bar graph Geography and Map Division (95)



Statistical Atlas of the United States, Based upon the Results of the Eleventh Census, Map 29, Plate 11 Henry Gannett, ed. Washington: GPO, 1898 Color map Geography and Map Division (96)

Maps As Tools in Tracing Migration Patterns [[chart](#)][[map](#)]



By 1950, the black population comprised approximately eleven percent of the population of the United States, while black migrants comprised forty percent of the population in several of the U.S. major cities. This 1950 map shows counties with 500 or more blacks and their distribution, and graphically represents how the black population and become concentrated in northern cities during the first half of the twentieth century.

Distribution of Negro Population by County: Showing each County with 500 Negro Population, 1950 Samuel Fitzsimmons United States. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census, Volume 11, 1950 Color map Geography and Map Division (97)

[Map Showing Distribution of Black Population](#)

[Next section of the African-American Mosaic](#)

[Table of contents for the African-American Mosaic](#)



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[U.S.LIFE](#) > [People](#) > [Diversity](#) > The African-American Mosaic



African-American Mosaic

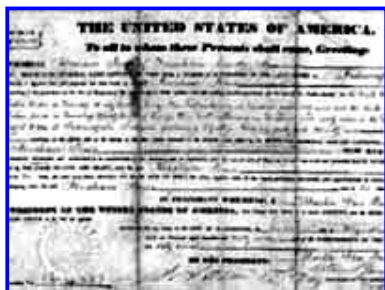
Western Migration and Homesteading



Landownership maps and atlases were published by commercial companies, usually on a subscription basis, for the wealthier rural areas. Landownership atlases also documented the migration of blacks to the Midwest. A map of Noblesville, the fifth seat of Hamilton, County, Indiana, shows the site of the Roberts Settlement. In 1909, Stephen Roberts Jr. (b. 1849), grandson of Willis Roberts, the first settler, was still buying cattle in Noblesville.

Hamilton County, Indiana Indiana: The Hamilton Trust Company, 1906 Map Geography and Map Division (98)

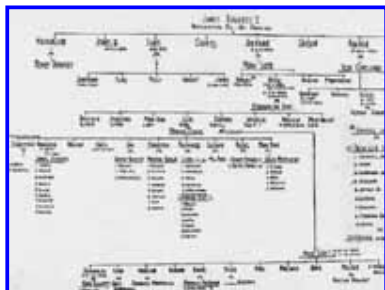
[Map Locating Noblesville, Indiana](#)



Abraham Jones's 1837 land-grant certificate, signed by President Martin Van Buren, is typical of those issued to the colonists of the Roberts Settlement.

Land grant certificate The Roberts Family Papers, 1734-1944 Manuscript Division (99)

[Roberts Settlement Land Grant](#)



The Roberts family chart traces the descendants of James Roberts I of Northampton County, North Carolina, grandfather of Willis Roberts (1782-1846) and founder of the Roberts Settlement in Noblesville, Indiana. Willis Roberts became a prosperous farmer and eventually married Mary Marthaline Hunt. They had eight children born between 1803 and 1819.

Photocopy of manuscript chart Roberts Family Papers, 1734-1944 Manuscript Division (100)

[Roberts Family Genealogical Chart](#)



Jobs of Black Women in World War I

During World War I, industrial opportunities became available to women when workers were needed to replace men drafted into military service. Black women responded to the demand by leaving their homes and domestic jobs. This chart shows a sampling of the industrial occupations of 21,547 black women in approximately seventy-five specific processes, at 152 plants, during the period December 1, 1918, to June 30, 1919. The report was made by Mrs. Helen B. Irvin, Special Agent of the Women's Bureau on 1918-1919. United States. Department of Labor. Division of Negro Economics.

The Negro at Work During the World War and During Reconstruction: Statistics, Problems, and Policies Relating to the Greater Inclusion of Negro Wage Earners in American Industry and Agriculture, p. 125 New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969 General Collections (101)



Founder and Editor of the Chicago Defender

African-American journalist Robert Sengstacke Abbott (1868-1940) founded the Chicago Defender on May 6, 1905, with a capital totalling twenty-five cents. His editorial creed was to fight against "segregation, discrimination, disenfranchisement . . ." The Defender reached national prominence during the mass migration of blacks from the South during World War I, when the paper's banner headline for January 6, 1917, read "Millions to Leave South." The Defender became the bible of many seeking "The Promised Land." Abbott advertised Chicago so effectively that even migrants heading for other northern cities sought information and assistance from the pages of the "Worlds Greatest Weekly."

