



*Nebraska History* posts materials online for your personal use. Please remember that the contents of *Nebraska History* are copyrighted by the Nebraska State Historical Society (except for materials credited to other institutions). The NSHS retains its copyrights even to materials it posts on the web.

For permission to re-use materials or for photo ordering information, please see:

<http://www.nebraskahistory.org/magazine/permission.htm>

Nebraska State Historical Society members receive four issues of *Nebraska History* and four issues of *Nebraska History News* annually. For membership information, see:

<http://nebraskahistory.org/admin/members/index.htm>

### Article Title: African American Resources at the Nebraska State Historical Society

Full Citation: "African American Resources at the Nebraska State Historical Society," *Nebraska History* 84 (2003): 115-116

URL of article: <http://www.nebraskahistory.org/publish/publicat/history/full-text/NH2003Resources.pdf>

Date: 9/02/2011

Article Summary: This list includes the Historical Society's most significant resources related to the African American experience in Nebraska. It describes archival collections, gives bibliographical information for library materials, and provides contact information for other Nebraska institutions holding additional materials.

# African American Resources at the Nebraska State Historical Society

The following list includes the Historical Society's most significant resources related to the African American experience in Nebraska. Material is constantly being added to the collection, and this list should not be considered comprehensive. Please ask for assistance from Library/Archives personnel.

The Nebraska State Historical Society library and archives are located at the Society headquarters building in Lincoln. Some materials may be kept at a remote location, however, and it is advisable to check with the Library/Archives staff to be sure that material will be available before planning a research trip to Lincoln. The Historical Society's web site at [www.nebraskahistory.org](http://www.nebraskahistory.org) lists current information about hours of operation and fees.

## Archival Collections

**RG2301: African Americans.** A collection of miscellaneous photographs of and related to African Americans in Nebraska.

**RG4250: Amaranthus Grand Chapter of Nebraska Eastern Star, Omaha.** The Order of the Eastern Star (OES) is the women's auxiliary of the Order of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons. Founded on Oct. 15, 1921, the Amaranthus Grand Chapter is affiliated particularly with Prince Hall Masonry, the African American arm of Freemasonry, and has judicial, legislative, and executive power over subordinate chapters in Omaha, Lincoln, Hastings, Grand Island, Alliance, and South Sioux City. The collection (on microfilm only) includes Grand Chapter records and subordinate chapter records. The Grand Chapter materials include correspondence, financial records, minutes, annual addresses, organizational histories, constitutions and bylaws, and transcripts of interviews with five chapter members. The collection also contains financial records, correspondence, minutes and charters from fifteen subordinate Nebraska OES chapters, although the bulk of that material is from Shaffer Chapter No. 1 in Omaha. For more information about Prince Hall Masonry and OES, see *Nebraska History* 76:1 (Spring 1995).

**RG4708: Bailey, Isaac, 1861–.** Certificate of Honorable Discharge issued to Isaac Bailey, 1st Sergeant, Troop B, 10th Cavalry, on May 5, 1908, with his military record on the back. A transcribed interview with Bailey's wife, Madge, describes life in the military, with particular emphasis on service at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, ca. 1902–1907.

**RG3248: Burckhardt, Oliver J., 1868–1949.** This collection relates primarily to African American settlers in Nebraska who moved to Cherry County in 1908. Includes biographical materials about the Reverend Burckhardt, and some of his writing and correspondence.

**RG3249: Burden, Henry.** Henry Burden, a former slave and Civil War veteran, homesteaded in Saline County, Nebraska. Three photographs relating to his homestead and family.

**RG1583: Citizens Against Racism and Prejudice, Lincoln.** A Lincoln-based, nonprofit organization, its mission was to fight "hate crimes and discrimination caused by bigotry, prejudice, and racism." The collection contains records, 1987–1995, including administrative and committee materials, correspondence, activity files, and publicity materials.

**RG3697: Danner, Edward, 1901–1970.** The collection relates to Danner's career as a state senator in the Nebraska Legislature, 1961–1970, representing the Near North Side district of Omaha (11th District). It contains correspondence and issue files, many of which deal with civil rights. Danner was especially interested in employment and housing issues.

**RG0938: Day, Ava Speese.** Letters, 1964, written to the Nebraska State Historical Society describing the experiences of African American homesteaders in the Nebraska Sandhills. Her grandfather, father, uncle, and husband all filed claims near Brownlee. Includes a hand-drawn map, transcripts of letters by NSHS staff, and clippings.

**RG1580: Hall, Norman C.** Notebooks, 1989–1991, containing Hall's records of Prince Hall Mason activities during his tenure as Worshipful Grand Master. [microfilm only]

**RG0301: Lincoln Commission on Human Rights.** Report, 1972, in response to the Cleveland Randolph charge of police brutality. Two volumes. Volume 1 contains transcripts of hearing proceedings, including interviews with Randolph, the police, and others. Volume 2 presents summaries of commission findings and statements of facts.

