





1970s

The decade of the 1970s was one of political firsts and cultural rebirth. It began with the activist fervor of the antiwar and minority rights movements. Affirmative Action bolstered enrollment at universities, while federal and city hiring provided black families with better job options. But as black mayors were elected, the debilitating impact of white flight kicked in. By the end of the decade, the African American middle class continued to expand, but others stayed trapped within cycles of poverty.



Black Panther Party
The Black Panther Party (BPP) was a revolutionary socialist organization that sought to combine the Black Liberation Movement with the New Left. It was founded in 1966 in Oakland, California, by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale. The BPP is best known for its Black Panther newspaper, its armed self-defense units, and its social programs, such as the Free Breakfast for Children Program, the Free People's Clinic, and the Free Black Community School. The BPP's radical approach to Black liberation and its emphasis on armed struggle led to its eventual decline and the imprisonment of its leaders.

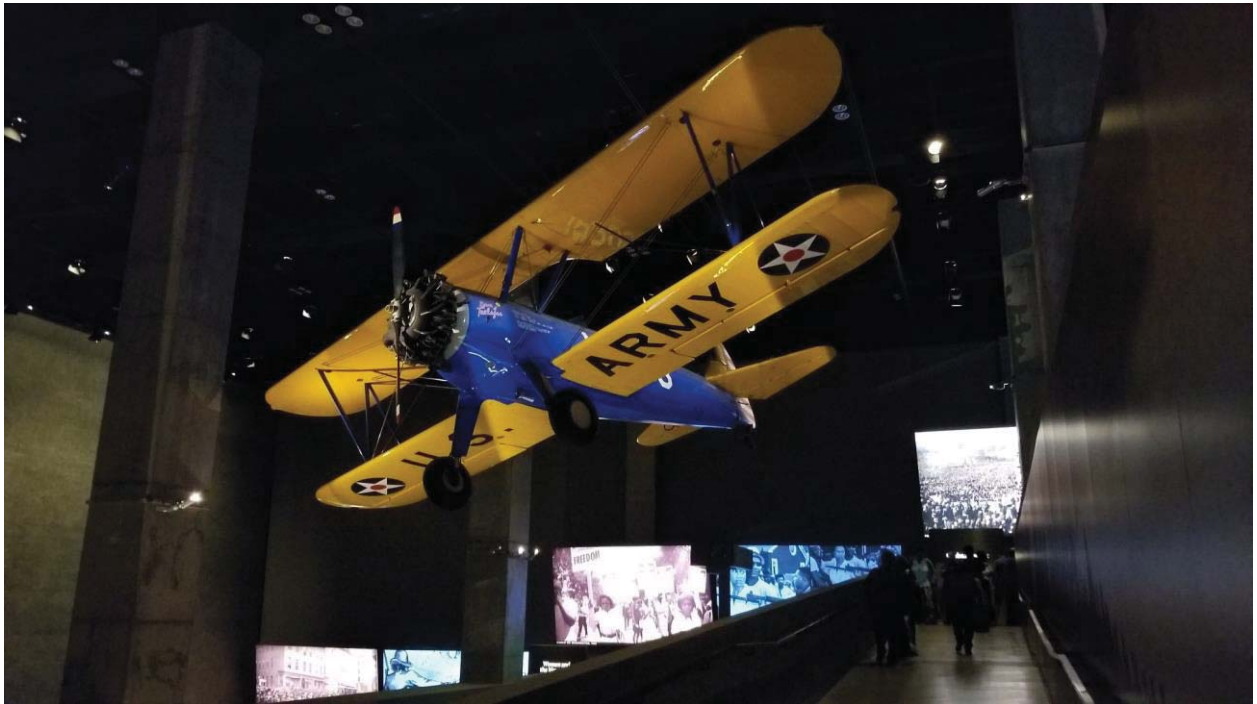
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*Change will not come if we wait for
some other person or . . . some other time.
We are the ones we've been waiting for.
We are the change that we seek.*

BARACK OBAMA

PEOPLE EVOLVE A LANGUAGE IN ORDER TO DESCRIBE
AND CONTROL THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES.

JAMES BALDWIN





*You tell me that hitler
Is a mighty bad man.
I guess he took lessons
from the ku klux klan . . .
Cause everything that hitler
And mussolini do,
Negroes get the same
Treatment from you . . .
I ask you this question
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BOTH HITLER-AND JIM CROW.*

LANGSTON HUGHES
"BEAUMONT TO DETROIT: 1943"

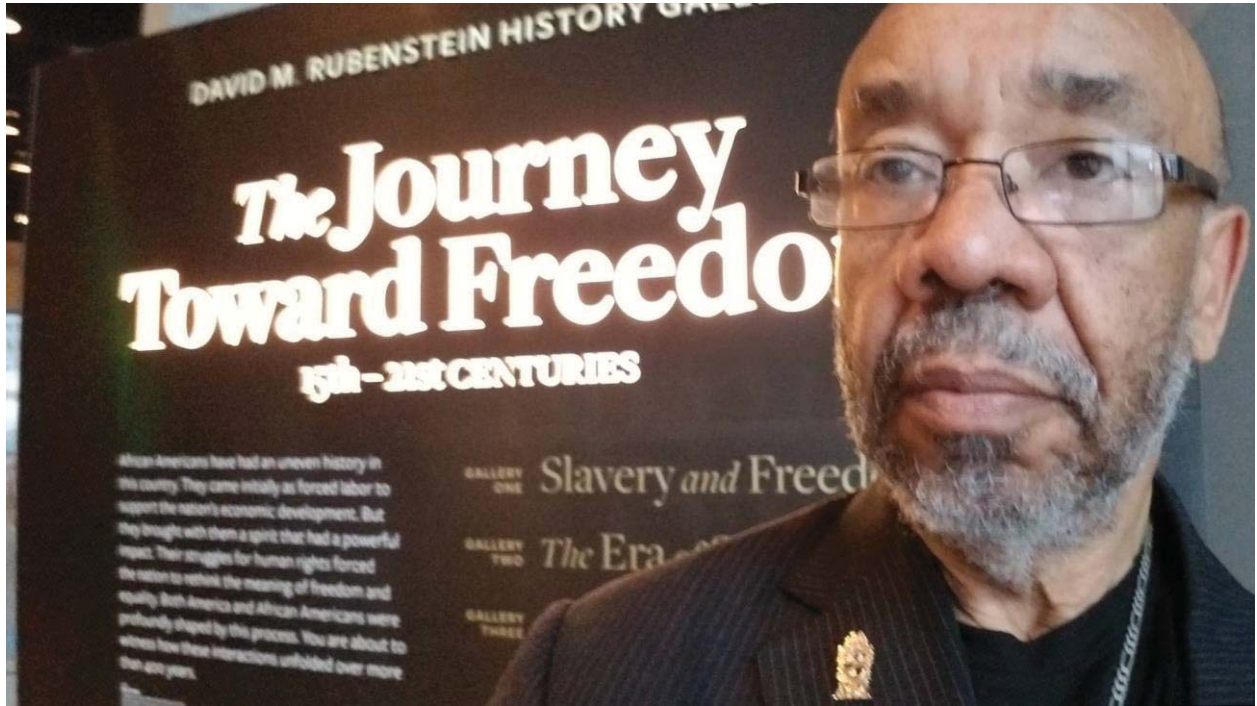
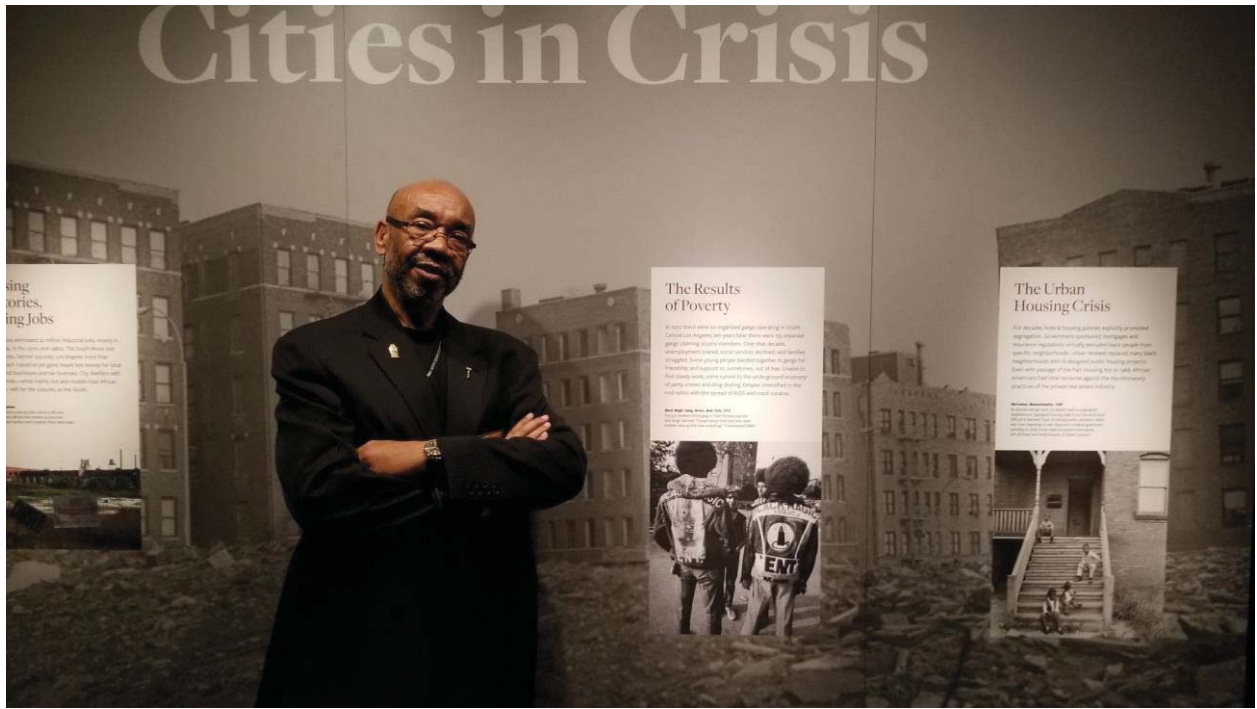
The Atlantic Creoles

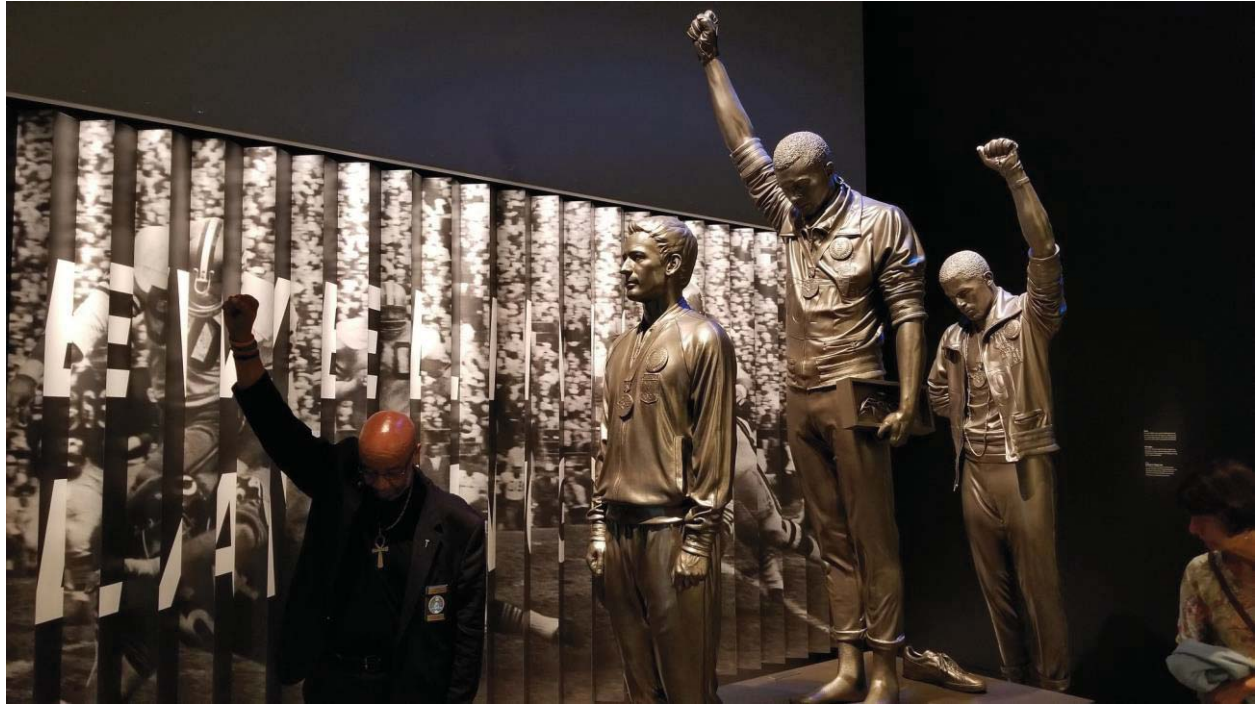
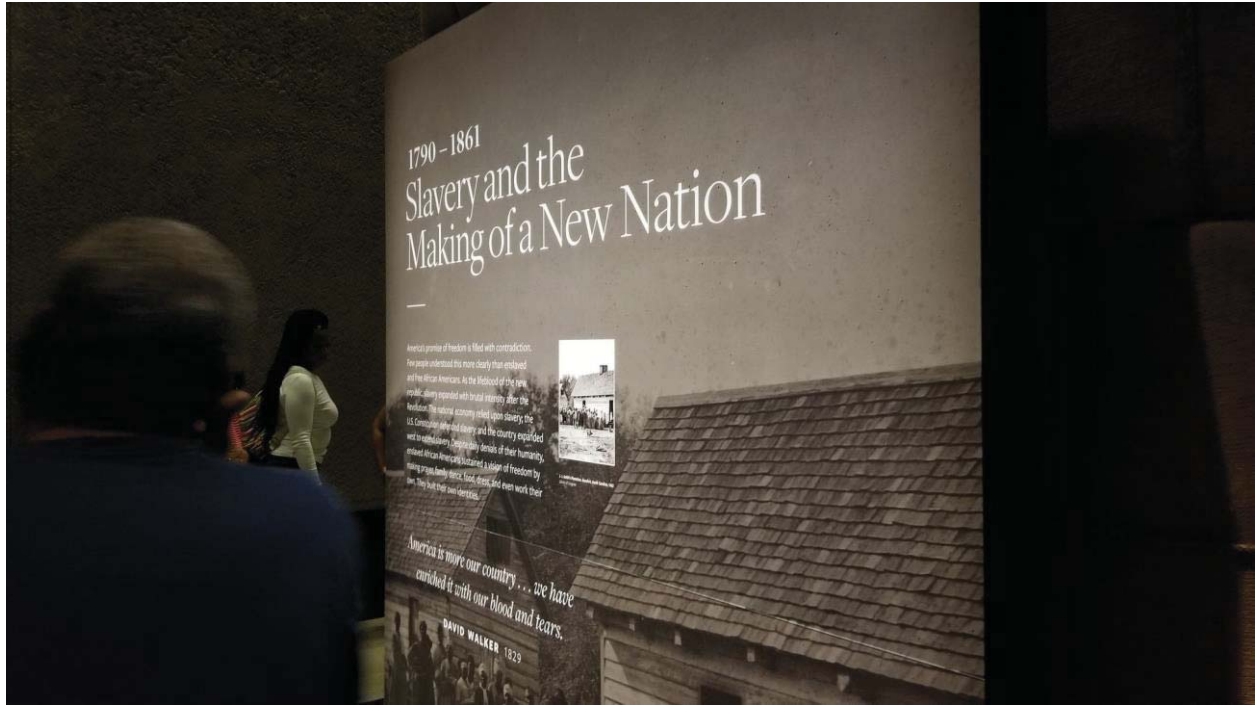
Atlantic Creoles were people of African descent who moved easily between cultures and across landscapes. Often born in port cities, they were multilingual and familiar with international trade. They served as liaisons, interpreters, diplomats, and missionaries. As cultural mediators, they effectively navigated all sides of the Atlantic world and helped it come into being. This fluidity demonstrates that status was not yet firmly tied to ideas of race during this early period.