Kenneth L. Kusmer, Ed. *The Great Migration and After, 1917-1930*, vol. 5, p. 4 Black Communities and Urban Development in America, 1720-1990, vol. 5 New York: Garland, 1991 General Collections (102)



The "Exoduster" Movement

Benjamin "Pap" Singleton (1809-1892), a former slave born in Nashville, Tennessee, became the leader of the "Exoduster Movement" of 1879, and in later years he was accorded the title "Father of the Exodus." In the late 1860s, Singleton and his associates urged blacks to acquire farmland in Tennessee, but whites would not sell productive land to them. As an alternative Singleton began scouting land in Kansas in the early 1870s. Soon several black families migrated from Nashville. By 1874, Singleton and his associates had formed the Edgefield Real Estate and Homestead Association in Tennessee, which steered more than 20,000 black migrants to Kansas between 1877 and 1879. In 1880 Singleton claimed to be "the whole cause of the Kansas immigration," in testimony before a U.S. committee on the "exodus to Kansas."

Nell Irvin Painter *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas After the Reconstruction*, p. 100 New York: Knopf, 1977 General Collections (103)



Emigrants Travelling to Kansas

In February of 1880, more than 900 black families from Mississippi reached St. Louis, en route to Kansas. Some black migrants sought "conductors" to make travel arrangements for them. These conductors would often ask for money in advance and not show up at the appointed departure time, leaving migrants stranded at docks and train stations.

Refugees on Levee, 1897. Carroll's Art Gallery. Photomural from gelatin-silver print Prints and Photographs Division (105) Prints and Photographs Division (105)



[Exodusters En Route To Kansas](#)

At the time of the Exodus to Kansas, yellow fever ravaged many river towns in Missouri, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Because many of the black migrants who stopped over in these towns -- coming by steamboat, train, or horseback -- were sick, unwashed, and poverty-stricken, it was assumed by city officials that they must be potential disease carriers. This caused great alarm in such cities as St. Louis, which imposed unnecessary quarantine measures to discourage future migrants.

"Negro Exodusters en route to Kansas, fleeing from the yellow fever, " Photomural from engraving. *Harpers Weekly*, 1870. Historic American Building Survey Field Records, HABS FN-6, #KS -49-11 Prints and Photographs Division (106)



[Exoduster Leaders](#)

In 1874 Benjamin Singleton and his associates formed the Edgefield Real Estate and Homestead Association in Tennessee. This association sought out the best locations for black settlements. Singleton tried to establish a well-planned and organized movement to Kansas, but by 1879, the unruly, mass Exodus had overwhelmed his efforts.

Benjamin Singleton, and S.A. McClure, Leaders of the Exodus, leaving Nashville, Tennessee. Photomural from montage. Historic American Building Survey Field Records, HABS FN-6, #KS-49-12 Prints and Photographs Division (107)



[Advertisement for Kansas](#)

Blacks had obtained information about Kansas by several means: letters from migrants, who settled in Nicodemus and other locations; circulars; and mass meetings. Benjamin Singleton printed handbills in an attempt to attract blacks to visit or settle in Kansas. One such flier was headed: "Ho For Kansas!"

"Ho For Kansas!" Copyprint of handbill. Historic American Building Survey Field Records, HABS FN-6, #KS-49-14 Prints and Photographs Division (109)

[Next section of the African-American Mosaic](#)

[Table of contents for the African-American Mosaic](#)



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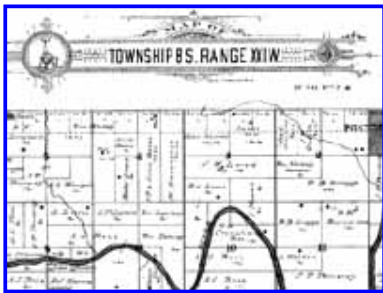
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[U.S.LIFE](#) > [People](#) > [Diversity](#) > The African-American Mosaic



