

**Black History Collection**  
**A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**2019**

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

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Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms009282>

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Revised and expanded by Connie L. Cartledge and Maria Farmer  
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Revised 2019 August

## Collection Summary

**Title:** Black History Collection

**Span Dates:** 1623-2008

**Bulk Dates:** (bulk 1800-1865)

**ID No.:** MSS57687

**Extent:** 1,215 items

**Extent:** 6 containers plus 2 oversize

**Extent:** 3.6 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in English, French, and Spanish

**Location:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm82057687>

**Summary:** Letters, court records, legal documents, slave deeds, financial records, speeches and writings, family and genealogical papers, military records, birth records, inventories, wills, ships' papers, a commonplace book, poll tax receipts, broadsides, postcards, marriage certificates, newspaper clippings, printed matter, and other material pertaining to African Americans.

## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

### People

Robards, Lewis C. Lewis C. Robards receipt book. 1851-1853.

### Subjects

African American families.

African American soldiers.

African Americans--Genealogy.

African Americans.

Civil rights.

Deeds.

Free blacks.

Freedmen.

Fugitive slaves.

Marriage records.

Registers of births, etc.

Ship's papers.

Slave records.

Slave trade.

Slavery.

Slaves--Emancipation.

Slaves--Legal status, laws, etc.

Slaves--Medical care.

Slaves.

Wills.

### Places

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Participation, African American.

## Provenance

The Black History Collection has been amassed by the Library of Congress through purchase, gift, bequest, and transfers from other divisions in the Library from 1900 to 2019.

## Processing History

The Black History Collection was arranged and described in 1997. Material acquired between 1997 and 1999 was incorporated into the collection in 2000 as Addition I. Subsequent material received between 2000 and 2011 was processed into the collection in 2011 as Addition II. Additional material acquired between 2012 and 2019 was incorporated into the collection in 2019 as Addition III.

## Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of the Black History Collection is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

## Access and Restrictions

The Black History Collection is open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

## Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Black History Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Scope and Content Note

The Black History Collection spans the years 1623-2008, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1800-1865. The collection contains letters, court records, legal documents, slave deeds, financial records, writings, family papers, military records, birth records, inventories, wills, ships' papers, and marriage certificates pertaining to African Americans from the colonial period to the early twenty-first century. Topics include the slave trade, abolition, fugitive slaves, manumission, emancipation, and freedmen. The material is arranged alphabetically by topic, type of material, or name and chronologically and alphabetically thereunder. Addition I contains apprenticeship papers, court records for slave trials, a muster roll for a company of black soldiers in the Union Army, and correspondence. A letter from an African-American soldier stationed in Germany after World War I describes his jazz band and club.

The files in Addition II include correspondence, legal documents, a commonplace book, genealogical material, broadsides, speeches, writings, newspaper clippings, and printed matter relating to slaves and fugitive slaves, free blacks, and civil rights. Letters of physician and farmer John H. Bayne who lived near Oxon Hill, Maryland, are to Robert Bruce, a manufacturer of artificial limbs, 1853-1854. These letters relate to Bayne's efforts to make an artificial leg for the slave of a neighbor and include an advertising broadside with instructions for measuring artificial limbs. Addition II also includes a commonplace book with entries by two individuals from Nashville, Tennessee, a plantation owner and a physician. Notes from 1832 to 1835 record the expenses of the plantation owner. The entries from 1866 to 1873 are made by the physician and contain notations of medical expenses of various plantation owners, including the medical care of former slaves and written remarks and notes that the doctor prepared on topics such as "the teeth and poison of venomous serpents" and cholera. The commonplace book also contains an 1859 letter of George Chase, publisher of *The Masonic Journal*, to Sidney Hayden. The bulk of the items pertaining to the twentieth-century civil rights movement relate to Mississippi, particularly Leflore County, and include poll tax receipts, speeches, a newsletter, newspaper clippings and a broadside of the Southern Improvement Council.

The files in Addition III include letters, legal and financial documents, slave deeds and freedom papers, military records, printed matter, and other material relating to the experiences of African Americans, including slaves and free blacks. Topics include African American soldiers serving in the Spanish-American War and the Civil War; slave trials and other proceedings; slave care and treatment; African American politics and voting rights; cultural and religious affairs, and

African American consumers. Noteworthy items include a letter from a Union officer in the Civil War describing the treatment of African American soldiers and the petition of a free African American woman to become a slave.

## **Arrangement of the Papers**

This collection is arranged alphabetically by topic, type of material, or name and chronologically and alphabetically thereunder.

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