

# Black History Resources in Florida's Digital Libraries

Compiled by the Digital Services department of the Florida Academic Library Services Cooperative, February 2018



## African American Legacy - The Carol Mundy Collection

**Description:** This digital collection contains a selection of materials from the thousands of items relating to African American history in the African American Legacy - The Carol Mundy Collection, 1720-2010 housed at the John C. Hitt Library. The physical collection includes books, manuscripts, sheet music, pamphlets, journals, newspapers, broadsides, posters, photographs and rare ephemera which all speak to the black experience. While the collection is comprehensive both nationally and internationally, the collection does contain materials that relates to local African American history.

**Webpage:** <https://digital.library.ucf.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/AAL>

## The Long History of the African American Civil Rights Movement in Florida Collection

**Description:** Digitized items of the Long History of the African American Civil Rights Movement in Florida, an exhibit created by Dr. Robert A. Cassanello and his students at the University of Central Florida. The exhibit chronicles both national and local events in the civil rights movements dating from the Civil War to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Curators for the exhibit were Joseph Corbett and Anne Ladyem McDiviitt. Assistant curators included Patrick Anderson, Laura Cepero, Jennifer Cook, Tanya Engelhardt, Jacob Flynn, William Franklin, Barbara Houser, Rustin Lloyd, Joshua Petitt, Lindsey Turnbull, and Jon Wolfe. Andrew Callovi was the graphic designer.

**Webpage:** <https://richesmi.cah.ucf.edu/omeka/collections/show/114>

## Cunningham Funeral Home Collection

**Description:** The Cunningham Funeral Home in Ocala documents the largest minority-owned business in Marion County, Florida. Brothers Albert and James Cunningham founded the company in 1955. Besides burial records, the collection contains photographs, financial transactions, oral histories, maps, letters, secretarial notes, political history, and notes on dress and life in Florida - all of which form the legacy of the Cunningham Funeral Home Collection. As African-American morticians in Ocala from the 1950s through the 1970s, the brothers and their business document a colorful, professional life that has become a quilt of southern history. Part of the collection's significance is due to the fact that, until the 1970s, the only comprehensive listing of African-American communities in any Florida county is found in morticians' records. For instance, if a researcher wants to know where African-American churches and schools were located, that information can be found in the records. Morticians have been - and continue to be - the means of knowing what was happening in the community: they knew everyone, and they could give directions to houses in obscure locations. They were truly the heart of the community. In addition to their intrinsic value for research in African-American social history, the records are also valuable because they retain Albert Cunningham's organizational scheme for the records and thus open an all too often obscured window into the pragmatic arrangement of minority business papers.

**Webpage:** <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/cunn>

## James S. Haskins Collection

**Description:** James Haskins, professor in the UF Department of English, was a social activist, an educator and an award winning

author of over 100 adult and children's books. His book *The Cotton Club* was made into a major film in 1984. The James Haskins Collection consists of over 3,000 books, manuscripts and papers. Included in the collection are copies of books written by Haskins, such as: *African Heroes*, *The Harlem Renaissance*, *The Cotton Club*, and *I Have a Dream : the Life and Words of Martin Luther King, Jr.*; as well as books from his personal collection, including many children's, historical, psychological, and anthropological works used in his research. A substantial number of books from his personal collection are signed first editions, from many respected authors in the field of children's literature and African American Studies. Some items of interest are: Copies of Haskins' works (listed in the UF Libraries Catalog); Photographs used in the writing and printing of his biographies; Original manuscripts of unpublished works; Correspondence with civil rights leaders, social figures and well known African Americans in the fields of music, politics and sports; Personal papers.

**Webpage:** <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/haskins>

### **Fifth Avenue African American (Alachua County) Oral History Collection**

**Description:** The 'Fifth Avenue African American (Alachua County) Oral History Collection' includes fifty-five interviewees discussing their personal histories and living in the black section of Gainesville (Florida). The interviews date from the 1980s; many of the interviewees are in their 90s and 100s. Topics include how children were raised and who raised them, education—or not completing an education, black schools, teachers, marriage, segregation and racism, community changes for local blacks over the decades, entertainment, social clubs, employment, chores, earnings, role of religion and church life, parentage and ancestry, childhood experiences, medical care and home remedies, impact of Depression, farming and working in the fields, lynchings, lack of statistical records, interacting with whites, among many other subjects.

