

A Guide to the  
FAIRFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S  
Collections Relating to  
**AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Century Period**

*Compiled by Judith Polizzotti, Intern  
Sponsored by:  
Southern Connecticut State University  
Graduate School  
History Department  
New Haven, CT*

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Fairfield Historical Society  
636 Old Post Road  
Fairfield, CT 06430  
203-259-1598

## **Introduction**

This guide describes historical records and files in the Fairfield Historical Society library that relate to African Americans. This includes the status of free blacks, examples of slavery and names and family information of African Americans who resided in the Town of Fairfield or Fairfield County during the Colonial period up through the 19<sup>th</sup> Century of U.S. History.

The guide will be a valuable tool for the researcher in locating the most significant records directly related to African Americans. Topics covered describe daily life to include military service, financial matters, religious affiliation, education, social life and slavery. It will enable students, teachers and those who are interested in the study of African American History to conduct genealogical research and study this important historical period. The information describes the contents, and location of files and primary source documents, books and copies of documents from; manuscripts, census data, photographs, genealogy listings, newspaper articles, family papers, and account books.

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### **1. Vertical Files**

#### **African Americans-Connecticut**

Items, 40, coverage dates, 1770-1980 ca.

Location: Vertical File Drawer

This file is made up of copies of primary source documents relating to African Americans in Connecticut including Connecticut Land Records, Newspaper Articles, Annual Reports, a Letter of Reference, and Pamphlets. The collection covers various topics relating to the Underground Railroad, the Amistad, the antislavery movement, acquisition of land, Blacks in the American Revolution, and daily life (birth, marriage, deceased). Some of the records include the Fairfield Historical Annual Report, Slavery in New England, 1916 and Three Petitions by Connecticut Negroes for the Abolition of Slavery in Connecticut, Connecticut Review, Fall 1995. It is a vertical file located in the drawer labeled Automobiles to Children's Museum.

### **African Americans-Fairfield**

Items 20, coverage dates 1760-1990 ca.

Location: Vertical File Drawer

This file identifies selective African Americans living in Fairfield from copies of family papers and covers topics including financial matters, family history, and legal transactions. Also a vertical file located in the drawer labeled Automobiles-Children's Museum, it contains copies of primary source documents including Fairfield Probate Court Records, Greens Farms Congregational Church Records and Family Papers. One such record is a copy of the Jennings Family Papers Manuscript #70 which contains an account record of mortgage payments for Randolph an African American family living in Fairfield. Fairfield Probate Records include a copy of a Will for African American, Toney Freeman (Toney Gould) 1799-1819. The one African American woman's photograph is of Mary E. Price, 1910 ca. An article from the Connecticut History, Volume 35, No. 2, from Fall 1994, describes the life of The Hubbards, An African-American Family in Connecticut, 1769-1810, written by Vincent J. Rosivach, Professor Fairfield University.

## **Genealogy-African Americans**

Items 18, Coverage Dates 1770-1860.

Location: Genealogy-Brown Envelop File Cabinet

This file contains genealogical working papers and summarized census data for families living in Fairfield. The file covers topics including religious affiliation, selective criminal proceedings, financial matters and social life and is mainly composed of hand written index cards listing African Americans from account books, military records, church records, emancipation records and family papers. It also includes copies of selective diary excerpts, Fairfield Newsletters, and Periodicals.

## **African American Census Data**

Items 17, Coverage Dates 1727-1929.

Location: Vault, Library Files Drawer

This file can also be used to research African American Genealogy. It would enable the researcher to track selective families daily life through birth, religious affiliation to emancipation, military service, business ownership and death. It is located in the Vault, File Cabinet, and Library Files Drawer. The records include an index of Bradley Family Papers that contain records of slave ownership, African American Military Service Data, Lists of Slave owners, and Baptisms records from Greens Farms Church Records have been used to develop genealogical working papers, including hand written lists of African American Families. In addition, also included are copies of pages from the following, Fairfield City Directory, Fairfield Land Records, Bridgeport City Directory, Church Records, and 1790 to 1880 United States Federal Census Records.

## 2. Books

Books cover topics from Slavery and Emancipation to the Underground Railroad, Black Women, Education, the Abolitionist Movement, the History of Military Service during the American Revolution and the Civil War. Following is a list of books from these specific topics with library reference numbers:

Bennett, Norman R., New England Merchants in Africa: A History in Documents 1802-1865, Boston University Press, 1965. (Ref.#387.5 B472r)

Bolster, W. Jeffrey, Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1997. (Ref. 387.5 B 693B)

Calvin, Underground Railroad, Fairbank, 1816-1898. (Ref. 921F164)

Ciccone, Diane, Journeys of Freedom: The Bennett, Brunk, Holmes and Parish Family Stories, Privately Printed, 1999. (Ref. 929.2 B471c)

Connecticut Ancestry Society Inc., Connecticut Ancestry, Emancipation and Sales of Slaves, Fairfield CT. May 2000 Vol. 42, No. 4, Priscilla A. Chatfield, pg. 177-180.

