

FY: 2020-21

ANNUAL REPORT



BIRMINGHAM
PUBLIC LIBRARY

"Buildings may not have been open, but libraries never closed."
– Julius C. Jefferson Jr., 2020-21 American Library Association President

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



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The Honorable William Parker
President, Birmingham City Council

MISSION

The mission of the Birmingham Public Library is to provide the highest quality experience to our community for lifelong learning, cultural enrichment, and enjoyment.

VISION

The Birmingham Public Library will play a vital role in the city by recognizing the potential of our community and transforming lives through community, education, and technology.

CORE VALUES

The Birmingham Public Library is committed to:

- Service
- Employees
- Leadership
- Learning
- Innovation
- Respect
- Diversity
- Integrity



Janine M. Langston, Interim Executive Director

Welcome to our Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Report. This report covers July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021, a year filled with unprecedented challenges, including a global pandemic, elections, political and social unrest, a census, and an economic downturn.

We all experienced a myriad of challenges – both large and small, personal and system-wide. Everyone had to cope with the inconveniences as well as the extra work imposed by safety precautions against Covid-19. But with these challenges came opportunities. The BPL team adapted, grew, and looked for new ways to provide essential services and resources in a time of tremendous need.

One of the darkest periods in my professional career came in September 2020 when 158 BPL team members were furloughed because of projected shortfalls in the City of Birmingham's operating budget (due to the economic impact of Covid-19). The remaining 39 team members were tasked with continuing Curbside Pickup Service and reopening the Central Library for in-person service in October. We welcomed back our full-time furloughed employees in December 2020 and our part-time employees in January 2021.

Together we worked to create safe protocols for reopening all BPL locations while providing virtual programming, curbside pickup, and limited in-person service for the remainder of the fiscal year. This challenging situation presented us with an opportunity to re-connect as a team. I believe we bolstered employee morale since the furlough through our efforts to improve communication, to be transparent about necessary changes, and to applaud and encourage colleagues who find creative ways to serve our patrons during difficult times.

This year of challenges shined a light on the resiliency of the Birmingham Public Library, our team members, Board of Trustees, Friends Foundation, supporters, and community partners. Building on a strong foundation of delivering exceptional and innovative library services, BPL team members moved forward with determination. We continued to serve the community by providing library materials, answering reference questions, issuing library cards, maintaining collections, providing citizen services, and producing informative and entertaining virtual programs.

I am so proud of BPL's commitment to offering support, educational opportunities, entertainment, connection, and access to resources people need to improve their lives. Despite the many challenges we faced, together we realized some remarkable achievements.

Janine M. Langston, *Interim Executive Director*



FY: 2020-21

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 2020 – JUNE 2021



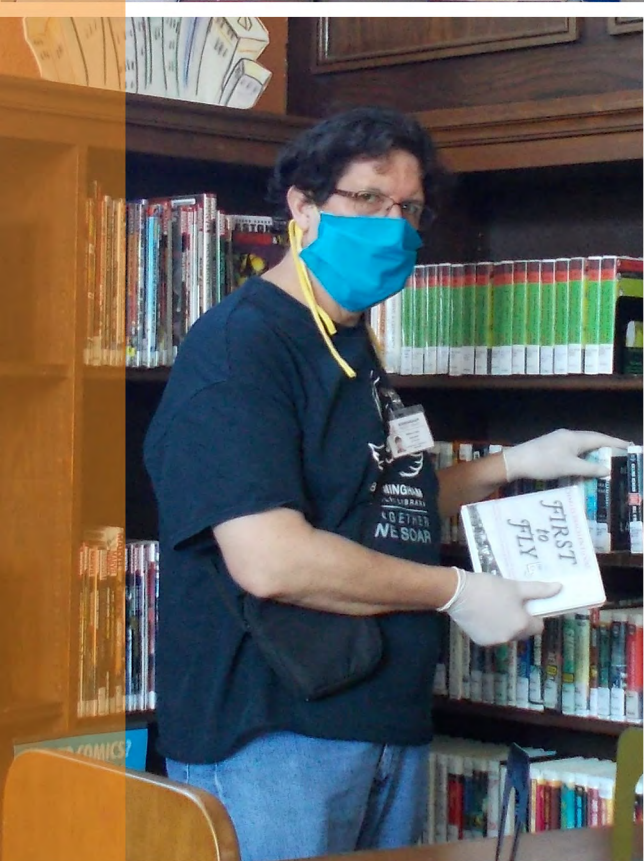
LIBRARIES CHANGE LIVES, and this last year made that most evident. Overcoming the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and staff furloughs, the Birmingham Public Library (BPL) maintained its commitment to service excellence by rethinking its programming and making use of technology, like the Zoom platform, to offer the public their accustomed access to our resources.