GENERAL ANDREW JACKSON
AND HENRY CLAY
SPOKE FROM THIS SLAVE BLOCK
IN NAGERSTOWN
DURING THE YEAR 1800





ORGANIZATIONS




EDUCATION

GE GALLERY

MAKING A WAY OUT OF NO WAY

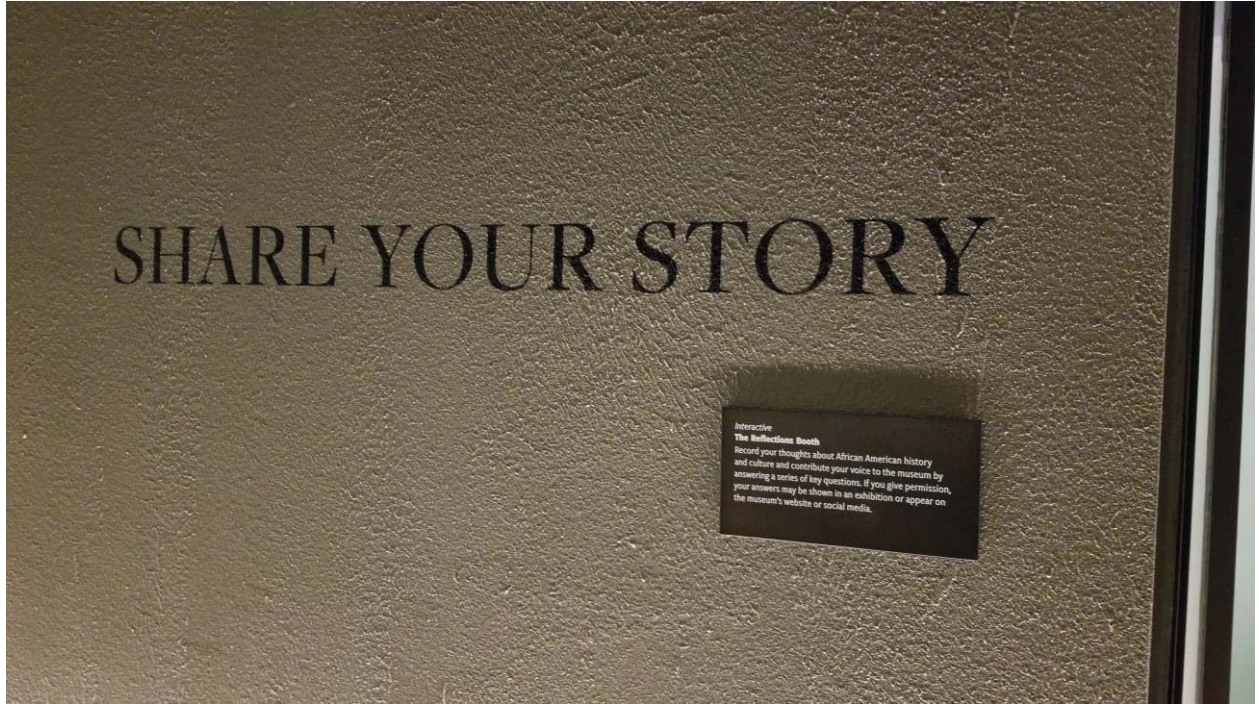
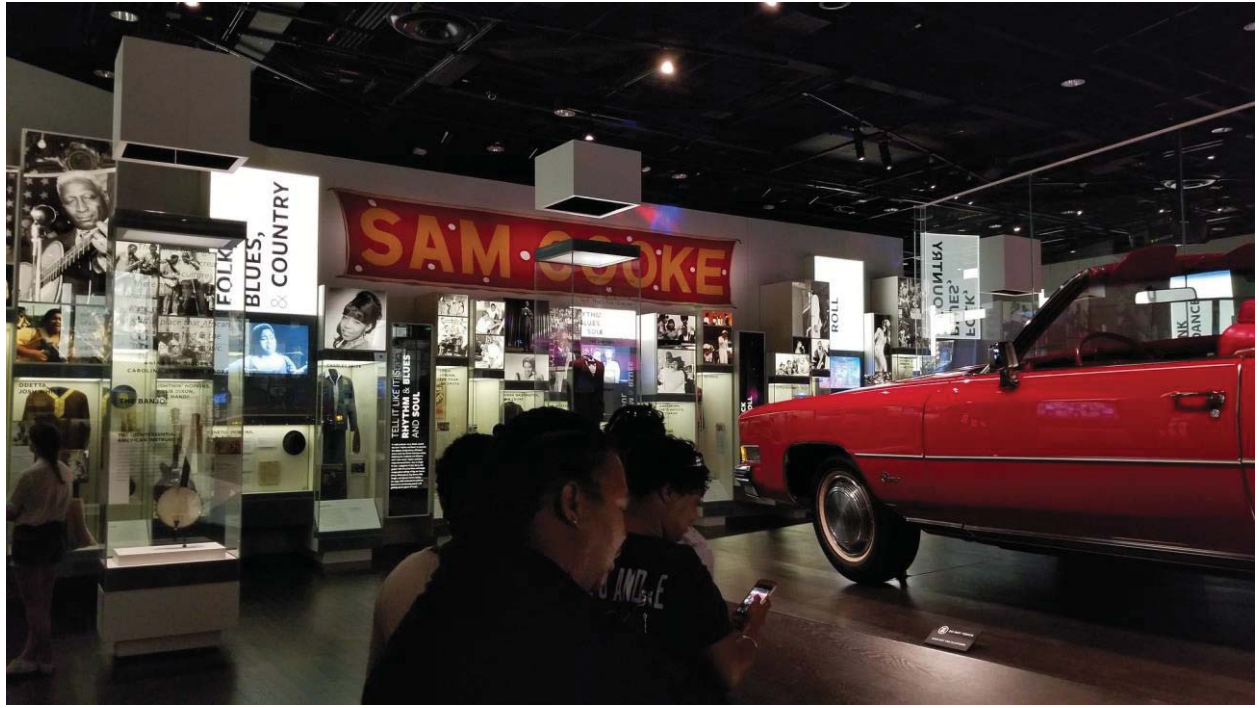
How did Black and white Americans work collectively to overcome the threat of racial oppression? Through the creation of churches, businesses, the press, and voluntary associations, Black men and women created ways to serve and strengthen their communities. They established networks of mutual support, cultivated leadership, and improved social and economic opportunities. They also developed a tradition of activism that paved the way for broader social change.

THE VALUE OF EDUCATION



Education provided a key, if limited, means of escape from the economic and social conditions of the early 20th century. It offered a path to a better life, and it was a way to gain the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in a rapidly changing world. For many, education was the only way to improve their lives and the lives of their children. It was a way to gain the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in a rapidly changing world. For many, education was the only way to improve their lives and the lives of their children.





AMERICA CAN BE CHANGED. IT WILL BE CHANGED.

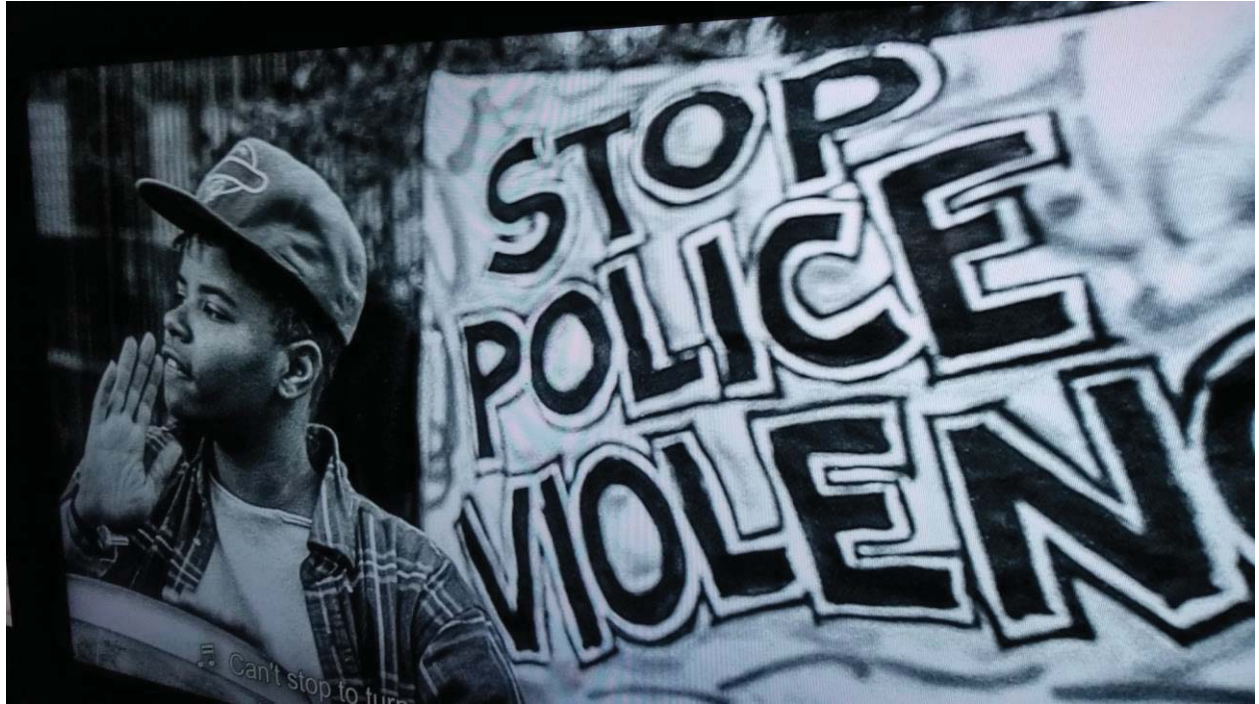


MARY McLEOD BETHUNE & THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NEGRO WOMEN

Renowned educator and reformer Mary McLeod Bethune dedicated her life to organizing and empowering black women to work for equality. In 1925 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





000s

Hurricane Katrina and subsequent flooding of New Orleans and the surrounding areas in 2005, a crippling recession undercut the majority of poor and middle-class families. Home foreclosures hit black Americans the hardest. The appeal of the country as a land of opportunity continued to attract an influx of black immigrants. And the decade closed with the election of the first African American president.




2000
The year 2000 was a pivotal moment in American history. It was the first time in the country's history that the presidential election was decided by the Supreme Court. The election of George W. Bush as the 43rd president of the United States marked the beginning of a new era in American politics. The year also saw the start of the War on Terror following the September 11 attacks. The economy was in a recession, and the country was facing a series of natural disasters, including Hurricane Katrina in 2005.






Community Building


To shield their families from the unfairness of segregation, African Americans created communities that served their social, political, and religious needs. The activities and organizations they created—from fraternal groups to literary clubs—provided them the opportunity to interact with one another and hold positions denied to them otherwise. Building communities together, they also developed the skills in oratory, organization, and leadership that ultimately served them so well in demanding their rights as citizens.



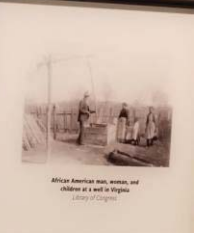
Three African American boys in Apalachicola, Florida
State Archives of Florida




African American men, women, and children at a well in Virginia
Library of Congress



Sisters of the Holy Family
Library of Congress

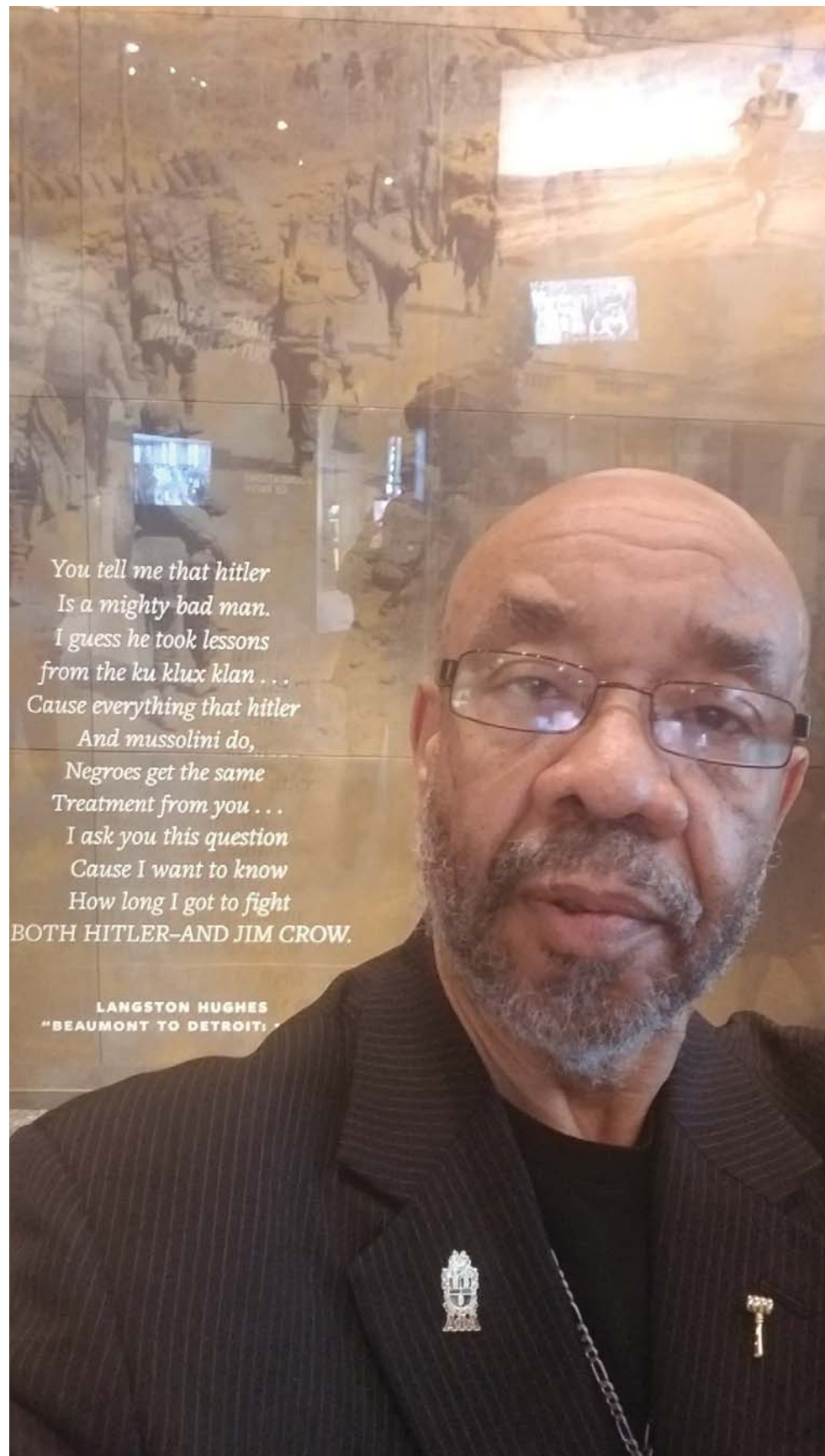


African American man, woman, and children at a well in Virginia
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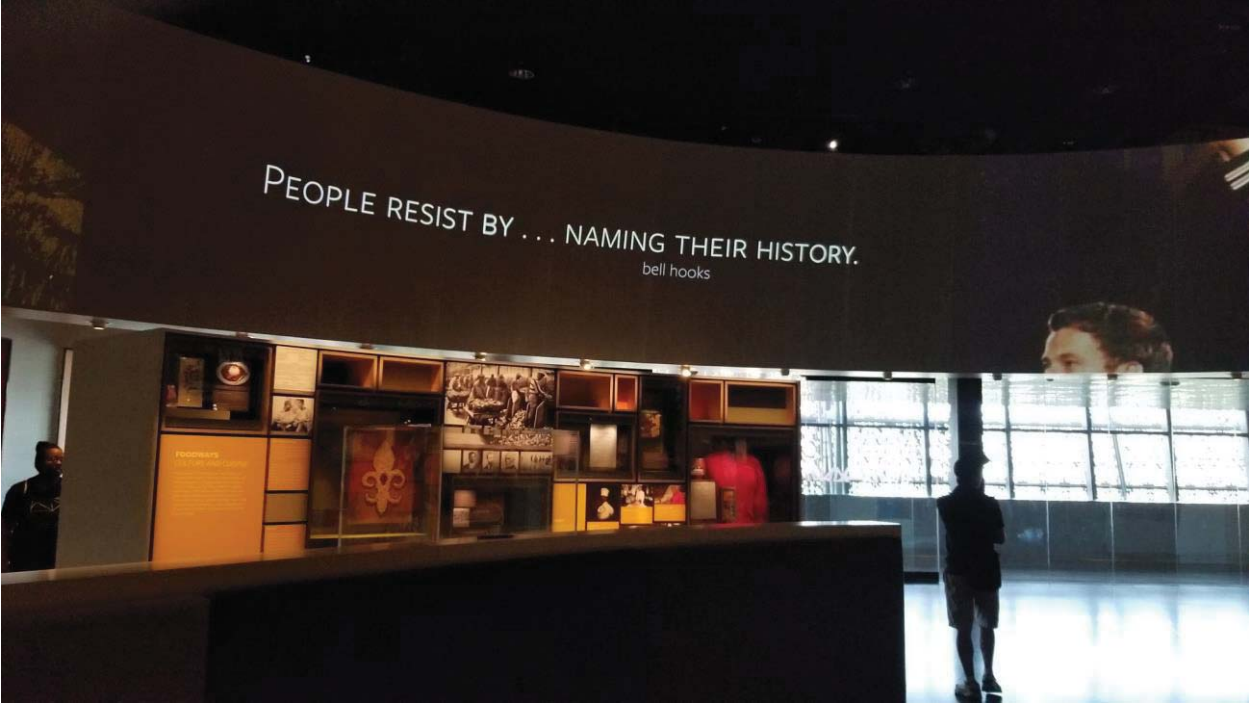




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BOTH HITLER-AND JIM CROW.*

LANGSTON HUGHES
"BEAUMONT TO DETROIT."





...and become, whether I
liked it or not, a symbol,
representing my people.

MARIAN ANDERSON

Music is your own
experience, your own
thoughts, your own

MARIAN ANDERSON



Marian Anderson, 1936. Marian Anderson held her performance from the Foye of Joplin (Dorothy Duke Center, University of Pennsylvania).

MARIAN ANDERSON

One of the great voices of the 20th century, Marian Anderson (1897-1993) captivated audiences worldwide. As a young singer, Anderson (1897-1993) studied with private voice coaches and performed at schools, churches, and concert venues across the country. Later she studied in Europe and inspired audiences there before her talents were recognized at home. In a career that spanned almost 60 years, Anderson raised the bar for musical training, dedication, and courage and opened doors that artists continue to walk through today.

Marian Anderson's Ensemble. Marian Anderson wore this shimmering silk jacket and black skirt at her concert at the Lincoln Memorial in 1955. The jacket was redesigned in 1962, just 10 years before the release of the film *Marian Anderson*.

Marian Anderson's Diary, 1952. Marian Anderson was in Philadelphia from August and September of 1952, and the personal account about her experiences, one of the items of her collection.



