



African American Resources

Historical and Genealogical Materials

Please note: This list of records relating to African American records is not definitive. Records description has been ongoing since 1918, and headings have changed over time with changing social and professional standards. Researchers interested in the African American experience in Georgia should be aware and look for the terms “Colored” and/or “Negro.” However, the first consideration in accessing records is provenance, that is, the agency or person creating the document. Therefore, records not specifically labeled or segregated by race may often be pertinent for research.

U.S. Bureau of the Census Population Schedules, 1870-1940

The U.S. Census is usually the starting point for any genealogical research, as (theoretically) all residents of the United States were counted or enumerated.

Slave Schedules, 1850 and 1860:

On these separate Slave Schedules for 1850 and 1860, the name of each slave owner is listed with the number of slaves owned, and number of slaves manumitted (if any). Under the slave owner’s name, a line for each slave shows age, complexion, and sex. Names of slaves were not entered. Available for all Georgia counties.

Georgia State Records

- **Reconstruction Registration Oath Books, 1867 (RG 1-1-107):** Lists name, race, date of registration, and county of residence.
- **Reconstruction Returns of Voters, 1867 (RG 1-1-108):** Lists voter’s number; date of registry; name; number and page in Oath Book; race; time of residence in state, county and precinct within a year; nativity by state or county; naturalization (if any); and remarks (if any).
- **Georgia Archives File II Counties, Subjects, and Names (RG 4-2-46).** Alphabetically arranged within each section. Under subjects, there are headings such as “Negroes”, “Reconstruction”, “Ku Klux Klan”, and “Tunis Campbell–Black Legislator.” These records contain both secondary and primary material.
- **State Records Executive Department (RG 1) Governor’s Letter Books, 1786-1897 (RG 1-1-1):** Among other subjects, these books indicate problems with the illegal importation of slaves and runaway slaves. Check the microfilm card catalog under Executive Dept.
- **Governor’s Subject Files, 1781-1993 (RG 1-1-5):** Chronological. Later material has a variety of subject headings. [Example: In Lester Maddox’s files, there are such subject headings as “Augusta Riot, 1967-70”, “Black Panthers” and “School Desegregation”.]
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THE GEORGIA ARCHIVES

African American Resources at the Georgia Archives

- **Department of Education (RG 12) Negro Education Division, 1911-ca. 1966**, RG 12-6, : Information on schools constructed with Slater and Rosenwald Funds, Jeanes fund teacher training, One Teacher Experimental Schools, workshops and teacher training programs.
- **Department of Education, Local Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1938-1977**, RG 12-22-64, : African-American schools are listed in separate sections from 1938-1965. Arranged by county, describe each school building, number of teachers, number of employees, number of students in each grade, average daily attendance, budget, and other statistics. An excellent snapshot of schools within the county in any given year.
- **Adjutant General's Office (RG 22) Georgia Army National Guard Miscellaneous Records**, RG 22-1-10 [Note: These records are scattered and do not appear in one single folder.] National Guard Riot Duty, 1900-1945 [Examples: Augusta Riot, 1912; Carrollton Riot, 1901; Racial Disturbance Plans, 1944-1945; Riot Duty, 1943; Statesboro Riot, 1904] Colored Militia Companies, ca. 1870s-1900s
- **General Assembly (RG 37) Summary Committee Reports**, RG 37-8-35 [Example: Report of the American Negro Study Committee, 1970] .
- **Works Progress Administration Records** (RG 44). Most notable in this collection are the WPA surveys of cemeteries, church records, county records, various publications, manuscript collections and the surveys of other states.

County Records

Please note: Many of these records are found in either the Ordinary (Probate) Court or the Superior Court, depending on the county. Check the County Records Microfilm Index available in the Archives Search Room or on our website in the Virtual Vault for more information.

Ordinary Court

- **Marriage Records:** Certificates list the names of the bride and groom, county of marriage, date of marriage, and the name of the official who married the couple.
- **Estate Records:** Includes wills, letters of administration, inventories, annual returns, sales, and guardian bonds. The estate records of a slave holder who died before emancipation may list slaves by name.
- **Apprenticeship/Indenture Registers, 1800-1930:** These records primarily document freedmen, but also document whites, and may be integrated in Probate Court minutes or other records. 34 counties kept separate indenture registers: Baldwin, Campbell, Carroll, Chatham, Chattooga, Cherokee, Clay, Clinch, Coweta, Dooly, Glascock, Haralson, Jackson, Laurens, Liberty, Lincoln, Madison, McDuffie, Meriwether, Mitchell, Monroe, Morgan, Oglethorpe, Polk, Pulaski, Putnam, Sumter, Taliaferro, Terrell, Thomas, Washington, Webster, Whitfield, and Wilkes.
- **Free Persons of Color Registers, 1796-1864:** Registers usually include name, age, occupation (sometimes), property, and white sponsor. Available for 21 counties, and 1 city: Appling, Baldwin, Camden, Chatham, City of Savannah, Clarke, Columbia, Elbert, Emanuel, Hancock, Jefferson, Jones, Liberty, Lincoln, Lumpkin, Morgan, Pulaski, Richmond, Taliaferro, Thomas, Warren, Wilkes.