BPL addressed the unique needs of Birmingham's virtual learners by issuing more than 900 virtual student library cards and augmenting BPL's digital collections with materials selected to benefit students, job seekers, and small business owners. Through curbside services, BPL safely provided physical library materials, printing and faxing services, and distribution of free school supplies. Curbside service also allowed us to deliver library-curated activities to learners of all ages. Over the year, 1,847 adults, children, and teens grabbed bright, educational activity kits.

"It is hard to imagine a service/institution as valuable as the Birmingham Public Library in the life of our city.

– Melanie Walker-Malone, Head of School, Red Mountain Community School

LIBRARIES CHANGE LIVES



Thank you for keeping me
safe during this pandemic.
Providing me with books to
read and enjoy has been
a blessing since time with
family and friends has been
limited.
Again, thanks for all that
you do.
Janice Kent

"I've been homeschooling my two daughters (ages 10 and 9) for five years now and I would feel completely lost without the library. I love that the services are free and the resources are endless. When the pandemic started, it affected us in many ways, just like it did everyone else. However, our libraries being closed was the biggest setback for myself and my girls. We were thrilled to have them open again for curbside pickup. Our libraries have allowed us to escape this COVID-weary world, one book at a time."

– Kate Shadix



FY 2020-21 YEAR IN REVIEW

JULY 2020-JUNE 2021



11,440
SERVICE HOURS

190,651
LIBRARY VISITS



70,634
PROGRAM
ATTENDANCE



130,728
LIBRARY CARDS



697,086
COLLECTION SIZE



70,634
CURBSIDE
SERVICES



262,913
BPL WEBSITE VISITS



170,908
DIGITAL STREAMS AND DOWNLOADS

COVID TIMELINE

June 15, 2020

Curbside pickup began at Central, Avondale, Five Points West, North Birmingham, and Springville Road and continues until September 25, 2020.

October 1, 2020

Central opens for in-person service 10 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F and Curbside Pickup available at Central, Avondale from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. M-F and available at Five Points West and Springville Road from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. T and TH.

January 4, 2021

In-person service resumes at Central, Avondale, Five Points West, North Birmingham, and Springville Road 9 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F alternating with a schedule with Curbside Pickup 9 a.m.-4 p.m. M-F.



183
PUBLIC
COMPUTERS

21,458
PATRON LOG
IN SESSIONS

678,240
TOTAL MINUTES



SUMMER LEARNING

2,084

OUTREACH
ATTENDANCE

CITIZEN SERVICES



106,734
PRINT COPIES



1,390
NOTARIES



770
PASSPORTS



14,213
FAXES



665

CURBSIDE
SERVICE

33,232 FACEBOOK VIEWS

BPL hosted 374 Virtual
Summer Programs with
33,232 views and
distributed 1,980
Grab 'n Go Craft Kits!



BIRMINGHAM CITY SCHOOLS PROGRAMS



1,152 KIDS

BPL staff provided
42 programs to 1,152
students at Birmingham
City Schools

DOWNLOADS



257,938
TOTAL
CHECKED OUT

3,857
BOOKS
BY MAIL

2021

at Central from
and at branches
M, W, F and T and TH
Curbside Pickup available

February 22, 2021

Expanded in person services at
Central and Avondale to 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
M-F and at branches alternating with
a M,W,F and T and TH schedule with
Curbside Pickup available 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

22,500

BPL was awarded
\$22,500 in grant
and sponsorship
funding

- Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham
- Birmingham Public Library Friends Foundation
- NCWITT

58K

Over 58,000 items
circulated during
June and July with
2,400 books delivered
to Birmingham City Schools
students for Literacy Programs





Through a grant from the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, BPL addressed learning deficits among young children, resulting from remote and hybrid learning formats due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The “Summer Literacy Leaders program” provided free reading and math tutoring for 2nd-and-3rd-grade students in Birmingham City Schools and provided Birmingham City School System’s summer sites with satellite libraries to promote literacy.