Connecticut Historical Society: Black Women of Connecticut: Achievement Against the Odds, Hartford Connecticut, 1984. (Ref. 920.7 B632)

Cruson, Daniel, Newtown's Slaves: A Case Study in Early Connecticut Rural Black History, Newtown Historical Society, Newtown 1994. (Ref. 974.6993,C957N)

Fuller, Edmund, Prudence Crandall Incident in Racism in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Connecticut. Wesleyan University Press., Middletown CT, 1971. (Ref. 921 C 891)

Greene, Robert Elwell, Black Courage, 1775-1783, Documents of Black Participation in the American Revolution, Washington DC, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, 1984. (Ref. #929.16811)

McCain, Diana, Connecticut African American Soldiers 1861-1865, Connecticut Historical Commission. (Ref. #973.7 M121C)

Moore, George Henry, Notes on the history of Slavery in Massachusetts, 1823-1892, New York, D. Appleton & Co, 1866. ( Ref # 326 9744 M822n)

Pauling, James Kirke, 1778-1860, Slavery in the United States, Harper Brothers, New York 1836. (326 P325s Vault)

Platt, Orville, "Negro Governors", New Haven Colony Historical Society Papers, Volume 6. (Ref. 974.67 NH 673p.)

Rosivach, Vincent J. Slavery in Fairfield at the End of the Colonial Period, Manuscript of Presentation at Fairfield Historical Society, Fairfield University, 1992. (Ref. #974.6971 R821)

Rowland-Fisher, John, Some Societal and Economic Aspects of Life in Fairfield CT, 1763-1800. Thesis Columbia University, New York, 1948.

Sherman, Henry, Slavery in the United States of America, from the establishment of the Confederacy to the present time. Hartford, CT, J.D. Hurlburt, 1858. (326 S553 B)

Steiner, Bernard C. History of Slavery in CT, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1893. (Ref.326.9746 S822s)

Wheatley,, Poems on Various Subjects, First Edition, London, 1777. (Ref. #8111.1 W557po)Vault.

White, David, Connecticut's Black Soldiers, 1775-1783, Chester CT, Pequot Press, 1973. (Ref. #974.6 AB4)

### **3. Genealogical Card File: Black Family Index**

Items 19, Coverage Dates 1740-1934.

Location: Card Catalog-Black Family Index

This file is demographic information developed from documents held by the Fairfield Historical Society such as; census records, church records, family papers and court records. Each card lists date of birth, marriage date, date deceased as available with the name of known family members.

### **4. E. N. Dannenburg Collection**

Items 2, Coverage Dates 1765-1860 ca.

Location: Card Catalog

This file contains two documents relating to the slave trade. The documents describe shipping transactions of New England Merchants to Africa 1802-1865 from Stratford Connecticut. It also provides an accurate transcript of a trade transaction of a Mulatto Boy for pork in 1765 from Zachariah Thomlinson of Stratford to Joseph Woodruff of Milford.



## 5. Manuscript Collection

Items 10, Coverage Dates 1671-1985  
Location- Finding Guides Top of File Cabinets

This collection contains primary source documents relating to African Americans from Fairfield Family Papers. It covers topics of slave ownership, emancipation and financial transactions.

MS #5, Couch Family Papers, 1738/9-1858 Folder K, Indenture & Slave Papers, 1781-1812.

MS. #9, Hide Family Papers, 1671-1912, Box I, Folder I, Legal Papers, Correspondence & Maps 1742/2-1838.

MS #10, Jennings Family Papers, 1756-1925.

MS #12, Bradley Family Papers, II Box, Folder O, Indentures & Slave Papers.

MS # 15, Wakeman Family Papers, 1705-1957, Folder 5 Slave Purchase & Emancipation 1801-1817; Will 1817.

MS # 19, Bulkley Family Papers 1713-1943, Ships papers from 19<sup>th</sup> C, Box II, VI, and VII.

MS #B20, Burr Family Papers 1752-1951, Box I, Folder J, Photocopies of Probate Papers.

MS #23, Nichols Family Papers, 1728-1894, Box I, Folder D, Financial, Contractual, Probate Records.

MS #27, Adams Family Papers 1712/13-1889, Box I, Folder E, Legal Papers.

MS#37, Fairfield Family Papers, Sherman, David 1708-1741/2, Box III, Folder P, Slave Papers.

## **6. Related Local Collections and Other Resources on Subject**

These records are located within Connecticut outside of the Fairfield Historical Society Collection. The Fairfield Town Hall contains The Family Book No. 1 1696-1855, in the Office of the Town Clerk. The Bridgeport Public Library also contains an extensive collection of African American records and papers. Some other resources include:

Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, 121 Wall Street, New Haven CT, 06520, Director Barbara Shailor, 203-432-2972, X2959.

Bridgeport Public Library, 925 Broad Street, 06604, Contact History/Genealogy, Mary Witkowski, 203-576-7777, X7417.

Connecticut Historical Society, 1 Elizabeth Street, 06106, Director, Nancy Milnor, 860-236-5621.