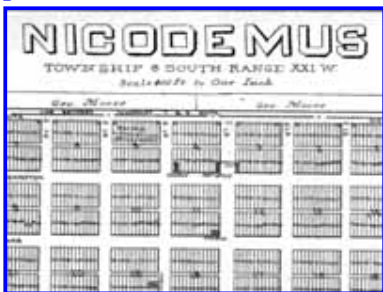
African-American Mosaic

Nicodemus, Kansas



County landownership maps and atlases provide excellent sources for studying the changes in black settlement patterns. The first map shows the black township of Nicodemus, located in Graham County, Kansas. The second map brings the township to scale. On these maps important structures may be easily located, such as the First Baptist Church, on Washington Street, block 4, lots 13 and 14.

Standard Atlas of Graham County, Kansas: Including a Plat Book of the Villages, Cities and Townships, p. 29 Chicago: George A. Ogle Company, 1906 Map Prints and Photographs Division (110a)



Standard Atlas of Graham County, Kansas: Including a Plat Book of the Villages, Cities and Townships, p. 63 Chicago: George A. Ogle Company, 1906 Map Prints and Photographs Division (110b)

Nicodemus, Kansas, Township Maps [\[page 29\]](#)[\[page 63\]](#)



Z.T. Fletcher, an early resident of Nicodemus, Kansas, was the first postmaster, as well as the secretary of the Colony. He also became the first entrepreneur in Nicodemus, having established the St. Francis Hotel in 1880.

Z.T. Fletcher, an early resident of Nicodemus, Kansas Photographer and date unknown Copyprint Historic American Building Survey Field Records Prints and Photographs Division (111)

[Early Nicodemus Entrepreneur](#)



Jenny Smith Fletcher, the wife of Z. T. Fletcher, was the first postmistress and school teacher in Nicodemus. She was also one of the original charter members of the A.M.E. Church. Mrs. Fletcher was the daughter of W. H. Smith, president of the Colony and founder of Nicodemus.

Jenny Smith Fletcher, wife of Z.T. Fletcher, early resident of Nicodemus, Kansas Photographer and date unknown Copyprint Historic American Building Survey Field Records Prints and Photograph Division (112)

First Nicodemus Postmistress



A good deal of intermarriage took place among the first black colonists of Nicodemus township, including the Fletcher, Williams, and Switzer families. Many of their descendants are still living in the township today. Henry Williams, father of the first black child to be born in Nicodemus, is pictured here with Reece Switzer, another early resident.

Henry Williams and Reece Switzer were early residents of Nicodemus, Kansas Copyprint Historic American Building Survey Field Records Prints and Photograph Division (113)

Early Nicodemus residents



The Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) produced a townsite plan of Nicodemus as it existed between 1877 and 1890, with architectural drawings and photographs of forty-two of the buildings. The locations of these buildings are shown on the plan, along with their earliest known year of construction.

Townsite plan for Nicodemus, Kansas, 1877-1890 Photostat Historic American Building Survey Field Records Prints and Photograph Division (114)

Plan of Nicodemus, 1877-1890



Historic Fletcher-Switzer House in Nicodemus

The Fletcher-Switzer House was an important focus of activity in Nicodemus. The complex of houses and outbuildings are some of the few remaining examples of early residential architecture left in the townsite. The first owner of the site was Z. T. Fletcher, secretary of the colony which arrived in Nicodemus in July 1877. He and his wife lived in a dugout on the northwest corner of the township, (ref. no. 35 on townsite plan). There he opened a post office and she ran the school. In 1880, Fletcher built the St. Frances Hotel (ref. no. 32) and a livery stable (ref. no. 31). After rail service failed to materialize, Fletcher sold his town lots to the original promoter, W. R. Hill, but continued to run the businesses. The hotel reverted to Graham County for a time but was brought back into the family in the 1920's by Fred Switzer, a great-nephew raised by the Fletchers. When Switzer married Ora Wellington in 1921, they made the hotel their home. Fred Switzer and Ora Wellington's 1983 oral transcripts are in the HABS Collection in the Prints and Photographs Division.

