



Noah Lenstra <nlenstr2@gmail.com>

Fw: Black Newspaper Notes

4 messages

Tim Pinnick <t_pinnick@yahoo.com>

Tue, Jan 4, 2011 at 11:31 PM

To: "Noah Lenstra" <nlenstr2@illinois.edu>, Brian Zelip <bzelip@illinois.edu>

Unfortunately, I don't pay to have these archived, so what you see is what you get. If things are not aligned, clicking the link will not work.

Tim

--- On Wed, 12/16/09, Tim Pinnick <blackminers@yahoo.com> wrote:

From: Tim Pinnick <blackminers@yahoo.com>

Subject: Black Newspaper Notes

To: t_pinnick@yahoo.com

Date: Wednesday, December 16, 2009, 10:20 PM

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Black Newspaper Notes



This past weekend was one of great excitement as I traveled to central Illinois for a two hour workshop on black newspapers--and I was not the presenter! Instead it was Mary Stuart, a librarian and professor who oversees the development of the newspaper collection in History, Philosophy, and Newspaper Library on the campus of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. I learned a number of valuable things. One is off to the right in the Quick Links. Mary has put together a terrific research guide on the library's website for finding and using African American newspapers. It is so

awesome despite the fact that she claims it is a work in progress! I expect that I will be discussing it in depth in a future e-zine. But for now, you can visit it and enjoy. Another thrilling piece of news is that the university has received a digitization grant and one of the papers chosen is Chicago Eagle, a black paper covering 1892-1946. And the final piece of news I will leave you with is the the revelation that the library has the Proquest black newspaper database. It does not have all nine papers available but they do have five with plans of future purchases.

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For some of you the layout of this e-zine may appear a bit uneven, have unexpected word wrap, or some other weird abnormality. To view it the way it was meant to be seen, hit the "Click Here" hyperlink in the white space at the very top of this e-zine.
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Quick Link Descriptions

UIUC African American Newspapers Guide: A wide variety of resources and growing! Destined to become a solid reference site for serious researchers.

Chronicling America: The best site online to find out which black newspapers are in existence. Several digitized papers can also be found there.

The Historic Black Press: A nice overview of black papers by era, along with a super bibliography-- one of the best I've seen.

Miscellaneous Black Newspapers List: A state by state, city by city guide to the papers found on this 12 microfilm reel collection.

Chicago Defender Index: Search for information in one of the best known black newspapers ever published.

The Black Press in Illinois: This article contains an extensive list of papers by city, including publication dates.

Note: From week to week the quick links may change in both type and number. Some will eventually drop from the list, so you should bookmark them.

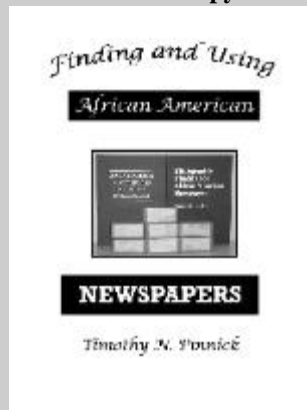
Quick Links...

- [UIUC Black Newspaper Guide](#)
- [Chronicling America](#)
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Interesting Find

When doing some work in WorldCat recently I came across a 2008 thesis (or dissertation) titled "The Savannah Tribune: completing the news for Savannah's African Americans, 1929-1941". It is written by Michelle McLean-Mobley of Armstrong Atlantic State University. (FYI, the Tribune began in the 19th century and ran well into the 20th--it can be found on microfilm.)

[Chicago Defender Index](#)
[The Black Press in Illinois](#)

Under Construction: The Black Community of Champaign, Illinois

In my book **Finding and Using African American Newspapers**, I discuss how researchers can find information about communities of interest even if: a) the town had a paper but no known copies survive. b) a newspaper was never published there.

I used the example of Hutchinson, Kansas, which did have an African American paper for a period of time however only 5 years, 1918-1922, appear to have survived. Benefiting from the widespread existence of out-of-town social columns in a number of black papers, I was able to locate a "Hutchinson" column in 3 of them and extend the window into the community.

African American researchers need to be proficient in using black newspapers in this manner to reconstruct communities where no traces of "us" are to be found. We must remember that by the early 20th century the rising tide of "sundown towns" and shifting employment opportunities had all but swept away the African American from many communities. In both these instances as well as others where blacks gained a more resolute foothold, very little evidence of the African American resident, past or present, exists. A search of countless county histories reveals, for the most part, only scant clues of their lives and activities.

On my visit to the Urbana-Champaign area this past weekend, I was able to spend several hours in the Champaign County Historical Archives located in the Urbana Free Library. It was my second visit there in conjunction with a project I have underway to recreate the African American community of Champaign, Illinois, for the time period surrounding the turn-of-the-century. I am very interested in determining the added value that can be derived from injecting black newspapers into the mix. After making an assessment of the resources available I am now in the process of examining black newspapers. For the record I have uncovered a black news column in one of the local mainstream papers titled "Among the Colored Folks", however it does not seem to have run for very long. No African American newspapers appear to be extant for the city, however utilizing the social column strategy I have located Champaign news in the *Chicago Defender*, *Chicago Whip*, and *Indianapolis Freeman*, along with two papers published in Springfield, Illinois, the *State Capital* and the *Illinois Record*.

The Champaign black community is a fairly large one. The town's population numbered 404 in 1900, 759 in 1910, 1,234 in 1920 and 1,598 in 1930. In the initial phases of my work I have had the good fortune to learn the name of the local correspondent. Although typically the name of the writer is not revealed, Z. L. Breedlove's name is prominently displayed at the top of the columns he sends in to the *Freeman*. Census and other records between 1910 & 1920 give us the name of Zelmar Lane Breedlove, born in 1893 in the state of Tennessee. He is an enterprising young man, and by 1915 is selling the *Defender*, *Freeman*, and the NAACP's *Crisis* from Breedlove's Consolidated News Stand. The processing of the *Freeman* columns have begun and already the activities, membership, organizational structure, and leadership of the two main churches, Salem Baptist and Bethel AME, are emerging. The phase one goal is to compile the details from a year's worth of submissions then assess and report the findings. Stay tuned for a groundbreaking research report down the road!

To discover more about what I do and where I go, or to comment on this e-zine visit my website [Historical Spotlight on African American History and Genealogy](#).

Until next time,

Timothy Pinnick

Dedicated to Uncovering Our History

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