The Black Freedom Struggle in the 20th Century

The first two modules of ProQuest® History Vault contain 1.3 million pages and offer all levels of researchers the opportunity to study the most well-known and also unheralded events of The Black Freedom Struggle in the 20th Century from the perspective of the men, women, and sometimes even children who waged one of the most inspiring social movements in American history.

Module 1: Federal Government Records


This module also contains important documentation that shows the longer arc of the freedom struggle both before and after the highpoint of the post-World War II civil rights movement. These topics include:

• Forced labor in the first half of the 20th century
• Migration of African Americans to urban areas that began during World War I
• East St. Louis riot of 1917
• Scottsboro Boys case and campaigns for the passage of anti-lynching legislation
• Heroic combat record of the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II
• President Truman’s Committee on Civil Rights

Module 1 consists of 37 titles.
Collection List: Federal Government Records

• African Americans in the Military: Subject Files of Judge William Hastie, Civilian Aide to the Secretary of War:
  • Part 1: "A-C"
  • Part 2: "D-M"
  • Part 3: "N-Z"

• Black Workers in the Era of Great Migration, 1916–1929

• Centers of the Southern Struggle: FBI Files on Selma, Memphis, Montgomery, Albany and St. Augustine

• Civil Rights during the Bush Administration, Subject File of the White House Office of Records Management, 1989–1993

• Civil Rights During the Carter Administration, 1977–1981 Part 1: Papers of the Special Assistant for Black Affairs:
  • Section A
  • Section B
  • Section C
  • Section D

• Civil Rights during the Eisenhower Administration, Part 1: White House Central Files, Series A: School Desegregation

• Civil Rights During the Johnson Administration, 1963–1969:
  • Part I: White House Central Files and Aides Files
  • Part II: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Administrative History
  • Part III: Oral Histories
  • Part IV: Papers of the White House Conference on Civil Rights
  • Part V: Records of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (Kerner Commission)

• Civil Rights during the Kennedy Administration:
  • Part 1: The White House Central Files and Staff Files and the President's Office Files
  • Part 2: The Papers of Burke Marshall, Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights
  • Part 3: The Civil Rights Files of Lee C. White

• Civil Rights during the Nixon Administration, 1969–1974 Part 1: The White House Central Files

• Department of Justice Classified Subject Files on Civil Rights, 1914–1949

• East St. Louis Race Riot of 1917

• FBI Files on Black Extremist Organizations:
  • Part 1: COINTELPRO and the Deacons for Defense
  • Part 2: Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver of the Black Panther Party

• Federal Surveillance of Afro-Americans, 1917–1925, The First World War, the Red Scare, and the Garvey Movement

• New Deal Agencies and Black America

• Peonage Files of the U.S. Department of Justice, 1901–1945

• President Truman's Committee on Civil Rights

• Records of the Committee on Fair Employment Practices, Part 1: Racial Tension File, 1943–1945

• The Civil Rights Movement and the Federal Government:
  • The Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, 1958–1973
  • The Interstate Commerce Commission on Discrimination in Transportation, 1961–1970
  • U.S. Commission on Civil Rights:
    • Police-Community Relations in Urban Areas, 1954–1966
    • School Desegregation in the South, 1965–1966
    • Special Projects, 1960–1970

• The Martin Luther King, Jr. FBI File:
  • Part I
  • Part II: The King-Levison File
Module 2: Organizational Records and Personal Papers

The collections in module 2 of History Vault cover many of the same events that are covered in module 1, offering excellent opportunities for retrieving results across multiple collections. Consisting of records of civil rights organizations and personal papers, the module 2 collections also branch out to cover other aspects of African American life in the 20th century, like religion, sports, education, fraternal organizations, and even the field of entertainment.

A particular highlight of module 2 is the records of Claude A. Barnett’s Associated Negro Press. Founded by Barnett in 1919, over the next five decades the Associated Negro Press covered an amazing variety of stories on Black life in America as well as foreign news of interest to Blacks. It is in the pages of the Associated Negro Press and the files collected by Barnett that researchers will find documentation on things like Marian Anderson’s powerful concert at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939; Jackie Robinson’s desegregation of Major League Baseball in 1947; and the controversial re-election of Joseph H. Jackson to his fifth term as president of the National Baptist Convention in 1961. The Barnett Papers also feature interesting coverage of the 1963 March on Washington, during which Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech.

The March on Washington is a good example of the benefits of cross-searchability in History Vault because unique documentation on this speech and the March itself is also found in the Records of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the A. Philip Randolph Papers, and the Bayard Rustin Papers. In addition to these collections, module 2 includes the papers of Mary McLeod Bethune, the Records of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs, and two collections on the Black Power Movement. Mary McLeod Bethune’s Papers document the life of one of the most influential African Americans in the quarter century from 1930–1955, founder of Bethune-Cookman College, president of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs, founder and president of the National Council of Negro Women, member of the National Youth Administration during the New Deal, and founder of the Federal Council on Negro Affairs (the so-called “Black Cabinet”).

The Records of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs (NACWC), the oldest African American women’s organization in the United States, feature documents on the state and local affiliates of the NACWC, publications of the organization’s national office, minutes from the NACWC’s national convention from 1895–1992, and materials on important civic leaders like Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, Mary Talbert, Mary Church Terrell, Margaret Murray (Mrs. Booker T. Washington), Mary McLeod Bethune, Jennie Moton (Mrs. Robert Moton), Hallie Quinn Brown, and Daisy Lampkin. Finally, module 2 includes collections on two black power organizations: the Revolutionary Action Movement and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers.

Module 2 consists of 36 titles.
Collection List: Organizational Records and Personal Papers, Part 1

- Bayard Rustin Papers
- Black Power Movement
  - Papers of the Revolutionary Action Movement
- Mary McLeod Bethune Papers: The Bethune-Cookman College Collection, 1922–1955
  - Part 1: Writings, Diaries, Scrapbooks, Biographical Materials, and Files on the National Youth Administration and Women’s Organizations, 1918–1955
  - Part 2: Correspondence Files, 1914–1955
  - Part 3: Subject Files, 1939–1955
  - Part 4: Administration of Bethune-Cookman College and the Mary McLeod Bethune Foundation, 1915–1955 and the Supplements to Part 4
- Papers of A. Philip Randolph
- Records of the American Committee on Africa:
  - Part 2: Correspondence and Subject Files on South Africa, 1952–1985
- Records of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs, 1895–1992:
  - Part 1: Minutes of National Conventions, Publications, and President’s Office Correspondence
  - Part 2: President’s Office Files, 1958–1968
  - Part 1: Records of the President’s Office
  - Part 2: Records of the Executive Director and Treasurer
- Part 3: Records of the Public Relations Department
- Part 4: Records of the Program Department
- Records of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, Series A: Holdings of the Chicago Historical Society:
  - Part 3: Records of the BSCP Relations with the Pullman Company, 1925–1968
  - Series A. 1928–1944
  - Series B. 1945–1955
  - Series C. 1956–1964
- Part Two. Associated Negro Press Organizational Files, 1920–1966
- Part Three. Subject Files on Black Americans, 1918–1967:
  - Series A. Agriculture, 1923–1966
  - Series B. Colleges and Universities, 1918–1966
  - Series C. Economic Conditions, 1918–1966
  - Series D. Entertainers, Artists, and Authors, 1928–1965
  - Series E. Medicine, 1927–1965
  - Series F. The Military, 1925–1965
  - Series G. Philanthropic and Social Organizations, 1925–1966
  - Series I. Race Relations, 1923–1965
  - Series J. Religion, 1924–1966

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