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- **Records of Slave Trials, 1800-1850:** These records may be integrated in regular Superior Court minutes or case files. Some counties kept separate volumes specifically for slave trials. These counties are: Baldwin, Hancock, Jones, Lincoln, Putnam, Screven (plus Trials of Free Persons of Color), Taliaferro (only Trials of Free Persons of Color).
- **Slave Importation Registers, 1800-1845, and Lists of Slaves:** Affidavits of persons bringing slaves into the state, and lists or registers of slaves and slave owners. Available for 12 counties: Camden, Columbia, Elbert, Franklin, Jackson, Jones, Morgan, Oglethorpe, Pulaski, Richmond, Warren, and Wilkes.
- **County Court Records, 1866-:** These courts were established in 1866 to handle civil cases in which the amount in questions was under \$100 as well as misdemeanor/regulatory crimes, previously handled by the County Inferior and Superior Courts. In many counties, these courts were primarily used to try freedmen. Records from these courts are available for 54 counties.

Superior Court

- **County Property Tax Digests, 1789-2001** (RG 34-6-1) and microfilm. All males between the ages of 21 and 60 had to pay a poll tax or head tax. Beginning in 1866, African-Americans are listed separately until the early 1960s. Immediately after the Civil War employers are often listed. Type of taxes paid also indicate occupation and wealth. Pre Civil-War digests indicate number of slaves owned. Digests after about 1930 may not include African-Americans who do not own real property. Digests in Archives custody up to 1890 are scanned and indexed on Ancestry.com. Check microfilm card catalog Tax Digest drawer for microfilm of tax digests not in Archives custody.
- **Deeds:** Generally list the number of acres and the location of the property (either by lot and district number, militia district or by geographic features on the bounds of the property, such as a watercourse). The deed will also include information about the transaction, such as from whom and for how much it was purchased. Most counties have indices to grantor and grantee, also called direct and reverse.

Federal Records

These records are available on microfilm at the Georgia Archives or from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

- **U.S. Adjutant General's Office:** *The Negro in the Military Service of the United States, 1639-1886*. M858. 5 Rolls. (Georgia Archives Microfilm #231/1-5) This microfilm publication reproduces the seven volumes (eight bound parts) of records compiled for publication by the Colored Troops Division of the Adjutant General's Office.
- **U.S. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands:** Georgia Archives only has limited microfilm publications which pertain to Georgia records.
- **U.S. Comptroller of the Currency :** The Freedman's Savings and Trust Company. Georgia Archives only has those microfilm publications which pertain to Georgia records.
- **U.S. Department of the Interior:** African Slave Trade and Negro Colonization, Records of, 1854-1872. M160. 10 Rolls. (GA Archives Microfilm #231/6-15) This microfilm publication reproduces three bound volumes and some unbound records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior relating to the suppression of the slave trade and the colonization of recaptured and free blacks.

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- **U.S. Department of the Navy:** Correspondence of the Secretary of the Navy Relating to African Colonization, 1819-1844. M205. 2 Rolls. (GA Archives Microfilm #231/16-17) This microfilm publication reproduces six volumes of correspondence of the Secretary of the Navy relating to African colonization, January 5, 1819-May 29, 1844. Copies of a few documents of later date (August 18, 1856-September 8, 1858) are included.

Manuscripts / Private Papers

These records include private, business, and school records. The collections are indexed by main entry, by geographic location, by subject, by chronological dates, and by the type of forms used (such as diaries, ledgers, etc.). Some collections are available in original format, while others are available solely on microfilm. Manuscript collections are searchable in the book (GIL) catalog.

Other Non-Governmental Material

- **Newspapers:** There are a variety of newspapers available, arranged by city of publication, county of publication, and title of the newspaper. Some examples of newspapers available are *Voice of the People*, 1901-1904, a newspaper published in Atlanta by Bishop Henry McNeal Turner as the monthly organ of the Colored National Emigration Association (GA Archives Microfilm #60/22); and *The Athens Blade*, 1879-1880, which published religious and social news about blacks in Athens and some surrounding counties. (GA Archives Microfilm #91/72)
- **Cemeteries and Churches:** The Archives has a variety of church records available in original format and on microfilm. These collections are available by denomination, by geographic location, and under the subject heading "Afro-Americans--Churches & Synagogues". The researcher should keep in mind that many churches in Georgia had both white and black members, and in some cases, slaves and/or freedmen were not allowed to have a separate church body. Church minutes usually list members, and often indicate race and legal status (free or slave). Church reunion or anniversary pamphlets may be donated to expand this collection.
- **City Directories:** Available mainly for Atlanta (1853-1990), but a few are available for other cities in Georgia. In these directories, there are alphabetical and geographic listings of residents, with the race of the individual noted. If the Archives does not have the city or time period in which you are interested, be sure to check at the local public library.
- **Secondary Sources:** The Archives has books and periodicals on a wide range of subjects in Georgia History.