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MARY McLEOD BETHUNE A FORCE FOR CHANGE





A Guard Tower

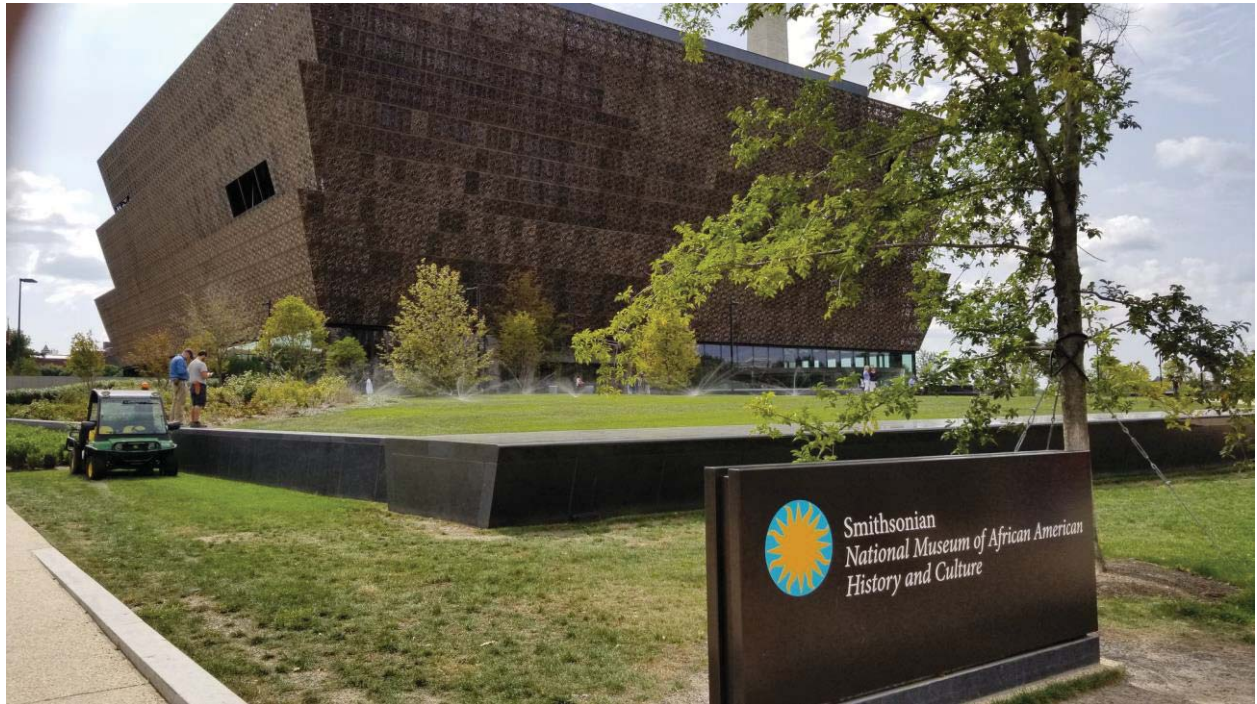
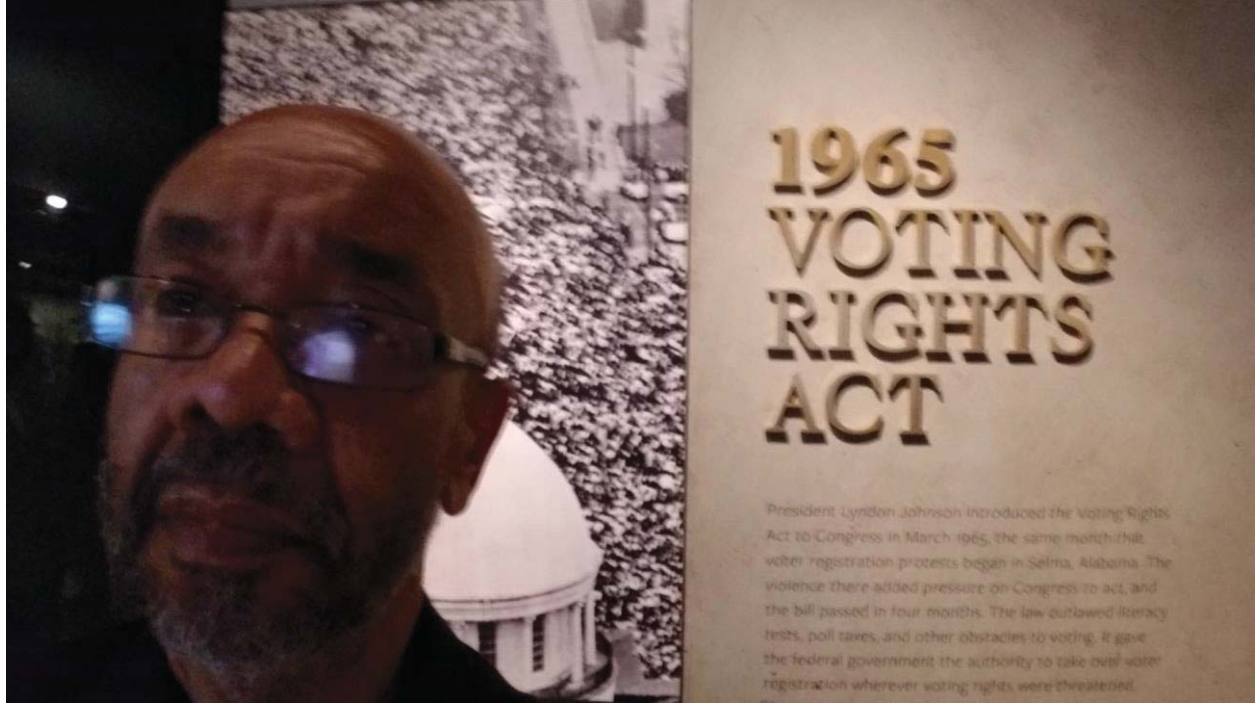
Today's Louisiana State Penitentiary originated on a plantation in Angola, Louisiana. The prison cells were located on the old slave quarters. The private owner leased the prisoners' labor for a profit, and the inmates mainly worked on levee construction along the Mississippi River. The state took it over in 1901. In the 1960s Angola was referred to as "the bloodiest prison in the South" because of the number of inmate assaults. Prison reforms have improved conditions in the years since.

Guard Tower from Angola Prison

Inmates at Angola are kept under regular surveillance. Towers like this one built in the 1930s or 1940s were in place to keep an eye on prisoners and prevent escapes. From its elevated platform—21 feet high—guards watched over Camp H at Angola. Gift of the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections and Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola

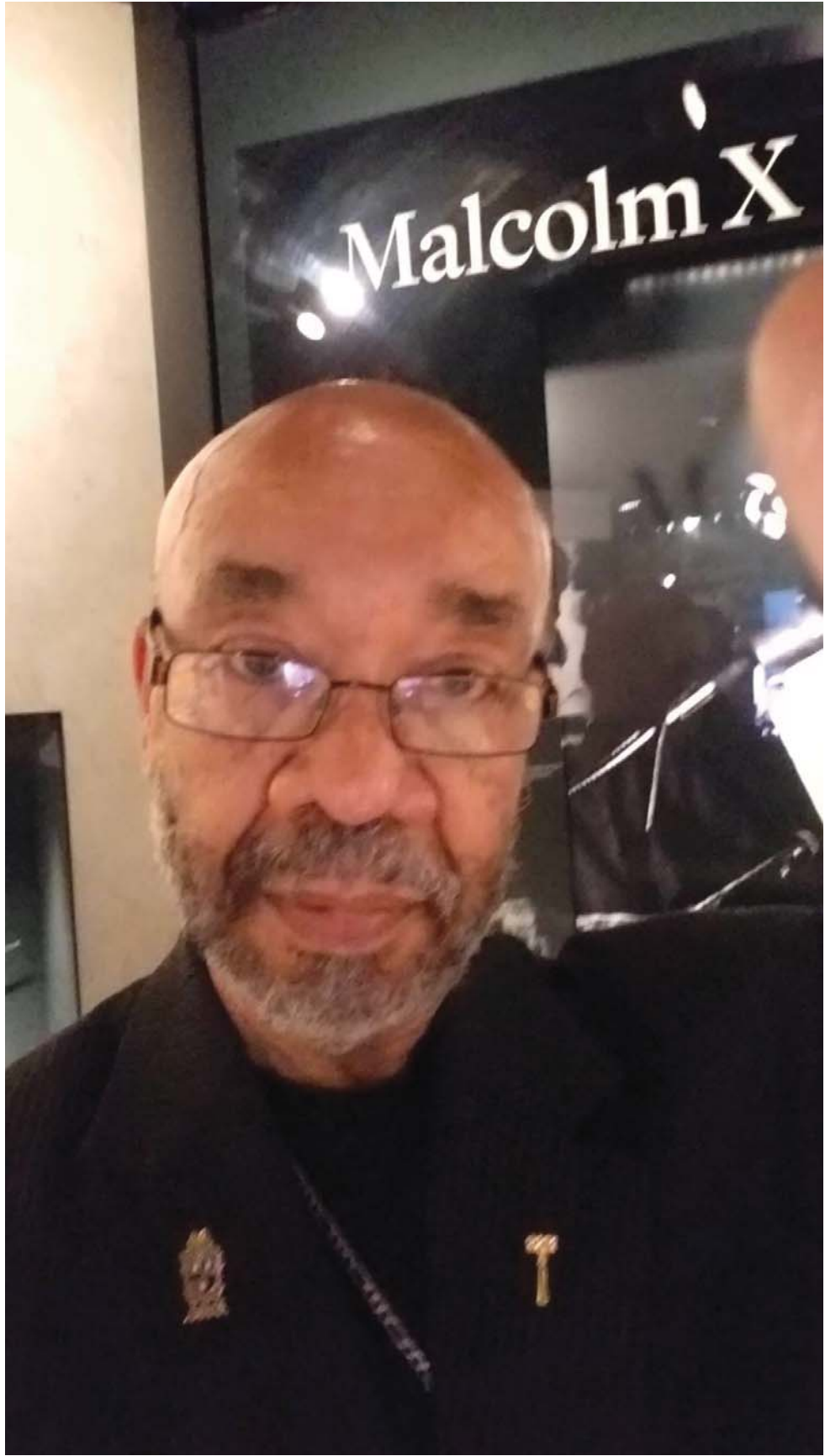
Background: A guard tower on the grounds of Angola prison in Louisiana
Louisiana State Penitentiary

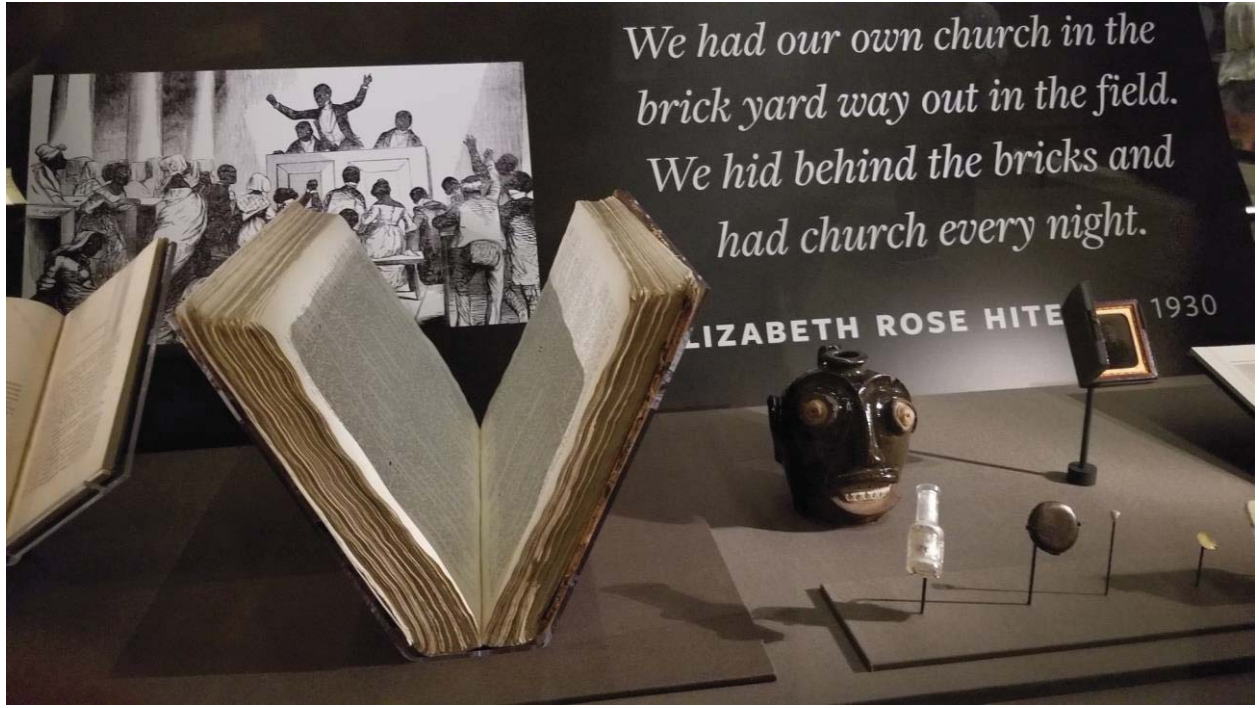
Photography by Stephanie L. Perreault

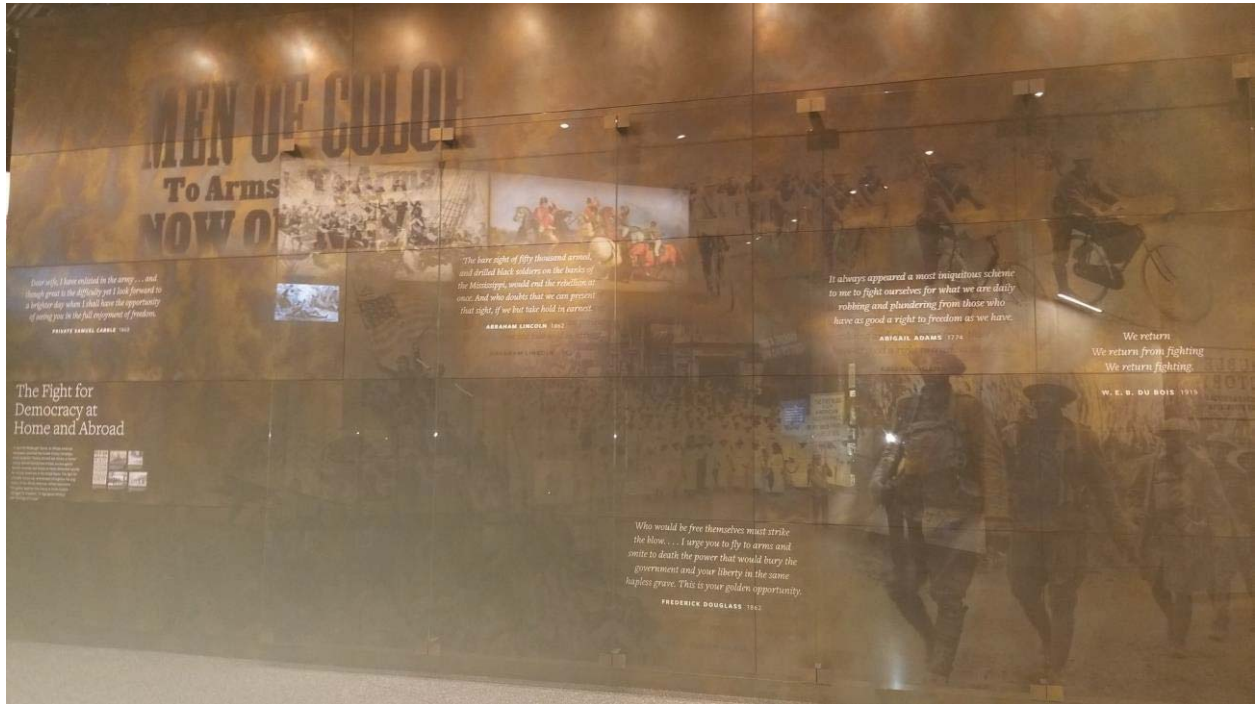
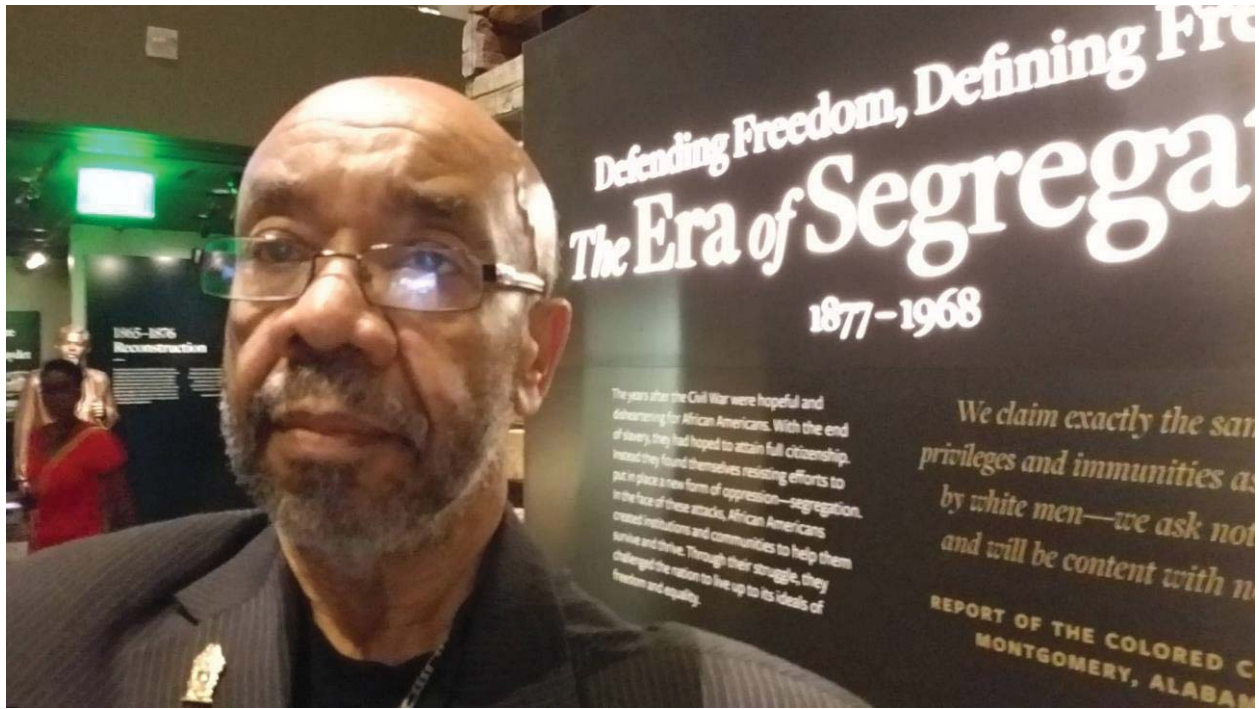
















I SHOOK UP THE WORLD!

MAILED OUT



MUHAMMAD ALI AS ACTIVIST

Muhammad Ali (b. 1942) was one of boxing's greatest champions. But his legacy transcends the world of sport. In the 1960s and 1970s, he offered unswerving critiques of racism, heightened the profile of the Nation of Islam, and raised awareness of the Vietnam War. After his boxing career, Ali continued to work globally as a force for change, exploiting his success in the ring and triumphing as a humanitarian.

