

# Library archives document Nebraska's Black history

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Historic photographs, books and documents on Nebraska's black history were showcased in the Calvin T. Ryan Library for Black History Month.

Laurinda Weisse, university archivist and digital repository manager, hosted an open house-like event highlighting black Nebraska history. There were a few different stations that had their own themes.

Some tables showed early black Nebraska students, some of the early Kearney residents as well as several other things from Nebraska's black history.

"Archives have traditionally been very white because they have collected things from people with money and power, which tend to be white men," Weisse said. "So, this is an opportunity to highlight what we do have, as well as to start discussions with black students and faculty on campus about what they would like to see from archives and how they can contribute to them as well."

A large majority of the materials that were shown were from Eliza Galaway. She was born into slavery on a plantation in Maryland. Galaway later became an early Kearney resident and long-time member of the community and wrote about her experience of what is like being an enslaved child.

In the archives, Galaway shared stories of how her mother was sold to Alabama, but her father joined the Union Army during the Civil War and was able to locate her mother. She then moved to Kearney and lived there until she died in 1936.

"We have an interview that Eliza Galaway gave with the high school newspaper where she talks about her life, which I think is really a fascinating document," said Nathan Tye, assistant professor of Nebraska and American West history.

The open house event also showcased materials from the archives and special collections from the UNK library.

There are even materials from the G.W Frank Museum of History and Culture on the west side of campus.

"It is so interesting to learn all about Nebraska's history and see the physical artifacts that were shown on the tables," said Aja King, a UNK junior.

Other tables had articles about black athletes and their life stories and various iterations of black student organizations.

"It is Black History Month so it is very important that we have these materials that both document students on campus and are available to students, student organizations, student researchers and others who want to engage in this type of material," Tye said.



UNK archives include poetry from Black authors. Photo by Chase Johnson / Antelope Staff