NOTES
CLA Conference Reception – King Library – Great Hall – April 10, 2013

“The beginning and the present day African American authors from Kentucky”

- **Notable Kentucky African Americans Database – NKAA**
  1. Patron grown. Grassroots. In-house project. Continuously updated. Free to all. That fellow librarian Rob Aken and I created beginning in 2003. NKAA turns 10 years old this year. It is 100% supported by the UK Libraries.
  2. People, places, events, communities, activities, definitions, and other information pertaining to African Americans in Kentucky and those from Kentucky.
  3. Listing of over 3,000 sources that support the entries and provides additional information about the entries.
  5. More than 200,000 hits per year from patrons first and foremost in Kentucky, but also from around the U.S., and many countries from around the world.

- **American Colonization Society**
  1. Founded the colony of Liberia in 1821
  2. One founder, Henry Clay, US Legislator for Kentucky – Henry Clay Papers 46M95
  3. Area named Kentucky, with a principal city named Clay Ashland
     a. *The Liberian Connection* – UK Media Library (AV-D7548)
  4. 658 Freemen from Kentucky went to Liberia, 1829-1859 – privileged
     a. President – Joseph Jenkins Roberts (1848-1856) & (1872-1876) – free born in Virginia in 1809, 1st African American President and the 1st President of Liberia
     b. Vice President – James M. Priest (1864-1868)
     c. President – Edward J. Roye (1871)
     d. Vice President and President – Alfred F. Russell (1883-1884)
     e. Vice President and President – William D. Coleman (1896-1900)
     f. President - Arthur Barclay (1904-1912)
g. President - Edwin J. Barclay (1930-1944)

5. President Alfred F. Russell was the grandson of Mary Todd Russell Wickliffe (the richest woman in Kentucky). Letter from Alfred’s mother in Monrovia, Liberia, to his grandmother Mary Wickliffe in Lexington, KY. Within the Wickliffe Preston Papers are a few other letters from former slaves who were living in Liberia.

6. Also letters in the Gordon Family Papers, letters written to Rev. Neal M. Gordon from his former slave Jacob Harris, who lived in Kentucky, Liberia.

- **Slave Narratives**
  1. Single volume books that were written by escaped slaves, the most famous of which was written by Frederick Douglas.
  2. Prior to the Civil War there were also a few Kentucky authors such as William Hayden, Andrew Jackson, Josiah Henson, Frances Fredric, and William Wells Brown.
  3. In 1849, *The Christian Examiner* recognized the narratives of fugitive slaves as a new and marketable addition to American literature. The journal also provided an early analysis of the potential impact and influence of this new Negro literature in the United States.
  4. These slave narratives became such a lucrative venture that there were false slave narratives published. And there were a few mistakes, such as the work Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, published in 1861, and the ongoing debate in the 20th Century as to whether it was a false slave narrative or not.
  5. One of the false slave narratives written by a woman was the title *Autobiography of a Female Slave* by Owensboro, KY native Martha Griffith, who had written the book with hopes of raising enough money to free the slaves she had inherited, and resettle them in a free state. The *Louisville Courier Journal* newspaper was one of the first to call foul, and referred to the title as abolitionist propaganda.
  6. Martha Griffith, a white abolitionist, was forced to admit that she had written the book. The book didn’t sell well, but the American Anti-Slavery Society gave Griffith the money to free and resettle her slaves.
  7. Today Mattie Griffith’s book is often, very often, mistaken an authentic slave narrative.
African American Authors – Kentucky