SHELLEY CHISHOLM: SHAKING UP THE SYSTEM

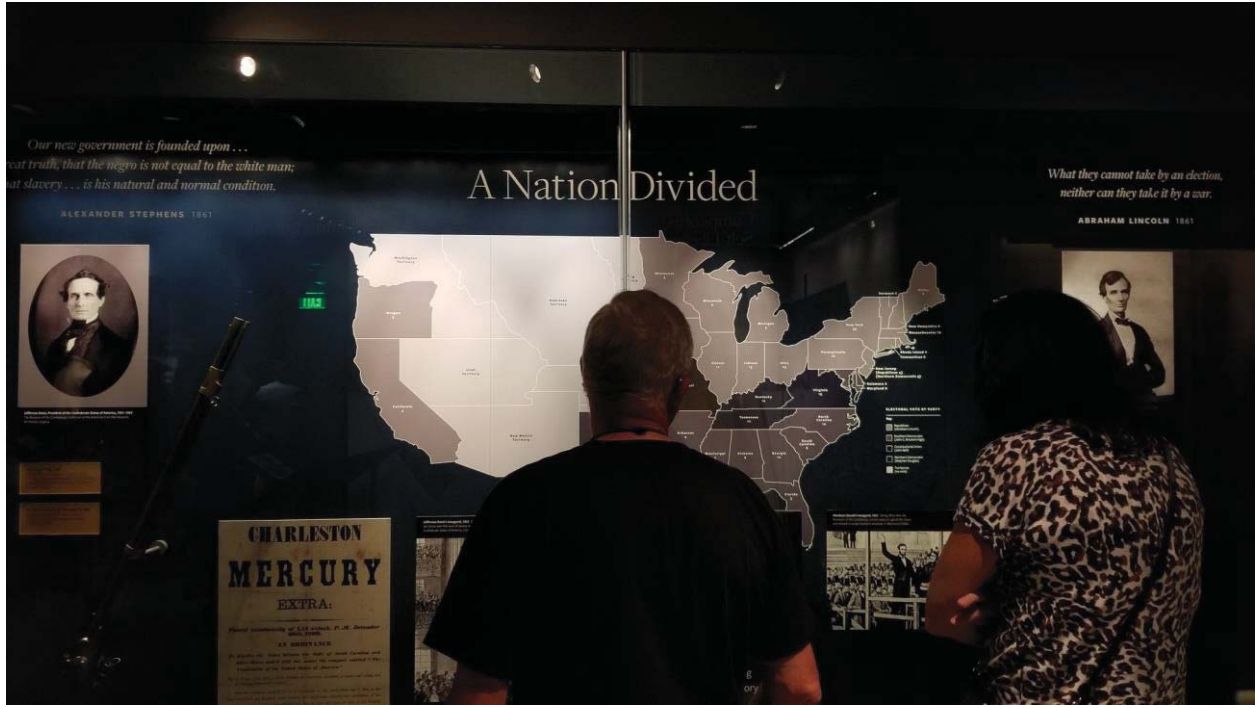
Shelley Chisholm, a former member of the House of Representatives, was a vocal critic of the system. She was a member of the House of Representatives from 2003 to 2007. She was a vocal critic of the system. She was a member of the House of Representatives from 2003 to 2007. She was a vocal critic of the system.

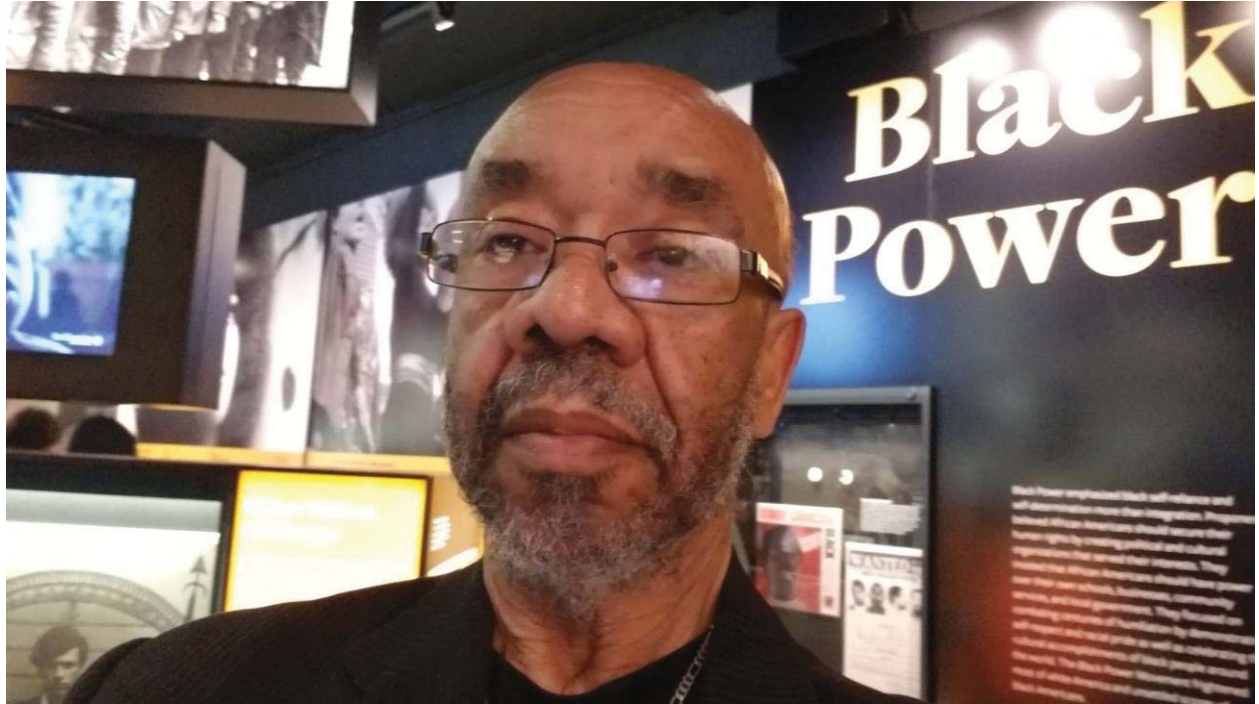
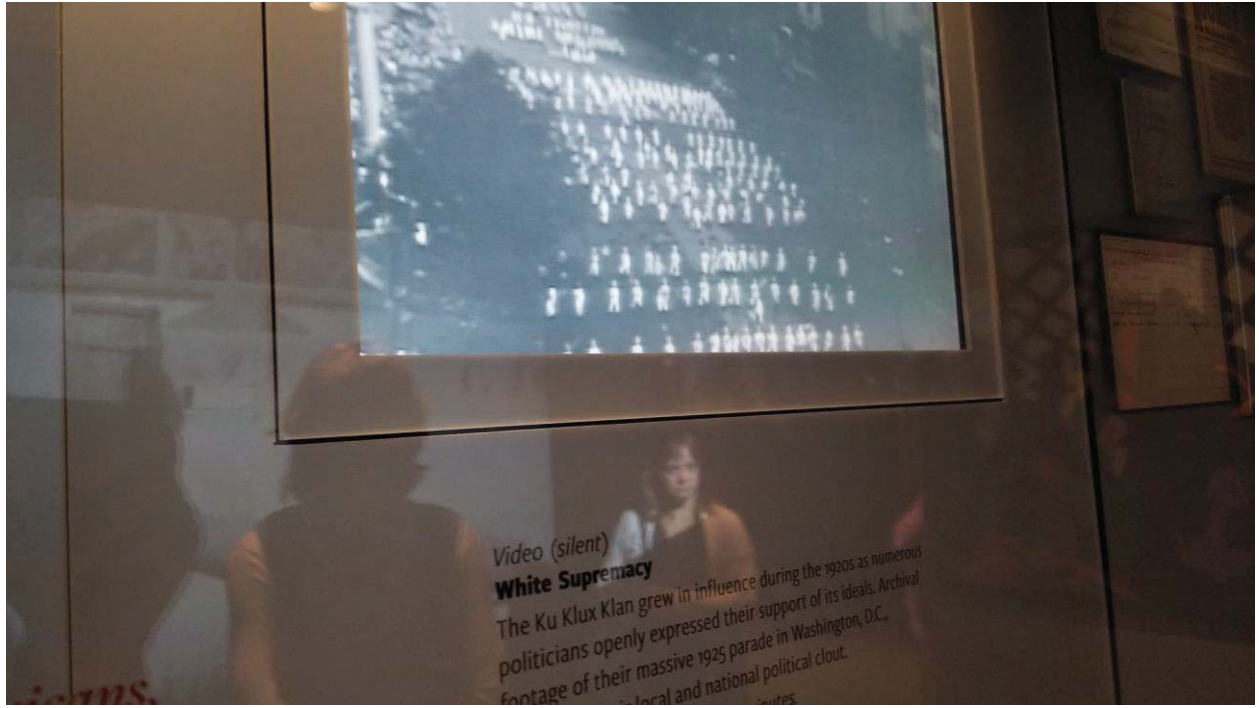


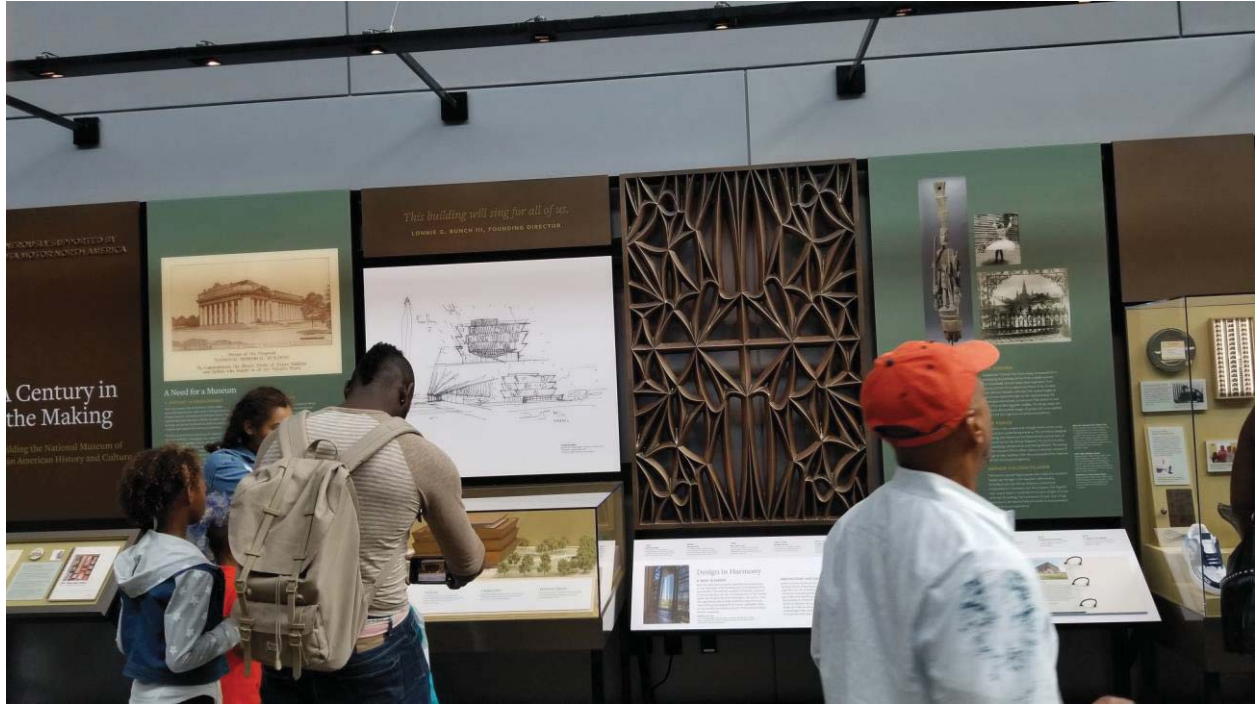
Look there above the center, where the flag is waving.
We are going out of slavery, we are bound for freedom.
We mean to show Jeff Davis how the Africans can