The Fletcher-Switzer House, 1983 Photomural from gelatin-silver print Historic American Building Survey Field Records Prints and Photographs Division (115)



[First Baptist Church, Nicodemus](#)

The First Baptist Church of Nicodemus was organized approximately nine months after the first black settlers arrived on the Kansas prairie land. In 1879, under the Reverend Hickman, a sod structure was partially built over a dugout, just north of the existing stucco and limestone structure. By 1880, a small, one-room, stone sanctuary had been erected at the same site. This structure evolved from limestone to stucco, and in 1975, a new brick sanctuary was built.

The First Baptist Church, Nicodemus, Kansas, 1943 William J. Belleau, Photographer Photomural from gelatin-silver print Historic American Building Survey Field Records Prints and Photographs Division (116)



[Aerial View of Nicodemus](#)

Aerial photography has been long used for measurements in map-making and surveying. A good early example is this aerial view of the Nicodemus townsite, taken in 1953.

"Aerial view of Nicodemus from the Northeast," 1953 Photomural from gelatin-silver print Historic American Building Survey Field Records Prints and Photographs Division (117)

[Next section of the African-American Mosaic](#)

[Table of contents for the African-American Mosaic](#)



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[U.S.LIFE](#) > [People](#) > [Diversity](#) > The African-American Mosaic



African-American Mosaic

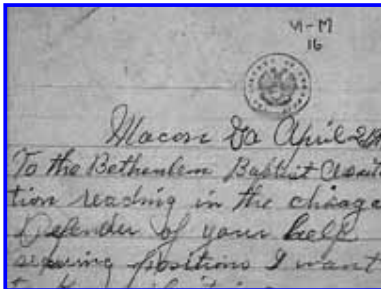
Chicago: Destination for the Great Migration



Ethnography focusses on the customs of particular tribes or peoples. Ethnographers are generally anthropologists well- trained in the use of elementary mapping and linguistic principles. This ethnographic map of 1926 Chicago shows the communities of different ethnic groups, including blacks.

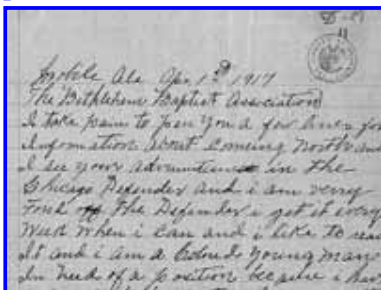
The Social Base Map of Chicago: Showing Industrial Areas, Parks, Transportation and Language Groups, Illinois, Chicago (city) Ethnography, 1926 University of Chicago Local Community Research Committee Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1926 Map Geography and Map Division (118)

[Map Showing Ethnic Neighborhoods of Chicago](#)



The *Chicago Defender* was a remarkably successful in encouraging blacks to migrate from the South to Chicago, often listing names of churches and other organizations to whom they could write for help. As a result, thousands of prospective migrants wrote letters to black churches, such as the Bethlehem Baptist Association in Chicago, Illinois, which assumed the task of helping black migrants find housing and employment. They also helped migrants to adjust to their new environment.

[Letter from Mrs. J. H Adams, Macon, Georgia, to the Bethlehem Baptist Association in Chicago, Illinois,] 1918 Holograph Carter G. Woodson Papers Manuscript Division (119)



[Letter from Cleveland Galliard of Mobile, Alabama, to the Bethlehem Baptist Association, Chicago, Illinois,] 1917 Holograph Carter G. Woodson Papers Manuscript Division (120)

[The Chicago Defender and Black Migrants from the South](#) [[Adams letter](#)][[Galliard letter](#)]



[Chicago Community Center](#)

The geographic isolation and discriminatory school policies imposed on urban blacks gradually lowered the quality of their public education system and inspired the use of stopgap measures to solve such problems as overcrowding. For example, the Ida B. Wells housing project community center was used to alleviate overcrowding in the kindergarten classes of the Chicago school system.

Ida B. Wells housing project, Chicago, Illinois, April 1942 Jack Delano, Photographer Photomural from gelatin-silver print FSA-OWI Collection Prints and Photographs Division (121)



[National Youth Administration Meeting](#)

The National Youth Administration, signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1935, was the only New Deal agency primarily designed to meet the employment and educational needs of American youth. By December 1940, resident training centers had been established for rural youths, blacks, and students. Each center had a "Citizenship Instructor" who held youths to practice the business of self-government.