During the last year, Birmingham Public libraries offered 39 educational support classes. Our contributions to our young students' academic futures included classes on:

- 3D design
- artificial intelligence
- electrical engineering
- scratch coding
- HTML coding
- game design

695 students attended these in-person and virtual classes. And with many high school students unable to tour college campuses due to the COVID-19 pandemic, BPL stepped in to host virtual college fairs.

To assist adults facing career challenges due to the pandemic, BPL hosted Google workshops for job seekers and "Grow with Google webinars" for small business owners. In addition, BPL offered a week of daily webinars focused on helping those affected financially by the pandemic. Money Smart Week 2021 covered topics, such as:

- saving options
- income tax fraud
- budgeting tips
- managing federal student loans
- choosing a bank account
- housing protection

BPL partnered with the Dannon Project to provide free face-to-face social worker consultations to assist patrons needing help with issues, like:

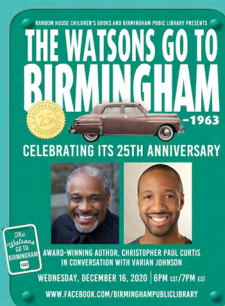
- drug abuse
- unemployment
- community services
- homelessness
- domestic violence
- healthcare
- training and education
- mental health issues
- legal referrals

BPL also offered many all-ages programs that emphasized both physical and mental health, including:

- gentle yoga classes for seniors
- coping with pandemic fatigue
- mental health awareness
- weight loss tips and home workouts
- parenting teens during the pandemic
- navigating the health insurance marketplace and Medicare workshops



Dedicated to offering equal access to information and technology to all, social justice is always at the heart of library service. BPL made great strides in social justice programming in 2020-2021 through in-person and virtual programming. Our “Read-In for Justice” was formed in June 2020 amid national protests of racial injustice sparked by the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police. The series of programs allowed people from the community to read books on race and social injustice.



We also proudly partnered with Random House Books to present “The Watsons Go to Birmingham 1963 – Celebrating its 25th Anniversary.” We hosted a virtual conversation with award-winning authors Christopher Paul Curtis and Varian Johnson designed to appeal to adult fans of the book, educators, librarians, and today's generation of young readers.



BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY PRESENTS



60TH
ANNIVERSARY
**FREEDOM
RIDES**
1961-2021

Board the vintage Greyhound bus and be immersed in some of the sounds, stories and songs of the Freedom Rides and view a suitcase exhibit encouraging you to envision what it would take to make such a journey.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 2021
BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY
2100 PARK PLACE

3 P.M. - BUS ARRIVES
and open to the public

5 P.M. - PROGRAM
featuring Freedom Riders

Also featuring food trucks, an exhibit of photos and documents associated with the Freedom Rides, from the BPL Archives Department, and various books and DVDs available for check-out.

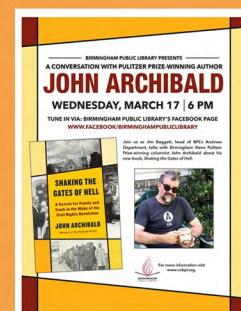
The Freedom Rides Greyhound bus tour carries out the theme of the year-long commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the Freedom Rides, "Retracing the Journey. Passing the Torch." The bus will return to the Freedom Rides Museum in Montgomery, Alabama on Thursday, May 20.



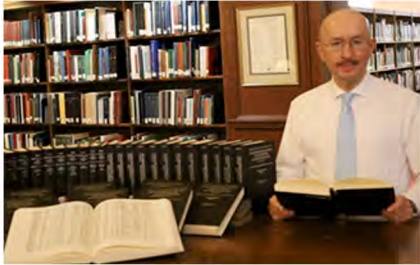
FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.COBPL.ORG.

We hosted a restored vintage Greyhound bus that is a part of the Freedom Rides Museum permanent collection in Montgomery as it retraced some of the Freedom Riders' journey. The bus began its drive in Ardmore, Tennessee, on Tuesday, May 18, before reaching us at the Central Library downtown. This trek landed on the exact date and time the bus arrived in the city 60 years ago, where student Freedom Riders were met with violence.

BPL Archives Department Head Jim Baggett presented "A Conversation with Pulitzer Prize-Winning Author John Archibald," who is well known for his award-winning columns appearing in the Birmingham News and AL.com since 2004. Columbia University awarded the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for Commentary to Archibald for his columns about Alabama politics, including controversial Judge Roy Moore.