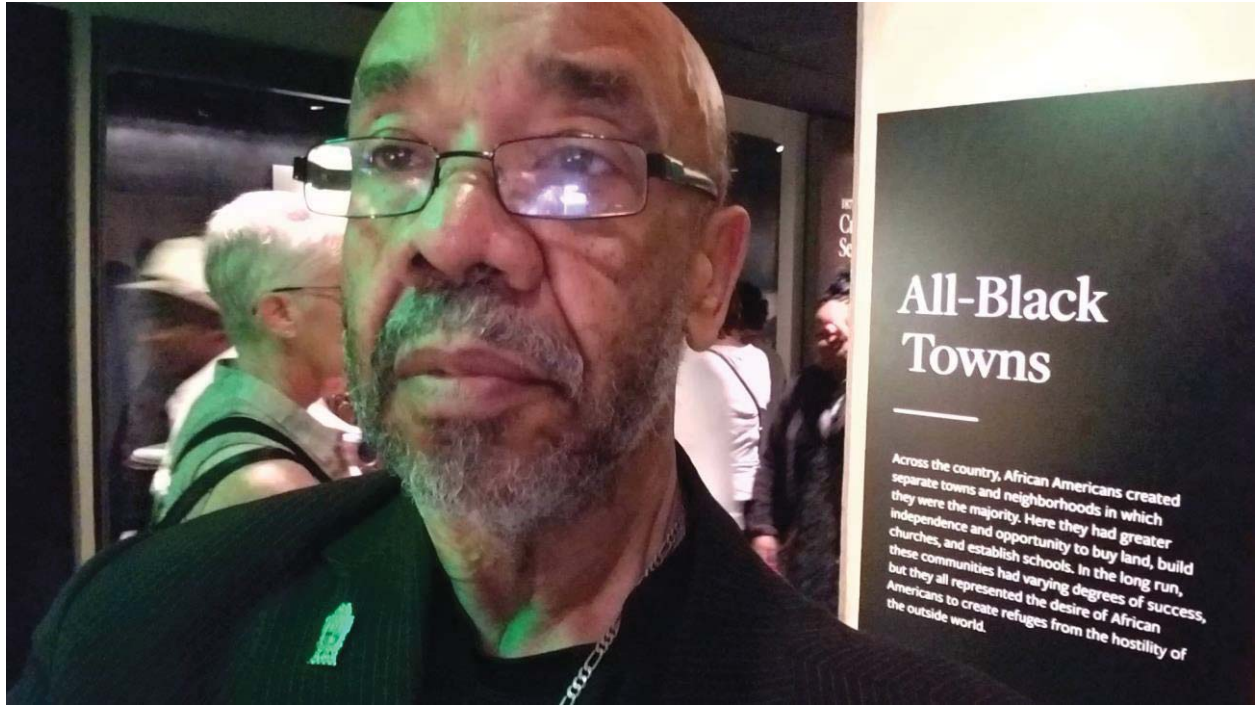
SOJOURNER TRUTH 1864

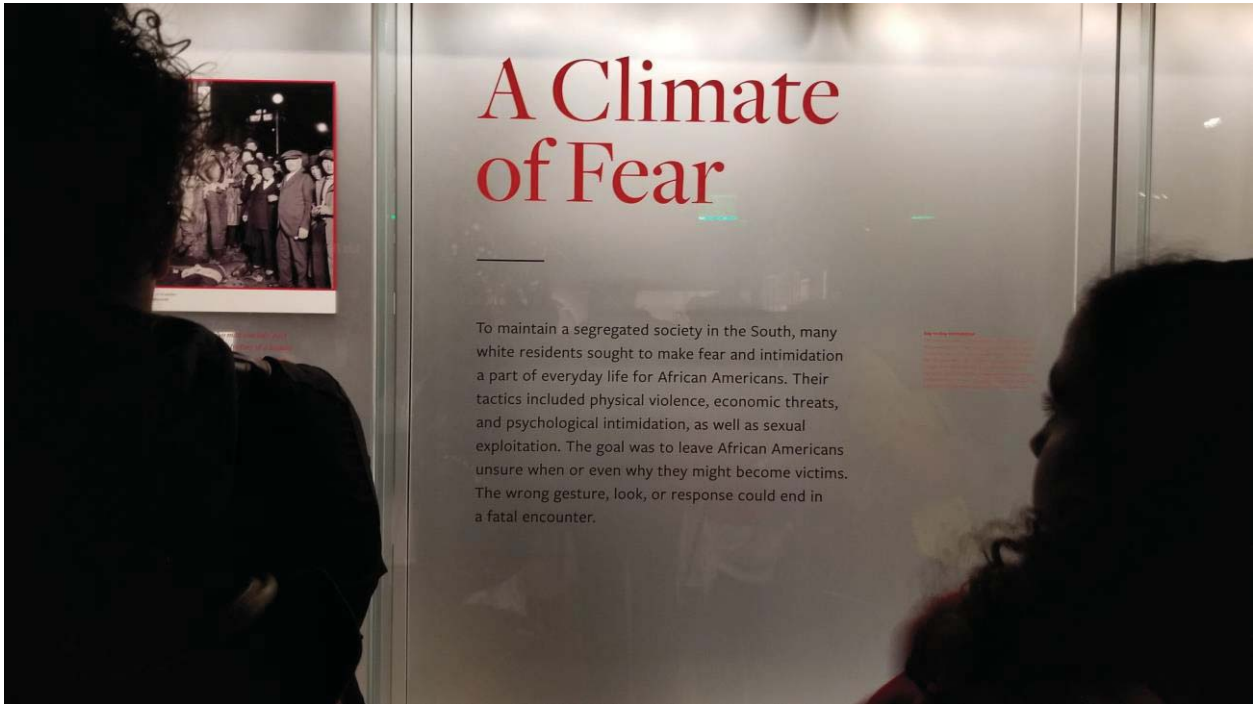


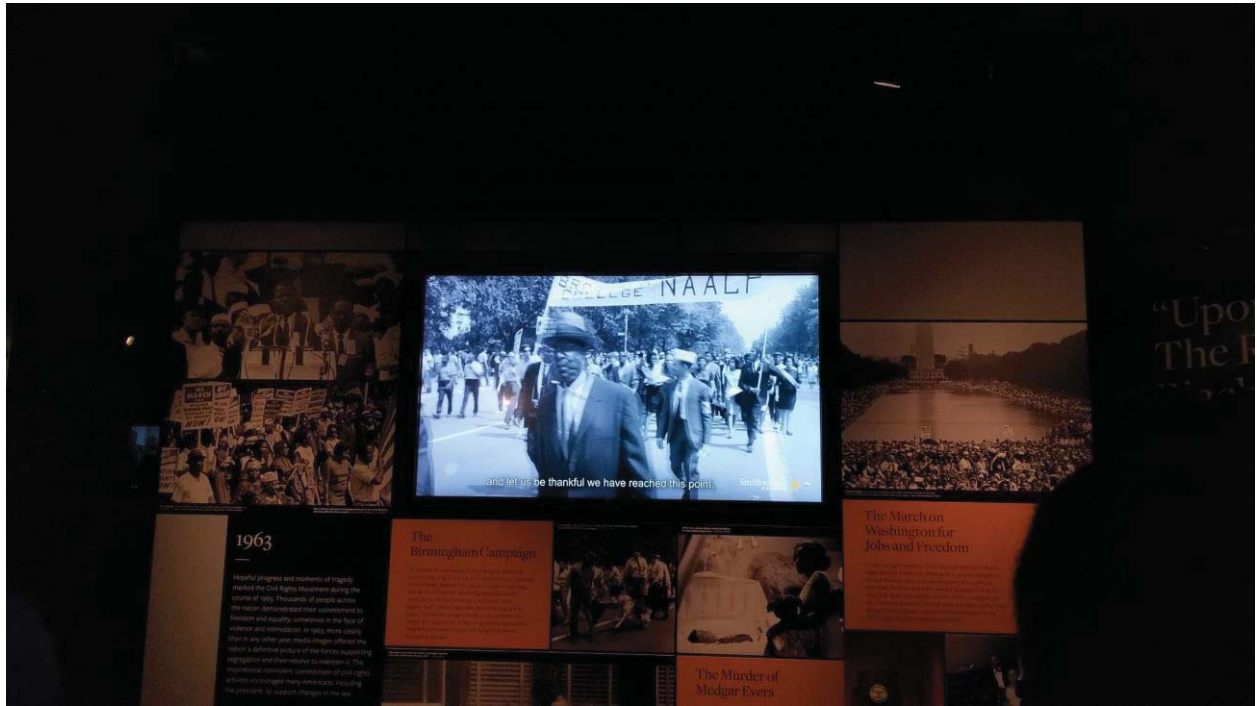




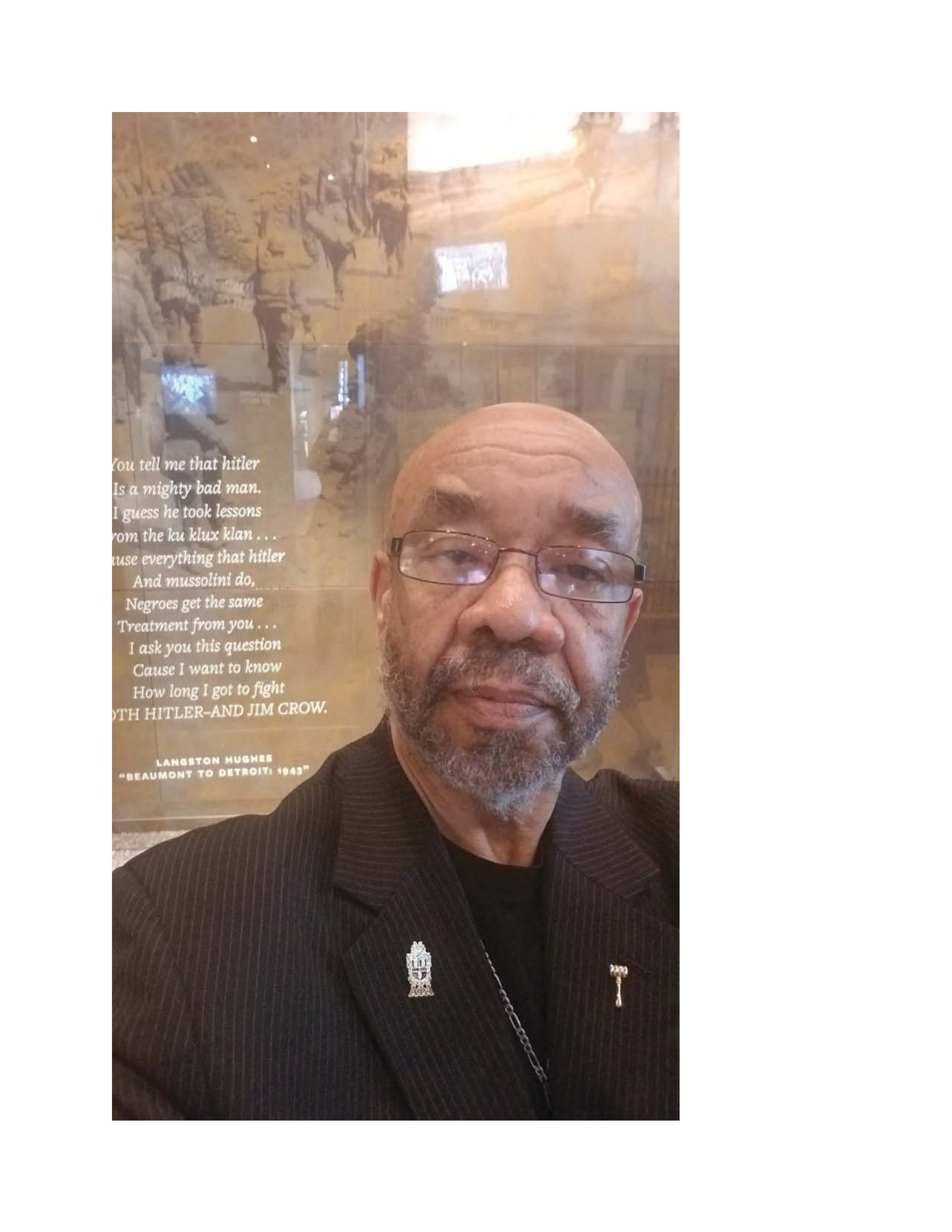






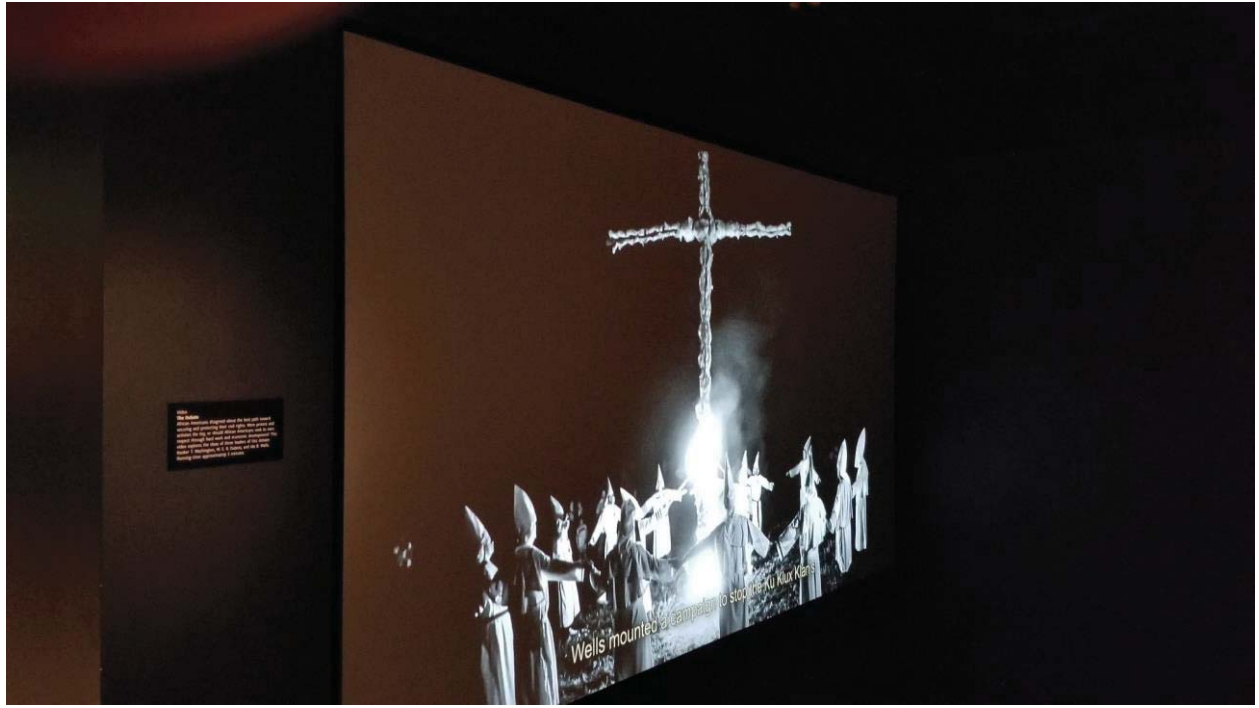






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LANGSTON HUGHES
"BEAUMONT TO DETROIT: 1943"



Wells
 In 1891, a white supremacist group called the "United Klans of America" was founded in Stone Mountain, Georgia. The group's members wore white robes and hoods, and they used violence to terrorize African Americans. In 1892, the group's first national convention was held in Stone Mountain, Georgia. The group's members were known as the "Ku Klux Klan" and they were active in the South and Midwest. In 1915, the group was reorganized and renamed the "United Klans of America, Invisible Empire, 1865." The group's members were known as the "Ku Klux Klan" and they were active in the South and Midwest. In 1925, the group's membership reached its peak at over 4 million members. The group's members were known as the "Ku Klux Klan" and they were active in the South and Midwest. In 1944, the group was declared a hate group by the United States government. The group's members were known as the "Ku Klux Klan" and they were active in the South and Midwest. In 1964, the group's membership was estimated to be around 1 million members. The group's members were known as the "Ku Klux Klan" and they were active in the South and Midwest. In 1978, the group's membership was estimated to be around 1 million members. The group's members were known as the "Ku Klux Klan" and they were active in the South and Midwest. In 1995, the group's membership was estimated to be around 1 million members. The group's members were known as the "Ku Klux Klan" and they were active in the South and Midwest. In 2000, the group's membership was estimated to be around 1 million members. The group's members were known as the "Ku Klux Klan" and they were active in the South and Midwest. In 2010, the group's membership was estimated to be around 1 million members. The group's members were known as the "Ku Klux Klan" and they were active in the South and Midwest. In 2015, the group's membership was estimated to be around 1 million members. The group's members were known as the "Ku Klux Klan" and they were active in the South and Midwest. In 2020, the group's membership was estimated to be around 1 million members. The group's members were known as the "Ku Klux Klan" and they were active in the South and Midwest.

Wells mounted a vigil to stop the Ku Klux Klan

Global Impact

What does it mean to be black in America today? How does racial identification intersect with other forms of belonging? Does race still matter? African Americans are leaving and shaping global communities that will define this century. With the census finding each generation of Americans more multiracial than the last, and immigration bringing greater ethnic diversity to black populations in the United States, notions of identity and community will

If the problem of the twentieth century was, in W. E. B. Du Bois's famous words, "the problem of the color line," then the problem of the twenty-first century is the problem of colorblindness, the refusal to acknowledge the causes and consequences of colorism.

EXIT

PF

where you lived, who you named





A Guard Tower

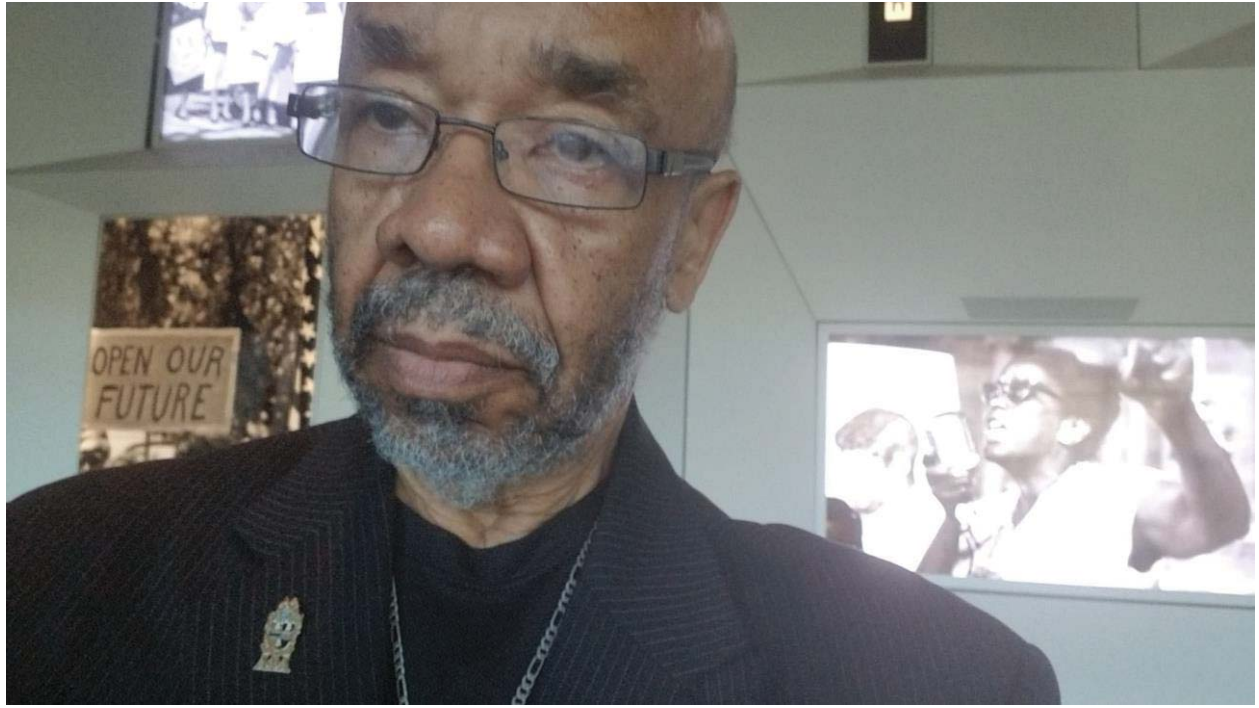
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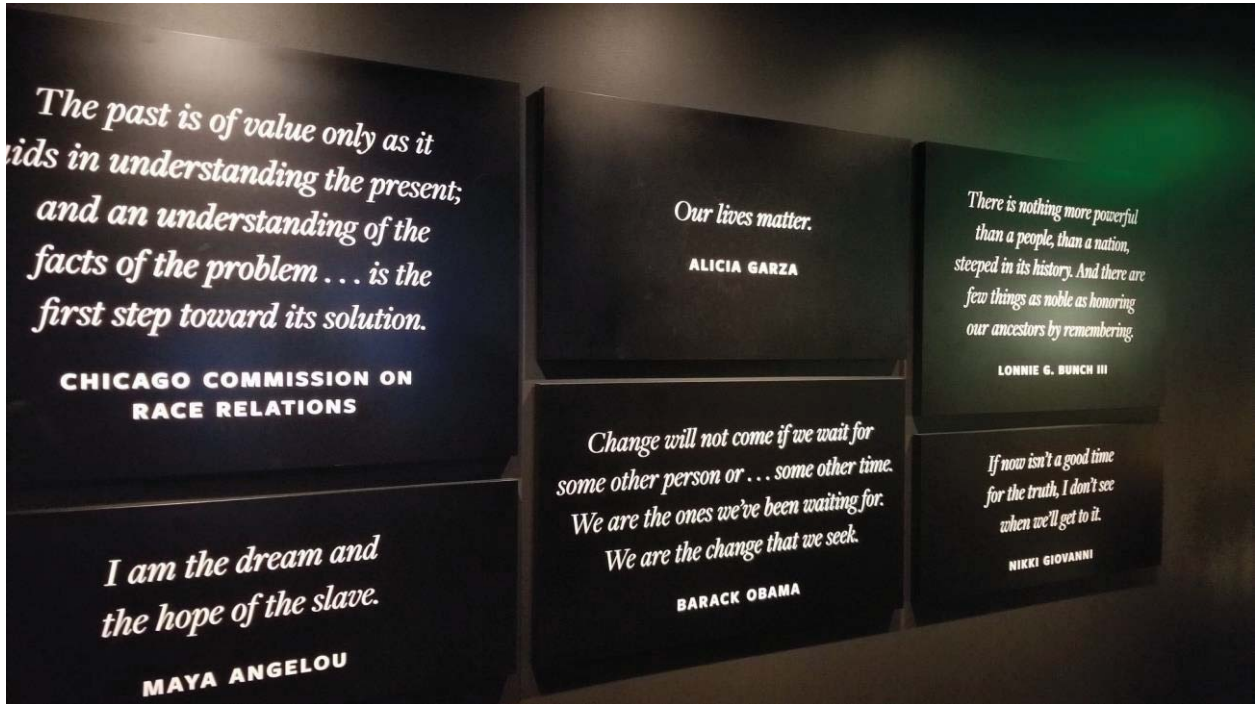
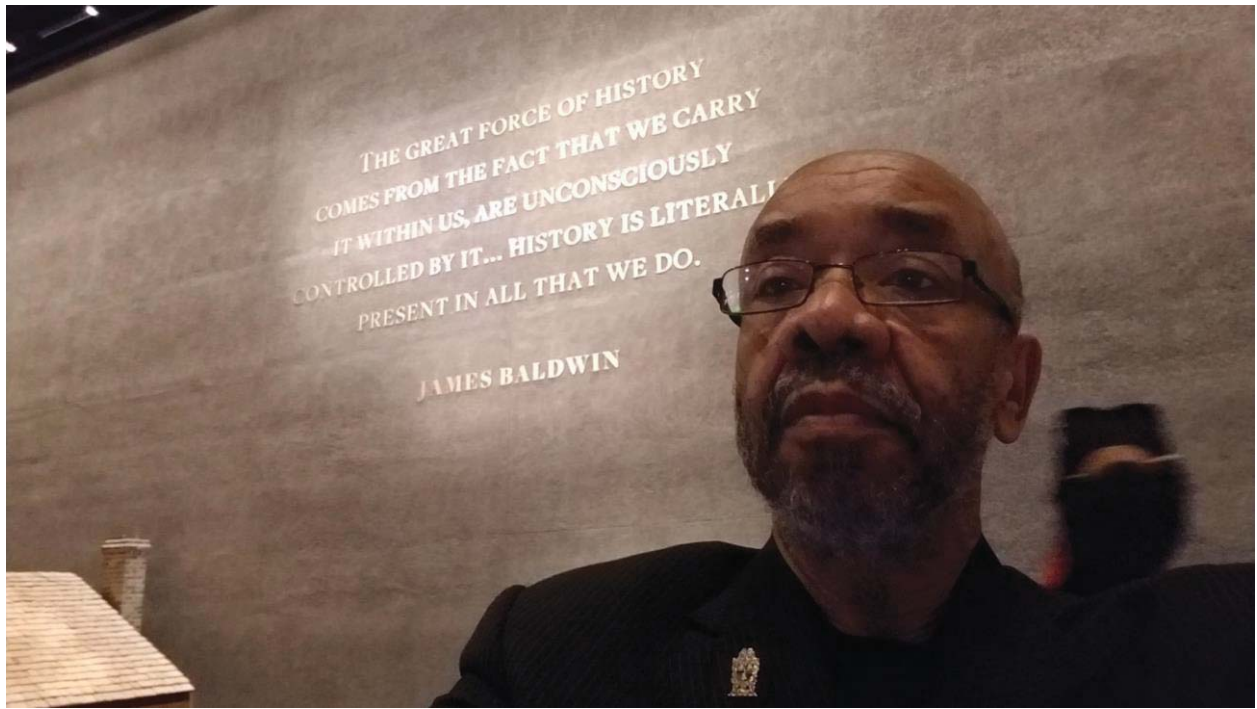
Guard Tower from Angola Prison

Inmates at Angola are kept under regular surveillance. Towers like this one built in the 1930s or 1940s were in place to keep an eye on prisoners and prevent escapes. From its elevated platform—21 feet high—guards watched over Camp H at Angola. Gift of the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections and Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola

Background: A guard tower on the grounds of Angola prison in Louisiana
Louisiana State Penitentiary

Photography by Stephanie L. Bernick







at Home

Daily Tribune
AD, THEN WANE
PLAN REFERENDUM
 ONE DEATH IN 14 HOURS PUTS TOTAL AT 26
 Suppress Disease Over Hospital After Health
 London Asks Citizens to Aid by Caut...

