

RESEARCH GUIDE

African-American Literature

Compiled by Richard Bleiler
Richard.Bleiler@uconn.edu
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For access to UConn Libraries Online Reference Books (eBooks) in *Literature* connect to:
<http://www.lib.uconn.edu/online/research/refbooks.html>

The following sources are intended to enable researchers to locate work by and about African American authors. This is a selective list; many additional sources also contain significant information and should also be used.

Networked Electronic Resources

HOMER

<http://www.lib.uconn.edu> (UConn Libraries homepage) → HOMER – Library Catalog

HOMER, the Libraries' Catalog, searches for books and separately catalogued materials held in the University of Connecticut Libraries; it does not locate articles. HOMER uses the subject terms *African American* or *African Americans* to locate material by and about African-Americans. *Blacks* is used in reference to people of African descent anywhere in the world; the following subject search examples may be useful:

morrison toni	african american poets	african americans in literature
african american authors	african american women authors	american literature–african american authors
african american dramatists	african american women in literature	
african american novelists	african american women poets	

ABELL (1920+)

<http://www.lib.uconn.edu> (UConn Libraries homepage) → All Databases → By Database Name → ABELL

The *Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature (ABELL)* indexes journal articles, books, chapters, dissertations, and book reviews from approximately 750 journals. Many of these are also indexed through the *MLA Bibliography* (below). There is no full text but there are links to full-text resources.

The *ABELL* subject headings are frequently inadequate, and searches are best done using keywords; the following keyword search examples may be useful:

morrison toni	african-americans	afro-americans
african-american	afro-american	

Academic OneFile 1980+

<http://www.lib.uconn.edu> (UConn Libraries homepage) → All Databases → By Database Name → Academic OneFile

Academic OneFile indexes many of the same journals indexed through *Academic Search Premier*. Many of the journals indexed through *Academic OneFile* are full text and are not otherwise held in the UConn Libraries.

Academic OneFile generally uses the subject heading *African-American*; the following subject search examples may be useful:

african-american authors	african-american women poets
african-american poets	american fiction - african-american authors
african-american women authors	american poetry - african-american authors

Academic Search Premier

<http://www.lib.uconn.edu> (UConn Libraries homepage) → All Databases → By Database Name → Academic Search Premier

Academic Search Premier indexes many of the same journals indexed through *Academic OneFile*. Many of the journals indexed through *Academic Search Premier* are full text and are not otherwise held in the UConn Libraries.

Academic Search Premier generally uses the subject heading *African American*; the following search examples may be useful:

African American authors	African American screenwriters	African American women dramatists
African American dramatists	African American women authors	African American women poets
African American poets		

American Periodical Series

<http://www.lib.uconn.edu> (UConn Libraries homepage) → All Databases → By Database Name → American Periodical Series

The *American Periodical Series* provides the full text and full images from more than 1100 periodicals published between 1740 and 1900, with occasional later coverage. The APS does not use subject indexing, and searches are best performed using keywords and, when possible, names.

Early American Newspapers, 1690-1922

<http://www.lib.uconn.edu> (UConn Libraries homepage) → All Databases → By Database Name → Early American Newspapers

The *Early American Newspapers* provides the full texts and full images from more than 1000 historical newspapers published between 1690 and 1922. Although a broad “article types” search is possible, the *Early American Newspapers* does not use subject indexing. Searches may be done by keywords, names, the contents of specific newspapers, and geographic places of publication; there are also indexes for searching the newspapers published during Presidential eras and eras in American history.

Evans Digital Edition and Shaw-Shoemaker

<http://www.lib.uconn.edu> (UConn Libraries homepage) → All Databases → By Database Name → Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans

<http://www.lib.uconn.edu> (UConn Libraries homepage) → All Databases → By Database Name → Early American Imprints, Series II: Shaw-Shoemaker

The *Evans Digital Edition* contains the searchable full texts of everything listed in Charles Evans’s *American Bibliography: A Chronological Dictionary of All Books, Pamphlets and Periodical Publications Printed in the United States of America from the Genesis of Printing in 1639 down to and Including the Year 1800*.