1. Nikky Finney – won 2011 National Book Award for Poetry – *Head Off & Split: poems*
2. Frank X Walker – the 2013-14 Kentucky Poet Laureate, the 1st African American to receive the honor
3. Both are members of the Affrilachian Poets. There is a listing of other members in the handout, as well as a few sources by researchers who have taken a closer look at tales, writers, and poets in relation to the now accepted term “Affrilachian.”
4. There are hundreds more authors from Kentucky, starting in the 1840s up to present day.
   1. Joseph S. Cotter Sr. – *White Song and a Black One* (Bardstown)
   2. Joseph S. Cotter, Jr. – *The Band of Gideon and other Lyrics* (Louisville)
   3. bell hooks – *Ain’t I a Woman* and other works including her children’s books *Be Boy Buzz and Happy to Be Nappy* (Hopkinsville)
   4. Christine Claybourne Johnson – *Poems of Blackness* (Versailles) & member of the Nation of Islam
   5. Gayl Jones – *Corregidora* (Lexington)
   6. Edward Jordan McCoo, I – *Ethiopia at the Bar of Justice* (play) (AME Church minister in Newport, KY) – a play that was a standard for Negro History Week. In December of 1927, the well known dramatist Henrietta Vinton Davis staged the play at the Ward Theatre in Kingston, Jamaica. The performance was in service to the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities Imperial League, founded by Marcus Garvey.
   7. George C. Wolfe – *Jelly’s Last Jam* (Frankfort)
   8. Albery A. Whitman – *Not a Man, But Yet a Man* (Hart County) – he was also the father of musician Casswell Whitman and the father of one of the most successful vaudeville troupes in the United States, the Whitman Sisters.
   9. Margaret Young – *First Book of American Negroes* (Campbellsville) – she was the wife of Whitney Young, Jr., leader of the National Urban League.
10. Countee L. Cullen – *Cooper Sun* (Louisville or Lexington)

63M349: Wickliffe Preston Papers / Special
G. W. McElroy for Lucy Russell, Monrovia, Liberia to Mary Todd Russell Wickliffe, Lexington, KY, 20 September 1835. Wickliffe-Preston Papers, Box 39 / Special

Francis Vaughn, Jeffersonville, IN to William Preston, Louisville, KY, 14 November 1882. Wickliffe-Preston Papers, Box 67 / Special

Milly Crawford, Frankfort, KY en route to Liberia, to Mary Todd Russell Wickliffe, 10 March 1833. Wickliffe-Preston Papers, Box 39 / Special

51M40: Gordon Family Papers / Special

Neal MacDougal Gordon (d. 1871) served as pastor of the Ebenezer Presbyterian Church in Nicholasville for thirty years (1841-1871) and founded Gordon’s School for Boys in 1850 which trained young men for the Presbyterian ministry. The collections includes many letters relating to Neal Gordon and his interest in the education of ministers and the colonization of blacks in Liberia, a task which included educating young men for the “African Mission.”

Efforts to return free-born and emancipated American blacks to Africa were motivated by reform sentiment and commercial and religious interests. Between 1820 and 1861 about 12,000 blacks, the majority emancipated slaves, were transported to Liberia, a country created by the American Colonization Society in 1817.

Twenty-five letters, most written to Gordon, relate directly to the colonization process. Two letters of particular interest are dated 1848 and 1857. They are from a former slave, Jacob Harris, who writes to Gordon from Monrovia, Liberia and “Kentucky in Liberia, Montasado County.” He writes of his satisfaction with his life in Africa, but also of illness and deprivation. He writes to Gordon: “We are now ready to receive thankfully whatever you may please to send us. We need it now very much.” A missionary, H. W. Erskine, was stationed at Kentucky in Africa and writes Gordon of the beauty he finds there.”

Item 176, p. 28, Guide to Selected Manuscripts.

American Colonization Society / Special


• **Slave Narratives. Pre-1866 Books.**

(1846) *Narratives of the sufferings of Lewis and Milton Clarke: sons of a soldier of the revolution, during a captivity of more than twenty years among the slaveholders of Kentucky, one of the so called Christian states of North America* / Lewis Garrard Clarke; Milton Clarke; Joseph C Lovejoy; John Greenleaf Whittier / 326.9769 / C54 / Special

(1846) *Narrative of William Hayden containing a faithful account of his travels for a number of years, whilst a slave, in the south* / William Hayden / Online / [Documenting the American South](http://docsouth.unc.edu/)