...s and whites lasted more than 500 injured. All rights reserved.
mmer

1919, more than 25 cities
 outbursts of racial violence.
 in Chicago, Washington, D.C.,
 tion for jobs and housing, as
 e growing assertiveness of
 disturbances.

*We were all proud to be Americans.
 proud to be black, and proud to
 be in the 15th New York Infantry.*
 MELVILLE MILLER

White Supremacy
 The Ku Klux Klan grew in influence during the 1920s as northern politicians openly expressed their support for it. Much of the footage of their marches was produced in Washington, D.C., illustrating their basic and original political goal. Running over approximately 3 minutes.

The Second Rise of the KKK

1917-1945 The New Negro Steps Forward

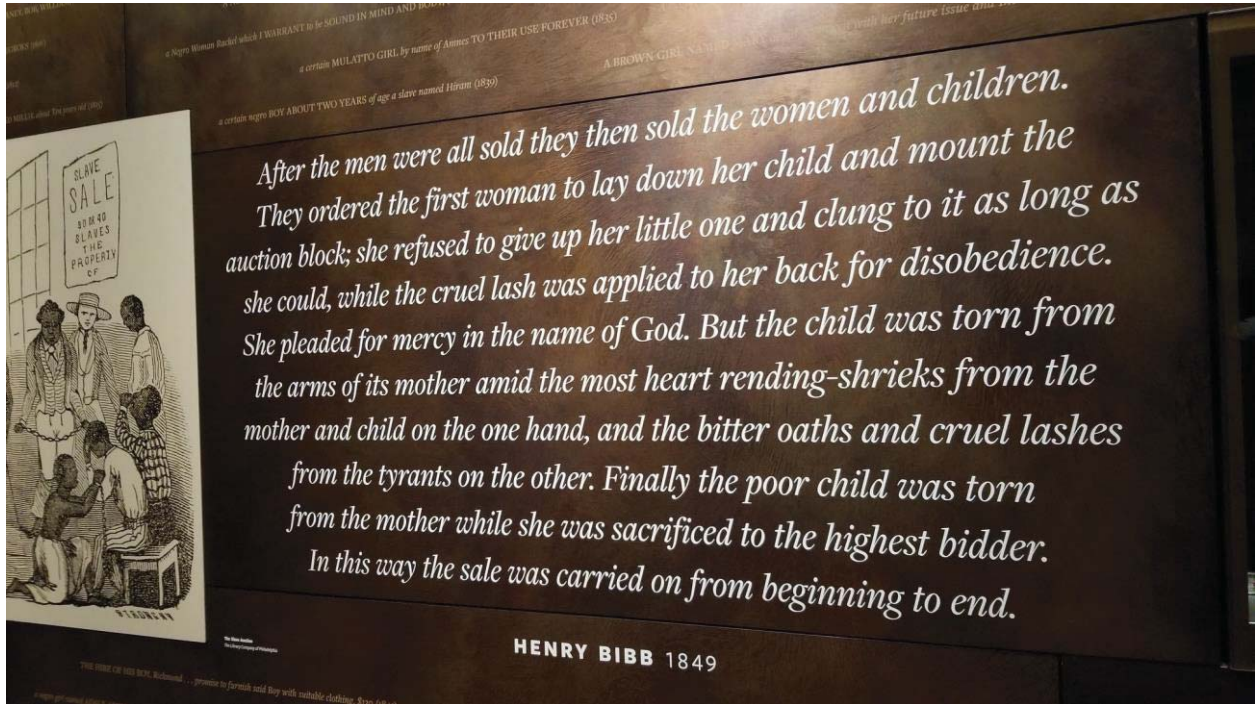
The experiences of World War I, at home and abroad, changed the attitudes of a generation of African Americans. They were less willing to retreat in the face of discriminatory treatment. They felt greater pride in their African heritage and grew more strident in their resistance to attacks on their civil rights. This new attitude was evident in their music, literature, and other cultural expressions as well as in their political and social activism.

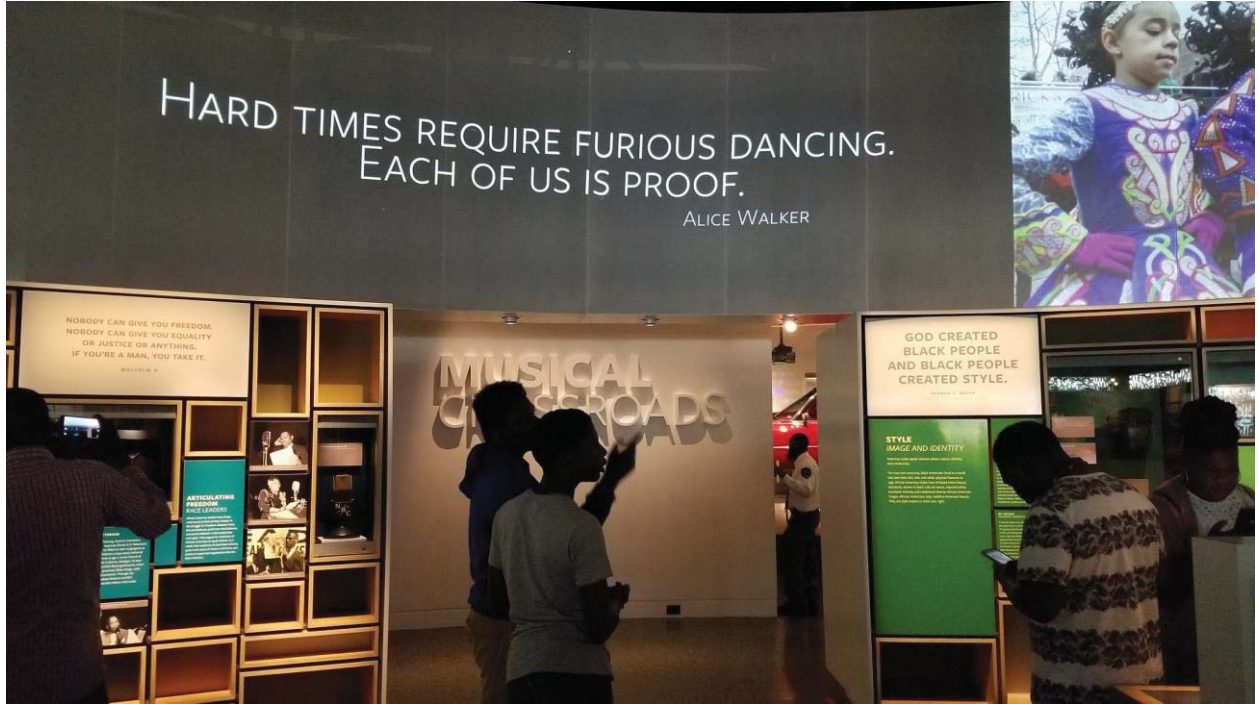
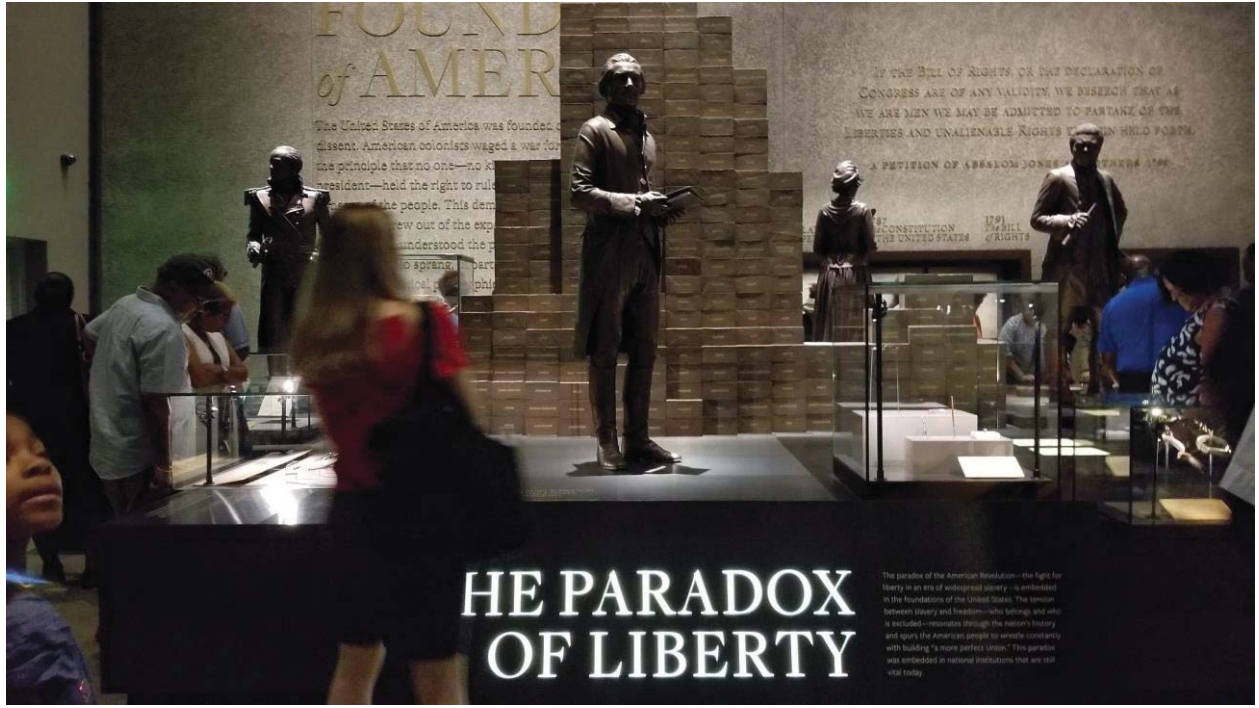
This deep feeling of race is at present the mainspring of Negro life... an attempt, fairly successful on the whole, to convert a defensive into an offensive position, a handicap into an incentive.
 ALAIN LOCKE 1925

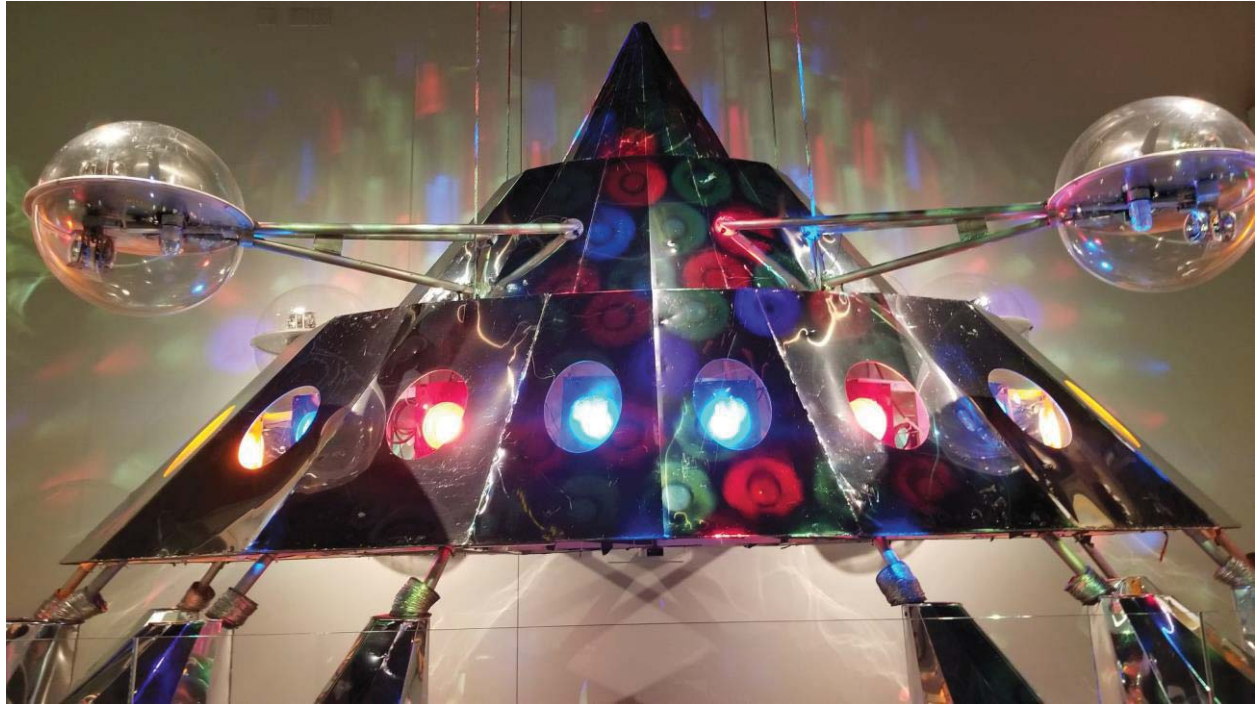
AFRICAN AMERICAN POPULATION STATISTICS OF 1920

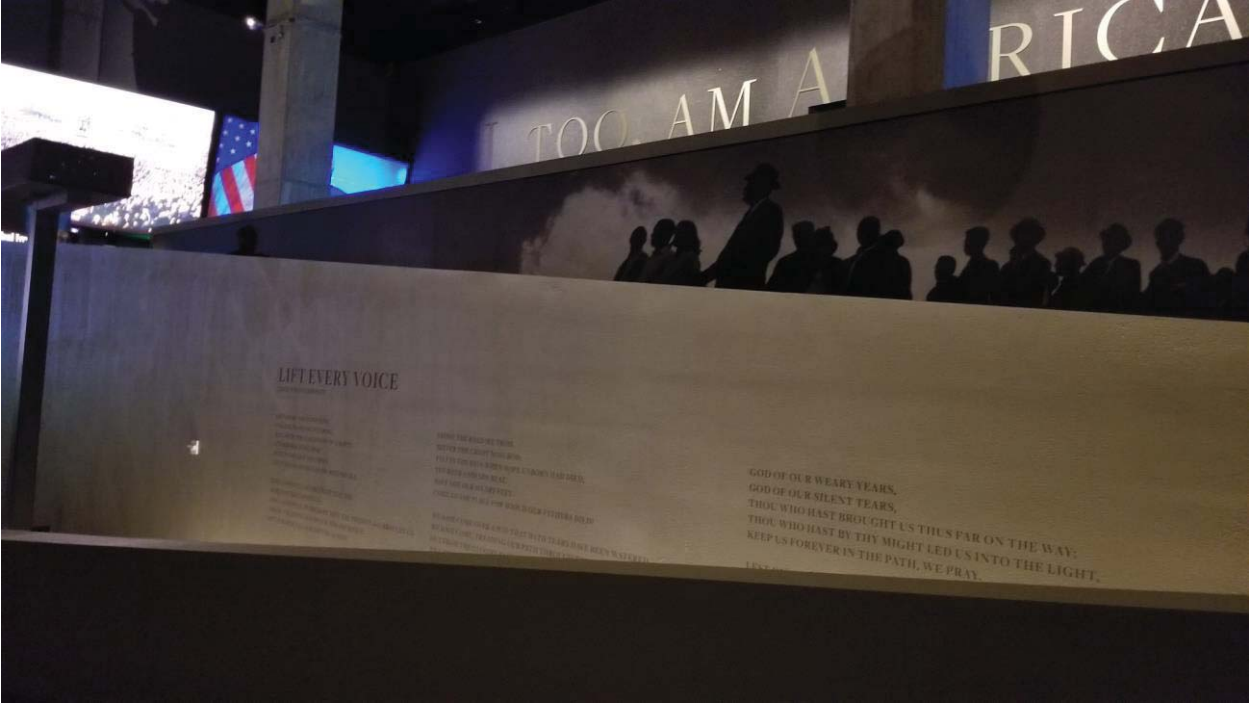
- Total U.S. population: 105,710,820
- African American population: 10,463,193 (9.9%)
- 66% lived in rural areas
- New York City was the city with largest African American population











The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

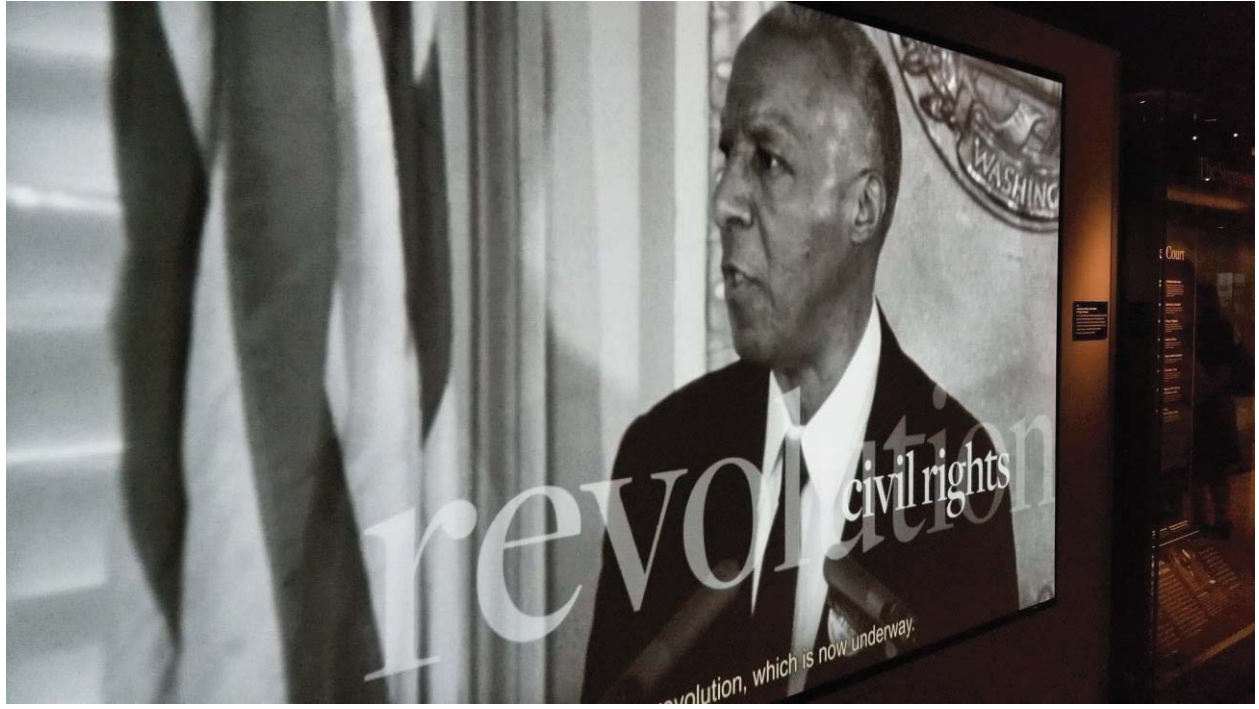
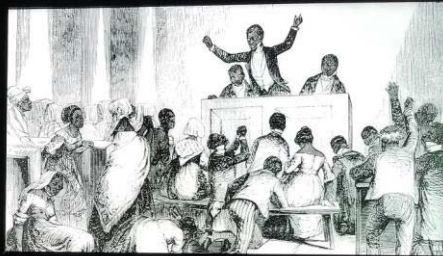


CCNY
ONE MAN X ONE VOTE



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.



