From communal struggle to creative outpourings, uncover the everyday lives of African Americans spanning two turbulent centuries.

This online resource showcases a diverse range of primary source material focusing on race relations across social, political, cultural and religious arenas. A vital resource for students, teachers and researchers of African American and American studies.

Introduction
Focusing predominantly on Atlanta, Chicago, New York and towns and cities in North Carolina, this collection presents multiple aspects of the African American community.

Through pamphlets, periodicals, correspondence, official records and in-depth oral histories, it reveals the challenges of racism, discrimination and integration, and the expressions of a unique African American culture and identity.

Source Archives
- Atlanta History Center
- Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Richard J. Daley Library Special Collections and University Archives, University of Illinois at Chicago
- The Newberry Library, Chicago
- Weeksville Heritage Center, New York

Consultant Editors
The following scholars and academics have provided feedback, advice and written content for African American Communities:
- Jennifer Scott
  Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, University of Illinois at Chicago
- Davarian L. Baldwin
  Trinity College
- Clarissa Myrick-Harris
  Morehouse College
- Priscilla A. Dowden-White
  University of Missouri - St. Louis
- Tomiko Brown-Nagin
  Harvard University
- Kenneth R. Janken
  University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Nature of the Material
This resource features a wide range of material, including:
- Correspondence
- Leaflets and pamphlets
- Periodicals
- Oral histories
- Objects
- Photographs
- Legal documents and official records
- Maps
- Ephemera
Collection highlights

• Chicago Urban League Papers, c.1916-1985, showing the major impact the League had on improving social conditions for black Chicagoans.

• A special exhibition on the African American community of Weeksville in Brooklyn and the Hunterfly Road Houses at Weeksville Heritage Center, depicting African American life and culture in the 1860s, 1900s and 1930s.

• Material on the legal battles for the desegregation of public schools and buses from the papers of Thomas J. Pearsall, James B. McMillan and Algernon Lee Butler.

• A complete run of *The Messenger*, 1925-1928, a popular civil rights magazine published by activist A. Philip Randolph.

• The Long, Rucker and Aiken family papers, providing records of three prominent African American families in Atlanta, c.1870-1965, and featuring rich photographic collections.

• Oral histories of individuals in the civil rights movement in Atlanta and personal accounts from members of the Weeksville community.

Key themes covered include

• Desegregation – focusing on schools, hospitals, transport and other areas of public life. Documents show legal battles, campaigns in favour of integration and public reaction.

• Urban renewal and housing problems – featuring papers on housing and race relations, planning records and papers of neighbourhood councils.

• Civil rights activities and protests – featuring material on Atlanta’s police department and Chicago riots.

• Race relations and community integration – featuring documents charting increased African American home ownership in Chicago.

• African American culture – documents showcasing the life and culture of African Americans in Brooklyn from the Weeksville Heritage Center.

Features

• Interactive exhibition on the African American community of Weeksville in Brooklyn

• Oral histories

• Specially-commissioned contextual essays from academics and collection specialists

• Thematic guides

• Community case studies

• A visual gallery organised by key theme

‘Researchers, students, and teachers will find in this collection an astonishing array of incredibly rich and diverse primary source material from a variety of archives. By including documents from a range of urban centers, small towns, and even some rural communities, Adam Matthew has given researchers one stop access to more than a century of African American social, political, cultural, and religious history.’

Priscilla A. Dowden-White, PhD.
Associate Professor and Undergraduate Coordinator
History Department,
University of Missouri - St. Louis
Further information

‘With this database we now have the capacity to write new histories and understand the formation of African American communities in entirely new and innovative ways.’

Davarian L. Baldwin, Paul E. Raether Distinguished Professor of American Studies Trinity College

Oral Histories

‘Voices Across the Color Line’ from Atlanta History Center features interviews with individuals involved in student activism during the Atlanta Civil Rights Movement. The student community of Atlanta University led peaceful demonstrations in the early 1960s calling for the desegregation of restaurants, public schools, libraries and other public facilities in Atlanta.

The Oral History Collection from Weeksville Heritage Center. Discover what life was like in the community of Weeksville, Brooklyn, through interviews with residents and individuals involved in ‘Project Weeksville’.

African American Communities – start your search here

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