**Webpage:** <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/ohfab>

### **Florida African Americans Oral History Collection**

**Description:** The Florida African American Oral History Collection contains oral history interviews from the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program.

**Webpage:** <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/ohfb>

### **Otis R. Anthony African Americans in Florida Oral History Project**

**Description:** Most of these oral histories were conducted between 1977 and 1978 as part of the Black History of Tampa Project, sponsored by the Tampa Urban League and the Hillsborough County Museum, under the direction of community activist Otis R. Anthony. In 1994, Anthony donated the collection to the USF Department of Anthropology, to support its Central Avenue Legacies Project. The department conducted additional interviews, focusing primarily on Central Avenue and the Afro-Cuban community. This is an open collection with interviews from other sources, to which more content will be added over time.

**Webpage:** <http://digital.lib.usf.edu/ohp-otisanthony>

### **Jazz Collection**

**Description:** Collection of digital images, documents, and other records depicting the history of jazz in Florida. Series descriptions are based on special topics, the majority of which students focused their metadata entries around. The roots of jazz music began in the fields of the American South, as African-American slaves sang "call-and-response" work songs and "spirituals" to help them get through the brutal hours of forced labor. As Europeans immigrated to American cities in the late 19th century, they brought their musical traditions with them, and soon African-American musicians, such as Ernest Hogan and Scott Joplin, combined these styles with polyrhythmic African music, creating ragtime. New Orleans was an especially diverse cultural melting pot and became a place for musical experimentation by the early 1910s. European music merged with blues, folk, marching band music, and ragtime, creating a new genre

called “jazz.” By the 1920s, the First Great Migration brought millions of African Americans to the urban Northeast and Midwest. Young, white Americans became enamored with jazz and blues music, and the genre was soon being played on radio stations, at dancehalls, and in homes across the country. New York City, Kansas City, and Chicago began to establish their own styles of jazz. Big band swing became the most popular style of American music in the 1930s and 1940s. The most definitive feature of jazz is improvisation. The Great Depression forced many bands to cut down in size, leaving more space for intricate melodies and room for exploration. Bebop, which emerged in New York in the early 1940s, was aimed at a listening audience, rather than a dancing one, and became known as “musician’s music.” Bebop paved the way for Afro-Cuban and Latin jazz in the 1950s, when musicians, such as Dizzy Gillespie and Duke Ellington, incorporated Latin rhythms by playing with Cuban musicians in New York. The popularity of rock music in the 1960s and 1970s led to jazz-rock fusion, which combined improvisation with rock rhythms and amplified instruments. By the 1980s, smooth jazz emerged, creating a commercial form of the genre that drew criticism from many purists, who felt that the musicians were more concerned with making money than creating art with substance. Although Florida might not be as closely associated with jazz as cities like New Orleans, Chicago, and New York City, it has made significant contributions nonetheless. Afro-Cuban jazz developed simultaneously in New York City and Havana in the early 1940s, and Florida’s Cuban immigrants had a profound cultural impact on areas like Miami and Tampa. Since its founding in 1979, the annual Jacksonville Jazz Festival has become one of the most popular jazz festivals in the country, featuring some of the top names in the genre, such as Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Count Basie, George Benson, and Herbie Hancock. The Clearwater Jazz Holiday began around the same time and has also evolved into a major international jazz festival. In addition to the legendary Sam Rivers, who moved to Orlando in the early 1990s and continued to perform until his death in 2011, Florida has been the home to a number of prominent jazz musicians, including Cedric Wallace, Ira Sullivan, George Tucker, Nathen Page, Alfred “Pee Wee” Ellis, Jackie Davis, Rich Matteson, Jeff Rupert, and the University of Central Florida’s Jazz Professors.