Slavery Shapes America

The lives and labor of enslaved African Americans transformed the United States into a world power. Yet they received no recognition or payment for what they created. By 1860 four million enslaved people produced well over 60 percent of the nation's wealth, and the slave trade valued them at \$2.7 billion. Selling an enslaved person provided ready cash, explaining in part why roughly 600,000 people were sold in the domestic slave trade. This vast wealth, in human form, affected the entire nation.



The Battle Over Lynching

*Why are there "Jim Crow" cars in the South?
It is because of the Afro-American. Why are there so much
lynching and midnight murder in the South?
To get rid of the Negroes.*

CLEVELAND GAZETTE 1892



The Rise of Lynching

Lynching had a long history in the United States. It was a way of punishing people who were thought to have broken the law. In the South, it was often used against African Americans. The practice was especially common in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Campaign Against Lynching

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there was a growing movement to end lynching. Reformers and activists worked to change public opinion and to get laws passed that would stop the practice.

Murder by Mob

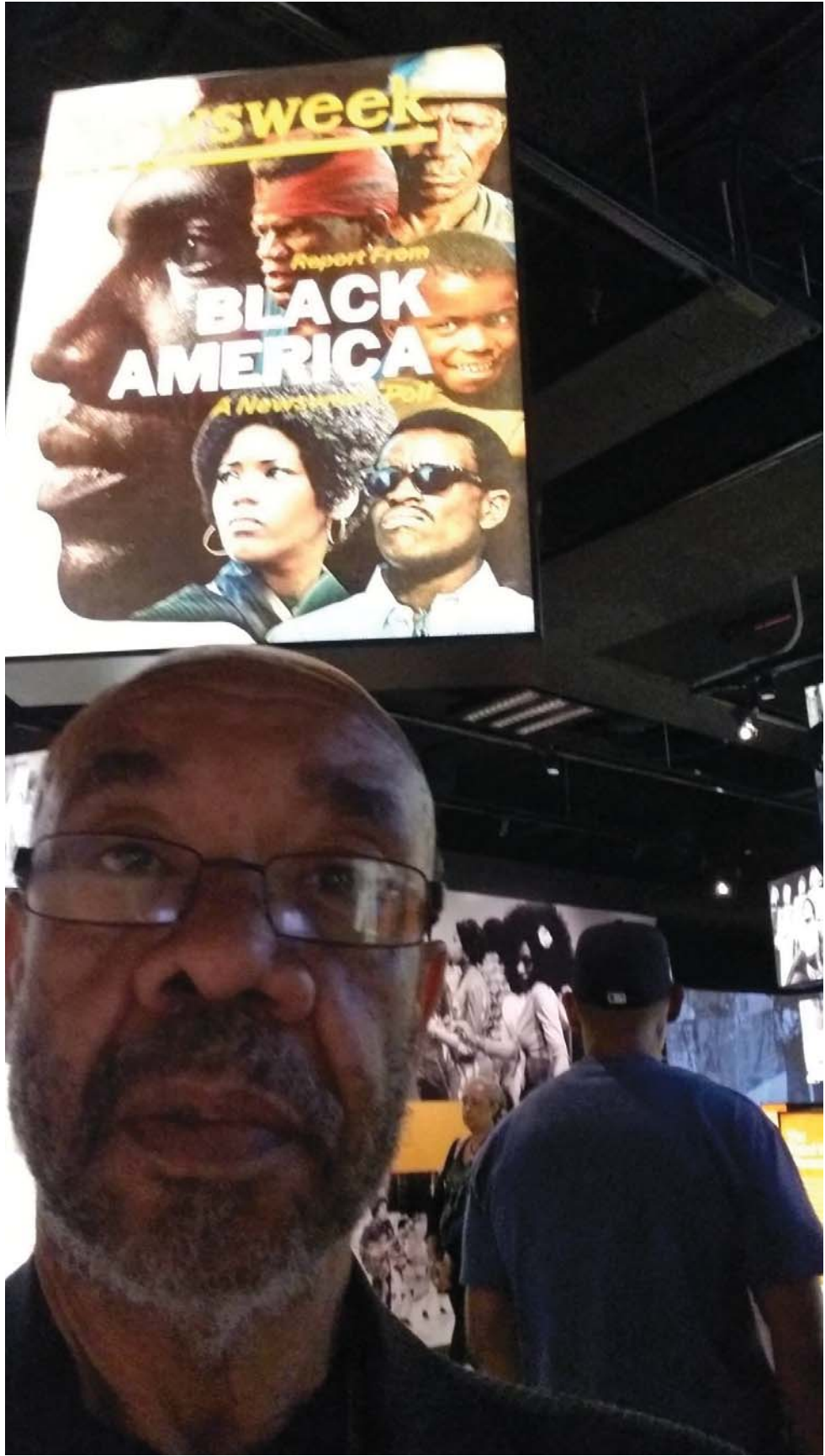
Lynching remained a deadly problem after many years. It was a way of punishing people who were thought to have broken the law. In the South, it was often used against African Americans. The practice was especially common in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

WOMAN LYNCHED
A woman was lynched in the South in the early 20th century. The practice was especially common in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

High Lynching
The number of lynchings was high in the early 20th century. The practice was especially common in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Black Lynching
The number of black lynchings was high in the early 20th century. The practice was especially common in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.





...aking of the Atlantic World

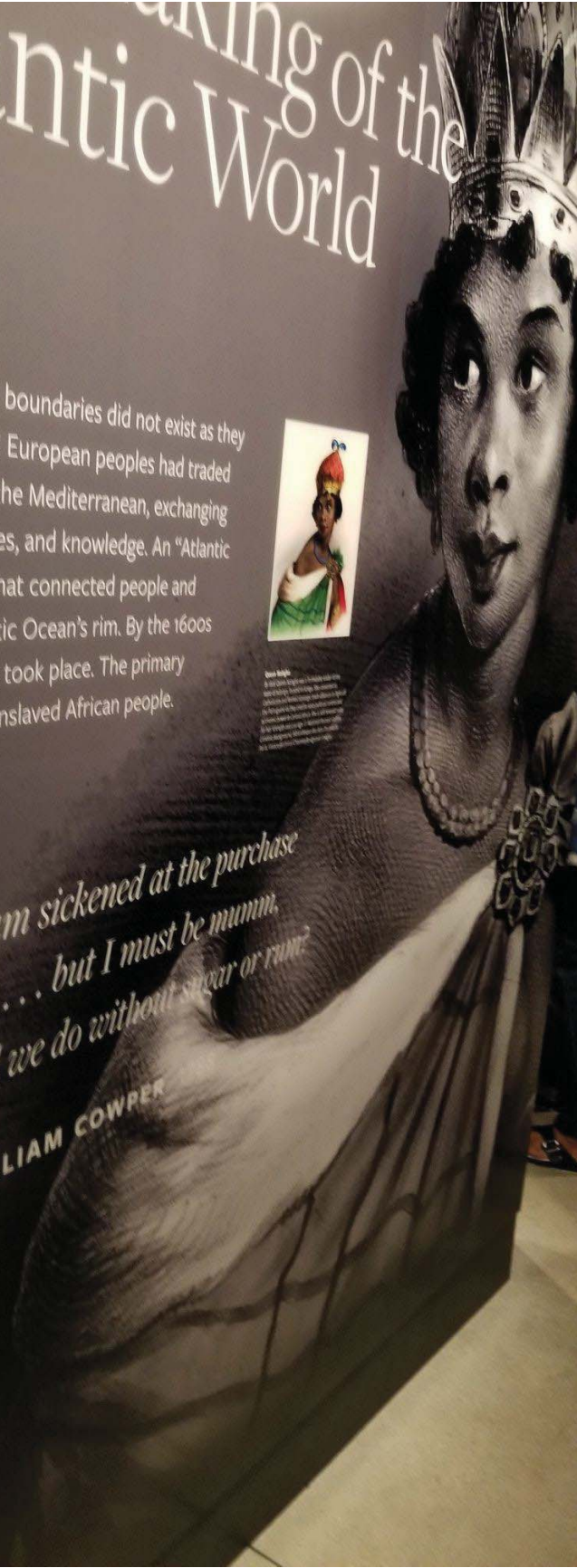
In the 1400s national boundaries did not exist as they do today. African and European peoples had traded for centuries across the Mediterranean, exchanging diverse goods, cultures, and knowledge. An "Atlantic world" was forming that connected people and ports along the Atlantic Ocean's rim. By the 1600s an unanticipated shift took place. The primary commodity became enslaved African people. This is their story.

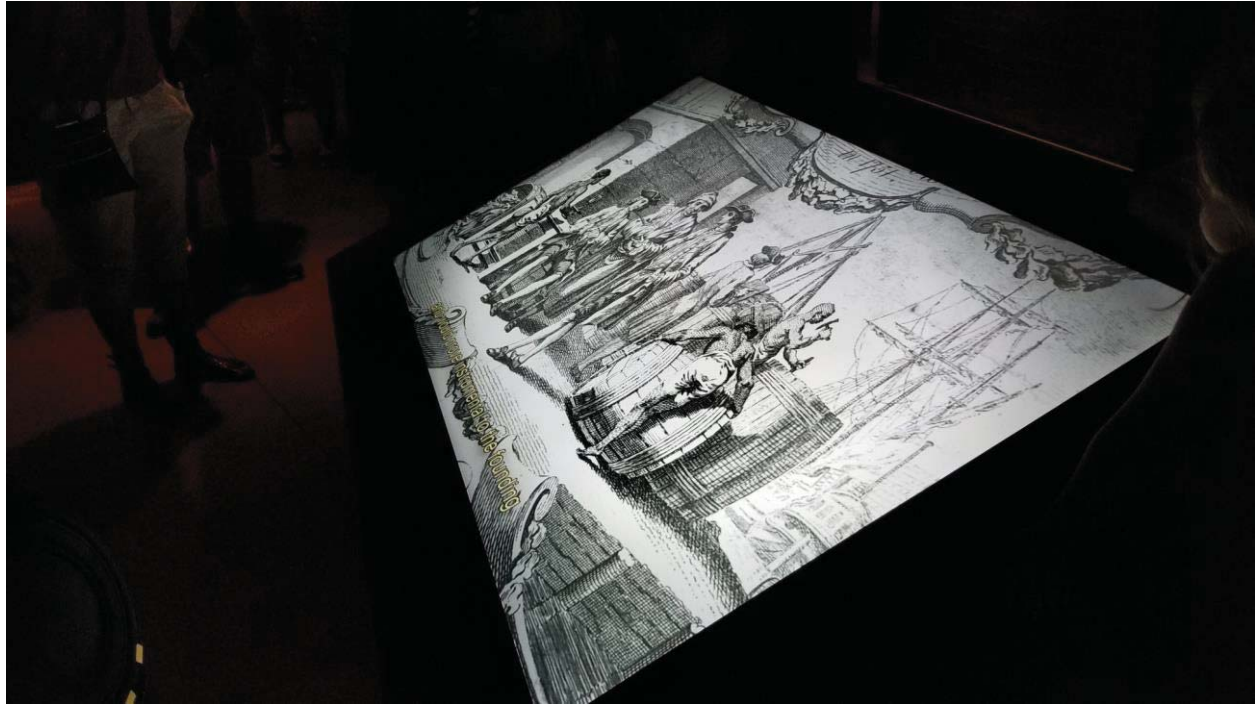


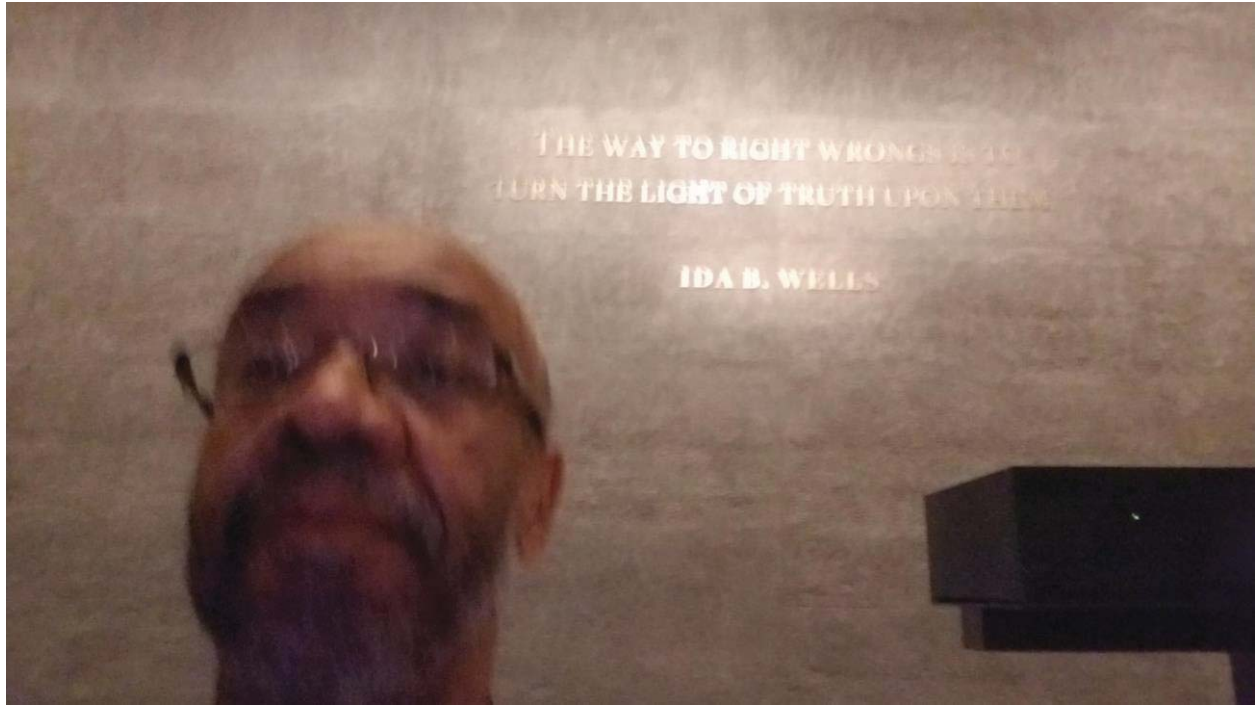
Queen Njinga
A 17th-century African ruler who was a skilled diplomat and warrior. She is known for her resistance to Portuguese colonialism in Angola.

