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 Ancestord 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" is hard to beat as the first place to go.

"AfriGeneas — African Ancestored Genealogy" (http://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 at http://listsarchives.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" (http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/ alican/) 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: Logone, KS; Cabacade 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 (http://www-personal.umich.edu/~caunt/afram.html). Another good site is the one at the University of Virginia, "Afro-American Sources in Virginia (and North Carolina)," found at (http://www.upress.virginia.edu/plunkett/ntoc.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 (http://www.unc.edu/lib/mssinv/afram.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 (http://members.aol.com/merny/faq/). The District of Columbia GenWeb 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 bibliogra-
phy. 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 de-
scribed 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/
aahlist.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; WW1; Vietnam; WW2;
Korea; and last but not least the
"African American Women on the
Web — web rings!" 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
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 Transcrip-
tions; 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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