Series II contains the searchable full texts of everything listed in Ralph Shaw and Richard Shoemaker’s 1801 – 1819 continuation to Evans’s work. Individual words and names may be searched, and under the heading “peoples” (under subjects) is a link to “African Americans.”

Literature Resource Center, also known as *Gale Literature Resource Center*

<http://www.lib.uconn.edu> (UConn Libraries homepage) → All Databases → By Database Name → Literature Resource Center

The *Literature Resource Center* provides the full texts of approximately 100,000 articles published in the *Contemporary Authors* volumes, the full texts of the criticism published in the *Contemporary Literary Criticism* volumes published after 1996, and the full texts of the bio-critical articles published in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*.

The *Literature Resource Center* offers an “authors by type” search that permits searches by author ethnicity and author nationality. It may be combined with searches for genre, theme, and literary movement or time period.

MLA International Bibliography (1926+)

<http://www.lib.uconn.edu> (UConn Libraries homepage) → All Databases → By Database Name → MLA

The *MLA Bibliography* indexes books, chapters, journal articles, and dissertations published from 1926 to the present. There is no full text but there are occasional links to full-text resources. The *MLA Bibliography* uses the basic subject heading *African-American. Black* is used in reference to people of African descent anywhere in the world. Additional information on accessing and searching the *MLA Bibliography* is available at the Babbidge Library’s Research & Instruction Services Desk.

The following subject search examples may be useful for locating criticism:

african-american dramatists	african-american literary history	african-american preachers
African-american experience	african-american literary tradition	african-american protagonist
african-american female characters	african-american literature	african-american theater
african-american feminist critics	african-american male characters	african-american women artists
african-american feminist writers	african-american male writers	african-american women critics
african-american homosexual men	african-american men	african-american women dramatists
african-american homosexual scholars	african-american men novelists	african-american women filmmakers
african-american homosexual writers	african-american men poets	african-american women journalists
african-american journalists	african-american men writers	african-american women novelists
african-american lesbian feminist writers	african-american novel	african-american women poets
african-american lesbian poets	african-american novelists	african-american women writers
african-american lesbian writers	african-american poetry	african-american writers
african-american lesbians	african-american poets	

Readers' Guide Retrospective (1890 – 1982)

<http://www.lib.uconn.edu> (UConn Libraries homepage) → All Databases → By Database Name → Reader's Guide

Retrospective

Reader's Guide Retrospective contains comprehensive indexing of the most popular general-interest periodicals published in the United States and reflects the history of 20th century America. *Readers' Guide Retrospective* use the term **blacks** in reference to all people of African descent, including African Americans and searches done by subject must have the words connected with dashes; i.e., **blacks-in-literature**.

Reader's Guide Retrospective is most easily searched through keywords; the following subject search examples may be useful:

american literature-black authors	black literature	black women in literature
black authors	black women authors	blacks in literature

eJournals

The following journals are available online and publish articles on African American Literature:

<i>African American Review</i> (1992+)	<i>PMLA</i> (1889-2002)
<i>American Literary History</i> (1989+)	<i>Representations</i> (1983+)
<i>American Literary Scholarship</i> (1998+)	<i>Research in African Literatures</i> (1999+)
<i>American Literature</i> (1929+)	<i>ELH</i> (1934+)
<i>Black American Literature Forum</i> (1976-1991)	<i>Journal of Black Studies</i> (1970+)
<i>Boundary 2</i> (1972+)	<i>MELUS</i> (1974+)
<i>Callaloo</i> (1976+)	<i>MLN</i> (1962+)
<i>Comparative Literature Studies</i> (2000+)	<i>Social Text</i> (1979+)
<i>Modern Fiction Studies</i> (1994+)	<i>Transition</i> (1961-2001)
<i>Negro American Literature Forum</i> (1967-1976)	<i>Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature</i> (1982+)
<i>New Literary History</i> (1969+)	<i>Twentieth Century Literature</i> (1955+)
<i>Phylon</i> (1940-2002)	

Microform Research Collections on Level 3

This list also occurs in the research guide for *African-American History*.

