





Fueling the Industrial Economy

Slavery created much of modern America. The factory system, with its innovations in technology and wage labor, is often held up as a symbol of American efficiency. Factories streamlined labor to mass-produce goods—brightly colored calico, woven hats,

inexpensive shoes, and ready-made and placed them within the reach of the common American. Slavery made possible the incentive, the capital, the raw material, and the captive

Literature

Free Southern Theater and The Negro Theatre were important venues for Black performers and writers. The latter free theater was a joint party for the use of "black dialect" in the poems. But he was serious about other things. Chestnut wrote books and short stories that often dealt with conventional topics such as immigration, "yearning for white," and class competition within the African American community. He had been and was a member of short courses within the Colored Union.

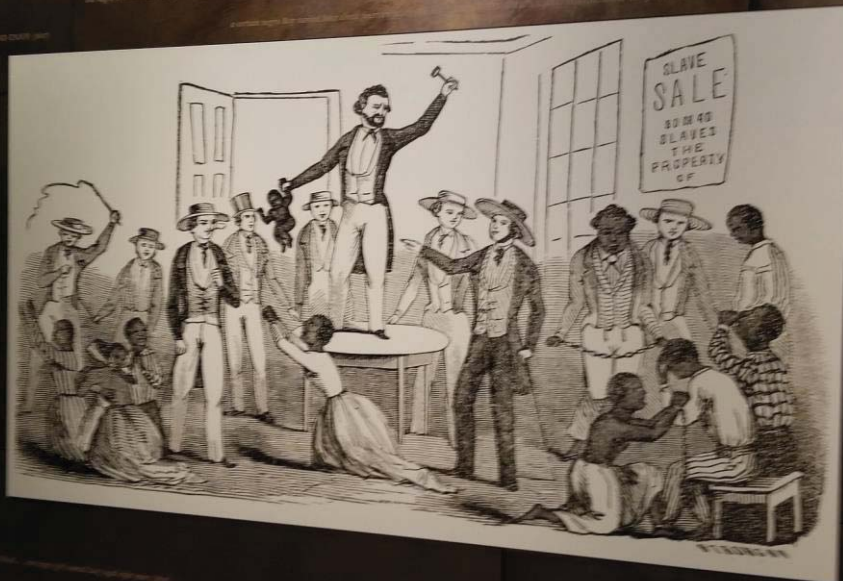
Historically Black Colleges and Universities

The first colleges for African Americans were established largely through the efforts of African American churches with the support of the American Missionary Association and the Freedmen's Bureau. They were important places for training teachers and future leaders. Between 1861 and 1900 more than 90 institutions of higher learning were established. Shaw University—founded in Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1862—was the first black college organized after the Civil War.

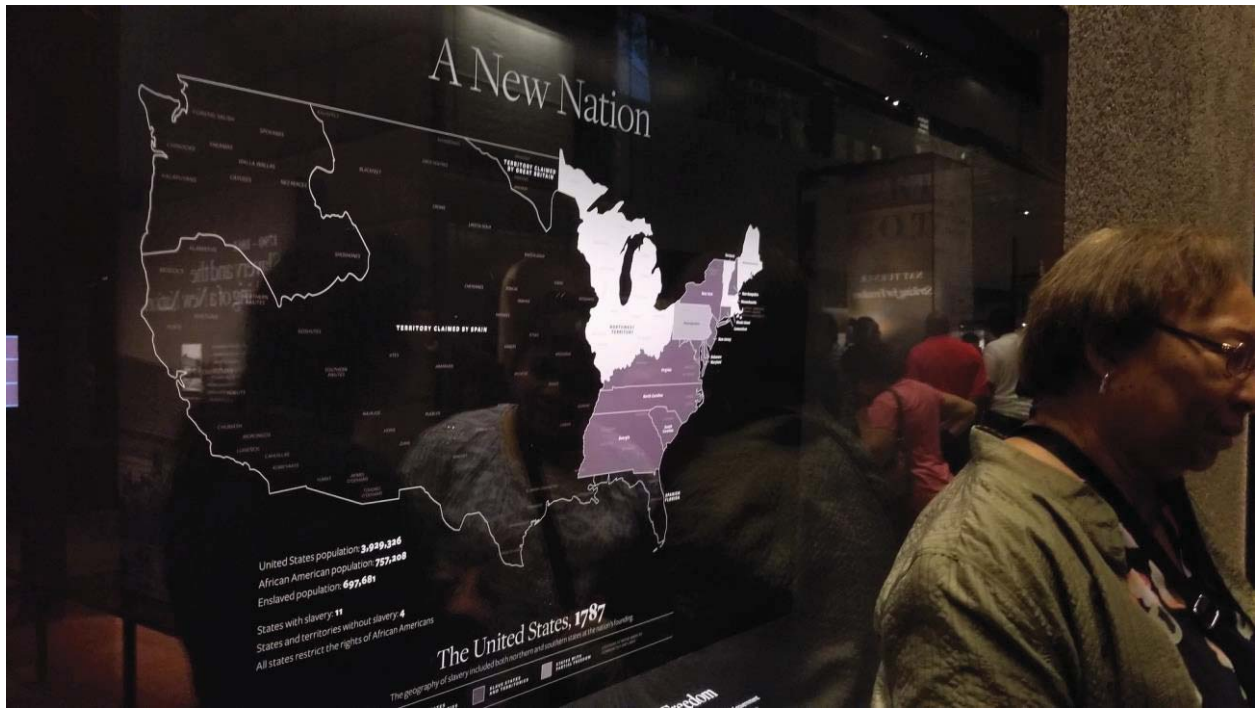
It produced by African Americans of nearly all aspects of the musical in the 1920s. Black performers offered representations of a multitude of musical from spirituals to classical compositions. A very broad audience with access to the nation and abroad the contributions to help transform American music into a world of musical expression.

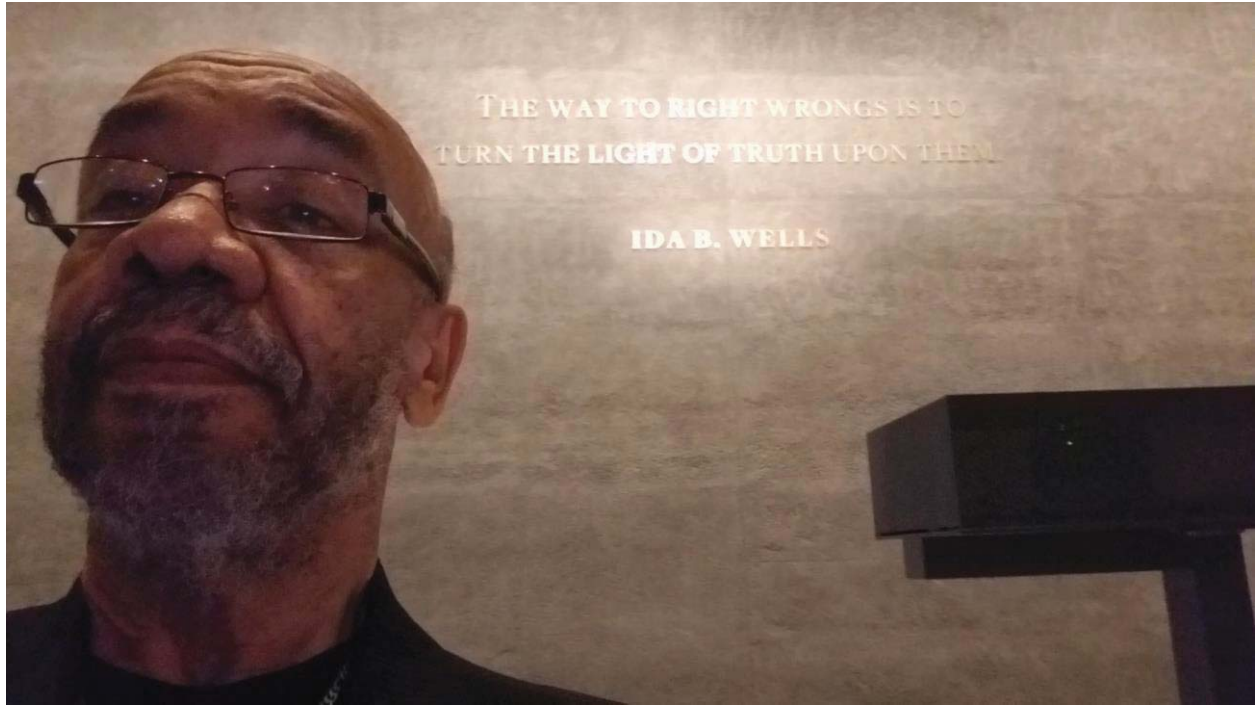
Our lives matter.