National Youth Administration girls and their instructor at the Good Shepherd community center, Chicago (south side), Illinois, April 1941 Russell Lee, Photographer Photomural from gelatin-silver print FSA-OWI Collection Prints and Photographs Division (122)



In "the Promised Land" of Chicago, many black migrants still had to join picket lines to fight for fair wages. Some foremen in various companies discriminated by placing restrictions upon the promotion and advancement of black workers, frequently preventing them from earning higher wages.

Carrying a sign in front of a milk company, Chicago, Illinois, July 1941 John Vachon, Photographer Gelatin-silver print FSA-OWI Collection Prints and Photographs Division (123)



Picket line at the Mid-City Realty Company, Chicago, Illinois, July 1941 John Vachon, Photographer Gelatin-silver print FSA-OWI Collection Prints and Photographs Division (124)

[Fighting Job Discrimination \[milk company picket\]\[picket line\]](#)



[Black-Owned Restaurant](#)

Many of the black migrants who came to Chicago between 1910 and 1930 started businesses and became entrepreneurs. The "Perfect Eat" Shop, a restaurant on 47th street near South Park, is an example of such a business. It was owned by Ernest Morris, seen standing in the rear of the restaurant.

The Perfect Eat Shop, a restaurant on 47th street near South Park, owned by Mr. Ernest Morris, Chicago, Illinois, April 1942 Jack Delano, Photographer FSA-OWI Collection Prints and Photographs Division (125)



Chicago's South Side "black belt" contained zones related to economic status. The poorest blacks lived in the northernmost, oldest section of the black belt, while the elite resided in the southernmost section.

Apartment building in a black section of Chicago, Illinois, April 1941 Russell Lee, Photographer Gelatin-silver print FSA-OWI Collection Prints and Photographs Division (126)

[Apartment Building in Chicago's "Black Belt"](#)

[Next section of the African-American Mosaic](#)

[Table of contents for the African-American Mosaic](#)



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[U.S.LIFE](#) > [People](#) > [Diversity](#) > The African-American Mosaic



African-American Mosaic

WPA



When Franklin Delano Roosevelt took office in 1933, he promptly set about to deliver on his presidential campaign promise of a "new deal" for everyone. In 1935 Roosevelt formed the Works Progress Administration (later renamed the Work Projects Administration--WPA) to create jobs that would allow individuals to maintain their sense of self-esteem. Even though inequities existed under the New Deal programs, they included ethnic and marginal groups, the financially and politically disenfranchised, the geographically dispersed, and women and children. In particular, many blacks found new employment opportunities, and special programs focused on three centuries of cultural accomplishments of African-Americans, as well as European contributions to national development.

During its brief existence, the WPA generated numerous documents consisting of written histories, oral histories, guidebooks, fine prints, plays, posters, photographs, and architectural histories, many of them relating to African-American history. Many black participants whose talent was nurtured by the WPA continued to make significant contributions to American culture after they left the WPA. Many of these individuals are represented in the collections of the Library of Congress.

The WPA materials were acquired for the Library largely through the efforts of Archibald MacLeish while he was Librarian of Congress from 1939 to 1944. Included are thousands of measured drawings made for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS); hundreds of oral histories from former slaves; records of theatrical performances given by the Federal theater Project; thousands of Farm Security Administration (FSA) photographs of rural life; hundreds of prints and posters produced by WPA artists; and the archives of American folklife.

WPA Checklist

Posters and Fine Prints



This poster promotes the sale of a book about the Diamond Jubilee Exposition held in Chicago, July 4 through September 2, 1940. The Exposition, the first of its size and scope, celebrated seventy-five years of freedom for blacks and their cultural achievements during that period since the Civil War.

Cavalcade of the American Negro Artist unknown Silk-screen poster Prints and Photographs Division (63)

[Exposition Celebrating Seventy-Five Years of Freedom for Blacks since the End of the Civil War](#)



[Poster Advertising the Federal Theatre Production of Eugene O'Neill's Play *The Emperor Jones*](#)

The Emperor Jones was one of several plays produced by the WPA's Federal Theatre Project in which blacks and black themes were featured. The play also was one among many controversial productions of the FTP. On the bottom of the poster, patrons are directed to the "white front cars" of the trolley when proceeding to the theater.