**Webpage:** <https://richesmi.cah.ucf.edu/omeka/collections/show/141>

### **Korean War Oral History Collection**

**Description:** The 'Korean War Oral History Collection' includes six interviews, five with African Americans, who give accounts of their service before and during the Korean War (1950-1953) – and subsequent years in the military. A major theme is segregation and desegregation in the military. As one combat soldier said, Why were we segregated? I mean, we got along. We spoke the same language. Another interviewee summarized as follows: We felt freer in a foreign land than in the land of our birth. Topics covered include race discrimination – overt and subtle – in a now (early 1950s) integrated military. Interviews discuss forms of racial hostility in the military; black and white service clubs; and segregation in military, even after President Truman issues Executive Order 9981 in July 1948 abolishing segregation in the armed forces. Other topics include: fighting alongside whites and race on the front lines; African Americans sticking together; African Americans in charge of integrated units; acceptance of segregation during the Korean War and troop integration during the Vietnam War; returning to segregation back in the states and not experiencing segregation on leaves in Japan; receiving medals; reasons for joining military service; the Uniform Code of Military Justice; treatment during basic training and differing treatment at nearby base towns, etc. Interviews suggest that the Korean War may have speeded integration back in the states. Interviewees discuss their war experiences as an ammunition truck driver, a jeep driver for officers, combat soldiers, a paratrooper, an artilleryman, and POWs. The interviews of the black veterans were conducted in 2000.

**Webpage:** <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/ohkw>

### **Florida Sentinel Bulletin Collection**

**Description:** The Florida Sentinel Bulletin is Florida's largest and most widely read African American newspaper. Founded in 1945, the paper is published twice weekly and distributed door-to-door and on news racks in Hillsborough, Polk, and Pinellas counties and via subscription

throughout the United States.

**Webpage:** <http://digital.lib.usf.edu/fl-sentinel>

### Florida Slave Narratives

**Description:** This collection of written interviews gives students the opportunity to experience history at a personal level, through the words of African Americans who spent their childhood and teenage years as slaves. The narratives are presented with the permission and cooperation of the Florida Historical Society, owner of the original documents.

**Webpage:** <http://digital.lib.usf.edu/fl-slavenarratives>

### Johnson Junior College

**Description:** The Florida Legislature authorized Johnson Junior College as a result of the efforts of the citizens of Lake and Sumter counties. A lengthy study was undertaken to determine the need for a segregated college for African American students in central Florida. On January 1, 1962, Perman E. Williams was appointed president and authorized to organize the college. Mr. W. D. Tolbert, Dean of the College, joined the faculty on June 1, 1962. The college opened in September 1962 on the grounds of Carver Heights High School. Following the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Johnson Junior college was desegregated and became a part of Lake-Sumter State College, then known as Lake-Sumter Junior College.

**Webpage:** <http://lssc.digital.flvc.org/islandora/search/?type=edismax&collection=lssc%3A353>

### The Civil Rights Movement in Florida

**Description:** The Civil Rights Movement shaped the 20th century culture and laws of the United States. The former slave states of the South in particular were battlegrounds in the fight to end discrimination against African-Americans. Florida and its citizens were prominent in that struggle. A key victory came in 1954 when

the United States Supreme Court unanimously decided that school segregation was unconstitutional in *Brown v. Topeka, Kansas Board of Education*. The actual process of school desegregation continued into the early seventies. At the same time, political protests and a gradual change in laws lead to the integration of buses, stores, theaters, beaches, and other public places. This unit introduces major themes, events, and individuals in the history of the Civil Rights Movement in Florida using primary sources from the collections of the State Library and Archives of Florida.

**Webpage:** <https://www.floridamemory.com/onlineclassroom/civilrights/>

### Black History Month: Resources for Students and Educators

**Description:** In 1926, Dr. Carter G. Woodson began officially commemorating African-American history during an annual week of remembrance. Woodson promoted the observance of “Negro History Week” during the second week of February to coincide with the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. Woodson was one of the first academically trained African-American historians in the United States. Through his efforts to celebrate and study the nation's African-American heritage, February is now officially designated as Black History Month. The list below features resources on African-American history from the collections of the State Library and Archives of Florida. Black history in Florida is especially rich, dating back to the early 16th century. These resources attest to the struggles and triumphs of persons of African descent in Florida history.

**Webpage:** <https://www.floridamemory.com/onlineclassroom/blackhistory/>

**ABOUT FALSC:** The Florida Academic Library Services Cooperative (FALSC) operates the integrated library system (ILS) used by public college and university libraries statewide – 40 institutions and more than 150 campus libraries – along with a shared catalog and a statewide collection of online journals, e-books, and other valuable e-resources. FALSC also provides a variety of products and services supporting digital collections. Learn more at [www.falsc.org](http://www.falsc.org).