The question of accessing the library and all its services led to our most innovative undertaking: the creation of BPL Mobile. This groundbreaking project embraces our past while looking to the future and will bridge the digital divide and bring traditional library services to underserved communities by offering computer training, notary services and traditional library services to the most underserved neighborhoods in Birmingham.



Honoring our commitment to preserving the past, BPL's Southern History Department's continuing excellence was recognized this year when Family Tree Magazine named the Birmingham Public Library as one of the top 10 libraries in the nation for genealogy research. That is not the only

recognition they received this year. The Southern History Department and Archives Department combined accomplished:

- Southern History staff responded to 523 requests for articles and obituaries from the local newspapers.
- Archives staff researched, retrieved, and refiled 47,187 files, photographs, maps, scrapbooks, architectural drawings, audio recordings, and other items requested by patrons.
- Research requests came from patrons near and far, including 29 states, Italy, Belgium, England, France, Austria, the Netherlands, and Scotland.
- We reached hundreds of patrons during Family History Month (October) with a series of virtual programs conducted by well-known genealogy speaker J. Mark Lowe and with Libby Copeland, author of *The Lost Family: How DNA Testing is Upending Who We Are*.

In October 2020, BPL closed the chapter on the Eastwood Branch Library. This branch opened in 1982 in the former Eastwood Mall. It was designed to serve as a popular reading and browsing library, replicating bookstore merchandising techniques. Instead of relying on the Dewey Decimal system, books were shelved and displayed by popular genres. Due to a shift in population and shopping trends, the library relocated to the Shops on Montevallo in 1999. We acknowledge and salute the 38 years of excellent service this library provided to area residents.





And looking toward the future, the Birmingham Public Library has been chosen as one of 10 nationwide organizations to receive the 2021 Infy Maker Award. BPL will use the \$10,000 grant to provide new STEM programming for 3rd through 12th grade students by creating maker kits for distribution at its afterschool programs and for youth-serving agencies close to library locations across Birmingham. These kits will be used for maker activities, including coding, robotics, electrical engineering, and design-based engineering.

Whatever the future holds, the staff of Birmingham Public Library has proven that BPL can and will persevere in fulfilling its vital role in the city of Birmingham.

GRANTS AWARDED TO BPL FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021

Library Sciences Technology Act (LSTA) awarded \$15,000 for Collection Development for Birmingham's underserved communities. Includes educational and workforce development databases essential to teachers and students participating in virtual and hybrid learning.

Infosys Foundation USA awarded \$10,000 for BPL's Engineer BHM program focusing on teaching electrical engineering, making and coding to students in Birmingham area school systems interested in science, technology, engineering and math-related fields.

Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham (CFGB) awarded \$16,000 for the Literacy Leaders program for rising 2nd and 3rd grade students to address learning deficits among young children.

Alabama State Council on the Arts (ASCA) awarded \$3,500 for Bards & Brews, the Birmingham Public Library's longstanding popular spoken word poetry/craft beer program, which features some of the nation's most talented poets sharing their voices while supporting area businesses.

BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY'S VIRTUAL COLLEGE FAIR

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/BIRMINGHAMPUBLICLIBRARY

THURSDAY, APRIL 8 · 10 AM
MILES COLLEGE

THURSDAY, APRIL 15 · 10 AM
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

THURSDAY, APRIL 22 · 10 AM
LAWSON STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

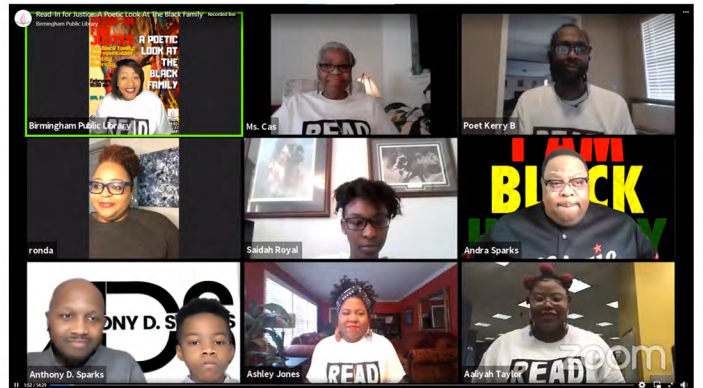
Lawson State
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

UAB

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.COBPL.ORG OR CONTACT
C. HARDY, PROGRAMMING/OUTREACH LIBRARIAN AT (205) 226-3741.
HOSTED BY BPL DIVERSITY COMMITTEE.