(1847) *Narrative and writings of Andrew Jackson, of Kentucky containing an account of his birth, and twenty-six years of his life while a slave: his escape: five years of freedom, together with anecdotes relating to slavery: journal of one year's travels: sketches, etc.* / E / 444 / J13 / 1847 / Special and E / 444 / J127 / 2013 / Special

(1849) *Autobiography of the Reverend Josiah Henson* / E444 / H52 / 1969 / Young

(1851) *The Life of Josiah Henson, formerly a slave. As narrated by himself.* / E / 444 / H52 / 1851 / Special


(1858) *Father Henson’s story of his own life* / Josiah Henson / E44 / H523 / 1858 / Special

(1863) *Slave life in Virginia and Kentucky: a narrative by Francis Fedric, escaped slave* / Francis Frederick; Catherine Lynette Innes / E44.F85 / A3 / 2010 / Young and Special

(1864) *Narrative of the life of J.D. Green, a runaway slave, from Kentucky containing an account of his three escapes, in 1839, 1846, and 1848* / J D Green / B G82282 / Special

• **Slave Narratives. More Recent Publications**

*Slavery days in Old Kentucky* / Isaac Johnson E / 444 / J64 / A3 / 1994 Special


*Kentucky Slave Narratives: a folk history of slavery from interviews with former slaves* Typewritten records prepared by the Federal Writers Project, 1936-1938. Published in cooperation with the Library of Congress. E / 445 / K5 / K56 / 2006 / Special
• Nikky Finney: 2011 National Book Award for Poetry

On wings made of gauze  PS3556 / I556 / O5 / 1985 / Young
Rice  PS / 3556 / I53 / R530 / 1995 / Special
Heartwood  PS / 3556 / I53 / H435 / 1997 / Special
World is round  PS / 3556 / I53 / W67 / 2003 / Special
The Ringing ear: Black poets lean south  PS / 591 / N4 / R56 / 2007 / Special
Head off & split: poems  PS / 3556 / I53 / H43 / 2010 / Special

• Frank X. Walker: 2013-14 Kentucky Poet Laureate, and first black writer to receive the honor

Frank X Walker Collection  2009MS189 / Special
Frank X Walker Papers  2012ms380 / Special
Eclipsing a nappy new millennium  PS / 591 / N4 / E35 / 1998 / Special
Affrilachia: poems by Frank X. Walker  PS / 3573 / A425332 / A32 / 2000 / Special
Buffalo dance: the journey of York  PS / 3623 / A359 / B84 / 2004 / Special
Black box: poems by Frank X. Walker  PS / 3623 / A359 / B53 / 2006 / Special
America! What’s my name?  PS / 536.3 / A64 / 2007 / Special
When winter come: the ascension of York  PS / 3623 / A359 / W47 / 2008 / Special
Isaac Murphy: I dedicate this ride  PS / 3623 / A359 / 183 / 2010 / Special
• Affrilachian Poets

Makalani Bandele (Louisville minister)
  *Hellfightin’* (Willow Books)
  *Cadences of echoes*

Journals:
  *My Brother’s Keeper*
  *Storytellers*
  *Red Holler*
  *Mythium Literary Magazine*
  *Tidal Basin Review*
  *African-American Review*
  *Prime Number Magazine*
  *Pluck! The Journal of Affrilachian Arts and Culture*
  *Black Arts Quarterly*
  *Platte Valley Review*
  *Sou’wester*

Mitchell L. H. Douglas
Kelly Norman Ellis
  *Offerings of desire*
  *Tougaloo blues*  PS3605 / .L467 / T68 / 2003 / MLK

Nikky Finny
Crystal Good
  *Valley girl*

Kamilah Aisha Moon
  *She has a name* (Four Way Books)

Ricardo Nazario-Colon
Glenis Redmon
Frank X. Walker
Crystal Wilkinson
  *Blackberries, blackberries*  PS3573 / .I4425 / B53 / 2000 / Special and Young
  *Water Street*  PS3573 / .I438 / W38 / 2002 / Special and Young