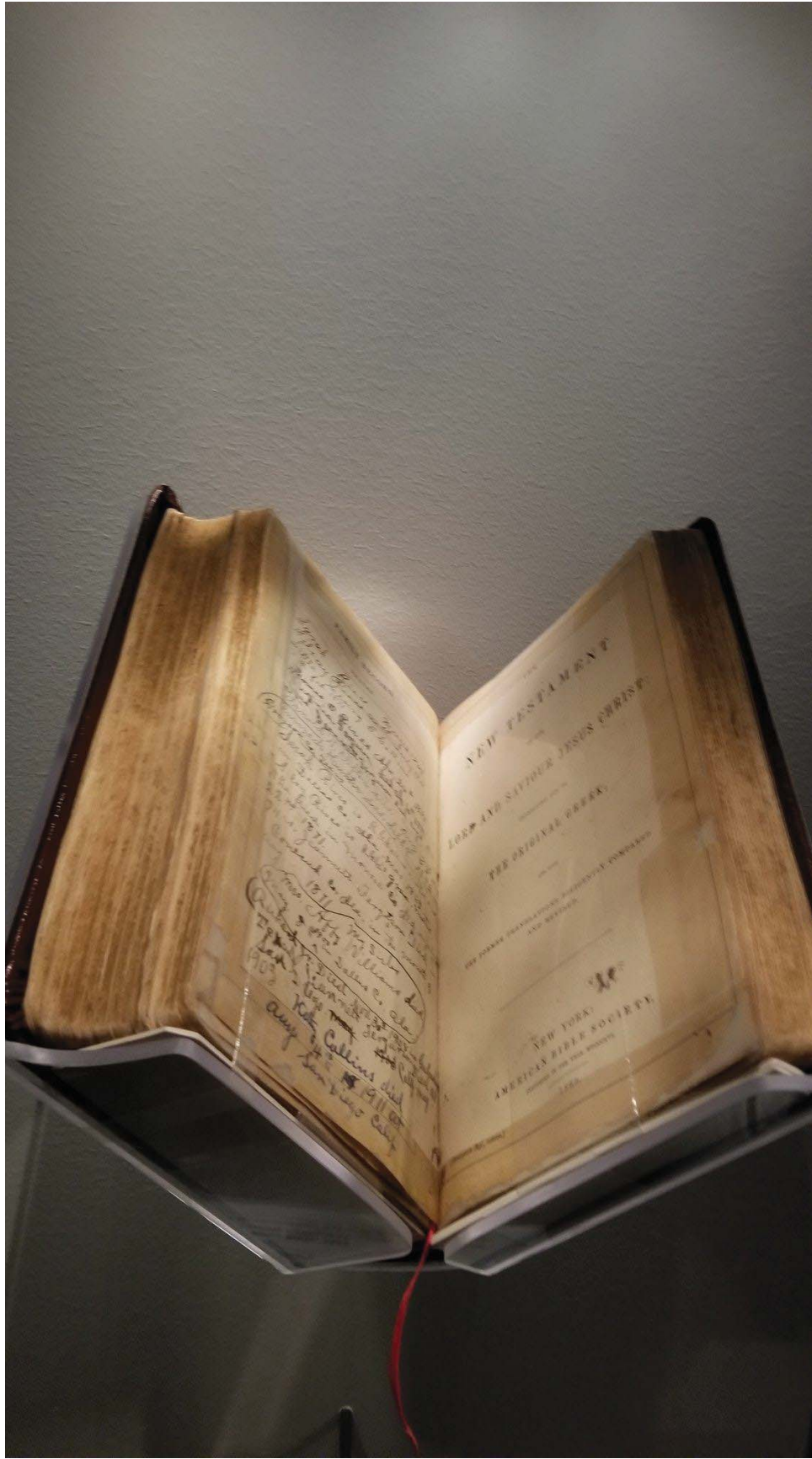
*I admit I am sickened at the purchase
of slaves . . . but I must be mumm,
for how could we do without sugar or rum?*

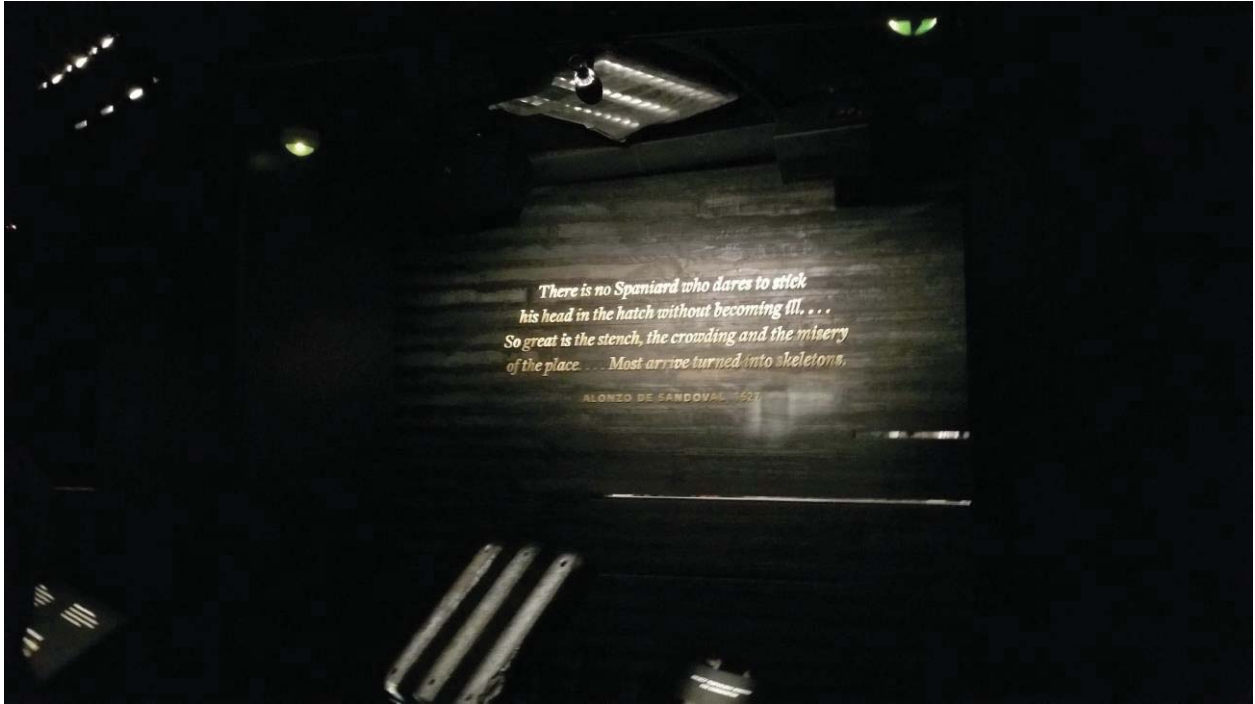
WILLIAM COWPER













Research Library and Archives

At the center of research across the Smithsonian are the specialized branches of the Smithsonian Libraries.

The National Museum of African American History and Culture Research Library and Archives, one of 21 locations of the Smithsonian Libraries, is devoted to providing access to resources that support the scholarship of researchers from around the world who study African American history, culture, and the African diaspora.

The Library is accessible by appointment to visiting scholars, independent researchers, and others pursuing knowledge.

Visit the Smithsonian Libraries website at libraries.si.edu for more information.

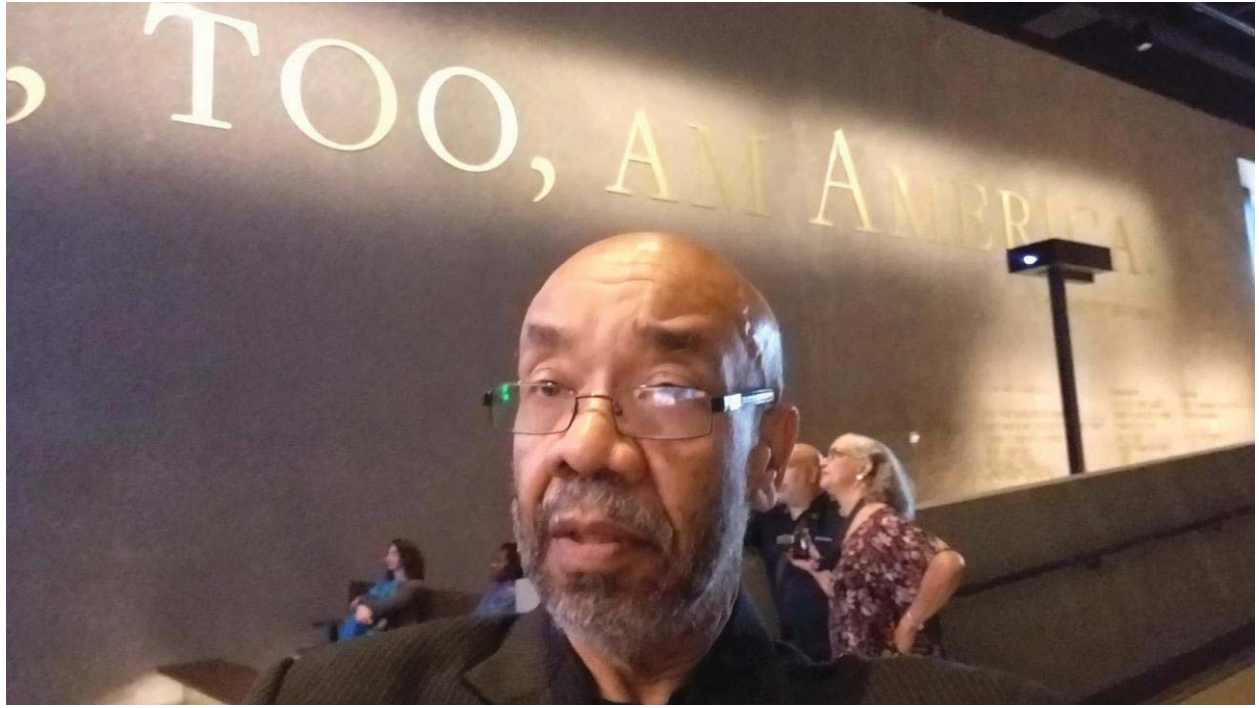


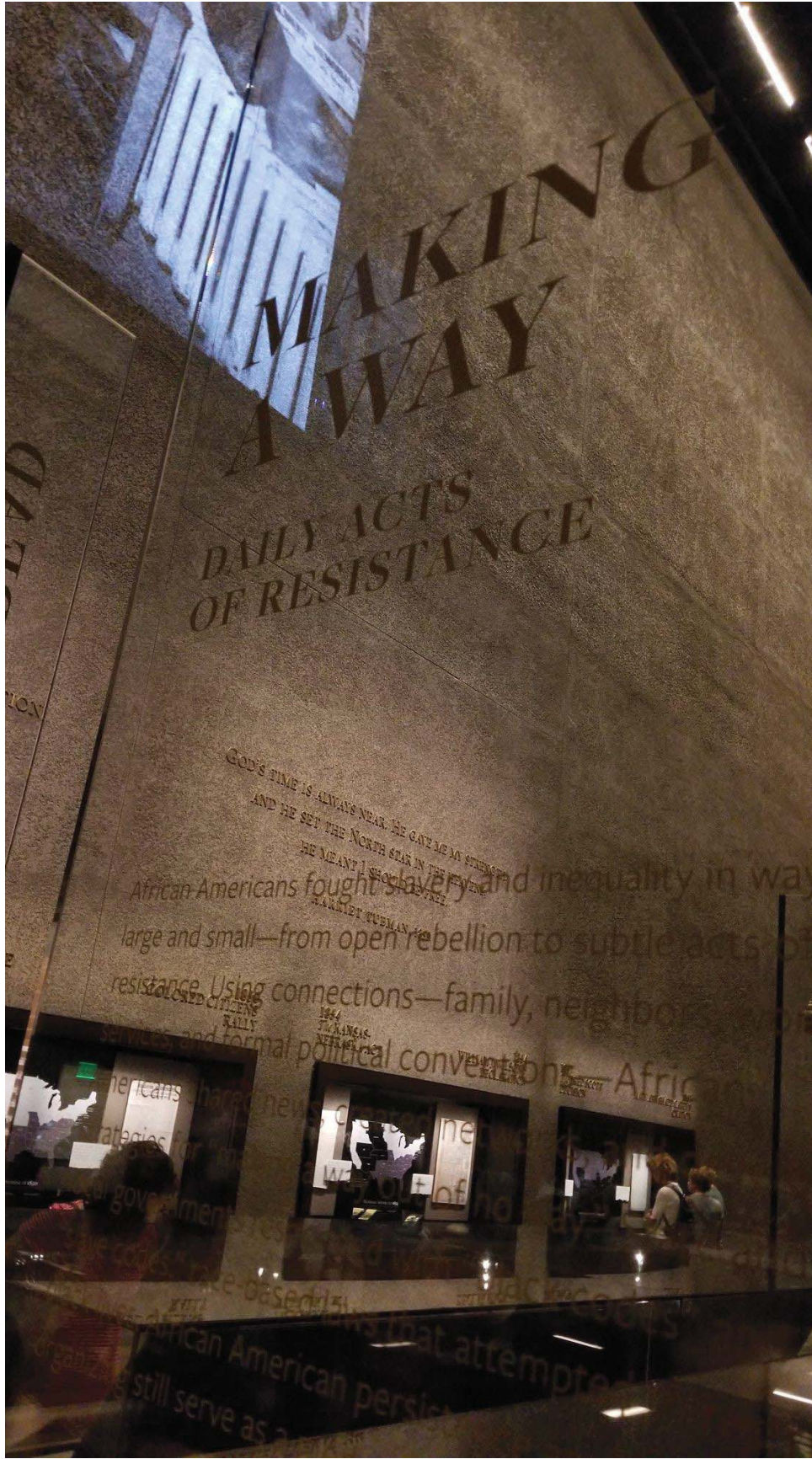
Video (silent)
White Supremacy

The Klan grew in influence during the 1920s as numerous
 groups supported its ideals. Archival









MAKING A WAY

DAILY ACTS OF RESISTANCE

GOD'S TIME IS ALWAYS NEAR. HE GOT JACOB STEPHENS AND HE SET THE NORTH STAR IN THE HEAVENS HE MEANT I SHOULD FREE.

African Americans fought slavery and inequality in ways large and small—from open rebellion to subtle acts of resistance. Using connections—family, neighbors, churches, and formal political conventions—African Americans



...based on... African American persistence... still serve as a...

Women's Groups

19th-century black churches ministered to the needs of the soul and served a host of secular functions, which placed them squarely in the center of black social life.

MARVIN ANDREW MCMICKLE 2002

African American women were always active in their communities and religious organizations. They also established a number of local clubs and organizations in the 1870s and 1880s. Led mainly by middle-class women, these groups focused on social, religious, cultural, and ultimately political issues, which were traditionally men's concerns. Many African American women believed they had a responsibility to work with poor or struggling members of their communities, and they fought attempts to limit African American

Black Codes

After the Civil War the former Confederate States passed laws intended to restrict the rights of African Americans. These "black codes" punished vagrancy, forced freedmen to sign labor contracts, and blocked their right to vote. Violators were subject to arrest, and the labor of prisoners was auctioned off to the highest bidder. In the end black codes created an oppressive system of customs and laws intended to tightly restrict the civic and economic rights of African Americans.

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.

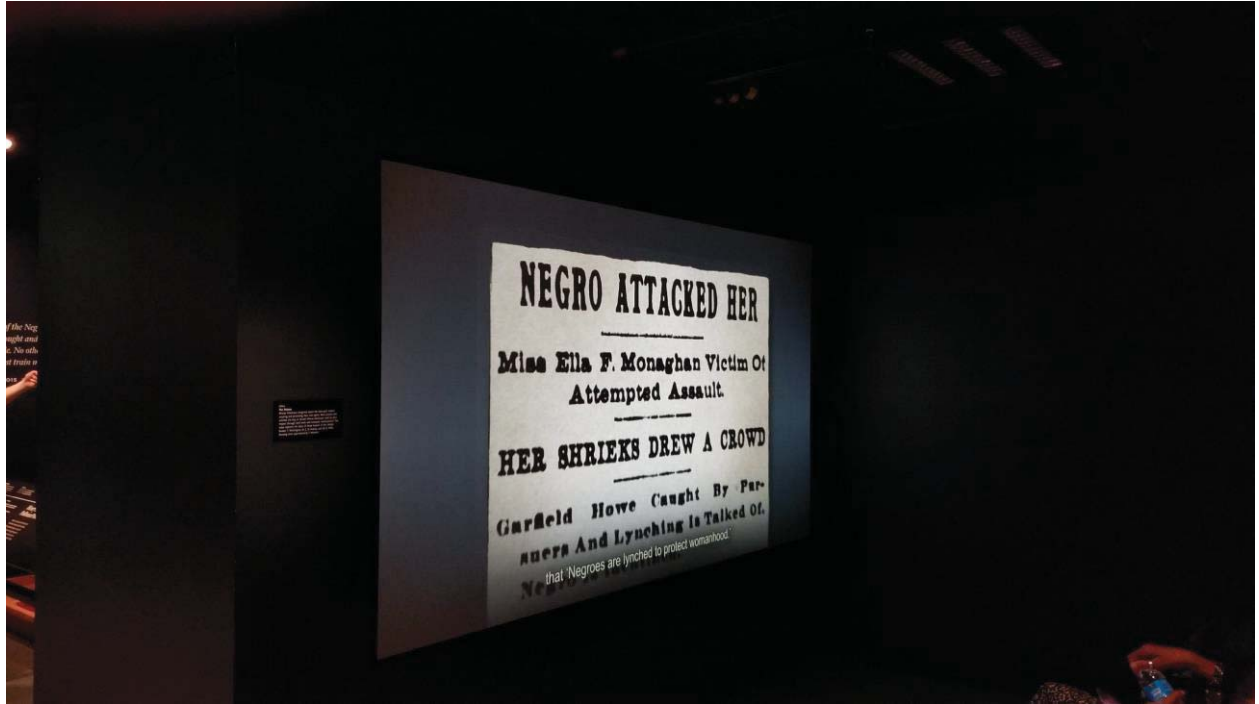
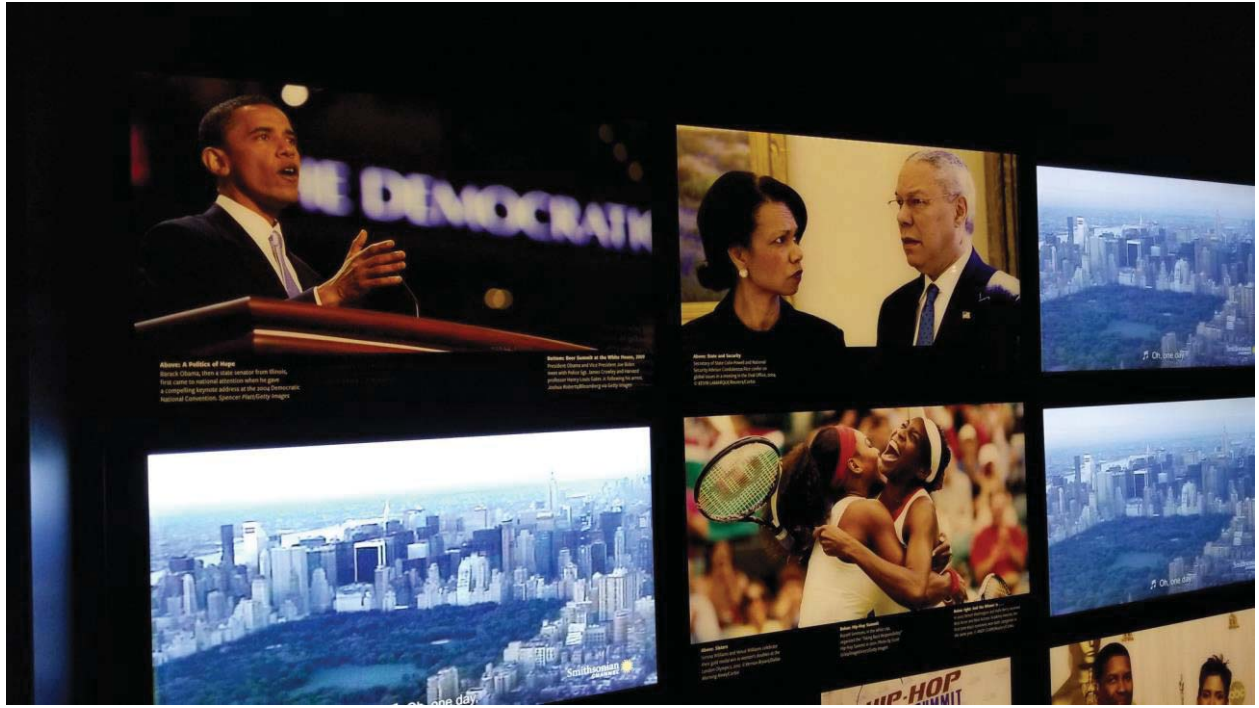
SOUTH CAROLINA

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



FREEING YOURSELF WAS ONE THING;
CLAIMING OWNERSHIP
OF THAT FREED SELF
WAS ANOTHER.

TONI MORRISON *BELOVED* 1987

