

Wired to the World

by Ralph Lee Scott

African American Genealogical Resources

If you have not looked recently at the wealth of African American genealogy sites on the Web, you and your library patrons are missing a number of attractive and useful reference sources. Two that I think are the best are: "Cyndi's List — African American" and "AfriGeneas — African Ancestored Genealogy." While there are many personal African-American genealogy home pages, these two commercial sites provide quick and fairly complete places to get started.

"Cyndi's List," an electronic version of a print book with the same title by Cyndi Howell (Howell has also written another work called "Netting your Ancestors") has an African-American page <www.CyndisList.com/african.htm> that provides a good selection of links. The Cyndi's Links are divided into categories: General Resources Sites; History and Culture; Libraries, Archives and Museums; Mailing Lists, Newsgroups & Chat; Military; People & Families; Professional Researches; Volunteers & Other; Publications; Software & Supplies; Records: Census, Cemeteries, Land, Obituaries, Personal, Taxes and Vital; Slavery; Society & Groups. Here you will find sites such as: People of Color in Old Tennessee; Lest We Forget; Underground Railroad — Taking the Train to Freedom; Blacks in Alaska History Project; Amistad Research Center; Buffalo Soldiers on the Western Frontier. While some links are outdated (as you would expect on any Web site), most seem to work. Here you can also find a list of Board Certified Genealogists who specialize in African American genealogy. If you are just starting to do research,

"Cyndi's" is hard to beat as the first place to go.

"AfriGeneas — African Ancestored Genealogy" <www.afrigeneas.com> is another commercial web site that "provides leadership, promotion and advocacy for the mutual development and use of system of genealogy resources for researching African related ancestry." AfriGeneas has a frame-based navigation bar on the left side that guides you through their major links. You can navigate to the "Beginner's Guide to African American Genealogy"; the AfriGeneas Mailing List (maintained by Mississippi State University <www.msstate.edu/listarchives/afrigeneas/>); the AfriGeneas Mailing Forum (maintained by AfriGeneas as a chat room); "Search 10,000+ African American Surnames" in the Surnames Database; Search a Slave Data Collection Database; local sites on the "AfriGeneas Community" (currently only Alabama, South Carolina, and Bahamas have linked home pages, but you can e-mail people with similar interests in most states and some overseas countries); "The AfriGeneas Newsletter" (current issue July - September 1999 appears to be quarterly) which has reviews and new site links; the AOL Genealogy Forum; "AfriGeneas List of Links"; a "become a volunteer today" form; and a future "AfriGeneas Shop." AfriGeneas is again a good place to get started and seems to keep up to date with additions to the Web on a regular basis.

There are many other Web sites of interest to African American genealogy researchers. "The African American Mosaic" <lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/african/> at the Library of Congress

describes itself as "a resource guide for the study of Black History of Culture." Divided into four sections (Colonization, Abolition, Migration, WPA), this site has links to some exhibit pages covering selected topics (Liberia: Nicodemus, KS; Cavalcade of the American Negro). While this site has some interesting sections, its scope is considerably less than comprehensive. A good comprehensive personal Web page can be found at the "Genealogy Resources on the Internet" site at the University of Michigan <www-personal.umich.edu/~cgaunt/afam.html>. Another good site is the one at the University of Virginia, "Afro-American Sources in Virginia (and North Carolina)," found at <www.upress.virginia.edu/plunkett/nc-toc.html>. This site is basically an index to manuscript collections at repositories in North Carolina and Virginia. The Manuscripts Division at the Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill, also has an 84-page resource description posted to the Web at <www.unc.edu/lib/mssinv/afm.html>. This guide states that "records relevant to African American life and culture comprise a prominent portion of our holdings of nearly 14.5 million items."

There is also, of course, a USENET discussion group (soc.genealogy.african) about "the Genealogy of Africa and the African Diaspora," a FAQ for which can be found at <members.aol.com/memery/faq/>. The District of Columbia GenWeb also has a good home page devoted to "African American Genealogical Research" sources in the Nation's Capital. Here you can locate a list of the most historic black churches and cemeteries

in the District, African American points of interest in DC, and a bibliography. If you are familiar with Rings (links to similar sites), you can find more information and link your site to "The African-American Genealogy Ring!" at

<afamgenealogy.ourfamily.com>. This Ring site is linked to a site called "Black Families.com — Keeping Our Families Whole"

<www.blackfamilies.com> which has a wide variety of other web sites described as "the best African-American Web sites." Again this is a good place to check for links of interest in a Yahoo! index format. Another useful and long running site is "ALL - African American Lifelines." ALL is found at <ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/cliff m/>. This site is sometimes hard to find because there is a space after the word "cliff" in the URL, not a hyphen or period, even though the URL reads "cliff_m" on my browser. Just another quirk of the Internet to drive you nuts.

Described as the "Newest African-American Historical and Genealogical Internet Resource page" (it says so right on the page!), the African American Historical and Genealogical

Resources Web site <http://members.aol.com/VVaughn/aahist.html> has interesting link not yet found on other sites. This site is broken down into state links and other "general areas of interest to the AA community." Here you will find "Historic Black Schools; Funeral Programs USA; Great Blacks in Wax Museum; Black Greeks online!; Famous African Americans; Not So Famous African Americans; Infamous African Americans; WWI; Vietnam; WW2; Korea; and last but not least the "African American Women on the Web — web ring!." This last site was not found on any other previously mentioned site!

A final major site that many like is "Christine's Genealogy Website" (sometimes cited as Christine's African American Genealogy Website, or Charity's Website, or C. Charity's Website, or ccharity), which is found at <http://ccharity.com>. "Christine's" contains a wide variety of current links to "Great Site, right?"; Indexes to Enrollment Cards (of the Records of the Board of Commissioners for the Emancipation of Slaves); Manumission Papers, 1857-1863; "Fugitive Slave Cases before U.S. Circuit Court for the

District ..."; Affidavits related to the 1866 Memphis Riots; the Lynching of Anthony Crawford; Papers relating to crimes committed by the Ku Klux Klan in Alabama, 1869-1879; Habeas Corpus Case Records in US Circuit Court for the District...; a Partial List of Negroes Lynched in the United States Since 1859; Obituaries in the Michigan Chronicle; the Ghosts of Jackson Hill; Patty Cannon's House [rules for]; Plantation Management; Justice to a Negro in North Carolina (1853 Wilmington case of George Allan); Five Civilized Tribes Enrollment Cards; Seminole Freedmen; Census Transcriptions; and Finding Pride in Slave Artifacts." At this site you can enter a county, state, or both, and be taken to a directory of available census, birth, death, and marriage records on the Internet. This give you just a sample of why "Christine's" is a very popular Web site.

I am sure that there are and will be other interesting Web sites of interest to African American genealogy researchers. The ones mentioned above, however, are I think the best currently available on the World Wide Web.

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