



Wright Memorial
Public Library

Explore the region’s literary history with [The Dayton Literary Trail](#), a new project from Wright Memorial Public Library

Have you heard of Natalie Clifford Barney?

What about Helen Hooven Santmyer? Or Milton Caniff?

These three authors are among the 15 writers featured on Wright Memorial Public Library’s new Dayton Literary Trail.

Launched this summer, The Dayton Literary Trail is Wright Library's self-guided local history tour, celebrating 15 talented writers who called the Miami Valley home at some point in their lives.

The trail was created by Kristina Lininger, who joined the library’s staff this year as an adult services librarian. Through her research, she learned the stories of authors across the region, such as Natalie Clifford Barney, who spent her early childhood in Dayton and became the first woman to openly write about lesbianism since the poet Sappho. Another Natalie featured on the trail is Natalie Zane Babbitt, who wrote *Tuck Everlasting*.

“For decades, this region fostered an impressive amount of progressive and talented writers – from Wilberforce University and Yellow Springs to the streets of downtown of Dayton – such a wealth of talent called the Miami Valley home at some point in their lives,” Lininger said. “And it is in all types of genres and subjects – poets, air flight, women’s rights, and African American plays. Such a fertile area of gifted writers.”

Featuring an [interactive map](#) of 26 stops along the trail and biographies of 15 authors — including lesser known authors as well as well-known, such as Paul Laurence Dunbar and Erma Bombeck — the trail project offers an opportunity to explore online or venture to the sites in person. In fact, adult participants in the Summer Reading Challenge can win prizes for visiting stops on the trail.

The project will become a permanent part of the library’s website to continue to celebrate the region’s authors and share the literary history.



“The work the fifteen authors created tell a multitude of stories – stories involving the same issues we discuss today – African American rights, gender equality, fair and equal treatment of people with disabilities, and the right to love who you love in life,” Liniger said.

Also this year, the Ohioana Library launched a statewide Ohio Literary Trail, which features authors and related sites throughout Ohio.

“I think it is fair to say we all gain perspective and insight into our own society when we learn more about local history, but I also hope people have fun along the way and take time to read the works of the authors. Their words and illustrations still matter in our society today,” Liniger said.

Start exploring at wrightlibrary.org/daytonliterarytrail

Authors on the Dayton Literary Trail

Natalie Zane Babbitt

Charlotte Reeve Conover

Natalie Clifford Barney

Paul Laurence Dunbar

Erma Bombeck

Virginia Hamilton

Eleanor Gertrude Brown

Manning Marable

Hallie Quinn Brown

Helen Hooven Santmyer

Milt Caniff

Ridgely Torrence

Suzanne Phillips Clauser

Wilbur & Orville Wright