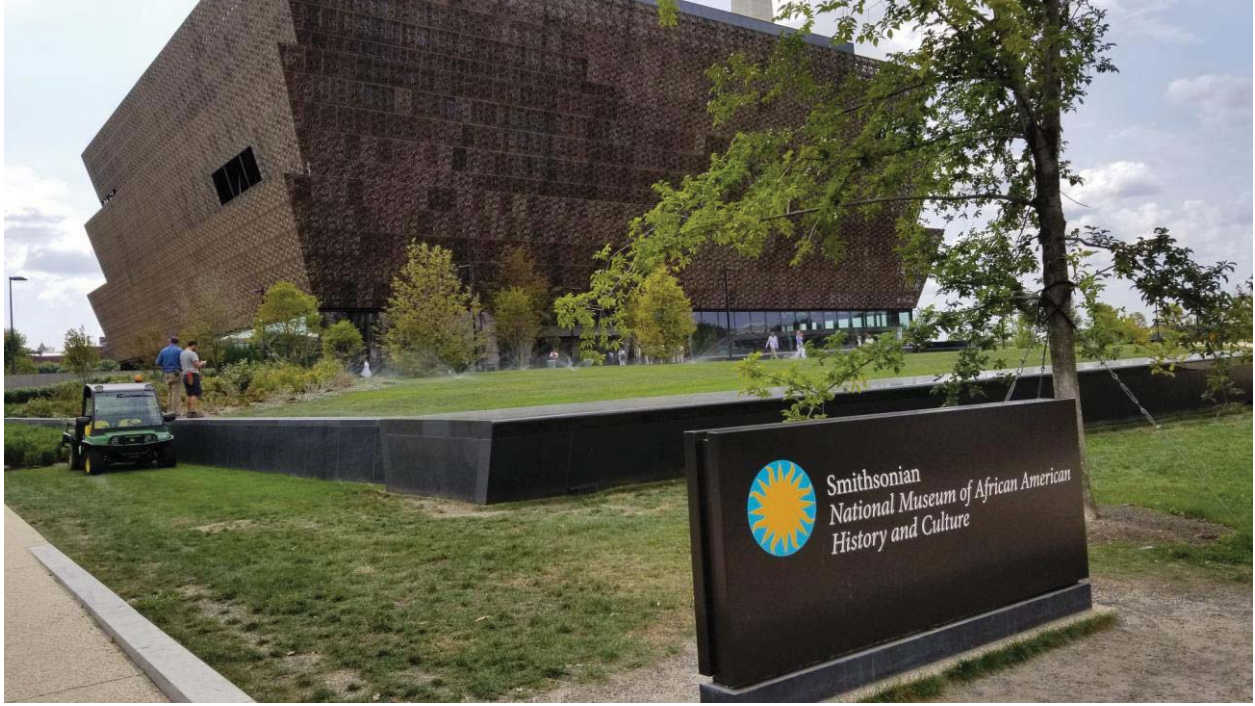
ALICIA GARZA

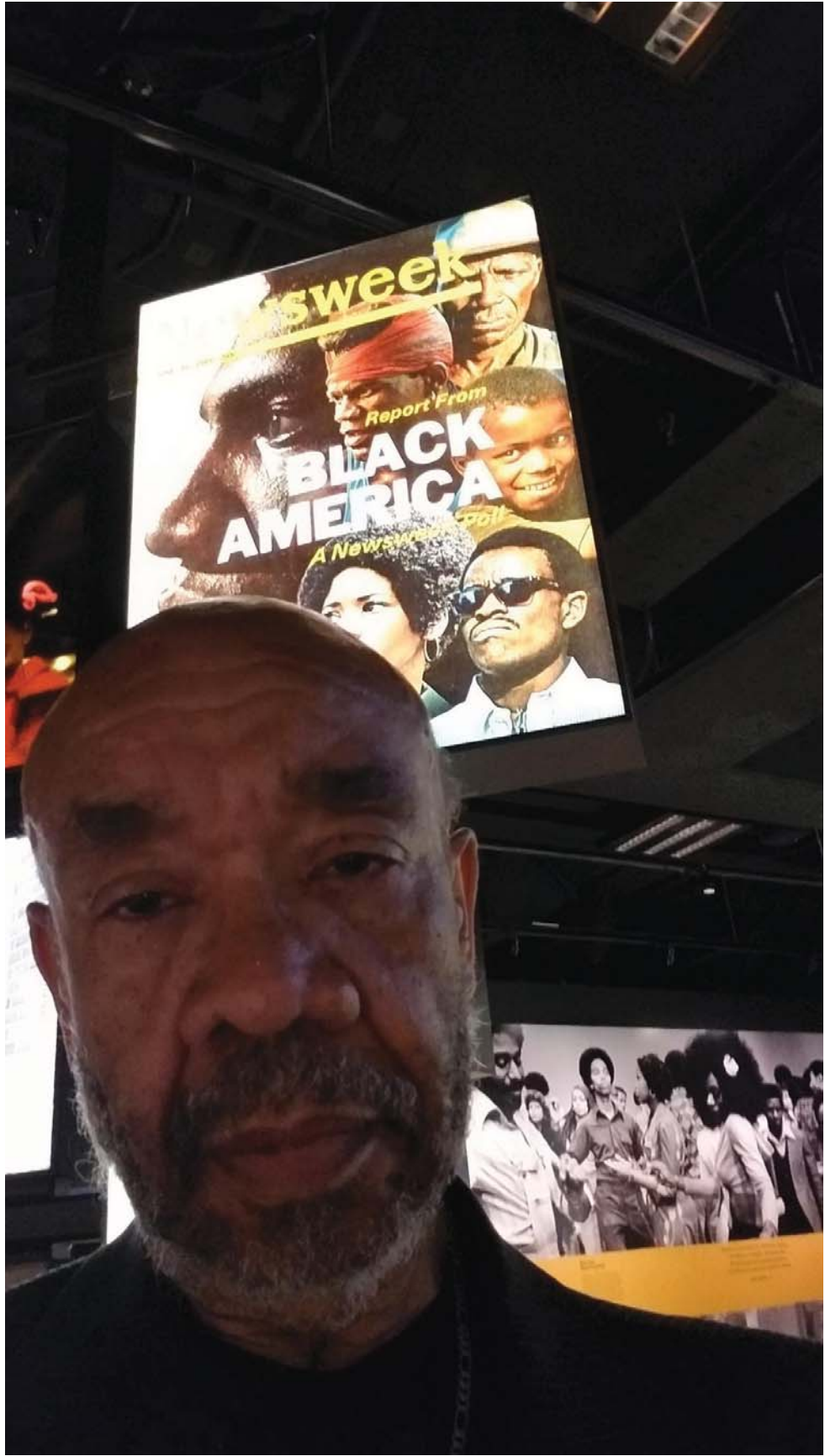


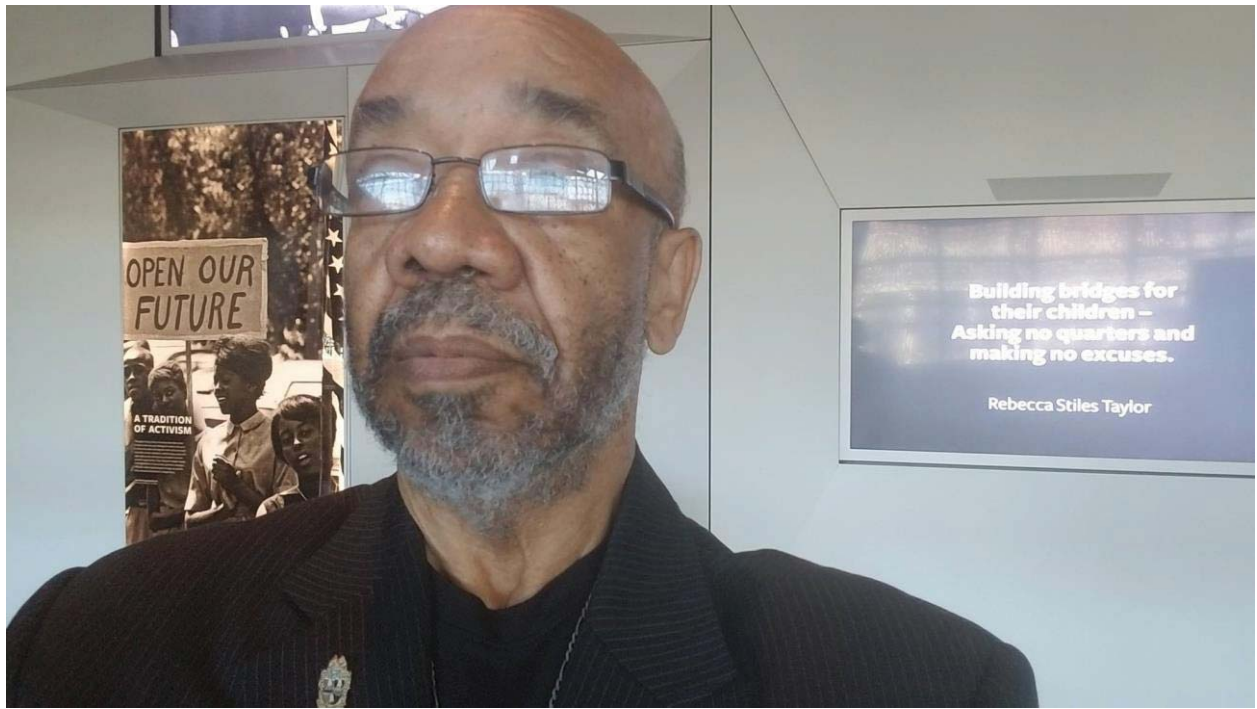
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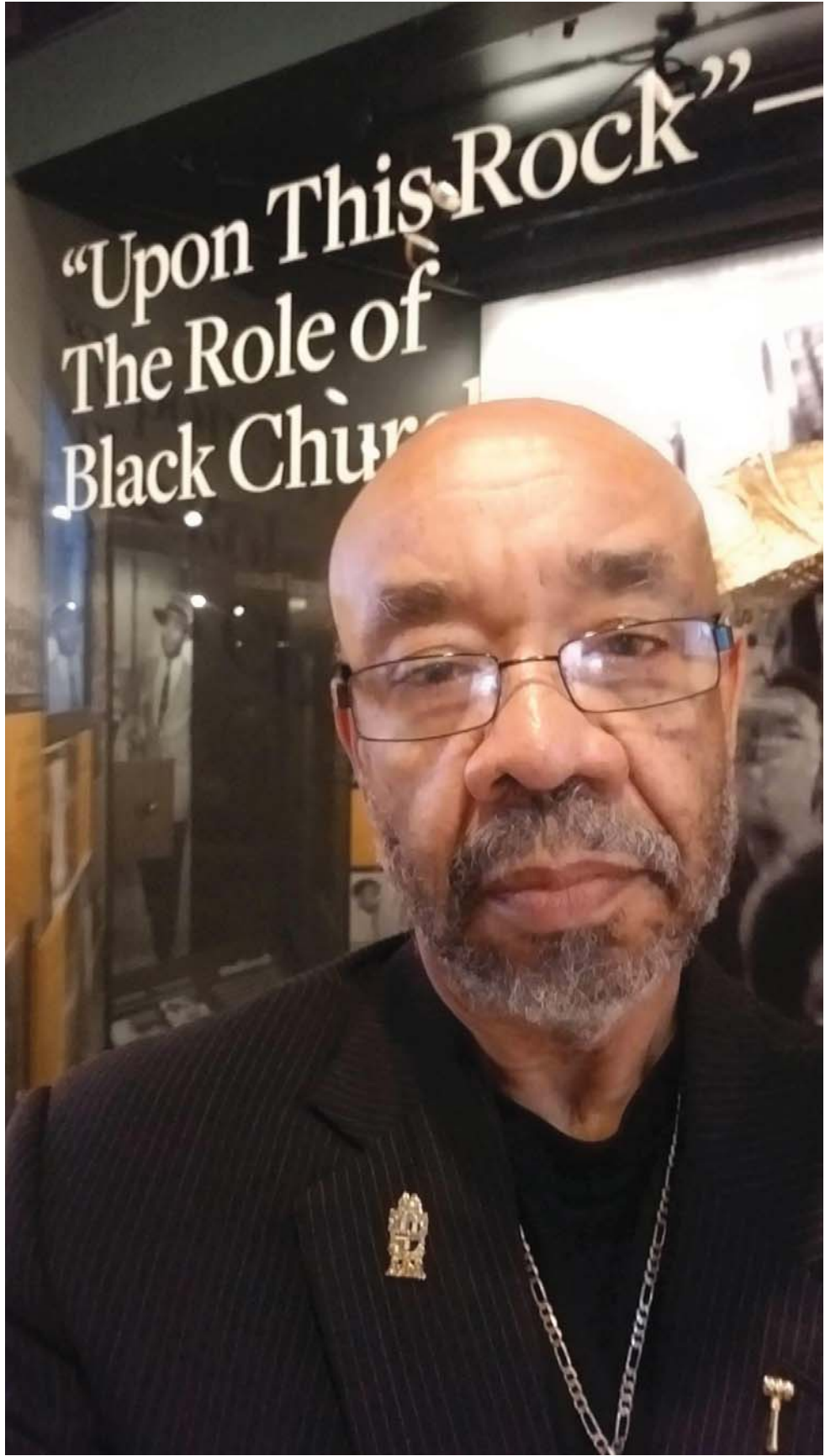






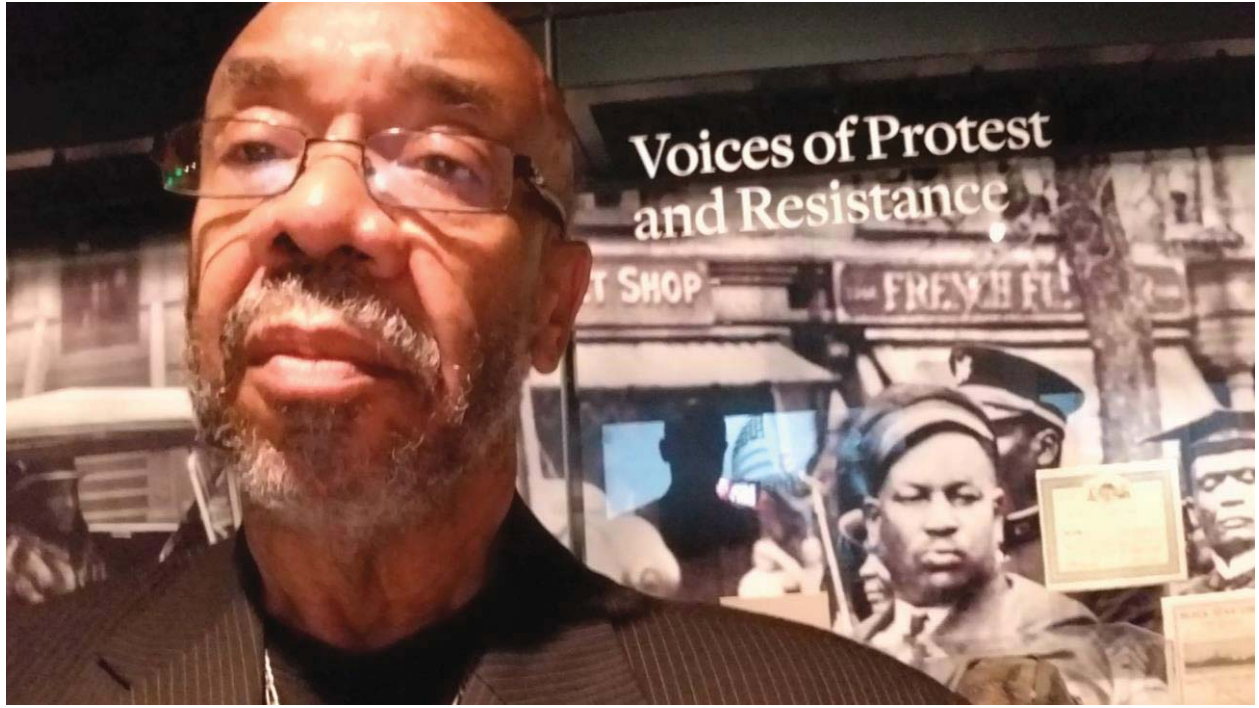


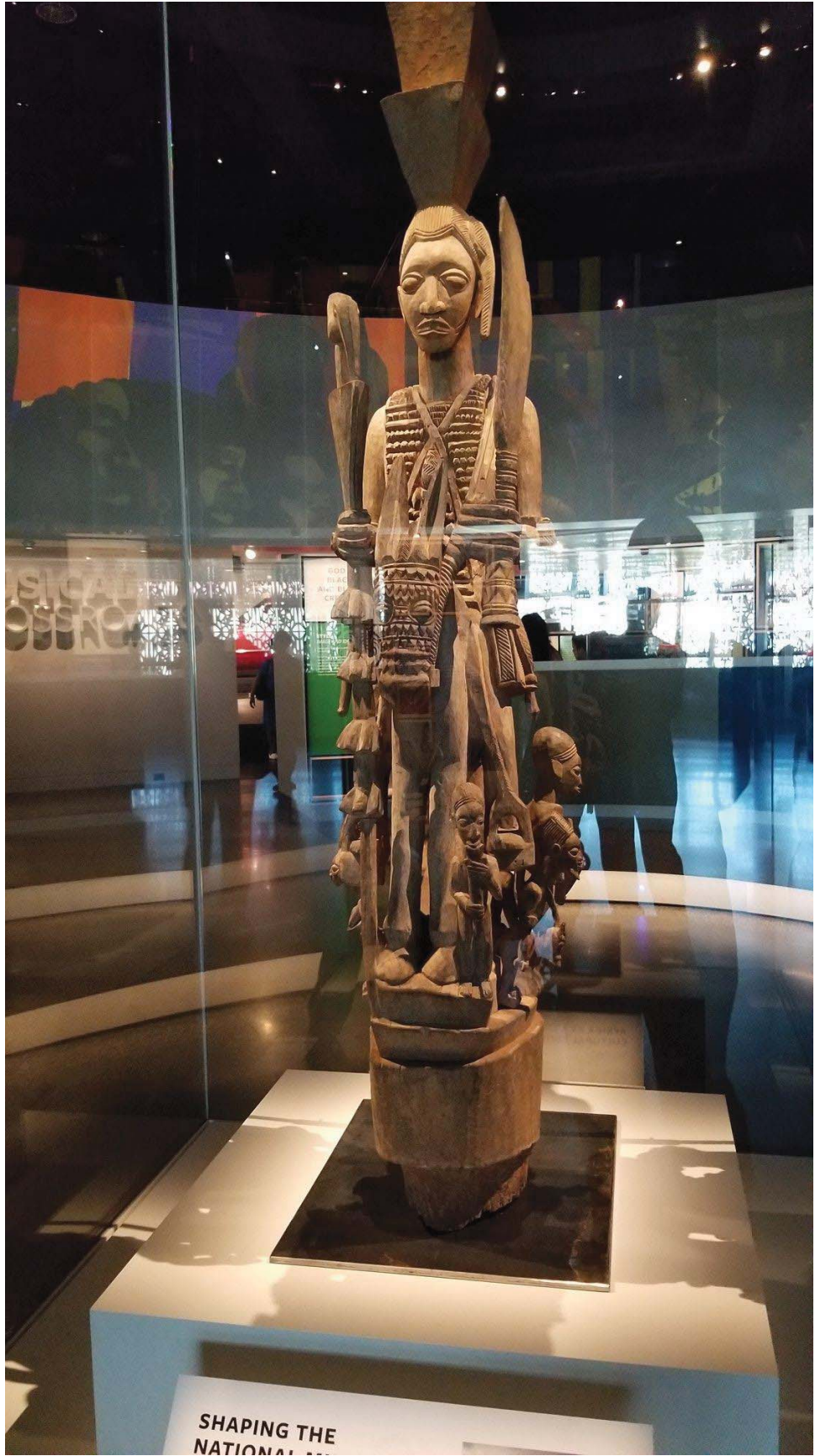








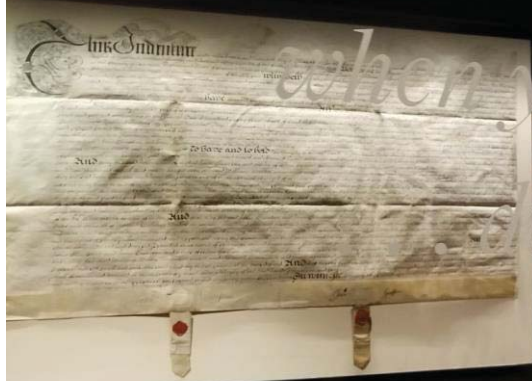




SHAPING THE
NATIONAL



Negroes . . . are a perishable Commodity,
when you have an opportunity
dispose of them for gold.



HUMPHREY MORICE

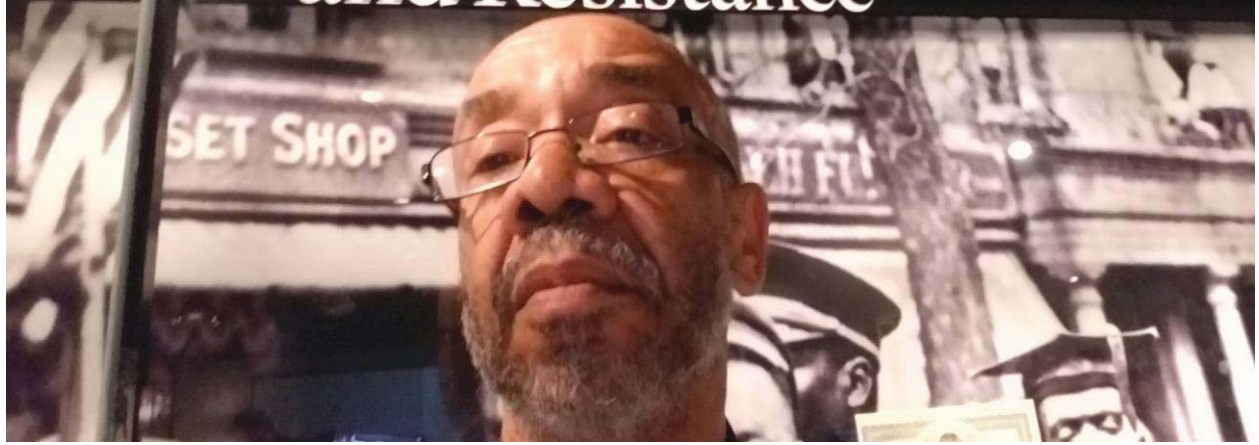
The Invention of
New World Plantations
1730

The land and climate of the Caribbean proved suitable for growing cash crops of land—New World plantations. The available African labor made this environment immensely profitable. African labor cleared and cultivated the land.





Voices of Protest and Resistance



1974
Church leaders organized the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in 1957 to search for a common goal. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., president of the SCLC, advocated nonviolence as a primary means of protest. "You must meet violence with non-violence."

