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Mid-Continent Public Library Celebrates Black History Month

Library Kicks Off Month-Long Series of Programs on Black History and Culture

Greater Kansas City, MO – February is Black History Month, and in honor of the occasion, Mid-Continent Public Library will offer numerous free programs for the public on black history and culture in America at several of its branches. Included among the roster of programs are:

**Why We Laugh**
Join comedian Darryl Littleton, aka D’Militant, for a comedy event featuring an exclusive screening of the film *Why We Laugh: Black Comedians on Black Comedy*, never-before-told comedy stories, and a live stand-up comedy show. Ages 12 and up.

Raytown Branch – Thursday, February 16 at 6:30 p.m.
[6131 Raytown Road, Raytown, MO]

**The Life of Harriet Tubman**
Harriet Tubman was not only the Underground Railroad’s most famous conductor, she also served as a Civil War nurse and spy and fought for women's suffrage. Learn about this remarkable woman from Kristen T. Oertel, author of *Harriet Tubman: Slavery, the Civil War, and Civil Rights in the 19th Century*. For adults.

Midwest Genealogy Center – Sunday, February 12 at 2:00 p.m.
[3440 S. Lee's Summit Road, Independence, MO]
Lone Jack Branch – Monday, February 13 at 10:00 a.m.
[211 N. Bynum Road, Lone Jack, MO]
Claycomo Branch – Monday, February 13 at 7:00 p.m.
[309 NE 69 Hwy., Claycomo, MO]
**Cotton, Rag Dolls, and the Underground Railroad**

Kansas City’s connections to the Underground Railroad run deep. Hear stories about the people who helped escaped slaves travel to freedom in the North, and discover the importance rag dolls played in the journey. Then make a rag doll with creative touches that make it all your own. Ages 7 and up.

Midwest Genealogy Center – Saturday, February 11 at 2:00 p.m.  
[3440 S. Lee's Summit Road, Independence, MO]

Antioch Branch – Saturday, February 25 at 10:30 a.m.  
[6060 N. Chestnut Ave., Gladstone, MO]

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**Tales from the Black West**

Saddle up for an interactive musical that not only debunks the myths of cow punching, but also explores the life and times of the nearly 10,000 African American cowboys and cowgirls of the Old West. Ages 7 and up.

Blue Ridge Branch – Saturday, February 18 at 2:00 p.m.  
[9253 Blue Ridge Blvd., Kansas City, MO]

North Oak Branch – Tuesday, March 21 at 6:30 p.m.  
[8700 N. Oak Trfy., Kansas City, MO]

South Independence Branch – Saturday, April 15 at 2:00 p.m.  
[13700 E. 35th St. South, Independence, MO]

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**Underground Railroad: The Who, What, and Where Did It Go**

Cultural historian Brother John shares the secret codes, symbols, agents, and songs of the Underground Railroad as well as added insight into this chapter in America’s history. Ages 8 and up.

Lee's Summit Branch – Saturday, February 18 at 10:00 a.m.  
[150 NW Oldham Pkwy., Lee's Summit, MO]

Woodneath Library Center – Monday, April 10 at 6:30 p.m.  
[8900 NE Flintlock Road, Kansas City, MO]

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**Finding Your Slave Ancestors**

In celebration of Black History Month, the Midwest Genealogy Center and the Midwest Afro-American Genealogical Interest Coalition (M.A.G.I.C.) are presenting a workshop on how African Americans can locate their enslaved ancestors. Led by Sherri Camp, a genealogy speaker, author, librarian, and founder and president of the Kansas Chapter of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS), participants will learn how to do a survey, determine where their ancestors were enslaved, and find out who their owners were. For adults.

Midwest Genealogy Center – Saturday, February 25 at 1:00 p.m.  
[3440 S. Lee's Summit Road, Independence, MO]
In addition to programming for all ages, the Library offers numerous other resources to learn more about black history including several online databases:

**African-American History Online**

*African-American History Online* is a comprehensive reference database, covering more than 500 years of African American history from the slave trade to the Civil Rights Movement to the present day. The thousands of informative entries include biographies, primary source documents, images, timelines, maps, and charts.

**Black Thought and Culture**

This database includes more than 100,000 pages of monographs, speeches, essays, articles, and interviews written by leaders within the black community from earliest times to 1975. It includes the only full run of *The Black Panther*—the party’s newspaper—and 2,500 pages of oral history interviews recorded by the former Black Panther David Hilliard. Teachers, artists, politicians, religious leaders, athletes, veterans, entertainers, and others are also represented within the scope of the database.

**Slavery and Anti-Slavery**

This collection is devoted to the scholarly study and understanding of slavery from a multinational perspective. It includes works on the transatlantic slave trade, the global movement for the abolition of slavery, and the legal, personal, and economic aspects of the slavery system from the 16th through the 19th Century.

**Slavery, Abolition & Social Justice, 1490-2007**

This resource is designed as a portal for slavery and abolition studies, bringing together documents and collections covering an extensive time period of 1490-2007, from libraries and archives across the Atlantic world. Close attention is given to the varieties of slavery, the legacy of slavery, the social justice perspective, and the continued existence of slavery today.

The Library’s extensive catalog is another great resource to explore first-hand accounts of key moments in black history and to learn about notable African American figures. Check out the following recommended reads from MCPL staff:

Registration is required for all programs. Visit mymcl.org/blackhistory to sign up for these events and to view additional Black History Month book recommendations from Library staff.

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**Access Your World**

Mid-Continent Public Library is the largest library system in the Kansas City metropolitan area, operating 31 branches and four Library-To-Go locations and serving over 792,000 people in Jackson, Clay, and Platte Counties. The Library strives to enrich our citizens and communities through expanding access to innovation, information, ideas, and inspiration. MCPL is a 2014 National Medal for Museum and Library Service winner. Connect with the Library on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.