Federal Theatre Project presents "*The Emperor Jones*" with Ralph Chesse's *Marionettes* Artist unknown Silk-screen poster Prints and Photographs Division (64)



[Poster Advertising One of the Many Black Musicians' Concerts Sponsored by the WPA's Federal Music Project](#)

Although offered during a less enlightened era in America when "separate but equal" was still the rule, this concert by black musicians, directed by Norman L. Black, reflects the widespread interest in black innovations in rhythm and blues.

Colored Band Concert Carken, Chicago, Illinois Silk-screen poster Prints and Photographs Division (66)



[Poster Welcoming Readers to Use the New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Black History and Culture](#)

With the entrance of the United States into World War II in 1942, the graphics units of the Fine Arts Project of the WPA was absorbed by the Defense Department's War Services Division. That Division produced hundreds of posters in support of the war effort, including this one encouraging reading about black contributions to the defense effort, among other subjects, in the Schomburg Center. The Schomburg Center was established within the New York Public Library system by Arthur A. Schomburg, a Puerto Rican of African descent, and it includes material by and about blacks throughout the world.

Books are Weapons. Read About...The Negro in National Defense; Africa and the War; Negro History and Culture J.P. (signed) New York, NY Silk-screen poster Prints and Photographs Division (67)



[Portrait of a Young Black Man](#)

This portrait of a young black man was done by the African- American artist Dox Thrash, who supervised the WPA Federal Art Project's graphics division in Philadelphia. Like many artists of the Art Project, Thrash made numerous studies of ethnic "types" and of interesting places within their locale -- in Thrash's case, Philadelphia.

Bronze Boy Dox Thrash (b. 1892) Aquatint Prints and Photographs Division (68)



Thrash's view of the Pier in Philadelphia during the 1930s is typical of hundreds of similar -- now priceless -- glimpses of local spots of interest produced by artists of the WPA's Federal Art Project. Many of these artistic creations were done by destitute artists whose support by the WPA was crucial to the continuance of their careers -- especially African-American artists.

Pier 27 Dox Thrash (b. 1892) Aquatint Prints and Photographs Division (69)

[Philadelphia's Pier 27 in the 1930s](#)



This brooding portrait of a black man is inscribed: "To Mr. Macleish (*sic*) From William E. Smith." Nothing is known about the artist, but Macleish was the Librarian of Congress, as well as a famous poet and champion of democracy, at the time Smith presented the print to him.

"No Body Knows" William E. Smith Linocut, 7/50 Prints and Photographs Division (70)

[Portrait of a Pensive, Aging Black Man](#)



The Scottsboro Case involved nine black youths who, on March 31, 1931, were indicted in Scottsboro, Alabama, for raping two white girls. Eight of them were sentenced to death, but after years of appeals and retrials, spearheaded by the Scottsboro Defense Committee, some were released, some remained in prison for years, and one escaped. The case was one of the most sensational of the time, and, as might be expected in the political hotbed of the thirties, became a centerpiece for charges and countercharges of radical communist involvement.

8 Black Boys in a Southern Jail Prentiss Taylor Lithograph, 40 prints Prints and Photographs Division (71)

[The "Scottsboro Case" Defendants, Indicted for Rape and Sentenced to Death, March 31, 1931](#)



This engaging portrait of a young man is another of the many representations of ethnic and racial "types" that were done by artists of the WPA's Federal Art Project. Not only are the subjects mostly anonymous, but the artists as well, despite the fact that their names are often known. Much research needs to be done to identify these artists, black and white, and to relate their WPA experience to their subsequent careers.

Reggie Raymond Steth Carborundum Print, No. 25, 1940 Prints and Photographs Division (73)

[Portrait of a Young Black Man](#)

[Next section of the African-American Mosaic](#)

[Table of contents for the African-American Mosaic](#)



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[U.S.LIFE](#) > [People](#) > [Diversity](#) > The African-American Mosaic



African-American Mosaic

Cavalcade of the American Negro



Produced by the Illinois Writers' Project of the WPA, the *Cavalcade of the American Negro* is a sweeping history of black contributions to all phases of American life from 1865 to 1940. The book was edited by Arna Bontemps and illustrated by Adrian Troy, of the Illinois Writers' and Art Projects, respectively, and was one of the more important contributions to the Diamond Jubilee Exposition held in Chicago in 1940. The book includes a useful description of all the exhibits at the exposition.