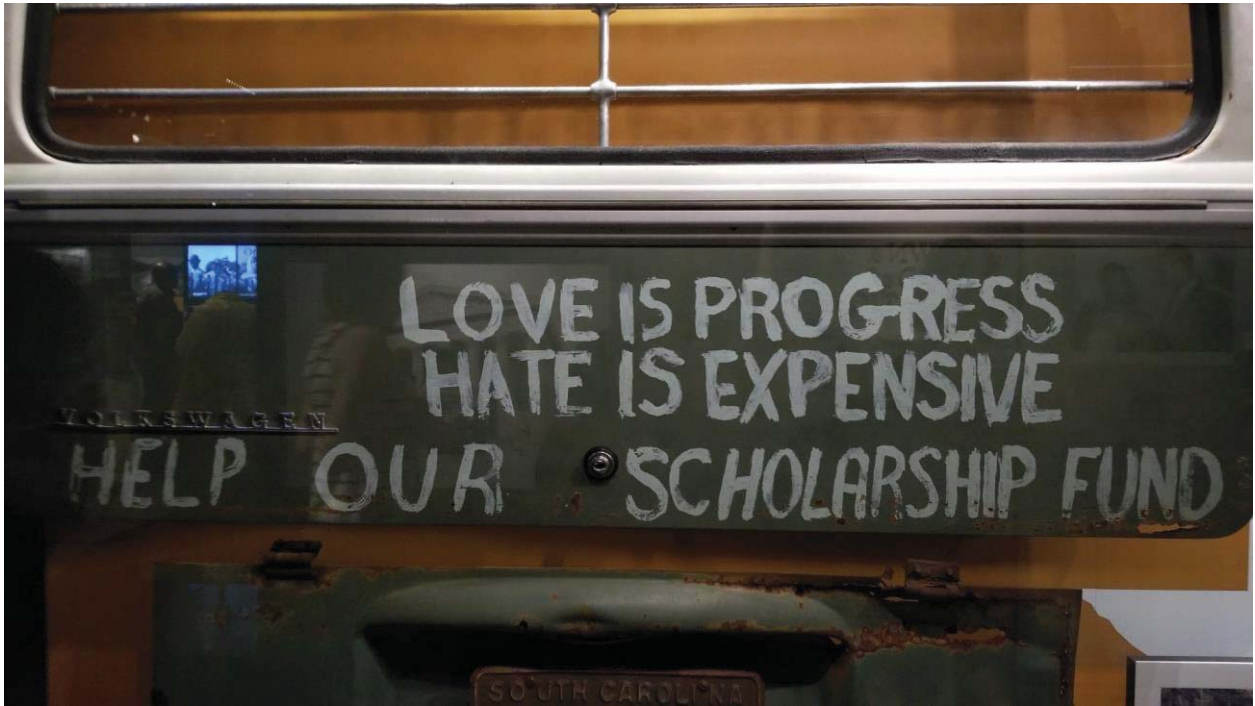
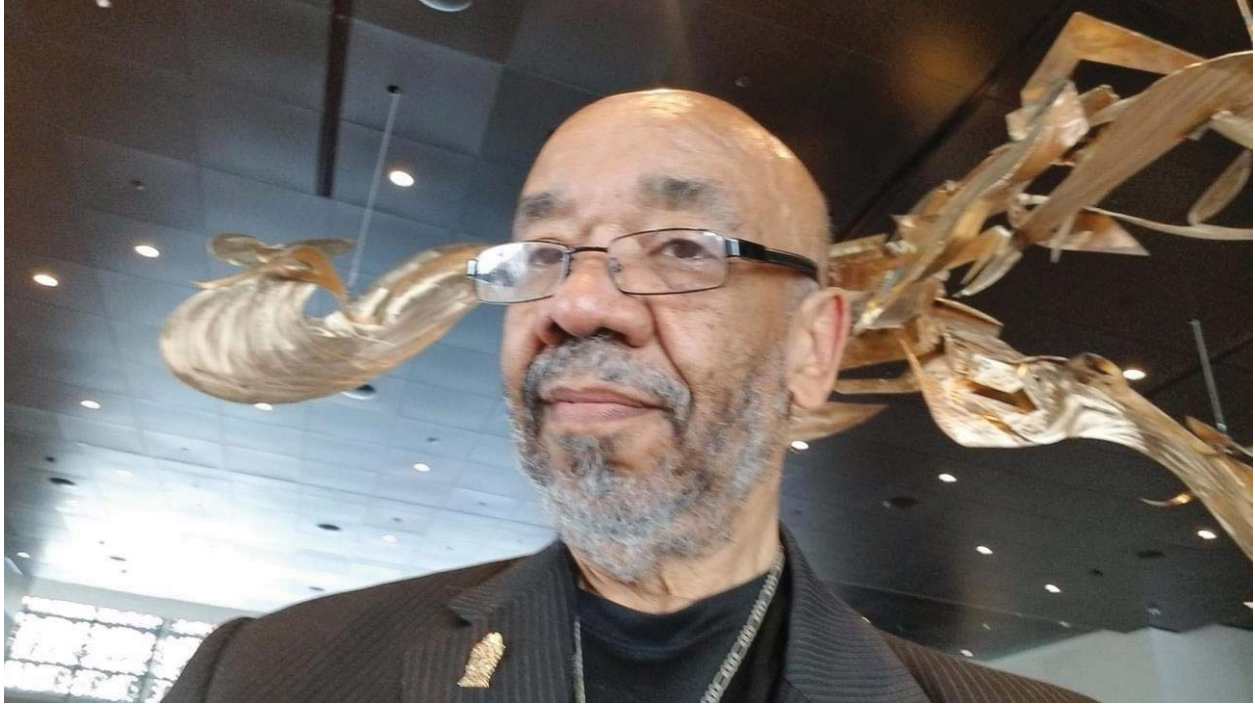
Voodoo Doll, Sea Island, Georgia, 1880s
Voodoo, or "Voodoo," is a religion rooted in beliefs and practices brought to the Americas by enslaved Africans. In the rural South, African Americans used voodoo charms like this for healing and protection. Hats were affixed to the dolls to conduct the energy of the spirit world.
Gift of Oprah Winfrey

Shofar
This ceremonial ram's horn was used at the Beth Shalom synagogue in Chicago. This congregation traces its roots to the Communalist Kabbalah, a group of kabbalists who sought to forge a new spiritual and cultural identity for African Americans. Gift of Rabbi Caplan Fryer and the Beth Shalom Shai Zaken (Ethiopian Hebrew Congregation)

Usher Badge
This usher badge identifies Ruby Penn as a member of the Senior Usher Board of New Bethany Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. She was a helper of the church and its congregation from the late 1950s through New Bethany was founded in 1992 by the Reverend Dr. John Jackson Ager.
Gift of New Bethany Baptist Church

Bible
This Bible belonged to Hattie McDaniel (1890-1952), the first African American to win an Academy Award. Her role as Cookie with the film *Go With the Wind*. The daughter of a Baptist preacher, McDaniel began her performing career singing spirituals in church and in traveling tent shows.
Gift of Howard Marshall

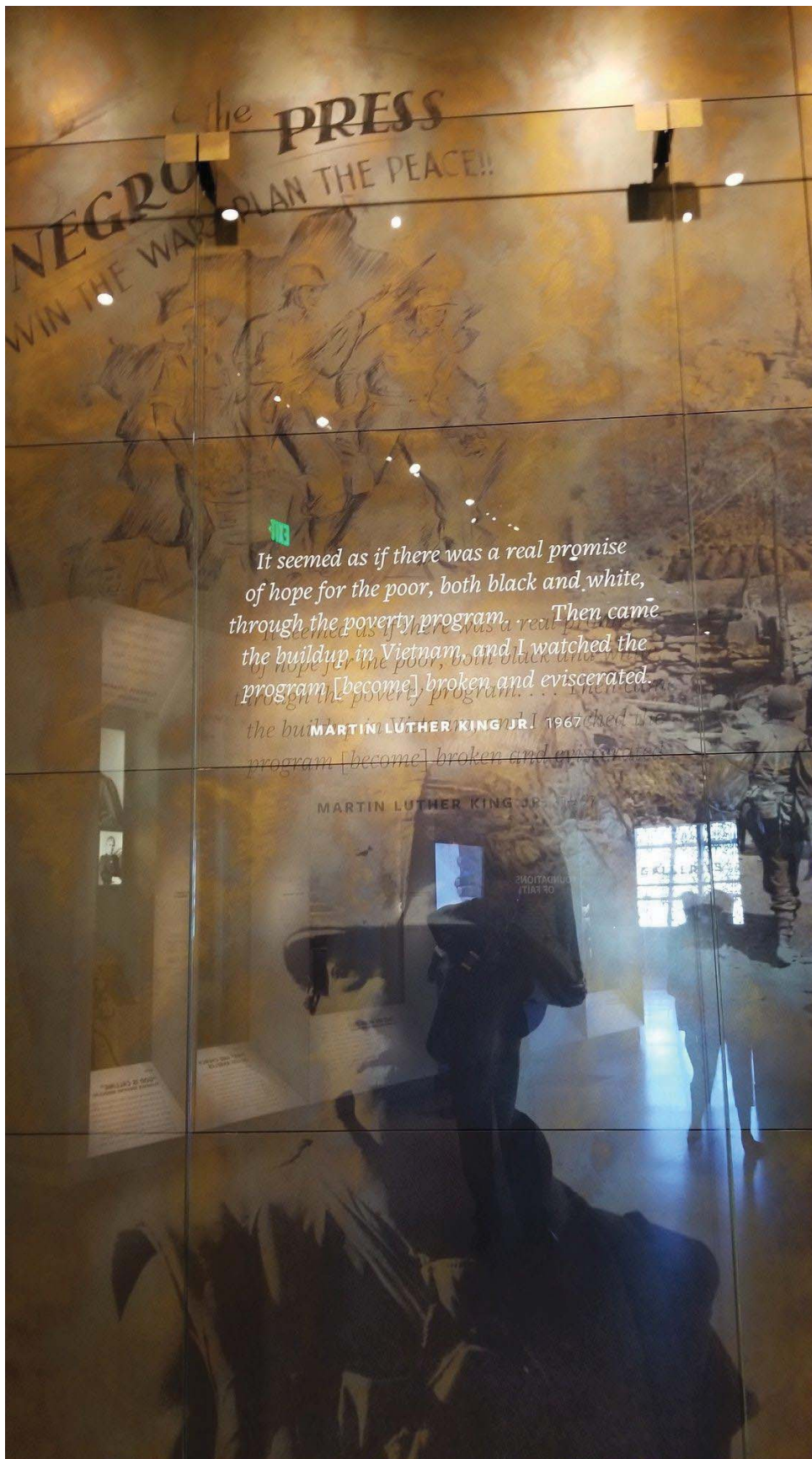
Qur'an cradle board
This Qur'an cradle board, a traditional cradle board, was a Qur'anic cradle for the infant children of African American Muslims in the early 20th century. The Qur'an cradle board is a wooden cradle board used to hold the infant child of a Muslim. Gift of the daughter of a prominent African American Muslim leader.
Gift of the daughter of a prominent African American Muslim leader



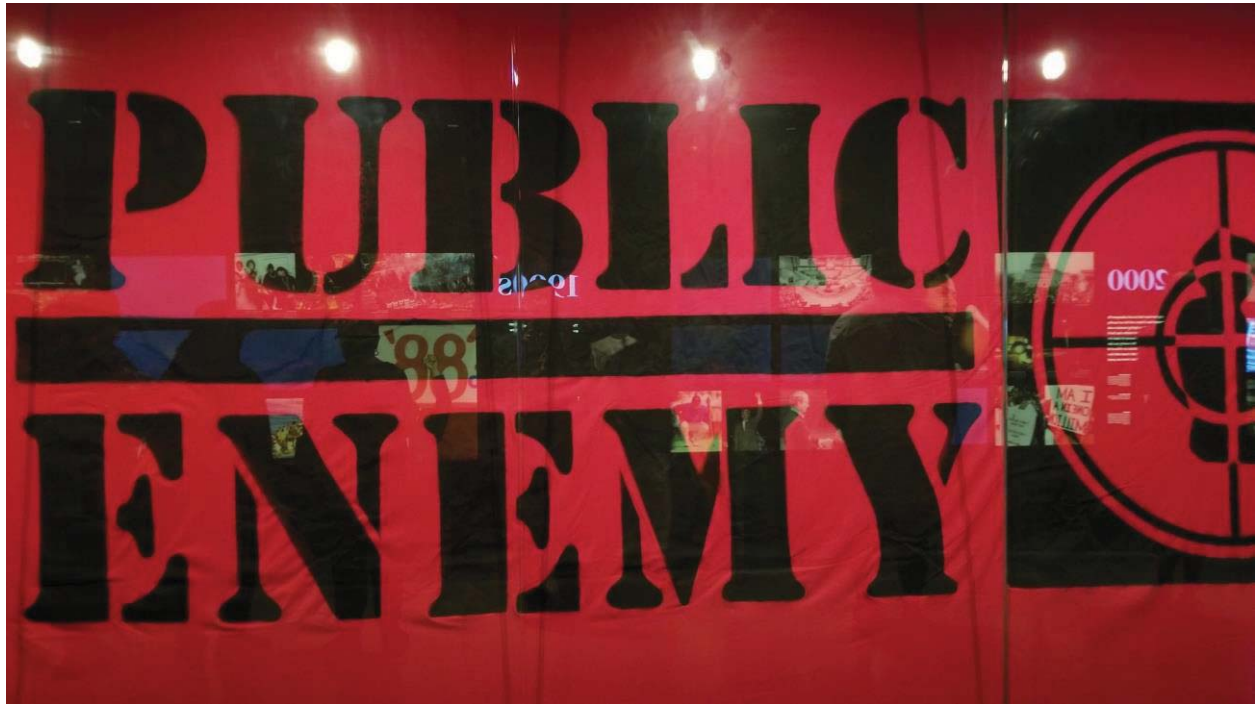
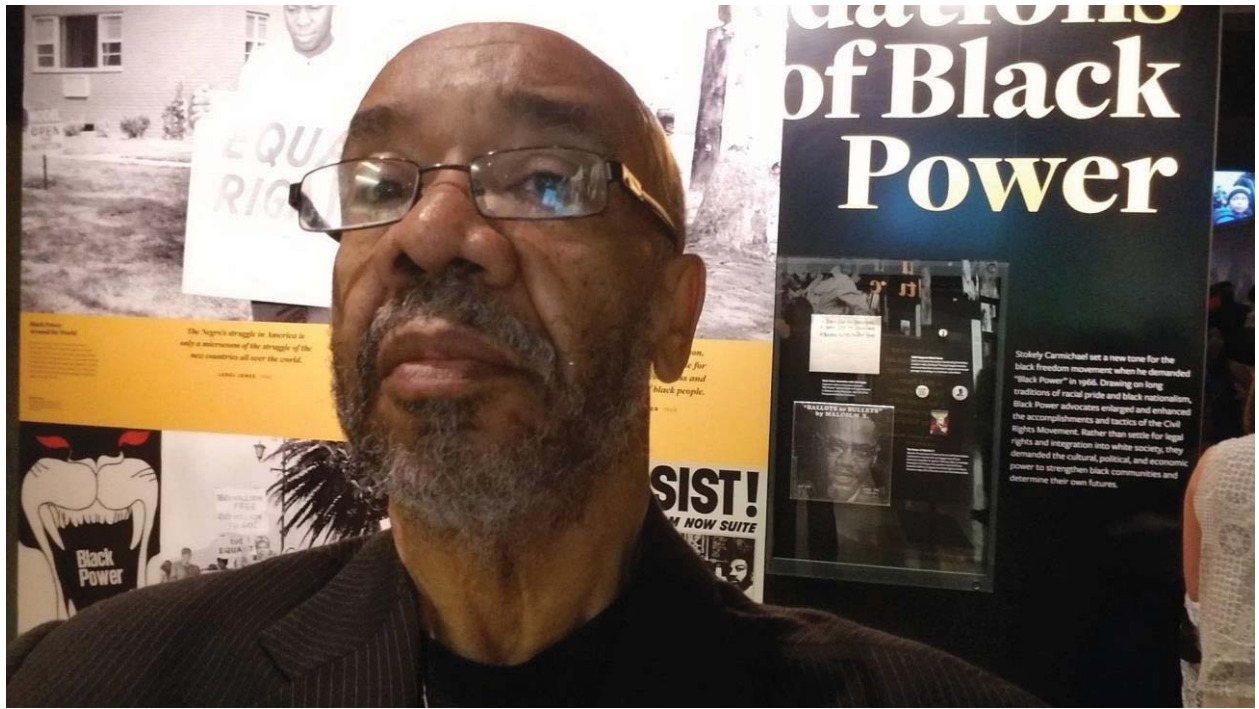
the PRESS
NEGRO! WIN THE WAR PLAN THE PEACE!!

