

## "Overlooked Stories and Histories: African Americans in Maine"

Great Falls Forum – Lewiston Public Library – November 10, 2022

### **Resources**

**[99 Years Podcast](#)** A Black exploration of the deliberate creation of the whitest state in the nation. This new podcast from Samuel James explores the Black history of Maine and the ties between national and local institutionalized racism. Find resources and learn more at [www.99yearsod.com](http://www.99yearsod.com).

**[Black History of Maine with Bob Greene](https://youtu.be/JO7QXxLcEyK)** (<https://youtu.be/JO7QXxLcEyK>) Lewiston Public Library, Jan 26, 2022. YouTube video. Learn about the rich history of Black people in what is frequently referred to as one of the whitest states in America, from this Portland native, retired journalist, and genealogist who has been researching Black history in Maine for many years.

**[Maine Becomes More Diverse But Still Whitest State In Nation.](https://www.mainepublic.org/news/2021-08-13/maine-becomes-more-diverse-but-still-whitest-state-in-nation)** (<https://www.mainepublic.org/news/2021-08-13/maine-becomes-more-diverse-but-still-whitest-state-in-nation>) Maine Public | By [Associated Press](#) Published August 13, 2021. This brief news story describes Maine’s increasing racial and cultural diversity.

**[“Why Is Maine So White? And What It Means To Ask The Question”](https://www.mainepublic.org/maine/2019-02-19/why-is-maine-so-white-and-what-it-means-to-ask-the-question)** (<https://www.mainepublic.org/maine/2019-02-19/why-is-maine-so-white-and-what-it-means-to-ask-the-question>) Willis Ryder Arnold, Maine Public. Published February 19, 2019. 6-minute audio. Kate McMahon, historian at the Smithsonian of African American History in Washington D.C.; Myron Beasley, Bates College professor of American Cultural Studies; and, Portland artist, educator, and founder of Indigo Arts Alliance, Daniel Minter fielded a question via email from a Maine Public Radio listener. Hear their responses.

**[“Black History in Maine: The Stories and Contributions of Maine's Black Individuals and Communities.”](https://www.mainepublic.org/show/maine-calling/2019-09-27/black-history-in-maine-the-stories-and-contributions-of-maines-black-individuals-and-communities)** (<https://www.mainepublic.org/show/maine-calling/2019-09-27/black-history-in-maine-the-stories-and-contributions-of-maines-black-individuals-and-communities>) [Maine Calling](#) Published September 27. LISTEN • 49:52. Audio file. Learn how African Americans in Maine helped create settlements and lay the foundations for the future of the state in various ways, from social to economic to cultural. Also hear about the struggles that black residents have faced along the way, as well as the roles that particular individuals played in shaping their communities.

**[Maine’s Visible Black History](https://minerva.maine.edu/record=b2334294~S19)**, (<https://minerva.maine.edu/record=b2334294~S19>) co-authored by H.H. Price and Gerald Talbot. Tilbury House Publishers, 2006. Representative Gerald Talbot’s ground-breaking collection of artifacts is the first comprehensive book on Maine’s

black history. It is a mosaic of early history, slavery, the Underground Railroad, arts, sciences, law, politics, civil rights, education, religion, military, and sports. Forty-two contributors write about black families and communities. Available through your local library.

**Mapping Black History in Maine**, (<https://www.maine Preservation.org/mapping-black-history-in-maine>) provides a visual exploration of the Black experience in Maine through the lens of the physical places these Mainer's lived and worked. This map is intended to shine a light on histories and places that have often been overlooked, actively ignored, hidden, or destroyed, in order to build a more complete history of Maine and its citizens.

### **Make Black peoples' stories visible in your own hometown**

*To begin, consult these sources and be curious about the presence of people of color in:*

- Town histories
- Local libraries
- Church and cemetery records
- Family remembrances
- Birth and death records
- Deeds and bills of sale
- Photographs
- Census records
- Historical Society and various other records

### **Resources suggested by**

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Bob Greene, retired journalist and historian, Trustee, [Maine Historical Society](#)

Candace Kanes, historian, former newspaper reporter/editor, and curator of [Maine Memory Network](#) at the Maine Historical Society

Leslie Hill, Professor Emerita, [Politics Department, Bates College](#).