Anti-Slavery Propaganda in the Oberlin College Library

2,500 pamphlets of anti-slavery propaganda published between 1619-1862 on 7,500 microprints.

Printed index: *Anti-slavery Propaganda in the Oberlin College Library*

Level 1 / Ref. E 441 L6 and Babbidge Microform Research Guides Table, Level 3

Location: Level 3, Microprint cabinet, alphabetically by collection title

Collection arrangement: alphabetical by author

Collected Correspondence of Lydia Maria Child

2,228 letters primarily addressing the anti-slavery movement and its surrounding political controversies, 1817-1880.

Printed index: *Collected Correspondence of Lydia Maria Child, 1817-1880: Guide and Index to the Microfiche Edition*

Babbidge Microform Research Guides Table, Level 3

Location: Microfiche cabinets, alphabetically by collection title

Collection arrangement: chronological

Cornell University Special Collection on Slavery

Catalog and annotated bibliography of the slavery-related titles in Cornell University's Special Collection published in the United States, 1619-1840

Printed index: none

Location: Microfilm shelves, alphabetically by collection title

Collection arrangement: subject

Lewis Tappan Papers

9 microfilm reels of correspondence, letterbooks, journals, notebooks, clippings, and miscellaneous items, 1812-1872, with a highlight being his anti-slavery activities.

Printed index: *Lewis Tappan Papers, Babbidge Microform Research Guides Table, Level 3*

Location: Level 3, Microfilm shelves, alphabetically by collection title

Collection arrangement: by material type, then chronologically

Negro Periodicals in the United States, 1840-1960

238 microfiche of seven periodicals (*Alexander's Magazine, Colored American Magazine, Competitor, Quarterly Review of Higher Education, Race Relations, Radical Abolitionists, and Southern Frontier*) portraying the black experience in America, 1840-1960.

Printed index: none

Location: Microfiche cabinets, alphabetically by collection title

Collection arrangement: alphabetical by periodical title

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture Series II: South Atlantic and the Caribbean

10 reels of microfilm with information about the British and former Spanish and French colonies lying to the east and southeast of North America. Rare documents on slavery are presented in *Miscellany*, Section 8, 1666-1852.

Printed index: **Reel Guide: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Series II**

Babbidge Microform Research Guides Table, Level 3

Location: Level 3, Microfilm shelves, alphabetically by collection title

Collection arrangement: alphabetically by author or title

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture Series V: West Indian (Haiti)

1 reel of microfilm with primarily governmental and military documents relating to Toussaint L'Ouverture, Henri Christophe, and Napoleon Bonaparte.

Printed index:

Manuscript Collections from the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, West Indian (Haiti) Collection

Babbidge Microform Research Guides Table, Level 3

Location: Level 3, Microfilm shelves, alphabetically by collection title

Collection arrangement: chronological

Slave Narratives

2000 microfiche interviews with former slaves from 17 states, 1936-1938

Printed index: none

Location: Level 3, Microfiche cabinets, alphabetically by collection title

Collection arrangement: alphabetical by state and by interview subject within each state

United States Department of the Interior, Records Relating to the Suppression of the African Slave Trade and Negro Colonization

10 microfilm reels of letters, communications, and documents relating to the U.S. efforts to suppress the African Slave Trade.

Printed index: ***Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior Relating to the Suppression of the African Slave Trade and Negro Colonization, 1854-1872, Babbidge Microform Research Guides Table, Level 3***

Location: Level 3, Microfilm shelves, alphabetically by collection title

Collection arrangement: largely chronological

General Sources

African American Authors, 1745-1945: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook

Level 4 / PS 153 N5 A32 2000

Contains bio-critical discussions of the lives and accomplishments of 78 African-American writers. Essays are written by scholars and provide a biography of the writer, the writer's major works and their themes, and the critical reception of the writer. They conclude with occasionally lengthy primary and secondary bibliographies.

African-American Writers

Level 1 / Ref. PS 153 N5 A344 2001

Contains bio-critical discussions of 55 African-American writers, from Phillis Wheatley (1753-1784) to Gloria Naylor (1950 -). There are also thematic essays on the Black Arts Movement, Slave Narratives, and Spiritual Autobiography. All articles are written by scholars and contain a primary bibliography and a selected secondary bibliography. Indexes by authors and titles.