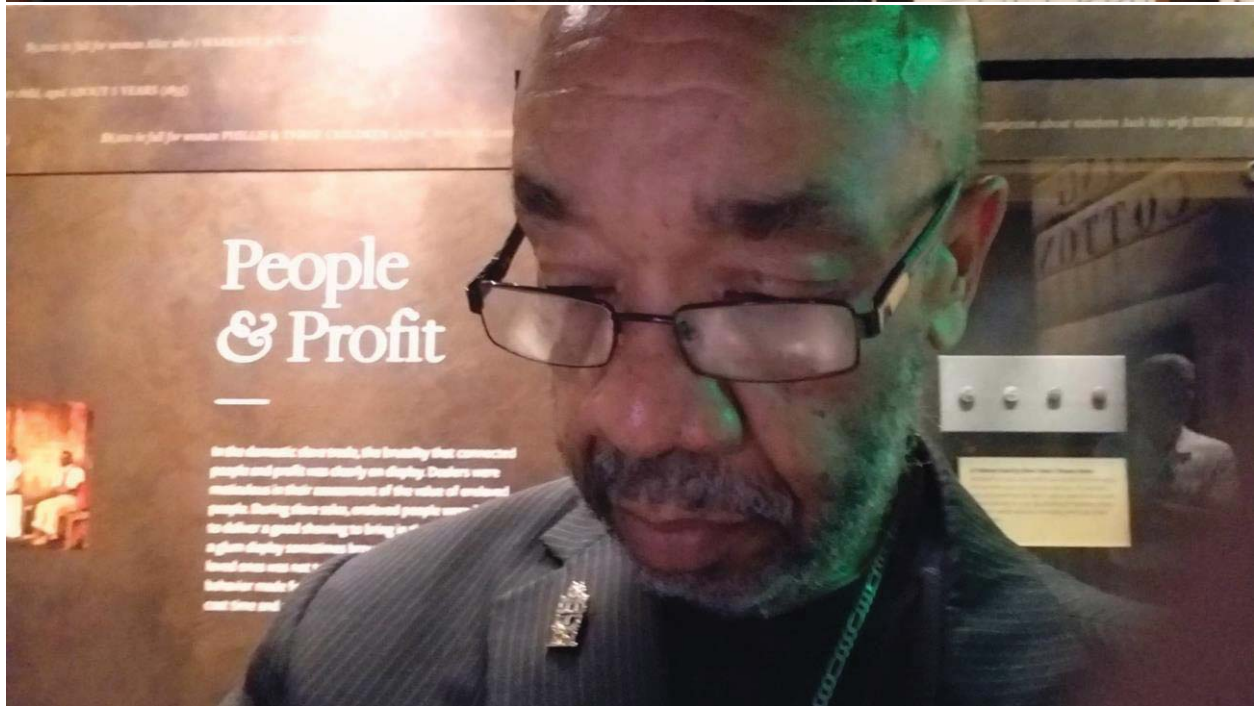
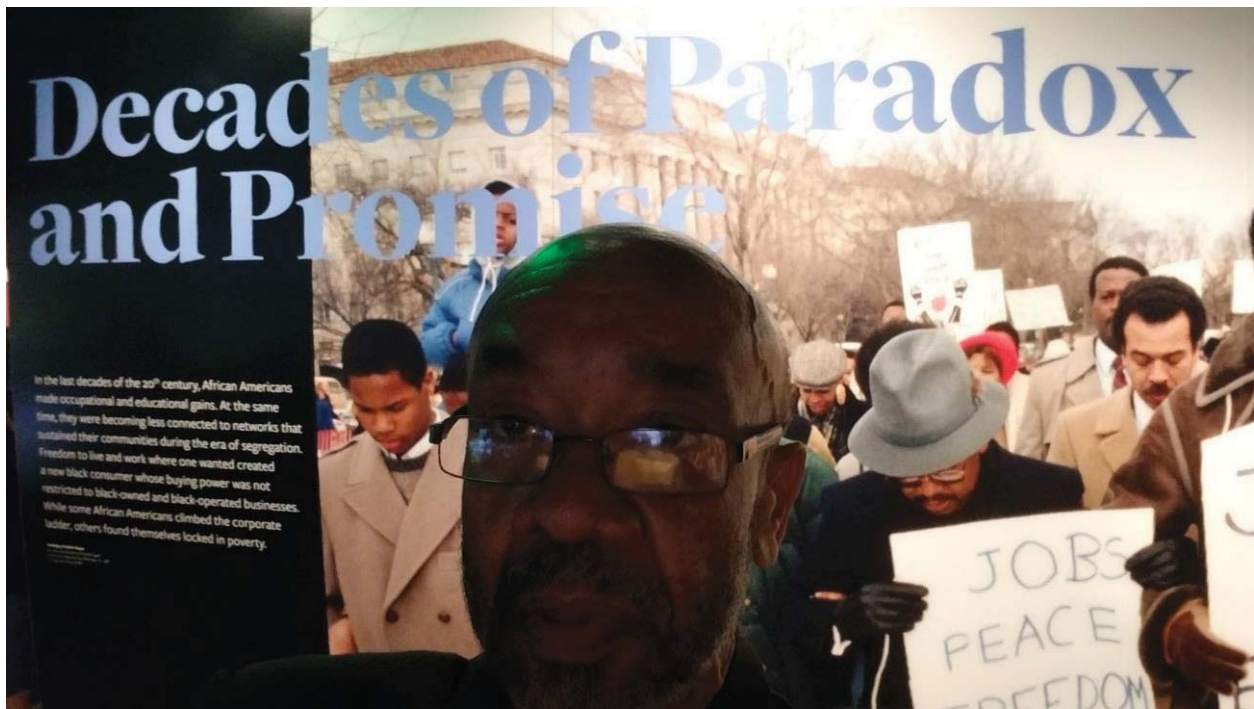
It seemed as if there was a real promise of hope for the poor, both black and white, through the poverty program. Then came the buildup in Vietnam, and I watched the program [become] broken and eviscerated.

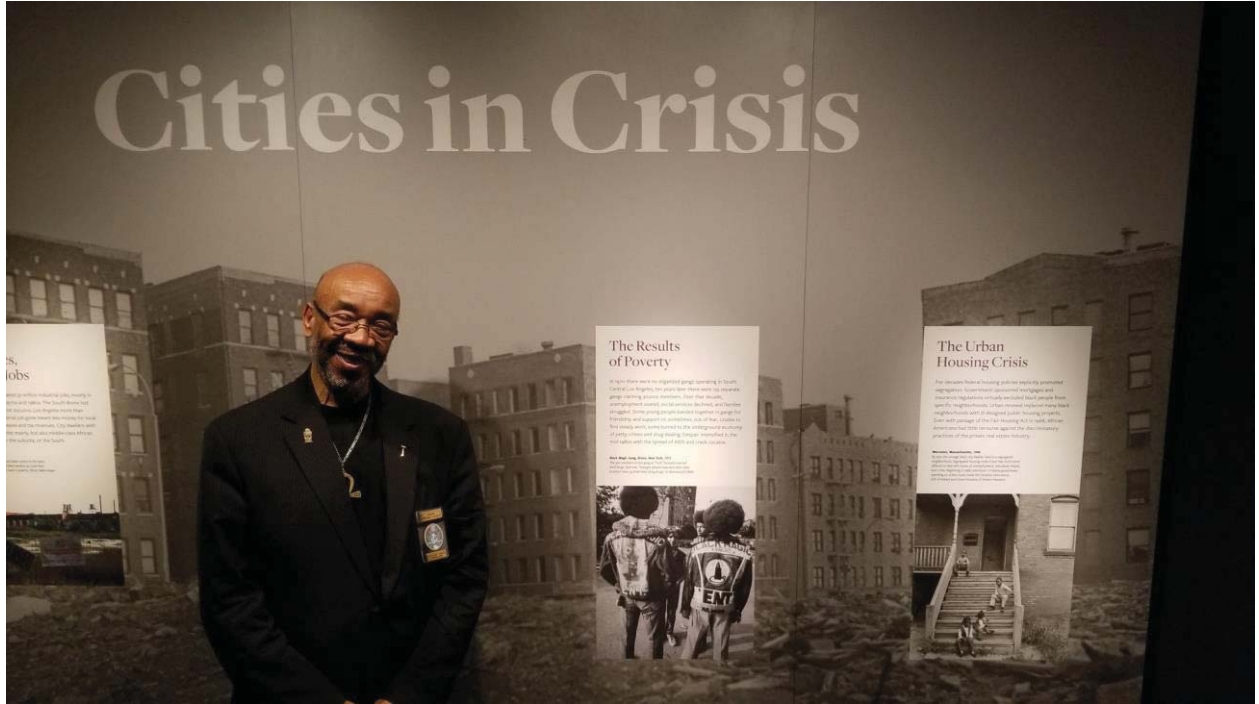
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. 1967







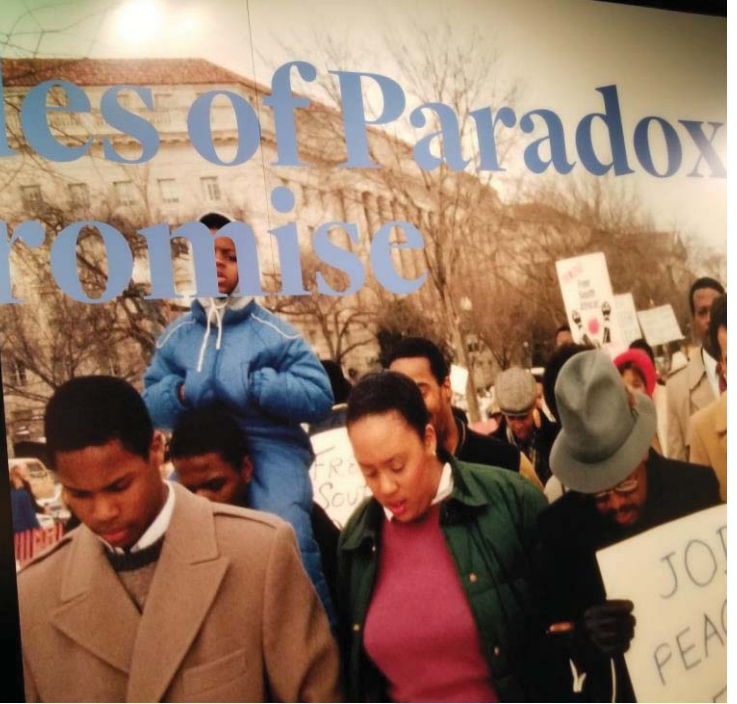






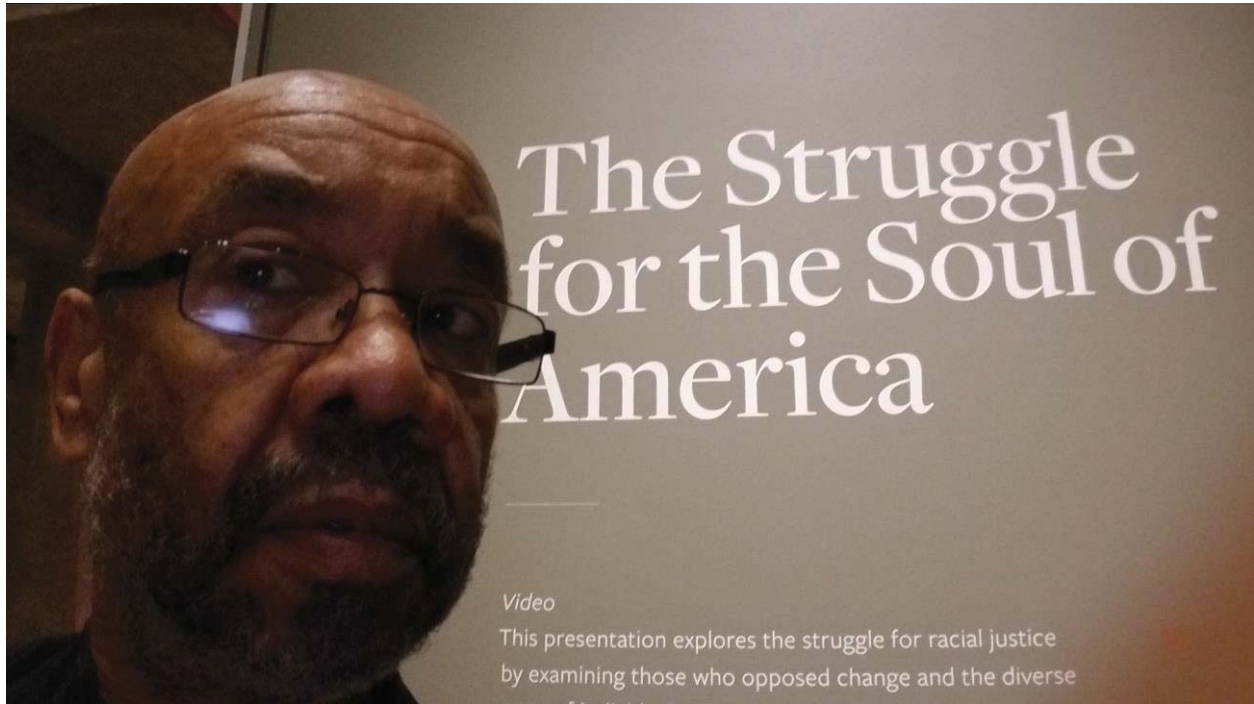
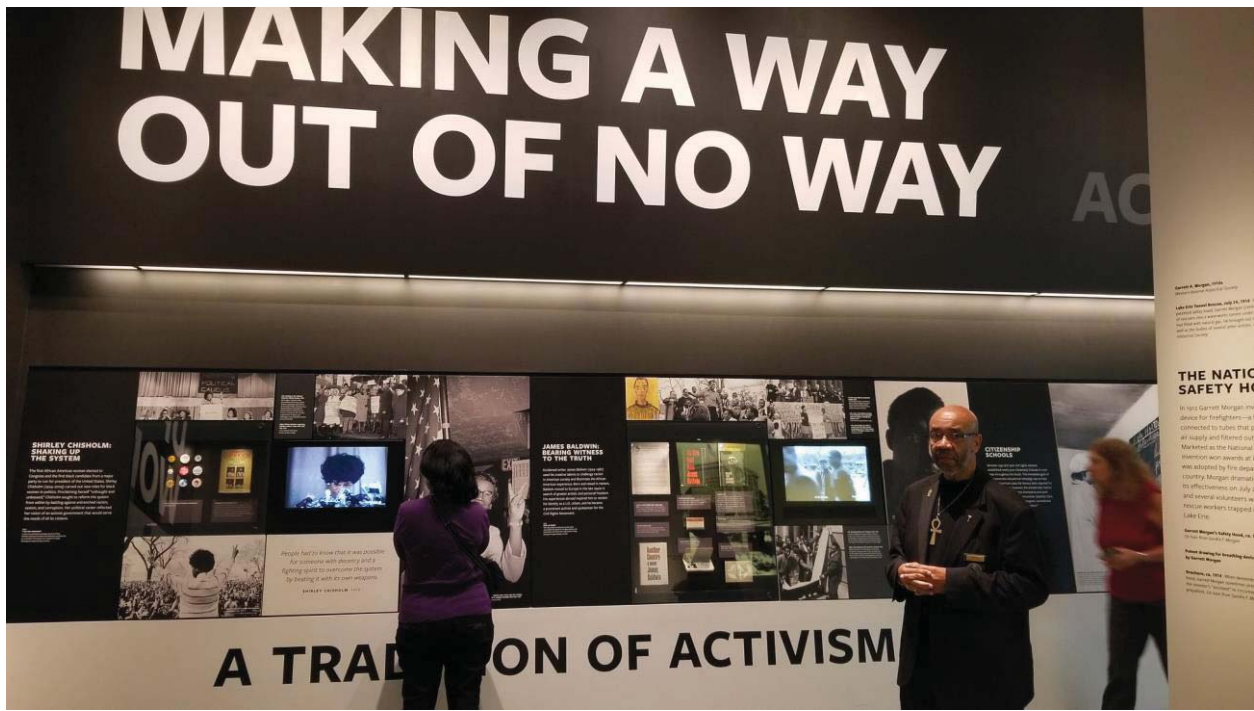
Decades of Paradox and Promise

In the last decades of the 20th century, African Americans made significant occupational and educational gains. At the same time, they were becoming less connected to networks that sustained their communities during the era of segregation. Freedom to live and work where one wanted created a new black consumer whose buying power was not met by traditional and black-operated businesses.











A Nation Divided

What they cannot take
neither can they take

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The map shows the United States divided into regions: West, Midwest, South, and Northeast. A legend indicates the following party affiliations: Free Soil (light blue), Liberty (dark blue), Union (red), and Liberty (yellow). The map also shows the locations of the four candidates for president in the 1860 election: Abraham Lincoln (North), Stephen A. Douglas (North), John C. Breckinridge (South), and John Bull Frémont (West).

THE ELECTION OF 1860
Slavery split the nation along regional lines during the 1860 election. Instead of the usual two political parties, four parties ran candidates for president—two from the South and two from the North.