**RG4669: Lutheran Film Associates.** *A Time for Burning*, 1966. Documentary film about race relations in Omaha.

**RG3206: Maston, George A., 1849–1912.** One poem written in 1904 by George Maston, minister, teacher, and barber.

**RG2759: Malone, Robert Thomas, 1891–1963.** Papers, 1925–1963, relating to social and welfare legislation, race relations, and associated problems. The collection contains personal correspondence, 1925–1963; extensive Urban League materials; and speeches. Includes files on Clyde Malone, social legislation, housing, labor, unemployment compensation, social justice, and other topics.

**RG5410: McIntosh, Charles Barron.** Research on the African American settlements of Cherry County, Nebraska, including maps and information about filing dates.

**RG5145: McWilliams Family.** Copy photographs (digital) of the McWilliams family of Lincoln, Nebraska, related families, and friends. The original photographs are not in the NSHS collections.

**RG5440: Hall, Alyce McWilliams.** Papers relating to Ruth Cox Adams, former slave and adopted

sister of Frederick Douglass, and to her descendants, the Adams, McWilliams and related families. Includes correspondence between Ruth Adams and Frederick Douglass (copies only); Ruth's autobiographical writings; family correspondence and photographs, reminiscences, genealogies, general family history materials, and clippings. The collection also contains a significant collection of the writings of Ruth Elizabeth Vanderzee McWilliams, and Vanderzee family materials.

**RG1254: National Association for the Advancement Of Colored People, Nebraska.** Records of the NAACP in Nebraska, arranged in two subgroups: 1) NAACP Branch Files, 1913–1939 [film only]; 2) Records of University of Nebraska Student NAACP, 1948–1949. The Branch materials of Subgroup 1 consist of activity files, reports finance and membership records, etc. sent to the national office from Lincoln, Omaha and Alliance, Nebraska. The files also include information relating to lynching in Nebraska. The original Branch files are housed in the collections of the Library of Congress Manuscript Division; only the microfilm copies are available at NSHS. Subgroup 2 contains a few minutes and other records documenting the activities of the University of Nebraska Student NAACP in the late 1940s.

**RG3957: National Urban League, Omaha and Lincoln.** Records and publications of the Lincoln and Omaha Urban Leagues which comprise a portion of the records of the National Urban League at the Library of Congress. The records document the activities of the Lincoln Urban League, 1932–1954, and the Omaha Urban League (now known as the Nebraska Urban League), 1929–1961. The materials consist mostly of printed matter, such as reports, programs, newsletters, and special events files. [filmed together; microfilm only]

**RG4795: Nebraska Black Oral History Project.** Interviews conducted 1980–1982 for a project funded by the Nebraska Committee for the Humanities, and sponsored by the Black Studies Department, UNL; The Great Plains Black Museum; and the Nebraska Association for the Study of African American Life and History. Interviewees were chosen for four research areas: Outstate Nebraska, Lincoln, Older Omaha Residents, and Active members of the Omaha Black Community. Sound recordings and transcripts are available.

**RG1300: Peterson, Pete (Harry W.), 1924–.** Scrapbook, 1969, city council campaign materials including letters, buttons, clippings, news releases, position statements, and a petition. Peterson was the first African American elected to the City Council of Lincoln.

**RG3430: Plummer, Henry Vinton, 1844–1905.** Records relating to the military career of Henry Vinton Plummer, born a slave in Maryland. He became the first African American chaplain to serve in the post-Civil War Army. After ten years of

service he was dismissed from the army for conduct unbecoming an officer. See also "Chaplain Henry V. Plummer, His Ministry and Court Martial," *Nebraska History*, 56:1 (Spring 1975).

**RG4244: Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Nebraska (Omaha).** Records, 1912–1986. In 1919, the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Nebraska was formed in Omaha with jurisdiction over subordinate, or blue, lodges located throughout Nebraska. This collection is arranged in two subgroups: 1) Filmed records, 1912–1986; 2) Census research files, unfiled. Subgroup 1 consists of eleven reels of microfilm containing correspondence, financial records, Grand and annual communications, legal documents, committee and officer reports, agendas, minutes and historical materials. Most of the material is from the Prince Hall Grand Lodge, although there are items from subordinate Nebraska lodges as well. The records in Subgroup 1 were loaned for filming; the originals are not in the NSHS collections. Subgroup 2 contains U.S. census forms, 1900–1920, listing vital statistics of Prince Hall members, mostly in Douglas County, but also Jefferson, Lancaster, Adams, Hall, Seward, Buffalo, Box Butte, Morrill, Otoe, and Scottsbluff counties. For more information about Prince Hall Masonry in Nebraska and its female auxiliary, the Order of the Eastern Star, see *Nebraska History* 76:1 (Spring 1995).

**RG0950: Roeser, Emil F., 1887–1982.**

Reminiscences about Grand Island and Hall County written by Emil Roeser, the "unofficial historian of Hall County," Nebraska. One of the five manuscripts in the collection is a story titled, "Thomas Goodchild, Negro Barber."