African-American Writers: A Dictionary

Level 1 / Ref. PS 153 N5 A3444 2000

Does not limit itself to discussions of African-American creative writers but discusses such figures as Martin Luther King, Jr., Ice-T, and Malcolm X, and such related figures as Joel Chandler Harris and Arthur B. Spingarn. Articles discuss such periodicals as the *Baltimore Afro-American*, the *Black American Literature Forum*, *Callaloo*, and *Phylon*, and such subjects as the Black Arts Movement, Folktales, the Harlem Renaissance, and Spirituals. Arranged alphabetically by name or subject, the volume

concludes with appendixes listing writers by genre, a chronology of writers, a chronology of firsts, the bibliography, and an index.

Afro-American Fiction Writers After 1955

Level A Annex / PS 21 D5 vol. 33 (*Dictionary of Literary Biography* vol. 33)

Contains bio-critical discussions of 49 African-American fiction writers whose careers became established after 1955. Most articles provide a photograph of their subject and primary and secondary bibliographies. The book concludes with an article on African-American literary criticism, a bibliography of additional sources, and a comprehensive index to other volumes in this series. **Note:** the biographical contents are accessible via the *Literature Resource Center* (described above).

Afro-American Poets Since 1955

Level A Annex / PS 21 D5 vol. 41 (*Dictionary of Literary Biography* vol. 41)

Contains bio-critical discussions on 51 African-American poets active after 1955; most articles provide a photograph of their subject and primary and secondary bibliographies. The volume concludes with a comprehensive index to other volumes in this series. **Note:** the biographical contents are accessible via the *Literature Resource Center* (described above).

Afro-American Writers, 1940-1955

Level A Annex / PS 21 D5 vol. 76 (*Dictionary of Literary Biography* vol. 76)

Contains bio-critical descriptions of 26 African-American writers active between 1940 and 1955; each article provides a photograph of its subject and primary and secondary bibliographies. Appendix I discusses three major African-American collections and research centers (the Hatch-Billops collection, the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture). Appendix II reprints the 4th quarter, 1950 *Phylon*, which had as its subject "The Negro in Literature." A separate bibliography of additional sources and a comprehensive index to other volumes in this series conclude this volume. **Note:** the biographical contents are accessible via the *Literature Resource Center* (described above).

Afro-American Writers After 1955: Dramatists and Prose Writers

Level A Annex / PS 21 D5 vol. 38 (*Dictionary of Literary Biography* vol. 38)

Contains bio-critical discussions of 35 African-American writers active after 1955; each article provides a photograph of its subject and primary and secondary bibliographies. Appendixes discuss the Black Theatre and the Black Arts movements, and the volume concludes with a comprehensive index to other volumes in this series.

Note: the biographical contents are accessible via the *Literature Resource Center* (described above).

Afro-American Writers Before the Harlem Renaissance

Level A Annex / PS 21 D5 vol. 50 (*Dictionary of Literary Biography* vol. 50)

Contains bio-critical discussions of 33 African-American writers active from the earliest days (i.e., Phillis Wheatley) until the 1930s; each article provides a photograph of its subject and primary and secondary bibliographies. Appendixes reproduce pages from Charlotte Forten's diary, three documents relating to John Edward Bruce, and three historical documents by African-American writers. The volume concludes with a comprehensive index to other volumes in this series.

Note: the biographical contents are accessible via the *Literature Resource Center* (described above).

Afro-American Writers From the Harlem Renaissance to 1940

Level A Annex / PS 21 D5 vol. 51 (*Dictionary of Literary Biography* vol. 51)

Contains bio-critical discussions of 34 African-American writers active in the Harlem Renaissance until 1940; each article provides a photograph of its subject and primary and secondary bibliographies. Appendixes discuss Alain Locke and Carl Van Vechten, and there is a separate bibliography of additional sources. The volume concludes with a comprehensive index to other volumes in this series.