CHARLESTON MERCURY



A Changing America

1968 AND BEYOND

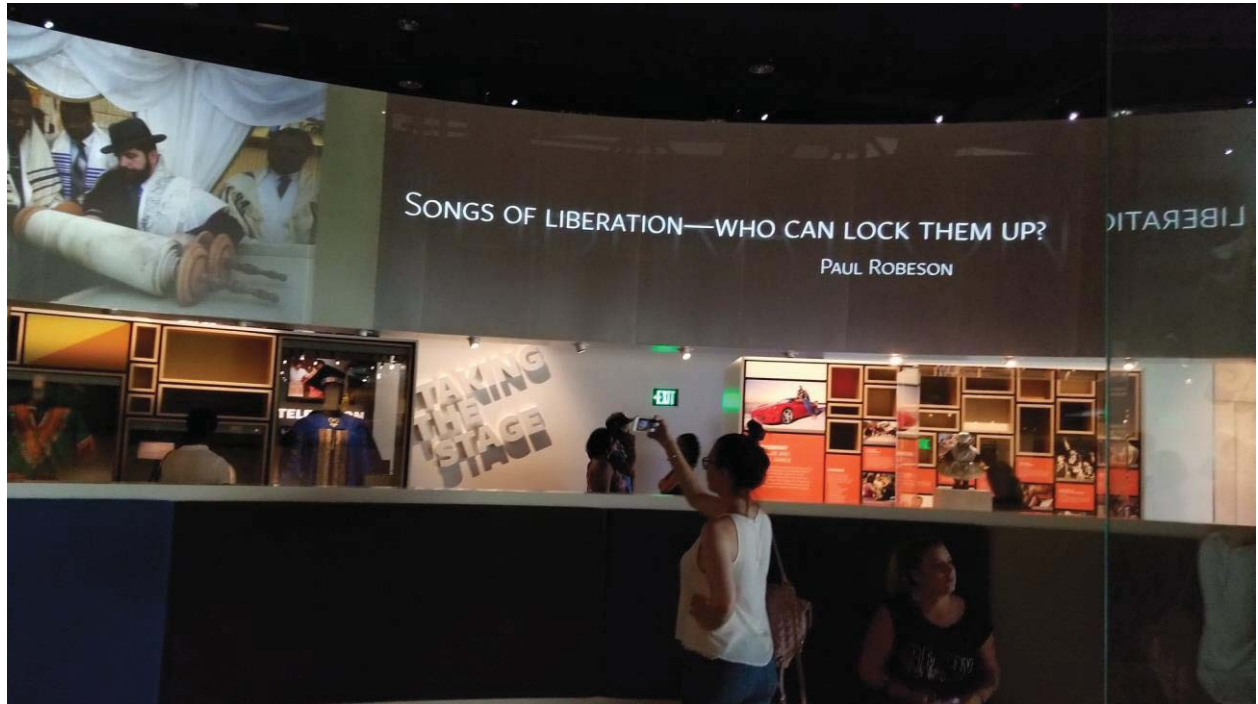
ake of the last 50 years of progress
exhibition examines the strategies
ed to wrestle with racial discrimination,
nd economic inequality since 1968
olving status of the African American
he Civil Rights and Black P

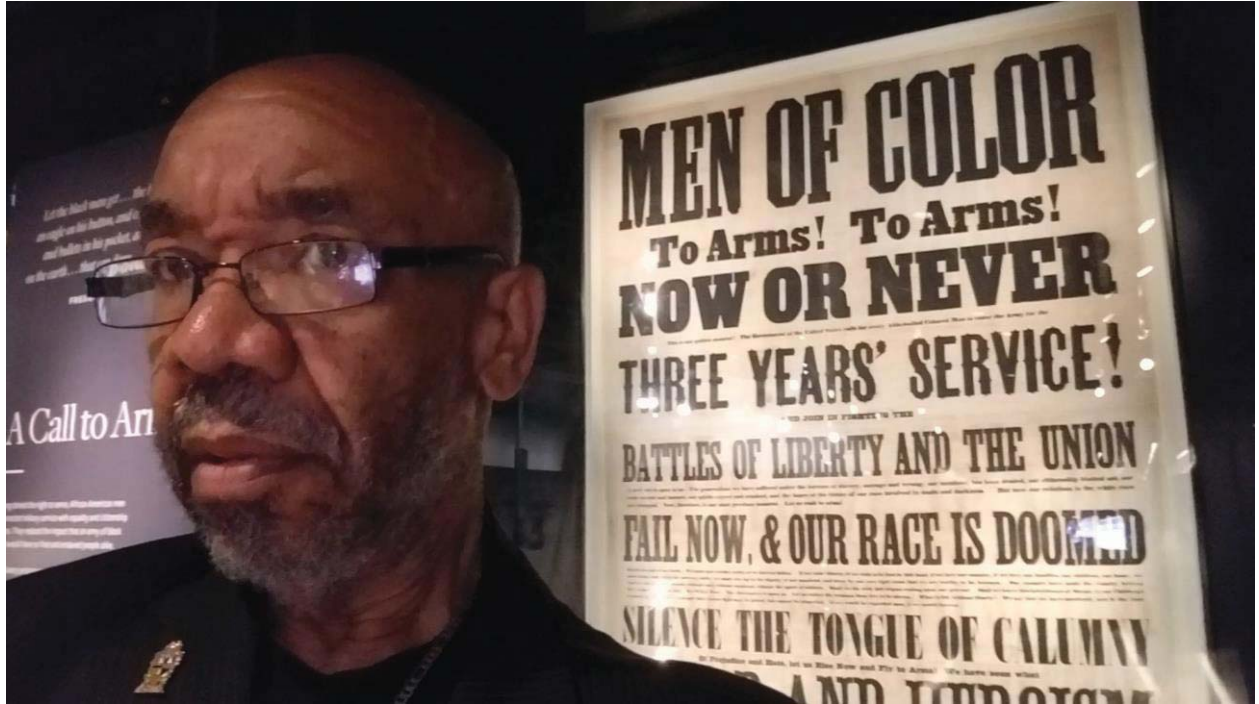
Documenting the
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SONGS OF LIBERATION—WHO CAN LOCK THEM UP?

PAUL ROBESON

MAKING
THE
STAGE
LIVE





**AMERICA
CAN BE
CHANGED.
IT WILL BE
CHANGED.**

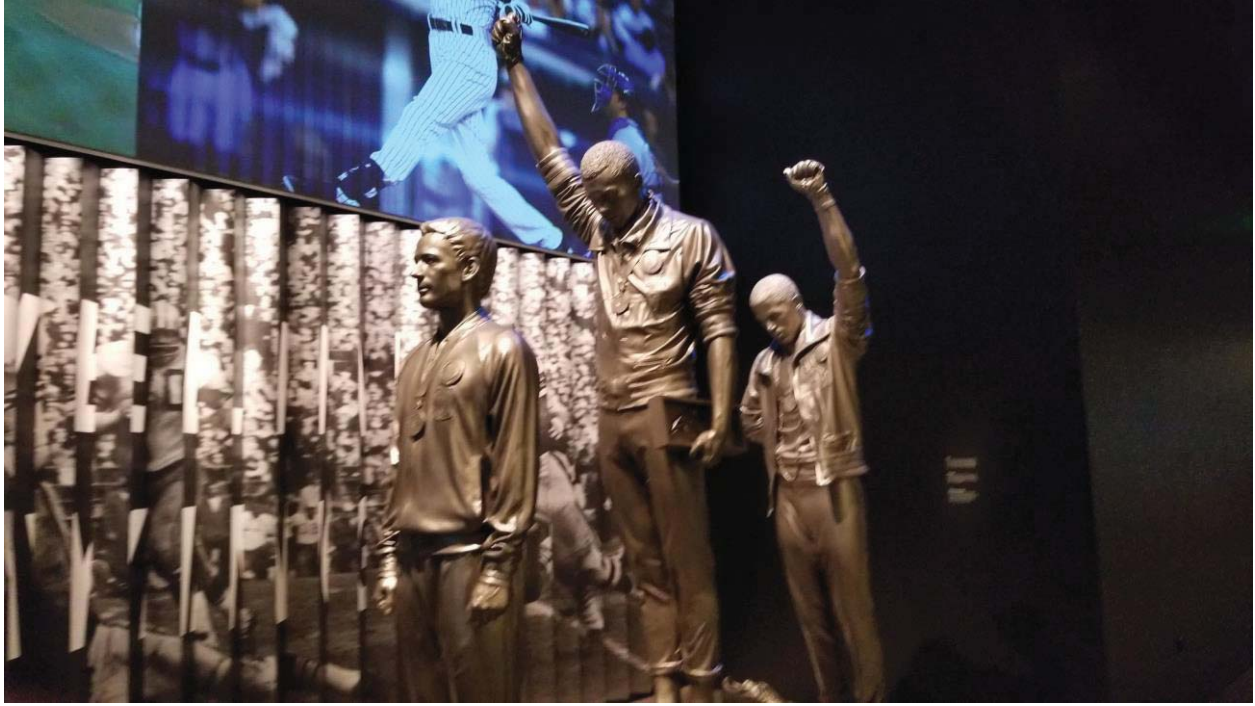


**MARY McLEOD BETHUNE
& THE NATIONAL COUNCIL
OF NEGRO WOMEN**

Renowned educator and reformer Mary McLeod Bethune dedicated her life to organizing and empowering black women to work for equality. In 1935 she founded the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) to unite and channel the activities of women's organizations across the country. Under the leadership of Bethune and her successors, the NCNW gained political recognition for African American women and advanced programs for social justice.

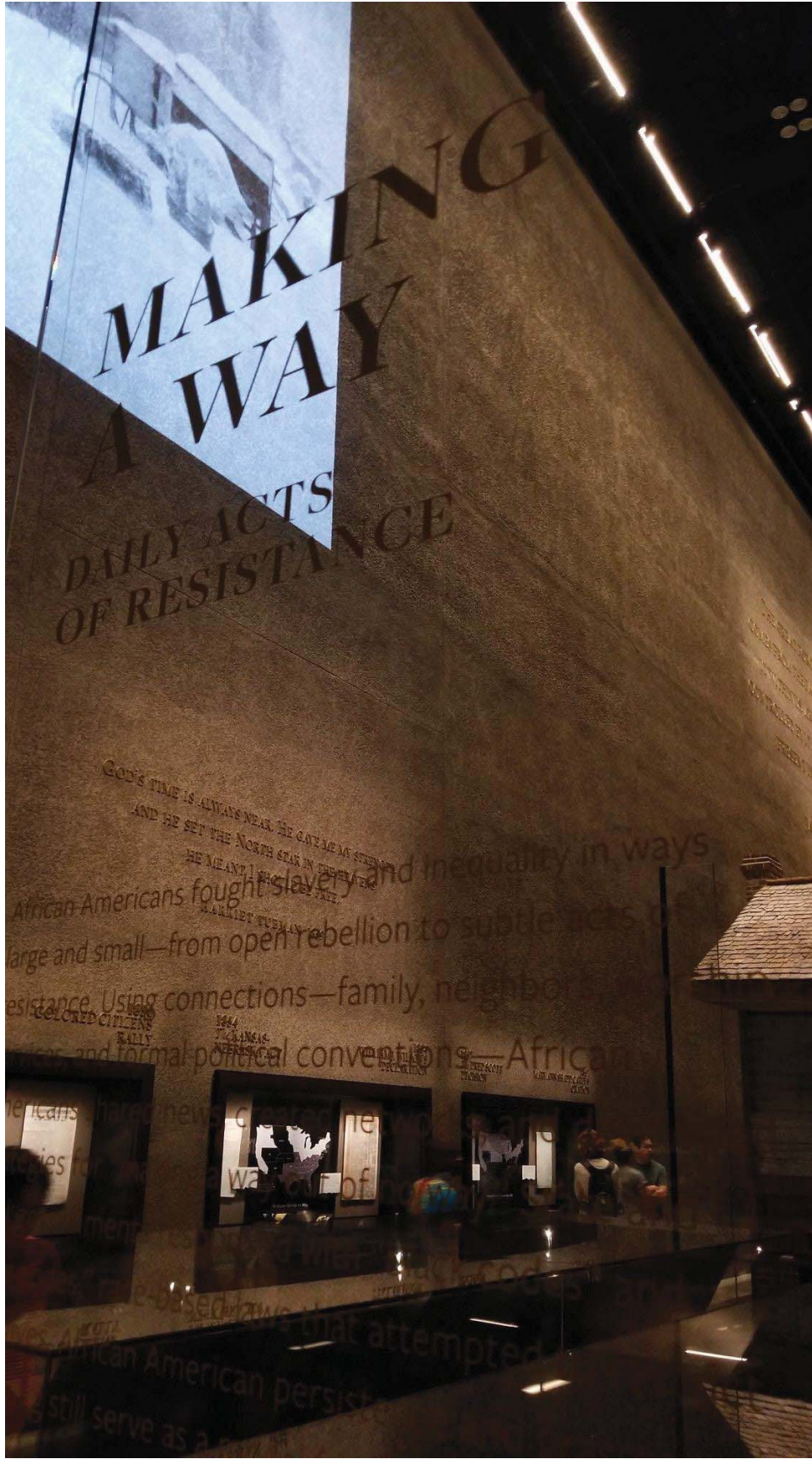
**MARY McLEOD BETHUNE
A FORCE FOR CHANGE**