**RG5337: Social Settlement Association of Omaha.** Records and photographs, 1924–1988, mostly 1924–1947, including bylaws and articles of incorporation; board of directors materials (minutes, monthly and annual reports, etc.); committee files; publications; Woodson Center files, 1932–1938; and scrapbooks. Social Settlement of Omaha was established in 1908 to help immigrant families adapt to life in America, and to teach neighborhood residents the value and duties of American citizenship. At least one member was employed at the Omaha Stockyards. In 1930 the Culture Center moved to a larger facility at 30th and R streets to better serve the growing African American population. Although it functioned on a semi-segregated basis, in theory arranging for separate use of the facilities according to race from 1908–1926, the necessity of sharing resources and building space created a great deal of interaction and cooperation between the Culture Center (later Woodson Center) and the Settlement House (see photo collection). The main Settlement House was eventually relocated to 4686 Q Street, but both houses continued to offer a wide variety of recreational, educational, and community-wide improvement clubs for their members.

**RG0539: United States Federal bureau of Investigation. Malcolm X Surveillance Files, 1953–1971.** Two reels of microfilm. Information on Malcolm X compiled by the FBI including biographical information, excerpts of his speeches, reports on his activities and public appearances in various U.S. cities, television and radio interview transcripts, articles about him, and information about attempts on his life, including his assassination in 1965. [microfilm only]

**RG5335: Urban League of Nebraska (Omaha).** Records, 1928–1994 (mostly 1928–1979), including administrative and board of directors materials, constitution and bylaws, committee records, special project files, publications, and photographs.

**RG5000: Vertical File Collection.** A miscellaneous collection of clippings, articles, and other materials about African Americans in Nebraska.

**RG0515: Works Projects Administration.** Interviews with Nebraskans conducted by WPA workers during the 1930s. Arranged by county and ancestry. Includes a large number of African Americans.

### Library Materials

#### General Books:

**325/Sm5b: Black Nebraskans: Interviews from the Nebraska Black Oral History Project II,** compiled by Alonzo N. Smith, 1982

**326/J63b: Black Oral History in Nebraska,** by Brenda B. Johns and Alonzo N. Smith, 1980

**978.2/C163v: Visions of Freedom on the Great Plains: An Illustrated History of African Americans in Nebraska,** by Bertha W. Calloway and Alonzo N. Smith, 1998

**929.73/W819a: African American Genealogy: A Bibliography and Guide to Sources,** by Curt Bryan Witcher, 2000

**978/A258a: African Americans on the Western Frontier,** edited and with an introduction by Monroe Lee Billington and Roger D. Hardaway, 1998

#### African American Newspapers:

The Library/Archives has microfilm copies (incomplete runs) of several Lincoln and Omaha African American newspapers. They can be viewed in the Reference Room or borrowed via interlibrary loan. Duplicate reels can be purchased.

*Review* (Lincoln): May 17, 1937 (978.2651/R32 on Filmstrip Reel 33, Item 6)

*Weekly Review* (Lincoln): Jan. 12, 26; Mar. 30, 1933 (film 326/W41)

*Enterprise* (Omaha): 1895–1897; 1908–1911 (film 326/Om1e)

*New Era* (Omaha): 1922–1926 (film 326/Om1n)

*Omaha Guide:* 1932–1947; 1954–1958 (film 326/Om1g)

*Omaha Monitor:* 1915–1929 (film 326/Om1m)

*Omaha Star:* 1938–present (film 326/Om1s)

*Progress* (Omaha): 1890–1891 (film 326/Om1p)

#### Nebraska History magazine and other NSHS publications:

References to pertinent materials can be found under "Black," "Blacks," "Negro," "Negroes," and "African Americans" in the *Index to Nebraska State Historical Society Publications*, or ask the reference staff for assistance.

For more information on Nebraska State Historical Society resources contact:

**Nebraska State Historical Society**  
1500 R Street / P.O. Box 82554  
Lincoln, NE 68508

**Tel: (402) 471-3270**  
**Fax: (402) 471-3100**

**E-mail: [lanshs@nebraskahistory.org](mailto:lanshs@nebraskahistory.org)**  
**Internet: [www.nebraskahistory.org](http://www.nebraskahistory.org)**

### Other Institutions with Materials Relating to African Americans in Nebraska:

#### Douglas County Historical Society

Historic Fort Omaha  
30th and Fort Streets, No. 11B  
Omaha, NE 68111-1657

Tel: (402) 455-9990  
Fax: (402) 453-9448

Internet: [www.OmahaHistory.org](http://www.OmahaHistory.org)  
E-mail: [director@omahahistory.org](mailto:director@omahahistory.org)

#### Great Plains Black History Museum

2213 Lake Street  
Omaha, NE 68110  
Currently closed for renovation. Visits can be arranged by calling (402) 320-5105.

#### Plainsman Museum

210 16th Street  
Aurora, NE 68818

Tel: (402) 694-6531  
Fax: (308) 385-5028

Internet: [www.plainsmanmuseum.org](http://www.plainsmanmuseum.org)

#### Stuhr Museum

P.O. Box 1505  
Grand Island, NE 68802  
(3133 West US Hwy 34  
Grand Island, NE 68803)

Tel: (308) 385-5316  
Fax: (308) 385-5028

E-Mail: [info@stuhrmuseum.org](mailto:info@stuhrmuseum.org)