Note: the biographical contents are accessible via the *Literature Resource Center* (described above).

Black American Women In Literature: A Bibliography, 1976 Through 1987

Level 4 / PS 153 N5 G4 1989

References the poetry, short fiction, essays, and plays by, and criticism on, approximately 300 black women whose work was published in periodicals and anthologies between 1976 and 1987. More than eighty periodical titles and more than two hundred books were indexed. Alphabetical by subject; appendixes list works and authors by genre. Index.

Black American Writers: Past and Present: A Biographical and Bibliographical Dictionary

Level A / Z 1229 N39 R87

Biographical and bibliographic data on more than 2000 African-American writers of novels, dramas, poetry, short stories, juvenile and young adult literature, and literary criticism, from Phillis Wheatley to the writers of the 1970s. Entries also provide lists of the criticism of the authors and their publications. There is also a general bibliography of useful sources, and there are separate appendixes listing African-American critics, historians, and editors; and white critics, historians, and editors.

Black Writers In New England: A Bibliography With Biographical Notes

Level B / Federal Documents I 29.82:B 56

Derived from the Collection of African-American Literature at Suffolk University, this bio-bibliography lists books by and about African-American writers who were born, studied, lived, or worked in New England. About 200 writers are listed, with approximately 625 books by and about them. Another 125 books are listed "by authors of all races that are about the writers of New England connections." There are two sections: 1) books by and about African-American writers associated with New England that are in the Collection of African-American Literature; and 2) African-American writers associated with New England not represented by books by or about them in the Collection of African-American Literature.

Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance

Level 1 / Ref. PS 153 N5 A24 2003

Contains articles on the figures and the music, sculpture, paintings, poems, and novels of the era.

Harlem Renaissance and Beyond: Literary Biographies of 100 Black Women Writers, 1900-1945

Level 1 / Ref. PS 153 N5 R65 1990

Contains bio-critical articles on 100 African-American women writers who published material between 1900 and 1945. Some photographs of subjects are given. Articles conclude with primary and secondary bibliographies; appendixes list writers by genre, by geographic location, and by date of birth. There is an appendix listing titles of works mentioned in the articles, and the volume concludes with a bibliography.

Modern Black Writers

Level 1 / Ref. PN 841 M58 2000

Provides excerpts from the criticism from books and journals on approximately 200 writers of African origin or descent; a significant number are African-American writers. "Modern" is not defined but appears to include writers whose lives encompassed at least some part of the twentieth century. The volume is alphabetical by writer; criticism is arranged chronologically. There are lists of writers by geographical origin and an index to the critics and their contributions.

Oxford Companion to African-American Literature

Level 1 / Ref. PS 153 N5 096 1997 Also available as a eBook at:

<http://www.lib.uconn.edu/> (UConn Libraries homepage) → All Databases → By Database Name → netLibrary

Approximately 1600 alphabetically arranged articles on key figures, texts, and subjects in African-American literature, from the earliest days until the present. Index.

Novels & Short Stories

Black American Fiction: A Bibliography

Level A / Z 1229 N39 F34

"The purpose of this bibliography is to provide the user with a list of Black American authors, their fiction and criticism. Nonfiction has not been included, nor has children's literature or young adult fiction." The work is alphabetical by subject's last name. Beneath each name is listed the works of the author: first publication data are given for novels and short fiction, and the contents of short story collections are listed. Reviews of these works are also cited. References to biographical and critical data appearing in books and journals are listed.

Index to Black American Literary Anthologies

Level A / Z 1229 N39 K34

"Designed to aid students in locating Black American literature which has been published in collections . . . the anthology must include more than two authors; it must be literary in quality, rather than solely political or social in purpose; it should be designed for an adult rather than a children's audience; it should be at least partly in English; it should include predominantly black authors; it should be longer than twenty-five pages; it may be limited to a single genre, or it may include a variety of genres; it may include excerpted or entire autobiographies, dramas, essays, fiction, narratives, poetry, short fiction, speeches, which will all be indexed; however, entire volumes of speeches and addresses have been excluded." There are 142 anthologies indexed by author and title.