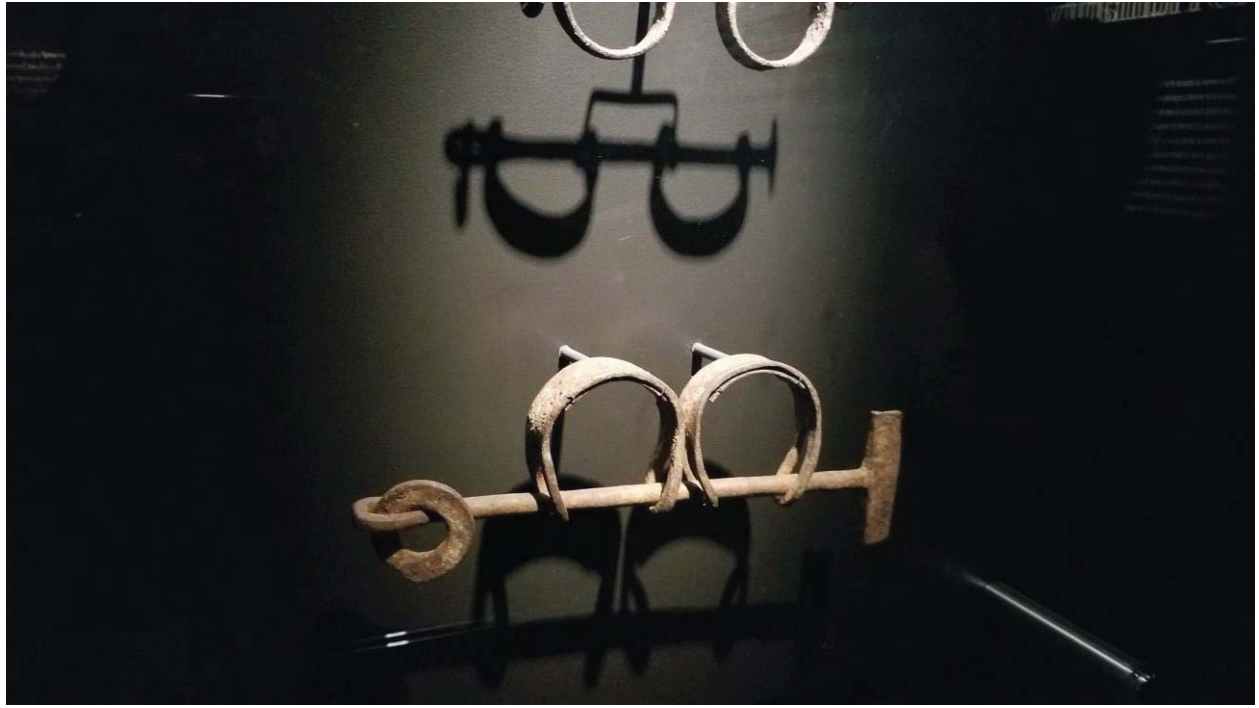


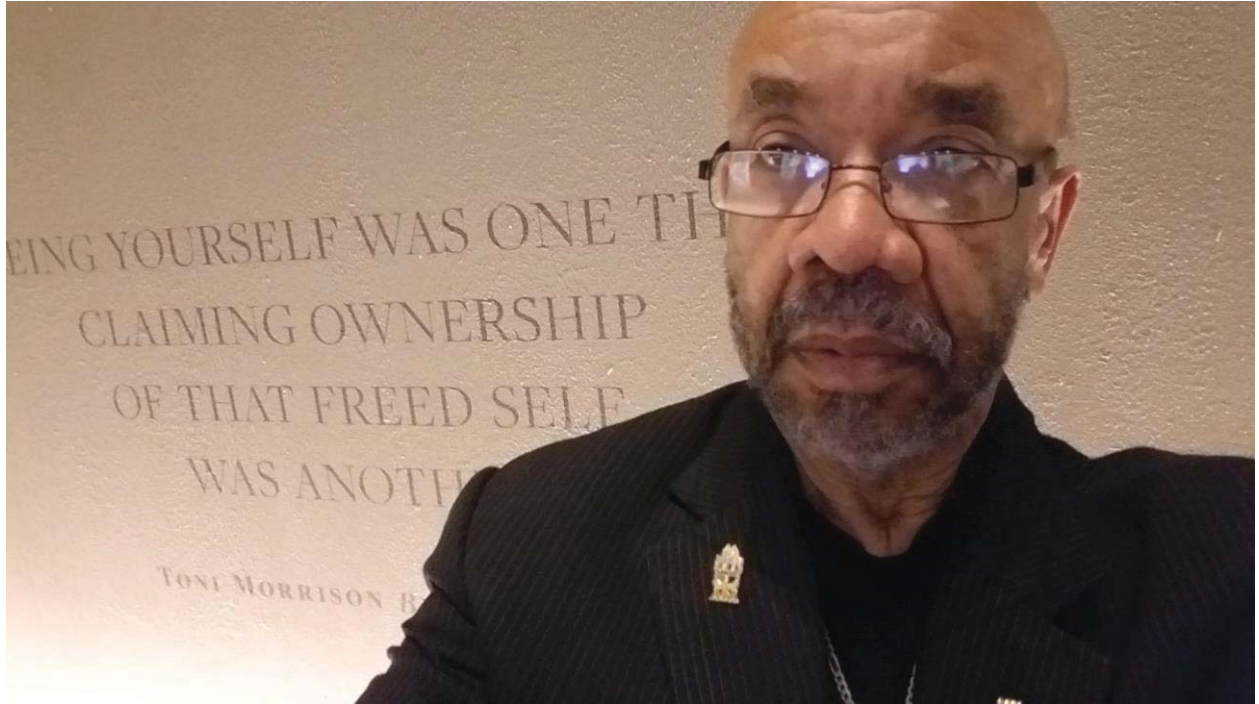
The Rise of the Ku Klux Klan

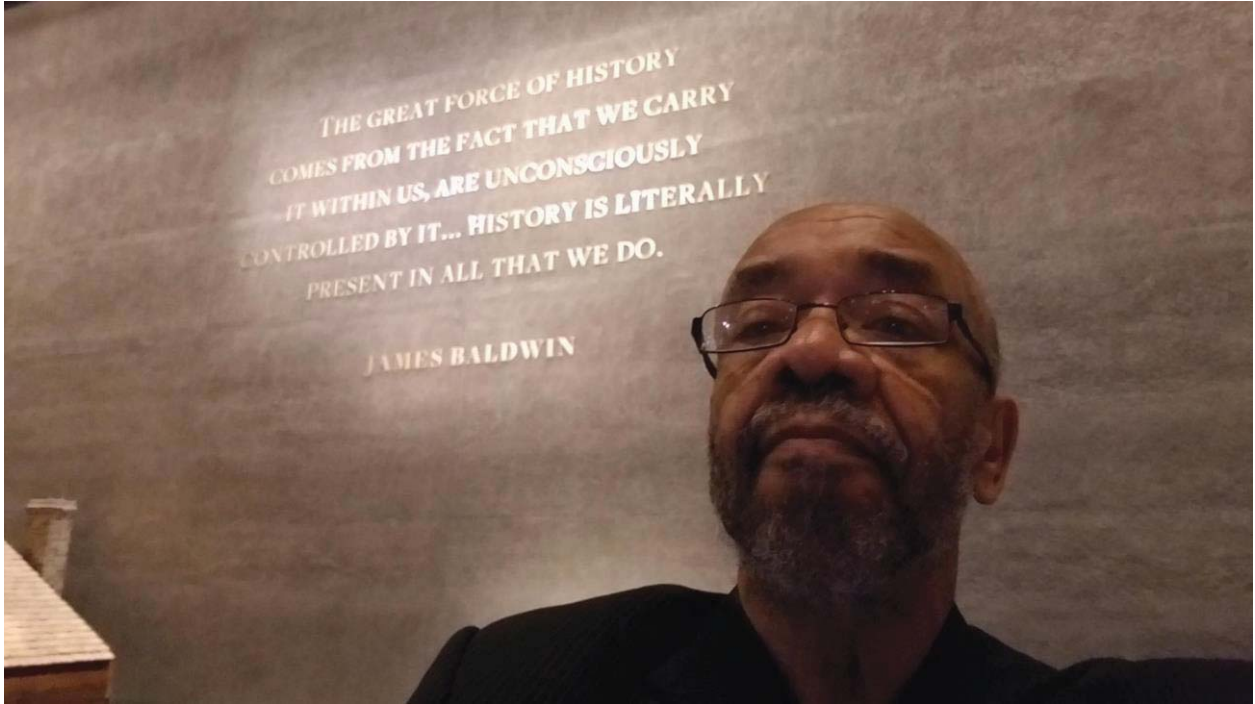


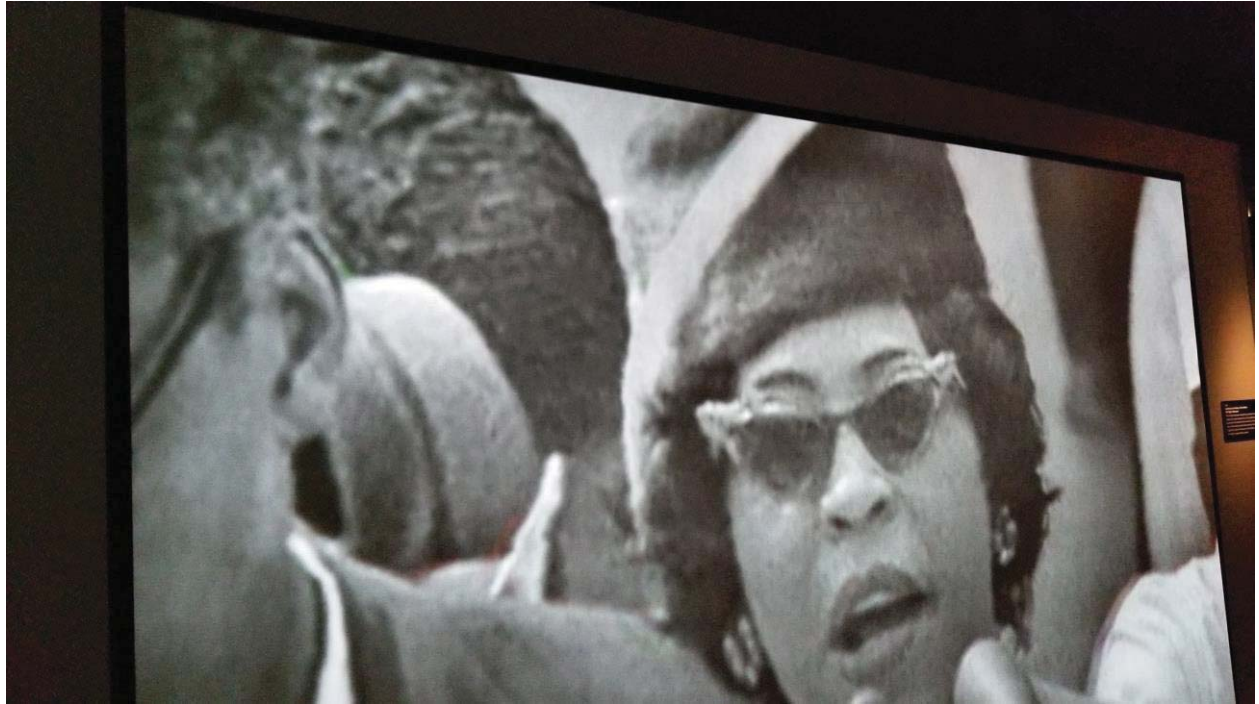
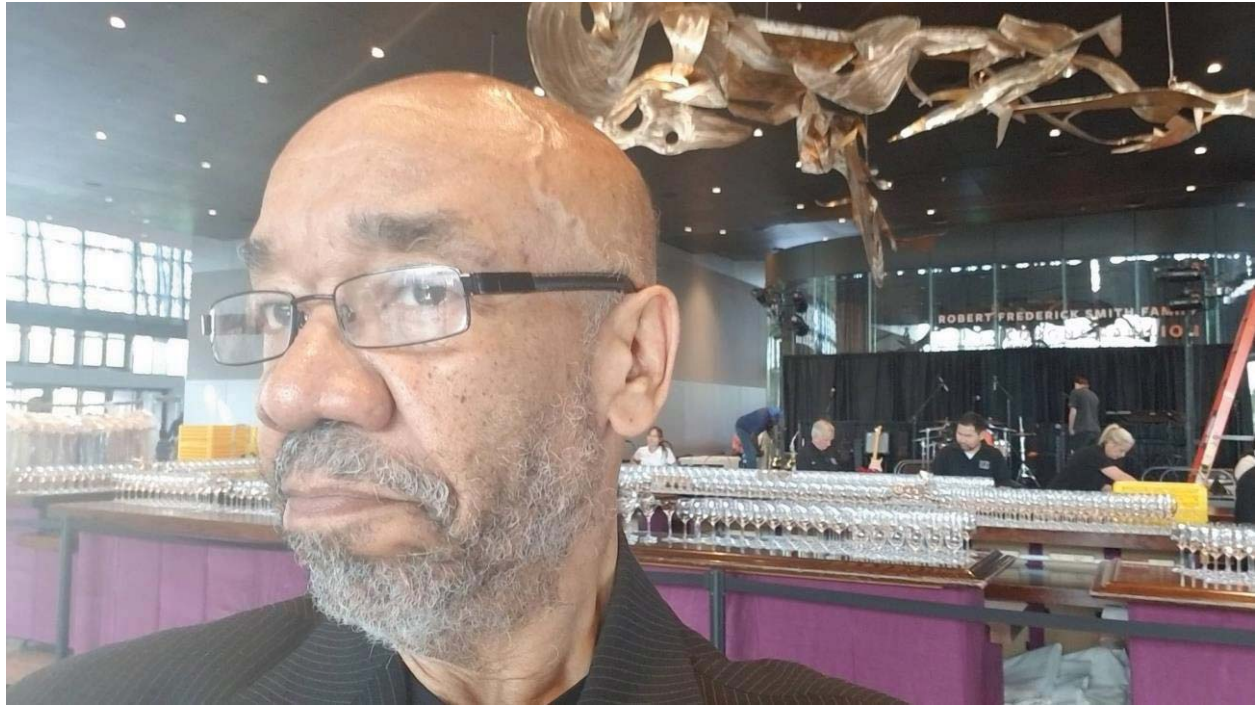












The Supreme Court

The Supreme Court plays a crucial role in interpreting and applying laws regarding race. Supreme Court Justices rely on the Constitution as a foundational document, albeit one that did not initially include African Americans as full humans and citizens. While the Supreme Court holds the power and responsibility to overturn legislation that is unconstitutional, it has sometimes failed to provide “equal protection of the laws” to all Americans, as outlined in the 14th Amendment. The composition of the Supreme Court affects its decisions. In 200 years, only two African Americans—Thurgood Marshall and Clarence Thomas—have served on the Court, and both have significantly shaped the Court’s identity and its decision-making.

African Americans and others have gone to the “court of last resort” to test, claim, or seek protection for their rights. As a result, the Supreme Court has rendered several landmark decisions on matters of race, as well as issues of ancestry, ethnicity, and tribal sovereignty. As Chief Justice John Roberts has noted, some cases represent “a test that the Supreme Court would fail.” Other cases have resulted in the Court driving social change.

The rights guaranteed by our Constitution are not self-enforcing; they can be made meaningful only by legislative or judicial action.

THURGOOD MARSHALL

1831
1832 **Cherokee Indian Cases**
Ruled that only the U.S. federal government, not individual states, had the power to negotiate and resolve claims with Indian “nations” involving claims concerning Indian lands. The rulings were not enforced however, and the federal government forcibly relocated the Cherokee to Oklahoma in 1838, in what came to be known as “The Trail of Tears.”

1857 **Dred Scott v. Sandford**
Ruled that Americans of African descent—whether enslaved or free—were not citizens of the United States, and thus held no rights to sue in federal court.

1896 **Plessy v. Ferguson**
Legalized a social order of racial segregation in public accommodations, with the doctrine of “separate but equal.” Reinforced second-class citizenship and substandard treatment for African Americans.

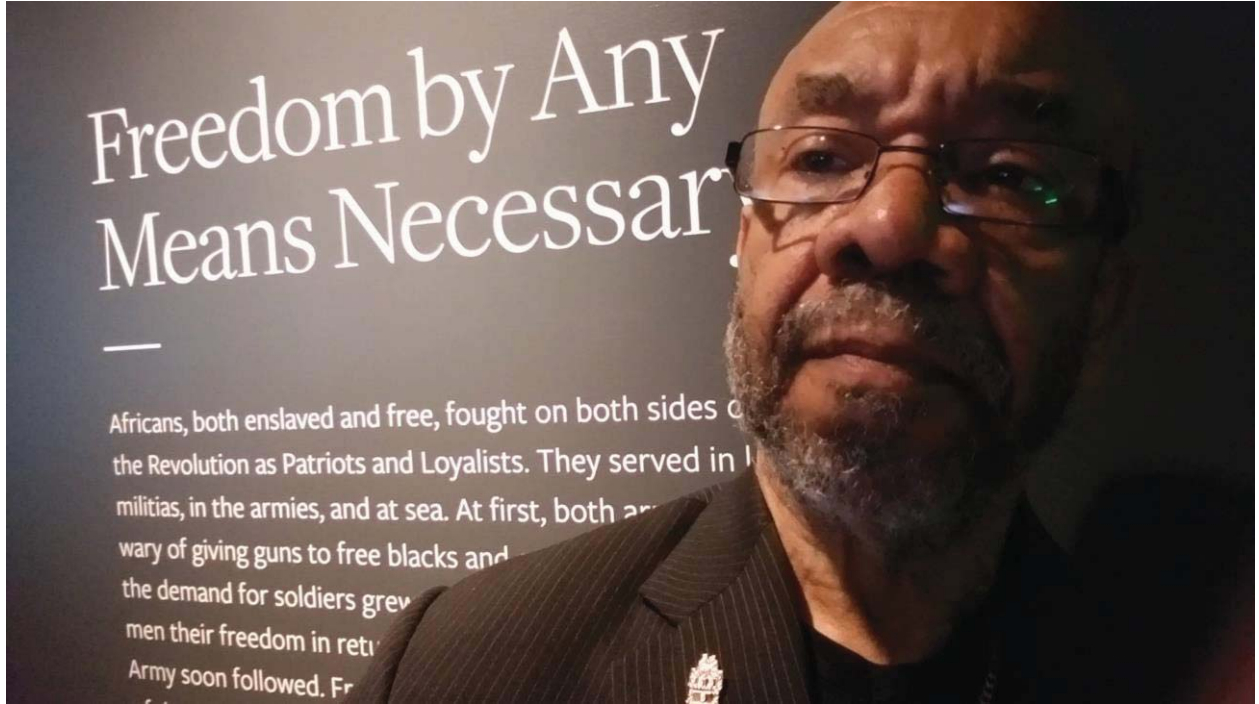
1946 **Sweatt v. Painter**
Challenged the doctrine that separate was equal and mandated access for a black law school student to learn alongside his white peer group.

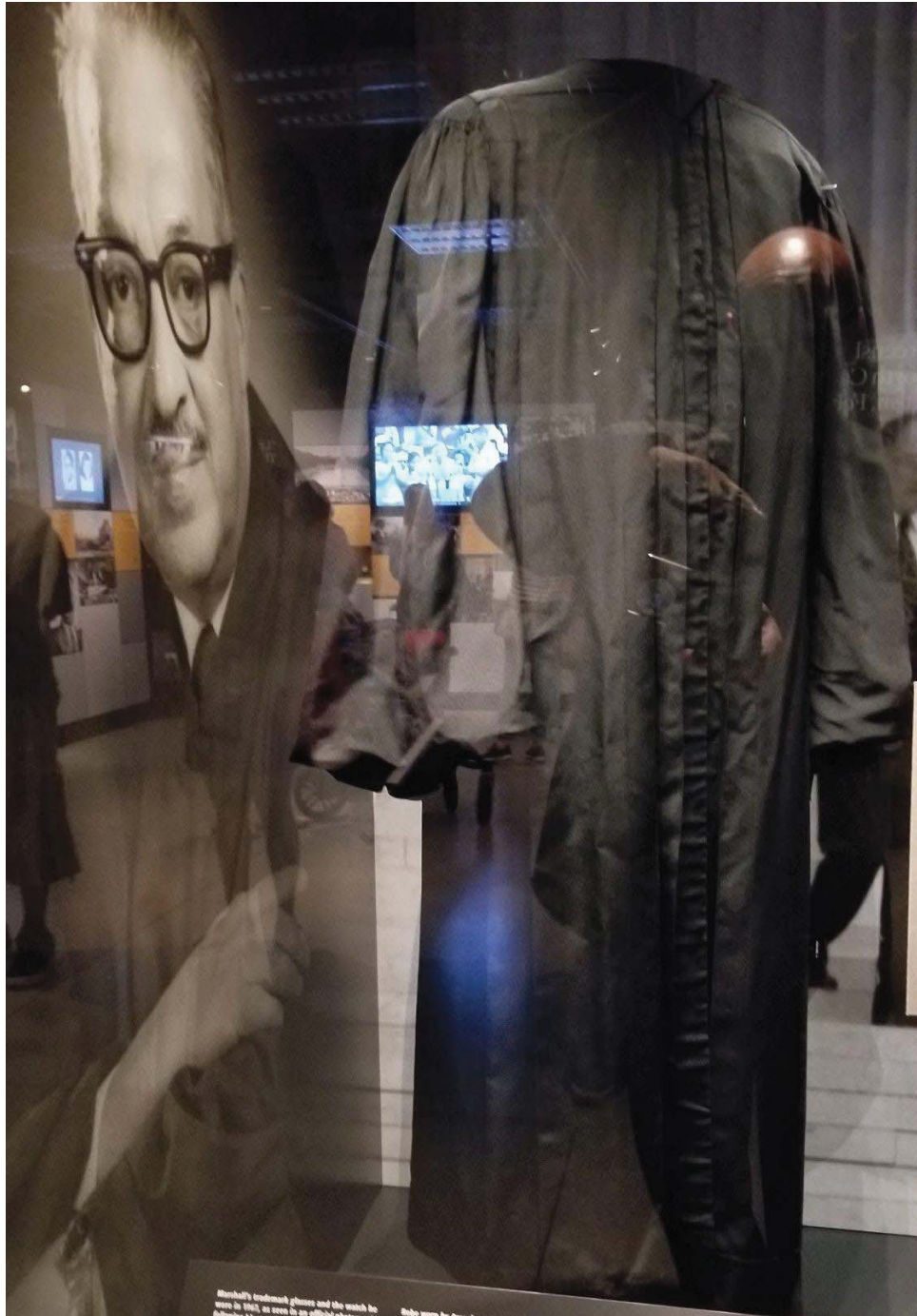
1954 **Brown v. Board of Education**
Prohibited racial segregation in public schools, affirming that “separate” was unequal and unconstitutional.