TUNE IN VIA:
BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY'S
FACEBOOK PAGE!



BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY PRESENTS

BARDS AND BREWS

Virtual Slam

FRIDAY, JANUARY 8 · 6 PM

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/BARDSANDBREWS

\$10 REGISTRATION FEE IS REQUIRED. LIMIT OF 10 PARTICIPANTS.
REGISTER AT BARDS.BREWS@COBPL.ORG FROM JANUARY 1 - 6.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.COBPL.ORG.



Local Authors EXPO

MEET THE AUTHOR
KIMBERLA LAWSON ROBY

As she discusses 'The Woman God Created You to Be'

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2020
6:00 pm

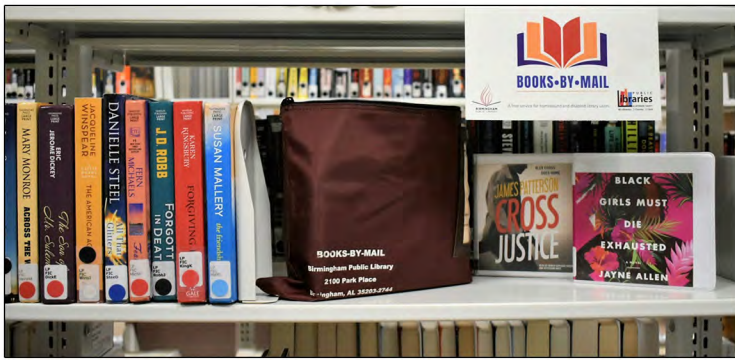
New York Times Bestselling Author
KIMBERLA LAWSON ROBY

The Woman God Created You to Be

THIS VIRTUAL EVENT WILL BE LIVE-STREAMED AT
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/BIRMINGHAMPUBLICLIBRARY

"In a time of uncertainty and confusion, the BPL system employees have worked tirelessly to meet the needs of their patrons. Since they closed to the public due to Covid-19, they have gained over 1,600 new library cardholders, loaned 18,408 items through curbside pick-up, electronically delivered over 12,000 items and had over 74,000 e-book/audiobook activities. All of this required the indispensable library staff."

– Alabama Library Association statement dated Sept. 28, 2021



BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY CURBSIDE PICKUP

Place your holds (online, app or call us.) When you have been notified that your items are ready:

1. DRIVE UP
HOURS: 9 AM – 4 PM
Park in the lot and please remain in your vehicle.

MON – FRI
Central
MON, WED, FRI
Avondale
East Lake
Five Points West
North Birmingham
Pratt City
Springville Road
Titusville
Wylam
TUE, THUR
East Enley
Enley
Inglebrook
North Avondale
Powderly
Smithfield
Southside
West End
Woodlawn

2. CALL UP
Be prepared to verify your account with your library card number or driver's license number.

Avondale: 205-226-4000
Central: 205-226-3600
East Enley: 205-787-1928
East Lake: 205-836-3341
Enley: 205-785-2625
Five Pts West: 205-226-4013
Inglebrook: 205-849-8739
North Avondale: 205-592-2082
North Bham: 205-226-4025
Powderly: 205-925-6178
Pratt City: 205-791-4997
Smithfield: 205-324-8428
Southside: 205-933-7776
Springville Rd: 205-226-4081
Titusville: 205-322-1140
West End: 205-226-4089
Woodlawn: 205-595-2001
Wylam: 205-785-0349

3. PICK UP
We'll let you know when to leave your vehicle and pick up your items from the designated table.

All library materials must be returned in the book drops. For the safety of everyone involved, returned materials will be quarantined for a minimum of 72 hours, and will take several days to be cleared from your account. No late fees will be charged.

For information, check out our website at www.cobpl.org. Also visit our Facebook page daily as programs continue to be available virtually allowing patrons to participate in fun activities or watch educational programming from the comfort of their own homes.

LITERACY LEADERS TUTORING SERVICES

NOW OPEN

**RIISING 2ND AND 3RD GRADERS
JUNE 14 – JULY 22**

REGISTER BY CALLING LOCATION!