Poetry & Drama

Afro-American Poetry and Drama, 1760-1975

Level A / Z 1229 N39 A37

Organized into two sections. The poetry section lists separately published poetry books and pamphlets by African-Americans written between 1760 and 1975; criticism about these authors and poems is also listed. The drama section lists separately published plays or collections of plays written by African-Americans between 1850 and 1975; criticism about these authors and dramas is also listed. Both sections begin with a list of general and major studies followed by chronologically arranged lists of

works by and criticism of individual authors. Many of the books listed here have their texts fully available through *The Database Of African-American Poetry 1760-1900*, described above.

Black American Playwrights: 1800 to the Present

Level A / Z 1229 N39 A7

Organized into three sections. The first provides an alphabetical list of the African-American playwrights and their works, together with criticism of authors and their publications, and awards the authors have won; 530 African-American playwrights and more than 1500 play titles are listed. The second section provides a selective general bibliography of useful works, and the third section indexes play titles. Continued by *More Black American Playwrights* (Ref. Z 1229 N39 A73; described on page 8).

Contemporary Black American Playwrights and Their Plays: A Biographical Directory and Dramatic Index

Level 4 / PS 153 N5 P43 1988

A companion to *Early Black American Playwrights and Dramatic Writers* (below). Provides bio-bibliographic information on more than 700 contemporary black authors, screenwriters, radio and television scriptwriters, musical theater collaborators, and other originators of theatrical and dramatic works produced and/or published between 1950 to 1988; significant information about the histories of plays is given. Appendixes list additional playwrights with scripts in selected special repositories. Contains a title index and a general index.

Early Black American Playwrights and Dramatic Writers: A Biographical Directory and Catalog of Plays, Films, and Broadcasting Scripts

Level 4 / PS 153 N5 P44 1990

A companion to *Contemporary Black American Playwrights and Their Plays* (above). Provides bio-bibliographic information on 218 pioneer black American playwrights, screenwriters, and other originators of dramatic works written and/or produced in the United States and in Europe during the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Appendixes list additional black American playwrights and their plays, additional musical librettists and brief descriptions of their shows, and give a chronology of plays and dramatic works classified by genre. Contains a title index and a general index.

Index to Black Poetry

Level 1 / Ref. PS 153 N5 C45

“References are included for the work not only of black poets but also of those poets who have in some way dealt with the black experience or written within the black tradition.” Indexed are 94 books and pamphlets by individuals and 33 thematic anthologies. Contains author, subject, title and first line indexes.

Index to Poetry By Black American Women

Level 1 / Ref. PS 153 N5 C45 1986

More than 4000 poems by more than 400 poets are referenced; 120 books and pamphlets and 83 thematic anthologies were indexed. Contains subject, title and first line indexes.

More Black American Playwrights: A Bibliography

Level A / Z 1229 N39 A73

A continuation of *Black American Playwrights: 1800 to the Present* (Ref. Z 1229 N39 A7; described on page 7). This does not duplicate the first volume but continues it. There are three sections. The first provides an alphabetical list of the African-American playwrights and their works, together with criticism of authors and their publications, and awards the authors have won; 490 African-American playwrights are listed, 190 of whom were also listed in the first volume. The second section provides a selective general bibliography of useful works, and the third section indexes play titles.

Summaries

Masterpieces of African-American Literature

Level 1 / Ref. PS 153 N5 M264 1992

Critical summaries of 149 literary works by 96 African-American authors from the 18th century through 1900. Significant African-American novels, plays, poetry, short stories, biographies, autobiographies, and essays are discussed; the average length of a discussion is 2500 words. Summary features brief analyses of the themes, characters, and settings, and the place of the work in a literary and historical context. Contains author and title indexes.

Masterplots II: African American Literature Series

Babbidge Level 1, Learning Commons Desk Workstation ONLY / Other Databases folder

Masterplots Complete 1999 contains the full text of *Masterplots II: African American Literature Series* published in 1994. Significant African-American novels, plays, poetry, short stories, biographies, autobiographies, and essays are discussed; the average length of a discussion is 2000 words. Summaries discuss the style, meaning, themes, and content of the work.