Bianca Spriggs
Paul C. Taylor

Affrilachian Audio Anthology:
  *Coal Black Voices* (DVD – video)  AV-V2876 / Young Media

• Other Works

Ford, Lyn. *Affrilachian tales : folktales from the African-American Appalachian tradition*

Burriss, Theresa L. *A voice of their own, the Affrilachian writers*
  Thesis (Ph.D.)--Union Institute and University, 2005

Doris Davenport; Mary Reichel. *Affrilachia & poetry "the egotistical sublime”*
  Belk Library; Appalachian State University. DVD video, 2006
• **Authors from Notable Kentucky African Americans Database (NKAA)**

**Burley, Daniel G.** (1908-1962)
*Dan Burley's jive*  
Contains two works: *Dan Burley's original handbooks of Harlem jive and Diggeth thou?*

**Carter, Leon J., III** (1944-1984)
*Black windsongs*

**Carter, Lillie Mae Bland** (1919-1982)
*Black thoughts*  
*Doing it our way: a family anthology*

**Cooper, Priscilla Hancock** (1952-)
*Call me black woman*

**Cotter, Joseph Seaman, Sr.** (1861-1949)
*Collected poems of Joseph S. Cotter, Sr.*  
*Caleb the degenerate: a play in four acts*  
*Links of friendship*  
*White song and a black one*  
*Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the founding of Colored Parkland, or “Little Africa,” Louisville, Kentucky 1891-1916*

**Cotter, Joseph Seaman, Jr.** (1895-1919)
*The Band of Gideon and other lyrics*

**Fortson, Bettiola Heloise** (1890-1917)
*Mental pearls: original poems and essays* - Chicago, 1915

**Green, Michelle Y.**
*Willie Pearl*  
*Willie Pearl: under the mountain*  
*A strong right arm: the story of Mamie "Peanut" Johnson*  
*Willie Pearl: Field Day at Big Sandy*

**Hayden, Shirley M.** (1961-)  
*The women of Nelson: a novel*  
*I tell on Stephen Foster*

**hooks, bell [Gloria Jean Watkins]** (1955-)
*Ain’t I a woman*  
*All about love: new visions*  
*Appalachian elegy: poetry and place*  
*Breaking bread*  
*Be boy buzz*
Belonging: a culture of place  HQ / 503 / H76 / 2009 / Special
Bone black  E / 185.97 / H77 / A3 / 1996 / Special
Communion: the female search for love  HQ / 1154 / .H635 / 2002 / Young
Happy to be Nappy  E / 185.86 / H682 / 1999 / Education
Killing rage: ending racism  185.615 / H645 / 1995 / Special
Outlaw culture: resisting representations  E / 185.86 / H737 / 1994 / Special
Reel to real  PN / 1995.9 / S6 / H66 / 1996 / Special
Remembered rapture  PE / 64 / H66 / A3 / 1999 / Special
Salvation: Black people and love  E / 185.86 / H739 / 2001 / Special
Wounds of passion: a writing life  E / 185.97 / H77 / A3 / 1997 / Special

Jackson, Blyden (1910-2000)
The waiting years  PS / 153 / .N5 / J34 / Young
Co-author, Black poetry in America  PS / 153 / .N5 / J3 / Young

Jacobson, Harriet P. (1879-1961)
Songs in the night - New York: Exposition Press, 1947

Jewell, Terri Lynn (1954-1995)
Our names are many - Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1996

Johnson, Christine Claybourne (1909-1999)
Poems of blackness  PS / 3560 / .O37373 / P64 / 1970 / Young
Muhammad’s children: a first grade reader  BP / 222 / J65 / 1963 / Special
ABC’s of African history  E / 185 / .96 / .J58 / Special
Masks - Chicago, IL : C. Johnson, 1983

Jones, Carriider “Rita”
Black hamlets in the Kentucky Bluegrass – play
The Mark of Cain – play
A Backward glance  PS / 3610 / .O618 / B33 / 2009 / Young