1954 **Hernandez v. Texas**
Identified Mexican Americans as a distinct group—neither “Negro” nor “white”—warranting protection against discrimination under the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment.

1978 **Regents of the University of California v. Bakke**
Concluded that while racial quotas were unconstitutional, race can be used as a factor—among other criteria—in admissions decisions at universities to address past discrimination.

2016 **Fisher v. The University of Texas**
Upheld that the implementation of an affirmative action program at the University of Texas was constitutional and did not violate the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment.





Marshall's trademark glasses and the watch he wore in 1967, 45 years in an official photograph following his appointment to the Supreme Court. Photo from the Thurgood Marshall Family.

Robe worn by Associate Justice Thurgood Marshall. On loan from the Thurgood Marshall.

Left: Thurgood Marshall; Right: Thurgood Marshall in 1967. Photograph Collection of the Supreme Court.



Appointed to the Court
President Lyndon Johnson and Supreme Court Justices. In 1967, President Lyndon Johnson appointed Marshall to serve as U.S. Solicitor General, and in 1967 he named Marshall to the Supreme Court. Photo by [unreadable].

Thurgood Marshall: Civil Rights Lawyer to Supreme Court Justice

Thurgood Marshall viewed legislative and judicial action as a means to eliminate racial inequality. Before President Lyndon Johnson appointed him to the Supreme Court, Marshall had argued more than 30 cases before the Supreme Court as an attorney for the NAACP.



LOUISIANA

Every negro is required to be in the regular service of some white person, or former owner, who shall be held responsible for the conduct of said negro. But said employer or former owner may permit said negro to hire his own time by special permission in writing, which permission shall not extend over seven days at any one time.

MISSISSIPPI

If any freedman, free negro, or mulatto, convicted of any of the misdemeanors provided against in this act, shall fail or refuse for the space of five days, after conviction, to pay the fine and costs imposed, such person shall be hired out by the sheriff or other officer, at public outcry, to any white person who will pay said fine and all costs, and take said convict for the shortest time.

SOUTH CAROLINA

No person of color shall migrate into and reside in this state, unless, within twenty days after his arrival within the same, he shall enter into a bond with two freeholders as sureties.

FLORIDA

When a person of color working on a farm or plantation deliberately disobeys orders, is impudent or disrespectful to his employer, refuses to do the work assigned, or leaves the premises, he can be arrested.

NORTH CAROLINA

No person of color can testify against a white person in court, unless the white person agrees to it.

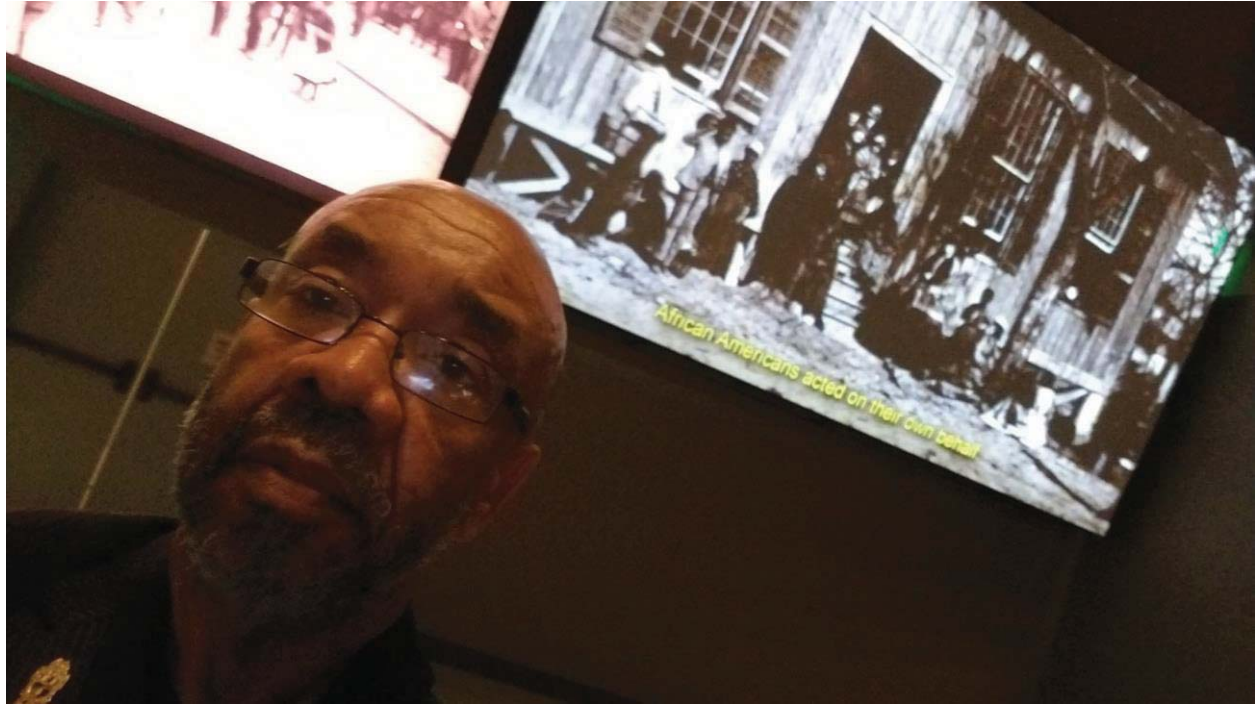
TEXAS

Only white men can serve on juries, hold office, and vote in any state, county, or municipal election.

TENNESSEE

No colored persons have the right to vote, hold office or sit on juries in this state.

MAKING A WAY OUT OF NO WAY

















CLASSICAL

JAZZ

IN THE SPIRIT: SACRED MUSIC TRADITIONS

IN THE SPIRIT: SACRED MUSIC TRADITIONS

SAC

ROOSEVELT HUNTER

FELTON WILLIA

SACRED

MUSIC OF THE BLACK CHURCH

AMERICA CAN BE CHANGED. IT WILL BE CHANGED.

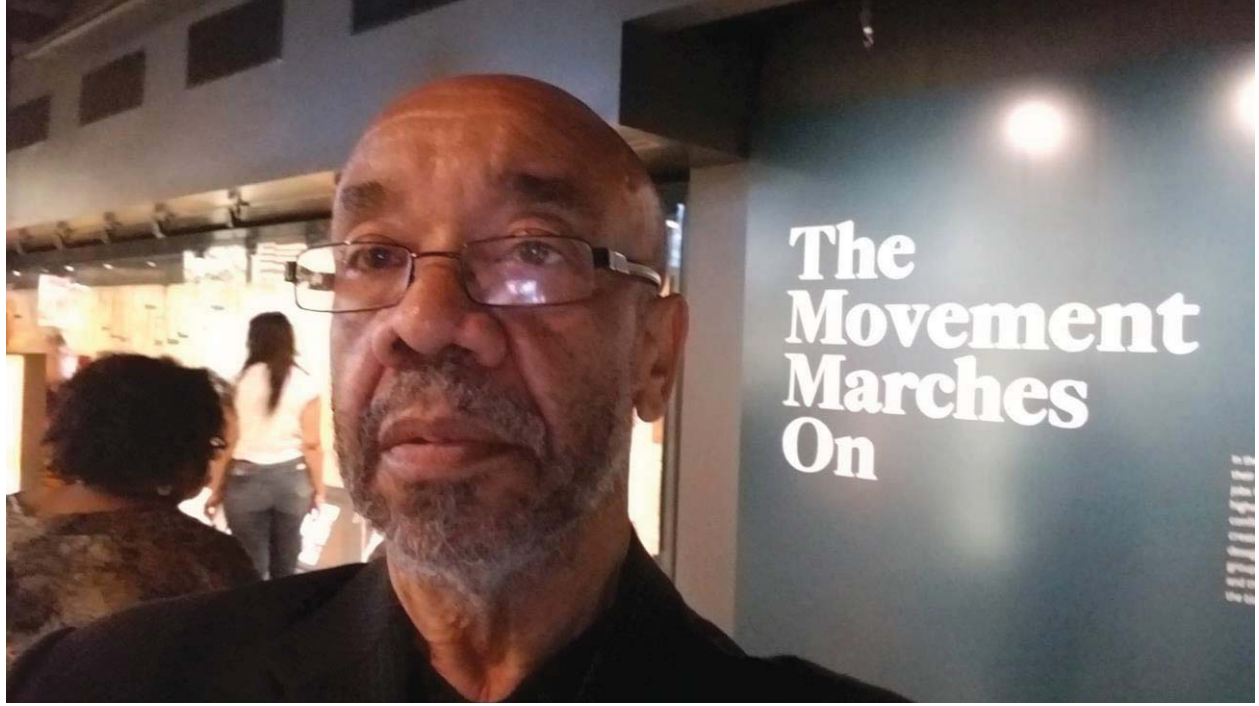


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MARY McLEOD BETHUNE A FORCE FOR CHANGE

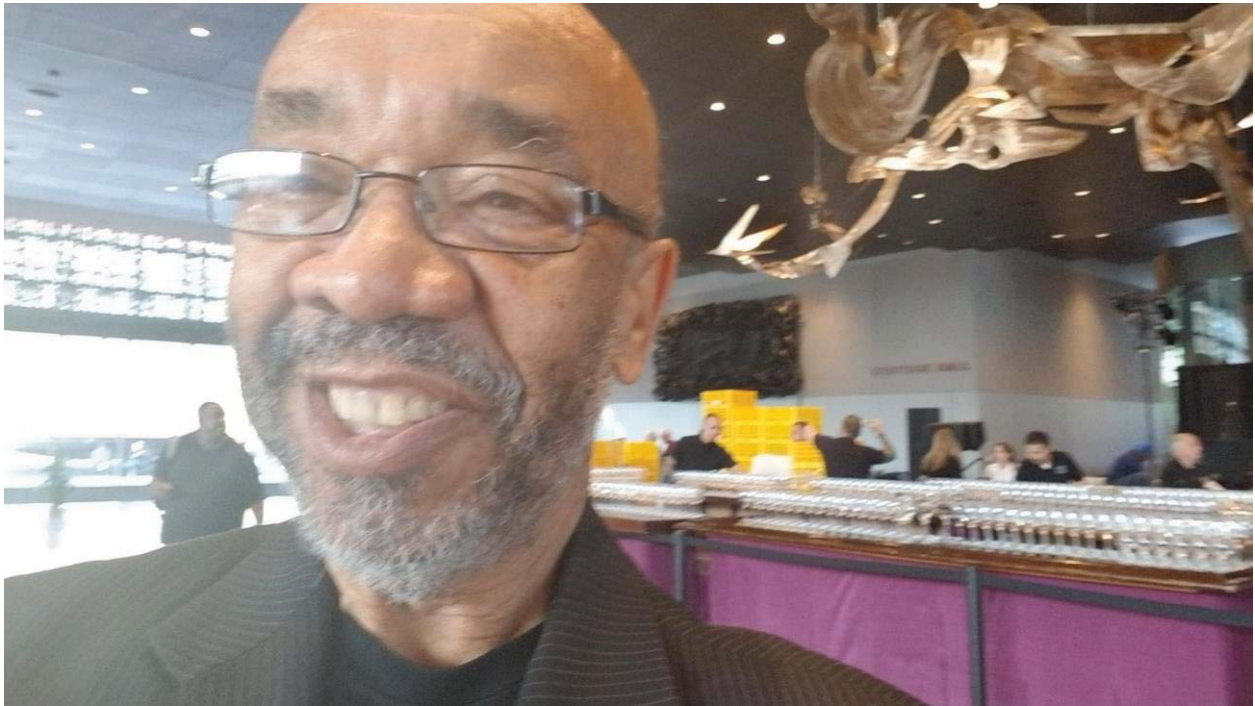




1820 – 1865 Life & Work

African Americans who endured slavery created cultures instilled with wisdom, beauty, and vitality. Living a dual life—one of hardship and one of community and faith—enslaved people turned their focus towards family, knowledge, neighbors, and joy, wherever it might be found. They found pleasure in a job well done, a child well loved, a song, a story, or a gathering that rejuvenated the soul. Life was more than enslavement.

Artwork: Emotions of Love of the James Oglethorpe House, Atlanta, Georgia, North Carolina, 1814



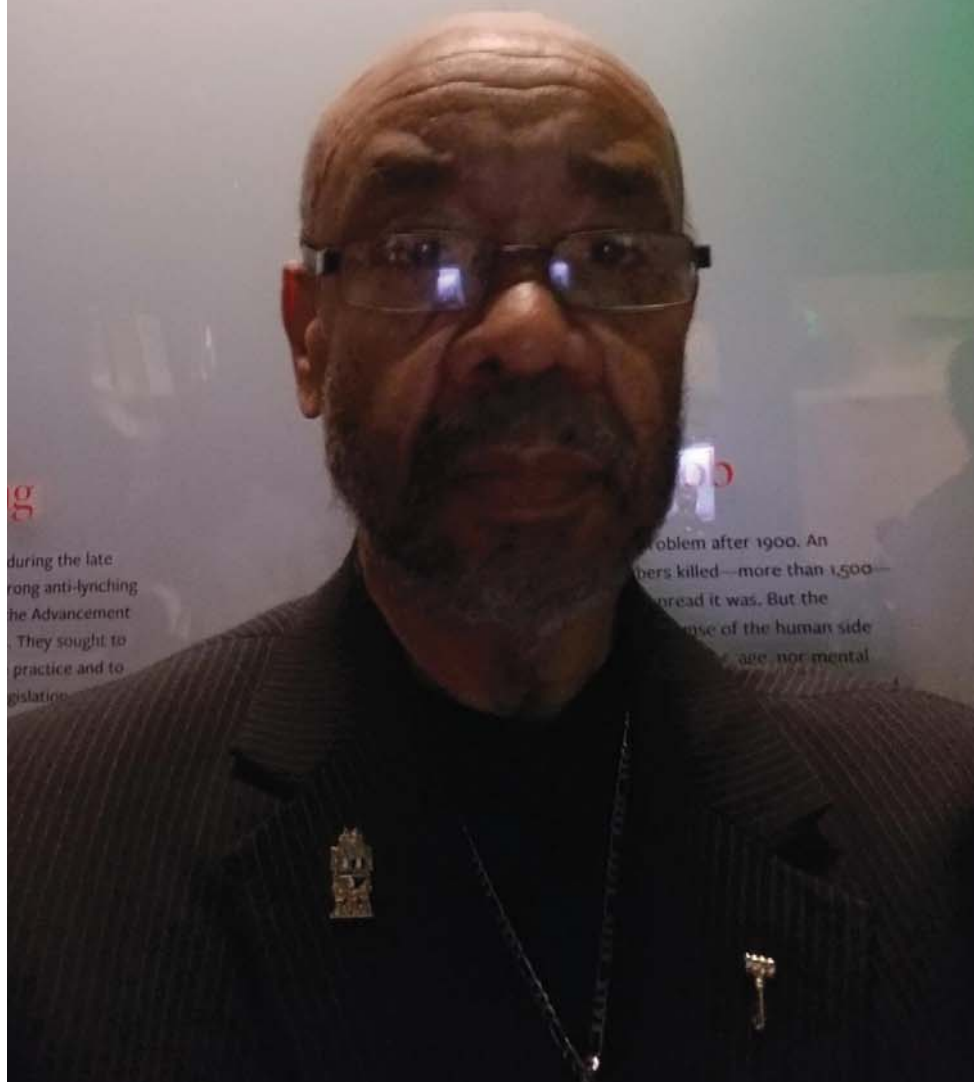
*I am the dream and
the hope of the slave.*