Cavalcade of the American Negro Illinois Writers' Program, comp. Chicago: Diamond Jubilee Exposition Authority, 1940, title page General Collections (77)

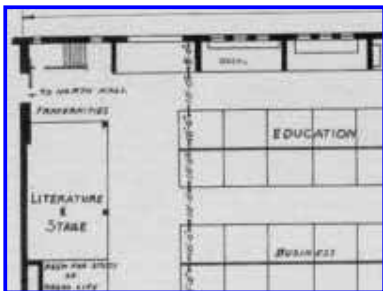
[Description of Chicago Black Exposition](#)



This brochure promotes the Exposition and other programs celebrating the emancipation of the American negro and his achievements over seventy-five years since the conclusion of the Civil War in 1865.

Illinois and Chicago invite you to the American Negro Exposition, Celebrating 75 years of Negro Achievement [Chicago], 1940, cover NAACP Collection Manuscript Division (78)

[Brochure Promoting the Chicago Exposition of 1940](#)



The advantageous location and spaciousness of the Chicago Coliseum were two of many factors allowing for a most successful exposition. The Coliseum was filled with exhibitions from every state in the Union, from several Caribbean islands, and from Liberia in Africa. The large black population of Chicago and from throughout the Mississippi region swelled the attendance at the popular event.

American Negro Exposition, Floor Plan at Chicago Coliseum Map NAACP Collection Manuscript Division (79)

[Floor Plan of the Chicago Coliseum, Where the Diamond Jubilee Exposition was Held July 4 - September 2, 1940](#)



[Letter of April 18, 1940 from Truman K. Gibson, Jr. to Thurgood Marshall](#)

Gibson and other executives of the Negro Exposition went to great pains to write the leaders of the black community throughout the country, especially those key people like Thurgood Marshall, legal counsel for the NAACP (and later a Supreme Court Justice). The presence of so many of these leaders at the Exposition made the affair one of the most successful of our time.

Typescript letter, April 18, 1940 NAACP Collection Manuscript Division (80)

Letter of April 18, 1940 from Truman K. Gibson, Jr. Executive Director of the American Negro Exposition, to Thurgood Marshall, Legal Counsel of the NAACP, Looking Forward to Seeing Him at the Chicago Exposition in the Summer



[Letter of January 23, 1940 from Snow F. Grigsby to Jesse O. Thomas](#)

The Negro Progress Exposition about which Grigsby wrote to Jesse Thomas was the forerunner of the Chicago Exposition in July 1940. Included in the Exposition, which was held during a convention in Detroit, were exhibit booths set up by many important black organizations, such as the National Urban League.

Typescript letter, January 23, 1940 National Urban League Collection Manuscript Division (82)

Letter of January 23, 1940 from Snow F. Grigsby, Exposition Director, to Jesse O. Thomas, Secretary of the National Urban League, Inviting the League to Set Up a Booth at the Negro Progress Exposition to be Held in Detroit from May 10 to 19, 1940

[Next section of the African-American Mosaic](#)

[Table of contents for the African-American Mosaic](#)



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[U.S.LIFE](#) > [People](#) > [Diversity](#) > The African-American Mosaic



African-American Mosaic

Authors and the Federal Writers' Project



Drums at Dusk by Arna Bontemps is an imaginary story set in the Caribbean island of Saint Dominque two years after the Parisian mobs stormed the Bastille. French sugar plantation owners are faced with a slave insurrection. While voodoo drums rumble in the night air, a gathering of blacks plans to burn cane fields and mansions, destroying Saint Dominque, the most wealthy and profitable overseas French Colony of the day. The creole city of Le Cap becomes the last refuge before whites flee the island.

Drums at Dusk, title page Arna Bontemps, Author New York: MacMillan, 1939 General Collections (74)

[Drums at Dusk](#)



This intriguing portrait of one of the great centers of black culture and creativity, entitled *Harlem: Negro Metropolis*, was written during the high point of America's fascination with the New York district. As Jamaican-born black author Claude McKay suggests, not only creative artists, but imaginative and even revolutionary thinkers swarmed to Harlem just prior to World War II.