Jones, Gayl A. (1949-)
The Healing  PS / 3560 / .O483 / H34 / 1998 / Special
Mosquito  PS / 3560 / .O483 / M67 / 1999 / Special
Corregidora  PS / 3560 / .O483 / C6 / 1986 / Special and Young
Eva’s man  PS / 3560 / .O483 / E930 / 1976 / Special and Young
Xarque and other poems  PS / 3560 / .O483 / X37 / 1985 / Special
Song for Anninho  PS / 3560 / .O483 / S6 / Young
Knight, Etheridge (1931-1991)
Black voices from prison
Poems from prison
Belly songs and other poems
Born of a woman: new and selected poems - - Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980
Genesis - - Minneapolis: Minnesota Center for Book Arts, Coffee House Press, 1988

Laine, Henry Allen (1869-1955)
Footprints - - Richmond, Ky., Cut Rate Printing Co., 1914
(online, 1924 reprint, Kentucky Digital Library)

Majozo, Estelle Conwill (1949- )
Come out the wilderness
The middle passage: 105 days
Blessings for a new world
Libation - - New York, NY: Published for Harlem River Press by Writers and Readers Publishing, 1995

McCoo, Edward Jordan (1882-1930) – playwright and minister
Ethiopia at the bar of justice

Merriweather, Claybron W. (1874-1952)
Goobers: peas
The voice of the soul
Sun flowers: lyrics of sunshine and other poems
The Pleasure of life, lyrics of the lowly, essays, and other poems

Negro poetry in America - - Boston, Mass., Stratford, 1925
The Influence of the sea upon English poetry - - New York : Revisionist Pr.,, 1976
Man under stress

Parks, Suzan-Lori (1964-)
Topdog / Underdog
Getting mother’s body: a novel
Venus: a play

Quisenberry, Rosetta Lucas (1951- )
A Saga of the black man
A Saga of the black woman, part 2
A Saga of the black child, part 3
A Saga of the black family, part 4
Shockley, Ann Allen (1927 - )
Loving her PS / 3569 / .H568 / L68 / 1997 / Young
Loving her; a novel PS / 3569 / .H68 / L9 / Young
The Black and white of it - - Weatherby Lake, Mo.: Naiad Press, 1980
Say Jesus and come to me - - Tallahassee, FL : Naiad Press, 1987, 1982

Smith, Effie Waller (1879-1960)
The Collected works of Effie Waller Smith 3537 / M36 / 1991 / Special
Rhymes from the Cumberland 3545 / R56 / R4 / 1987 / Special
Rosemary and pansies PS / 3545 / A56 / R640 / 1988 / Special
Songs of the months PS / 3545 / A56 / S640 / 1988 / Special

Talbott, Emma M. (1943- )
The Joy and challenge of raising African American children HQ / 769 / T267 / 1997 / Special

Whitman, Albery A. (1851-1901)
Not a man, and yet a man PS / 3187 / .W2 / N6 / 1970 / Young (reprint)
Twasinta's Seminoles; or, Rape of Florida PS / 3187 / .W2 / T8 / Young (reprint)
An Idyl of the South - - Upper Saddle River, N.J., Literature House, 1970, 1901

Williams, Orena Vaught (1913-1988)
Grains of sand (1974) [Indiana Historical Society]
From My garden (1980) [Indiana Historical Society]

Wolfe, George C. (1954-) – writer, director, producer
The Colored museum PS / 3573 / O52 / 665 / 1987 / Fine Arts
Jelly's last jam ML / 50 / Z99 / J45 / 1993 / Fine Arts
Shackles, with Richard Taylor PS / 3573 / O450 / 1988 / Fine Arts

Young, Margaret B. (1921-2009; Mrs. Whitney Young, Jr.) – children’s books
Picture life of Martin Luther King JB KIN / Education
How to bring up your child without prejudice HC / 101 / P78 no. 373 / 1966 / Young
Black American leaders J90 / YOU / Education