

# A Research Guide for African American History

A *research guide* is an introduction to researching a topic. It lists the best introductory sources to help you start your research, but it is not a comprehensive bibliography of the topic. Please ask a reference worker for further help.

## Scope

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This guide offers help in researching African American history. The reference works provide introductory articles about people, events, and themes important to African American history. Begin with the reference works to become aware of the issues in your topic. Then, use library catalog and the suggested subject headings to find books on your topic. You can also use the electronic resources to find articles in scholar journals. You can find primary sources by checking the websites suggested, or by using *Early American Imprints* in the periodicals room.

## Reference Works

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Reference works include encyclopedias, dictionaries, handbooks, and almanacs. They are available in the reference section.

REF 220.8996073 En19 Murphy, Larry G., J. Gordon Melton, and Gary L. Ward, eds. *Encyclopedia of African American Religions*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1993.

Articles on black denominations, religious movements, and religious leaders.

REF 323 En194 Schultz, David, and John R. Vile, eds. *The Encyclopedia of Civil Liberties in America*. 3 vols. Armonk, NY: Sharpe Reference, 2005.

REF 323.1 En19 Bradley, David, and Shelley Fisher Fishkin, eds. *The Encyclopedia of Civil Rights in America*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1997.

These complementary encyclopedias detail the civil rights movement in America. Though their titles are similar, the topics covered in each do not overlap.

REF 700.89 En197 Wintz, Cary D., and Paul Finkelman, eds. *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance*. 2 vols. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Covers the history of the black cultural movement in the early twentieth century. Includes articles about noted people, as well as articles about plays, books, music, sports, places, groups, and movements.

REF 920.009296073 Af834 Gates Jr., Henry Louis, and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, eds. *African American National Biography*. 8 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

The comprehensive, authoritative source for essay-length biographies of notable African Americans. Each article includes a bibliography. Compare this source to *American National Biography*.

REF 960.03 Af839 2005 Appiah, Kwame Anthony, and Henry Louis Gates Jr., eds. *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience*. 2nd ed. 10 vols.

Covers the dispersion of African peoples and culture around the world. Though it is world-wide in scope, it includes many articles that touch on African American history.

REF 973.0496073 En19 Palmer, Colin A., ed. *Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History*. 2nd ed. 6 vols. Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005.

This encyclopedia covers the social and cultural history of African Americans, with many biographical entries. The first five volumes contain the encyclopedia

proper; the sixth volume contains a list of the entries by theme, as well as primary sources and statistics.

REF 973.0496073 En193 Finkelman, Paul, ed. *Encyclopedia of African American History, 1619–1895*. 3 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

The best and most detailed encyclopedia about African American history. This is part-one of a two-part series.

## Books in Circulation

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Books in circulation available in the stacks to be checked out. Browse near the suggested books for other books on the same topic.

The library contains many monographs and surveys about African American history. To find them, search the library catalog using the suggested subject headings in the next section.

Another way to find circulating books about African American history is to check *The American Historical Association's Guide to Historical Literature* (REF 016.9 Am34 1995). This book lists the best works of history in every field, with brief annotations of each book. Check the subsections on race or ethnicity under "Colonial North America" (1239–1279), "United States, General" (1280–1324), "American Revolution and Early Republic, 1754–1815" (1324–1360), "United States, 1815–1877" (1361–1411), "United States, 1877–1920" (1412–1452), and "United States History since 1920" (1453–1503).

If any of the books you need is not owned by the library, then ask a library worker how to request it through PASCAL Delivers or Inter-Library Loan.

## Subject Headings

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*Subject headings* are suggested terms to use when searching the library catalog. Search for them by "subject," not by "keyword."

African American Abolitionists	African American Soldiers
African American Actors	African American Songs
African American Agricultural Laborers	African American Women
African American Agriculturalists	African Americans
African American Art	African Americans – (see specific place)
African American Artists	African Americans – Biography
African American Arts	African Americans – Bibliography
African American Athletes	African Americans – Civil Rights
African American Authors	African Americans – Colonization
African American Baptists	African Americans – Education – History
African American Churches	African Americans – Historiography
African American Clergy	African Americans – History
African American Congregationalists	African Americans – Intellectual life
African American Educators	African Americans – Migrations
African American Episcopalians	African Americans – Missions
African American Evangelists	African Americans – Music
African American Historians	African Americans – Race identity
African American Influences	African Americans – Religion
African American Intellectuals	African Americans – Segregation
African American Interpretations	Back to Africa Movement
African American Lawyers	Civil rights
African American Legislators	Civil rights – African Americans – History
African American Methodists	Civil rights – Movements
African American Missionaries	Civil rights – United States
African American Pentecostals	Civil rights – Workers
African American Scientists	Slave insurrection

Slave labor  
Slave trade

Slavery  
Spirituals (songs)

## Periodicals

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Periodicals are published regularly, and they are usually indexed. They can be found in the periodicals room on first floor.