Harlem: Negro Metropolis, p.117 Claude McKay, Author New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1940 General Collections (75)

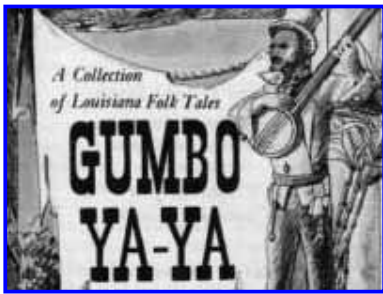
[Highlights of Harlem, America's Great Black Center](#)



The Negro in Virginia is one of the most thorough studies done on American blacks by WPA writers during the 1930s and 1940s. Begun under the auspices of the Federal Writers' Project, the book was completed by the Virginia Project after the demise of the FWP in 1939. The book covers the whole history and contributions of blacks in Virginia, from colonial times to 1940.

The Negro in Virginia, p. 260. Federal Workers of the Writers' Program of Virginia, comp. New York: Hastings House, 1940 General Collections (83)

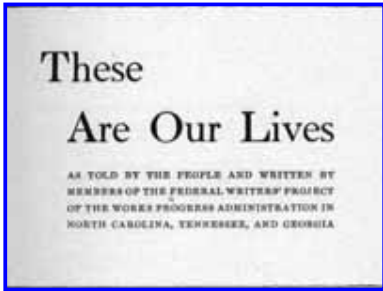
[The Negro in Virginia Documents Black Contributions](#)



Creoles and Cajuns, Frenchmen and Spaniards, slaves, free-blacks, Englishmen, and Indians, form the incredible social "bouillabaisse" out of which the writers of the Louisiana WPA extracted this collection of the fantastic folklore of bayou country. Initiated under the auspices of the Federal Writers' Project, Gumbo Ya-Ya was compiled by Lyle Saxon, State Director of the Louisiana Project, and was richly illustrated by Caroline Durifux and Roland Duevernet.

Gumbo Ya-Ya, title page Compiled by the Louisiana Writers' Project Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1945 General Collections (84)

[Gumbo Ya-Ya](#)



These Are Our Lives is a collection of thirty-five oral autobiographies of black and white farmers and workers of the South, recorded by Federal Writers' Project people in the states of North Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia. The idea of the autobiographies, as expressed by their initiator, W.T. Couch, of the North Carolina Project, was to "get life histories which are readable and faithful representations of living persons, and which . . . will give a fair picture of the structure of working society."

These Are Our Lives, title page Writers' Programs of North Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia, comp. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1939 General Collections (85)

[Oral Autobiographies of Farmers and Workers](#)



The coastal regions of Georgia and South Carolina proved to be a goldmine for the study of living African traditions in America. In *Drums and Shadows* the Georgia Writers' Project chronicled the tenacity of African artistic and linguistic traditions and their influence on American culture.

Drums and Shadows: Survival Studies among the Georgia Coastal Negroes, pl. XII Georgia Writers' Project of the WPA, comp. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1940 General Collections (86)

[Living African Traditions in America](#)

[Next section of the African-American Mosaic](#)

[Table of contents for the African-American Mosaic](#)



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[U.S.LIFE](#) > [People](#) > [Diversity](#) > The African-American Mosaic



African-American Mosaic

Ex-slave Narratives



WPA Slave Narratives, A917, vol. 1 Manuscript Division (87)

[Photograph of Slave Cabin and Occupants Near Eufala, Barbour County, Alabama](#)



Interviewed by Gertha Couric Eufala, Alabama WPA Slave Narratives, A917, vol. 1, pp. 25-26 Manuscript Division

[Nathan Beauchamp; His Narrative](#)



Interviewed by Ruby Pickens Tartt Livingston, Alabama WPA Slave Narratives, A917, vol. 1, pp. 92-94 Manuscript Division (89)



[Emma Crockett's Fine Double House; Emma Crockett; Her Narrative](#)



Interviewed by Ira S. Johnson Birmingham, Alabama WPA Slave Narratives, A917, vol. 1, pp. 404-406 Manuscript Division (90)

[Simon Walker; His Narrative](#)

[Next section of the African-American Mosaic](#)

[Table of contents for the African-American Mosaic](#)



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