MAYA ANGELOU

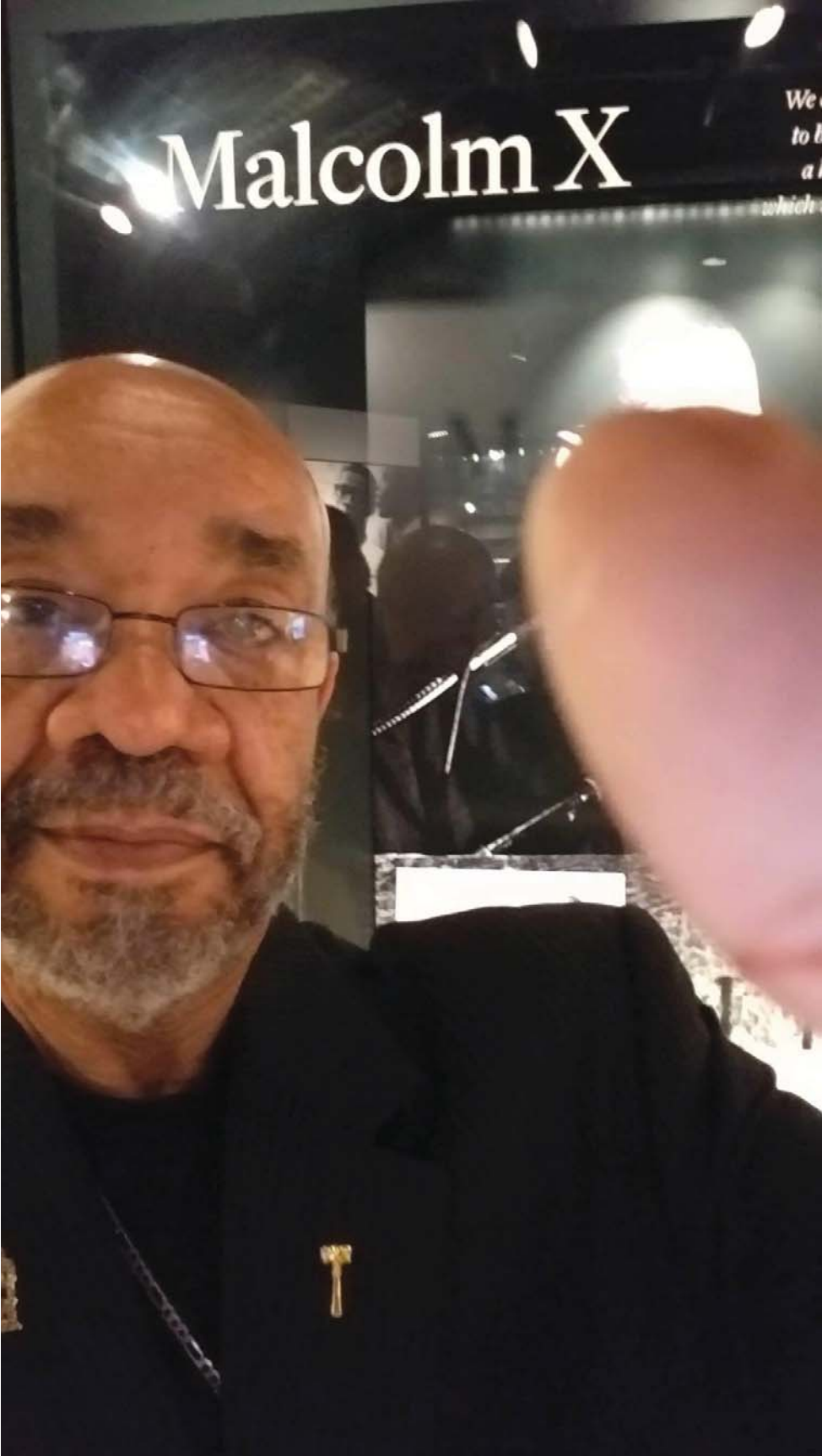


Why are there "Jim Crow" cars in the South?
Why are there so much
lynching and midnight murder in the South?
To get rid of the Negroes.

CLEVELAND GAZETTE 1892









EXPLORE MORE!

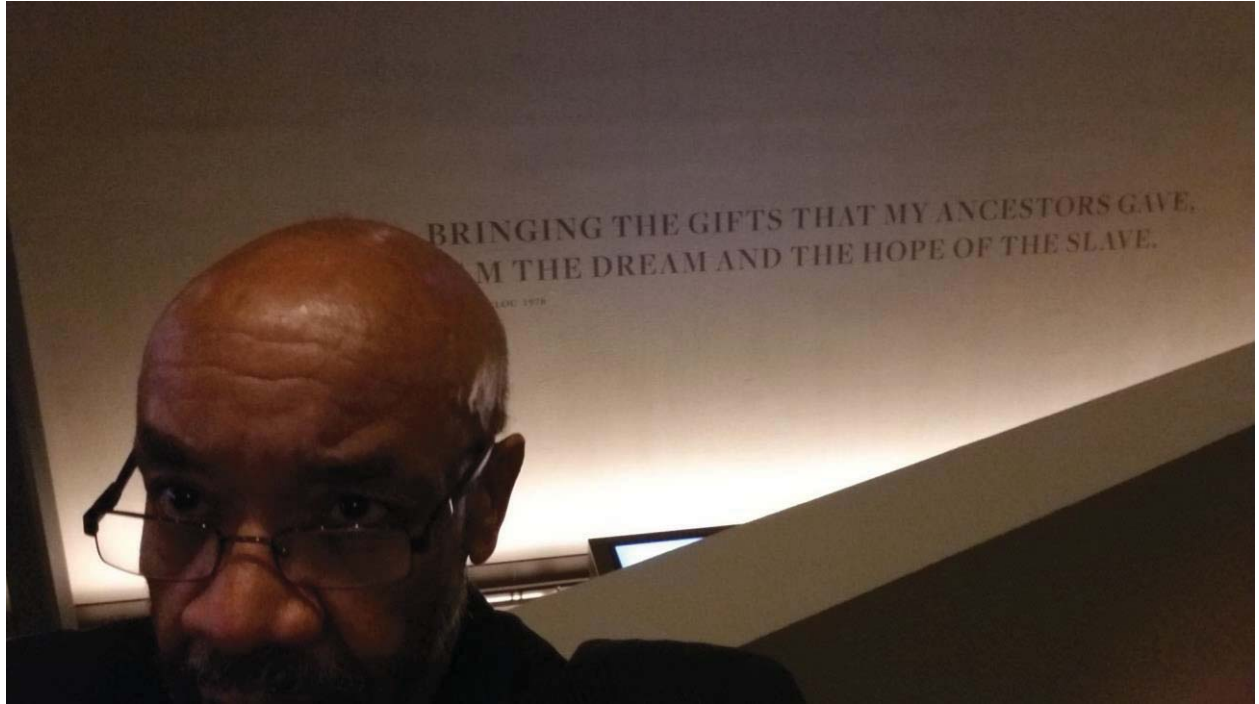
on the second floor

Continue your journey through African American history and culture by exploring more stories, images, and objects from our exhibitions and collections.

Dig into the past. Travel back in time. Step onto the stage. Meet your ancestors.

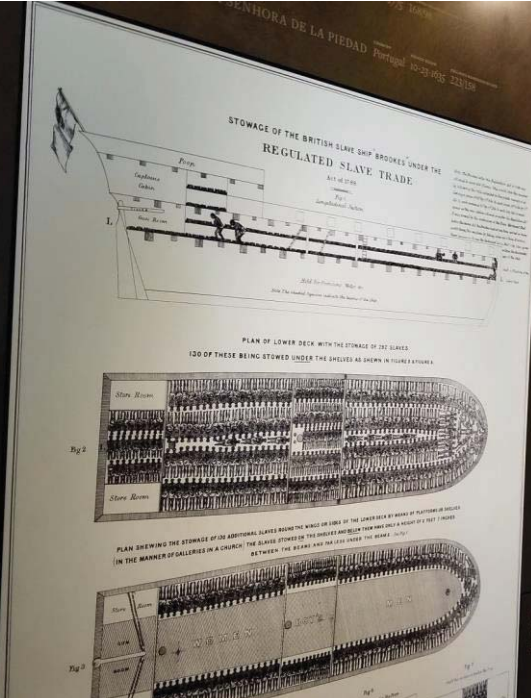
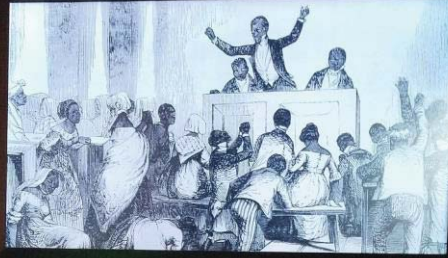
Make the journey your own.





FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH

To ensure their survival and progress, African Americans developed diverse religious institutions, from the first independent congregations established by free blacks in the early 1800s to contemporary black churches, temples, mosques, and synagogues. These institutions served as centers of moral and political leadership and provided services and support to urban and rural communities. Spiritual beliefs and faith practices offered hope and comfort, the will to resist oppression, and the values of self-determination and pride.



15th-19th CENTURIES The Middle Passage A Full Complement of Negroes

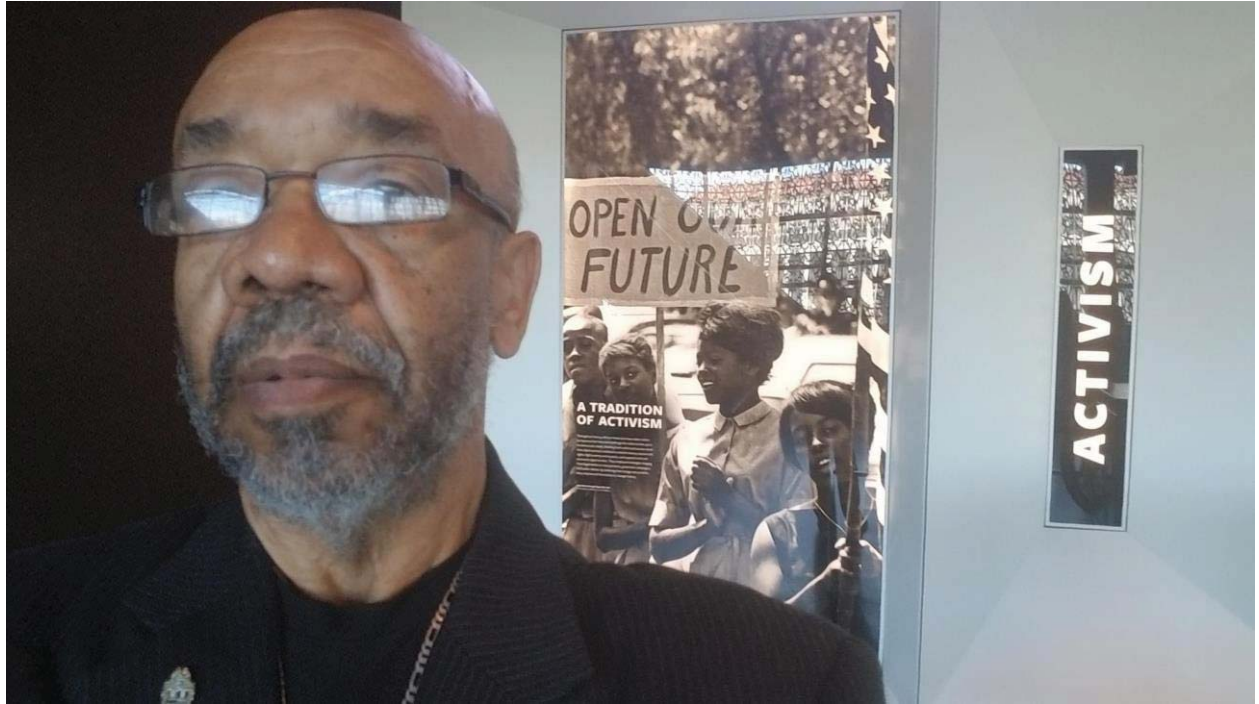
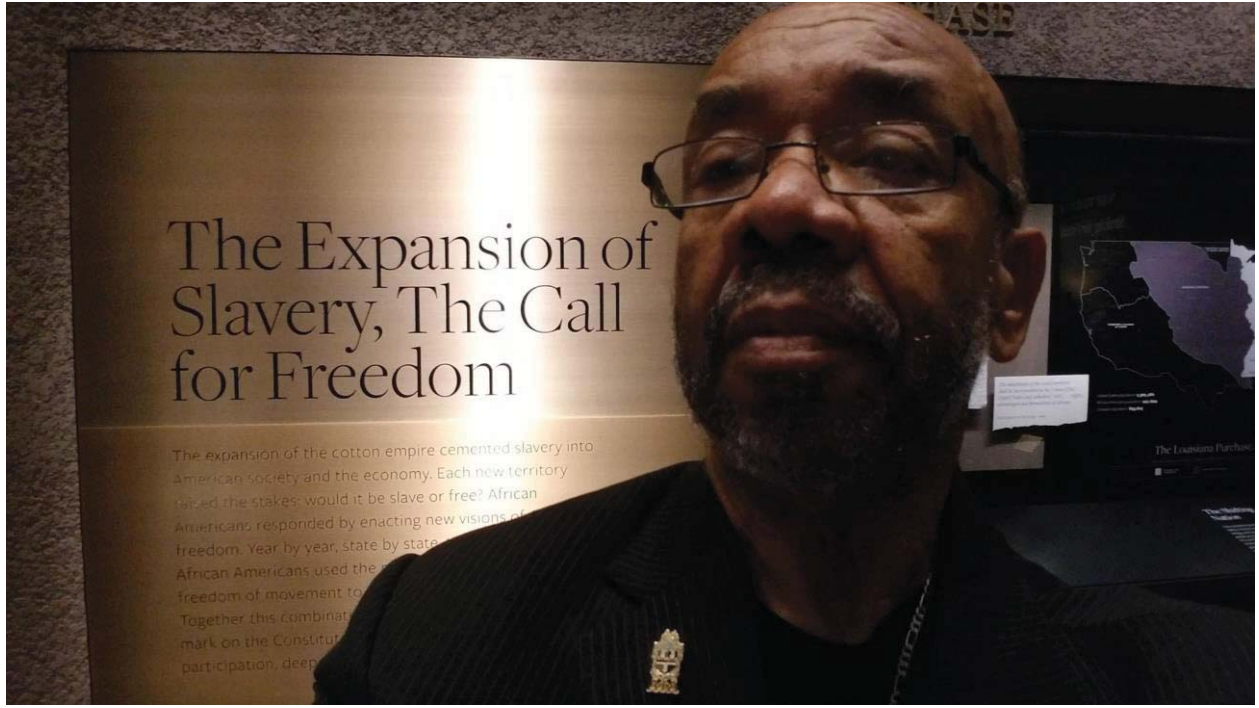
For four centuries, slavers sailed along the western African coast to pack the hulls of their ships with "a full complement of negroes." Millions of captive Africans were loaded onto these ships as commodities certain to bring a profit. The traumatic journey from western Africa to the Caribbean and the Americas—known as the Middle Passage—was a mixture of captivity and commerce. Enslaved Africans were dispersed throughout the Atlantic world and forced to leave their homeland and loved ones behind.











*The past is of value only as it
aids in understanding the present;
and an understanding of the
facts of the problem . . . is the
first step toward its solution.*

**CHICAGO COMMISSION ON
RACE RELATIONS**





BAD BRAINS,
MOTHER, FISHBONE,
LIVING COLOR

JIMI HENDRIX

ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?

Jimi Hendrix changed the way we think of the electric guitar. He was a songwriter, singer, and multi-instrumentalist with a force of will. His music captured the reality of the psychedelic 1960s and is one of the most significant musical and cultural moments of the 20th century. Starting with 1967's *Are You Experienced*, he enjoyed a brief reign as rock god. His career ended with his death in 1970.

BIG MAMA
THORNTON,
TINA TURNER,
THE NOTTIES

BLACK M

HENDRIX

IN LONG





A Fugitive

These images were used to rouse public support for emancipation. Many Americans believed that African Americans were shaped by slavery and therefore unfit for freedom. The artist documented that this was not true. Library of Congress

"The Scourged Back"

"I have found a large number of the four hundred [new recruits] examined by me to be as badly lacerated." —T. W. Mercer, 1863

A Soldier

Documentary images differed from the soldiers' private portraits, which revealed more about their personal identities. The illustrator posed Gordon standing up to reflect his freedom after enlistment. Library of Congress







1877-1900 Creating a Segregated Society

When Reconstruction came to an end in 1877, the majority of African Americans lived in the South. As white southerners regained control of state and local governments, they passed new laws to keep blacks and whites segregated and to condemn African Americans to an inferior, restricted, second-class citizenship. To resist the impact of these laws, African Americans created communities and institutions to sustain themselves and looked for ways to protest their treatment.



Give us our own land and we can take care of ourselves. But without land, de ole massas can hire us or starve us, as dey please.

CALL OF FORMER SLAVES TO BE GIVEN LAND

AFRICAN AMERICAN POPULATION STATISTICS OF 1870

- Total U.S. Population: 38,628,000
- African American Population: 4,886,000 (12.4%)
- 90% of African Americans lived in the south
- 82% lived in rural areas in 1890
- New Orleans was the city with the largest African American population
- Georgia was the state with largest African American population
- African American literacy rates: 8%