CENTRAL LIBRARY – 205.226.3655
AVONDALE LIBRARY – 205.226.4003
FIVE POINTS WEST LIBRARY – 205.226.4017
NORTH BIRMINGHAM LIBRARY – 205.226.4026
SPRINGVILLE ROAD LIBRARY – 205.226.4085

BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY PRESENTS PRIDE MONTH 2021

THURSDAY, JUNE 3 | 11:30 A.M.
AFFIRMING SPACES WITH THE MAGIC CITY ACCEPTANCE CENTER

THURSDAY, JUNE 10 | 10 A.M.
QUEER HISTORY WITH THE INVISIBLE HISTORIES PROJECT AND JIM BAGGETT, BPL ARCHIVIST

THURSDAY, JUNE 17 | 1 P.M.
PUBLIC HEALTH AND LGBTQ+ WITH LISTER HILL CENTER FOR HEALTH POLICY

THURSDAY, JUNE 24 | 1 P.M.
LGBTQ+ POLICY DISCUSSION WITH JOSH COLEMAN LGBTQIA+ LIAISON FOR THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM

TUNE IN VIA: BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY'S FACEBOOK PAGE
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/BIRMINGHAMPUBLICLIBRARY
FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.COBPL.ORG



BLACK HISTORY MONTH VIRTUAL CLASSES

INTRO TO GENEALOGY
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2021 | 10-11 AM

Want to learn how to do genealogical research? This introductory class will help get you started on your genealogical journey. The Southern History Department staff covers such topics as vital records, courthouse and church records, and the Federal Census. Registration required.

**AFRICAN AMERICAN GENEALOGY RESOURCES:
WEBSITES, DATABASES, WEBINARS**
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2021 | 10-11 AM

Join us for a look at online resources specifically for African American history and genealogy. Explore ground breaking sites like www.enslaved.org and discover other new and emerging resources. We'll also take a look at familiar sites like www.familysearch.org and identify webinars that can help you further your research. Registration required.

**GOOD, BAD, AND UGLY: ACCESSING AND ASSESSING
THE WPA SLAVE NARRATIVES**
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2021 | 10-11 AM

A federal government initiative to employ writers during the Great Depression led to the creation of an invaluable historical resource that has since been little used and little understood. Paul Boncella of the Southern History Department examines over forty volumes of published WPA slave narratives in an effort to outline their content and to make this enormous compilation accessible to a broader audience. Registration required.

To register, visit www.cobpl.org or call 205.226.3665.

I loved making this bookmark! I've learned that in times of pandemic, and political induced stress, creating art - in any and every form - does wonders for my spirit, and for my mental health. Thank you."

– Facebook message

"My kiddo said it was the "best day of her life" she made all the wonderful crafts the minute we got home."

– Facebook message

TO SERVE AND STAY SAFE

BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY LOCATIONS

Avondale Library

509 South 40th Street
Birmingham, AL 35222
205.226.4000

Inglennook Library

4100 40th Terrace N
Birmingham, AL 35217
205.849.8739

Springville Road Library

1224 Old Springville Road
Birmingham, AL 35203
205.226.4081

Central Library

2100 Park Place
Birmingham, AL 35203
205.226.3600

North Avondale Library

501 43rd Street N
Birmingham, AL 35222
205.592.2082

Titusville Library

#2 6th Avenue SW
Birmingham, AL 35211
205.322.1140

East Ensley Library

900 14th Street, Ensley
Birmingham, AL 35218
205.787.1928

North Birmingham Library

2501 31st Avenue N
Birmingham, AL 35207
205.226.4025

West End Library

1348 Tuscaloosa Avenue SW
Birmingham, AL 35211
205.226.4089

East Lake Library

#5 Oporto-Madrid Blvd
Birmingham, AL 35206
205.836.3341

Powderly Library

3301 Jefferson Avenue SW
Birmingham, AL 35221
205.925.6178

Woodlawn Library

5709 1st Avenue N
Birmingham, AL 35212
205.595.2001

Eastwood Library

4500 Montevallo Road
Birmingham, AL 35210
Closed October 2020

Pratt City Library

509 Dugan Avenue
Birmingham, AL 35214
205.791.4997

Wylam Library

4300 7th Avenue, Wylam
Birmingham, AL 35224
205.785.0349

Ensley Library

1201 25th Street, Ensley
Birmingham, AL 35218
205.785.2625

Smithfield Library

#1 8th Avenue W
Birmingham, AL 35204
205.324.8428

Five Points West Library

4812 Avenue W
Birmingham, AL 35208
205.226.4013

Southside Library

1814 11th Avenue S
Birmingham, AL 35205
205.933.7776



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.COBPL.ORG