Many periodicals that cover American history will also have articles about African American history. The following are well-known journals that publish about American history:

- *William and Mary Quarterly*
- *American History Review*
- *Journal of American History*
- *New England Quarterly*
- *Church History*

## Electronic Resources

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Electronic resources are subscription databases available from a link on the library's website. Visit <http://www.bju.edu/library/resources/alphabetical.html>.

[Biography Resource Center and The Complete Marquis Who's Who](#). Gale.

Gives biographical information on more than one million people throughout history, around the world, and across all disciplines. Combines 250,000 biographies from Gale Group sources with nearly one million biographies from The Complete Marquis Who's Who. This source is also useful for searching *Contemporary Authors* to find profiles of historians.

[American National Biography Online](#). Oxford University Press.

The *American National Biography Online* is the premiere biographical resource on over 18,000 people from all eras who have influenced and shaped American history and culture. Also included are nine hundred articles from *The Oxford Companion to United States History* for context.

[America: History and Life](#). ABC-CLIO/EBSCO.

This database is an index of the historiography of the Americas from the earliest times to the present. It abstracts articles from about 1,700 journals from 1964 to present, and it includes citations for dissertations and book reviews as well. Full text articles are linked to, where available. It is the single best source for finding articles about American history.

[A to Z Electronic Journals](#). EBSCO.

A to Z lists all the journals either indexed in the library's electronic databases or available in its print collection. You can search for a journal by title and find what issues are available in print and which are available in the different databases. You can also search or browse by subject to find a list of all the journals that treat a given topic.

[Academic Search Premier](#). EBSCO.

This multi-disciplinary database provides full text for more than 4,500 journals, including full text for more than 3,700 peer-reviewed titles. It includes many

history journals, such as *Church History*, the *Journal of American History*, the *New England Quarterly*, and the *American Historical Review*.

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## Other Resources in the Mack Library

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*Early American Imprints*. Readex Microprint.

This collection contains microfilm of all the extant works printed in North America till 1800. Ask for the microfilm and the index to the collection at the periodicals desk.

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## Websites

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Websites are recommended sources available free online.

[African American History & Studies - Directory of Online Resources](http://www.academicinfo.net/africanam.html). AcademicInfo.

<http://www.academicinfo.net/africanam.html>

A guide to websites about African American history.

[American Memory: African American History](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/browse/ListSome.php?category=African%20American%20History). Library of Congress.

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/browse/ListSome.php?category=African%20American%20History>

Several collections of primary sources from the Library of Congress, include the Federal Writers' Project slave narratives, court records, maps, music, pamphlets, and books.

[Archives Wiki](http://archiveswiki.historians.org/). American Historical Association. <http://archiveswiki.historians.org/>

Lists archival resources available. Organized by location, so that you can find archives near you.s

[Documenting the American South](http://docsouth.unc.edu/). University of North Carolina Library. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/>

A collection of texts and images about the history of the South.

[Featured Documents: The Emancipation Proclamation](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured_documents/emancipation_proclamation/index.html). National Archives and Records Administration.

[http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured\\_documents/emancipation\\_proclamation/index.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured_documents/emancipation_proclamation/index.html)

An online exhibit of the Emancipation Proclamation, including photographs of the original document.

[H-AfroAm](http://www.h-net.org/~afro-am/). H-Net. <http://www.h-net.org/~afro-am/>

An academic discussion listserv for African American history and African American studies.

[In Motion: The African American Migration Experience](http://www.inmotionaame.org/). Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library. <http://www.inmotionaame.org/>

A narrative of the many migrations of African Americans, for example, from Africa to America and from the rural South to the urban North. Besides the narrative, the website includes many texts, maps, and images.

[Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database](http://www.slavevoyages.org/). Emory University. <http://www.slavevoyages.org/>

A database of slave-trading voyages, including information about crew and slaves. Also includes summary statistics and secondary sources about the slave trade. Another database includes names of some 67,000 slaves transported in the Middle Passage.