

Encyclopedia of African American Business History

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Black business activity has been sustained in America for almost four centuries. From the marketing and trading activities of African slaves in Colonial America to the rise of 20th-century black corporate America, African American participation in self-employed economic activities has been a persistent theme in the black experience. Yet, unlike other topics in African American history, the study of black business has been limited. General reference sources on the black experience—with their emphasis on social, cultural, and political life—provide little information on topics related to the history of black business. This invaluable encyclopedia is the only reference source providing information on the broad range of topics that illuminate black business history.

Providing readily accessible information on the black business experience, the encyclopedia provides an overview of black business activities, and underscores the existence of a historic tradition of black American business participation. Entries range from biographies of black business people to overview surveys of business activities from the 1600s to the 1990s, including slave and free black business activities and the Black Wallstreet to coverage of black women's business activities, and discussions of such African American specific industries as catering, funeral enterprises, insurance, and hair care and cosmetic products. Also, there are entries on blacks in the automotive parts industry, black investment banks, black companies listed on the stock market, blacks and corporate America, civil rights and black business, and black athletes and business activities.