

BLACK CITIZENSHIP

IN THE AGE OF JIM CROW

Explore the dramatic, national story of the struggle for black equality after the end of slavery with a free digital poster exhibit

This free 8-piece poster series explores the years from the Civil War through World War I, drawing from New-York Historical Society's traveling exhibition *Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow*.

When slavery ended in 1865, a period of Reconstruction began, leading to such achievements as the 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution. By 1868, all persons born in the United States were citizens and equal under the law. But efforts to create an interracial democracy were contested from the start. A harsh backlash ensued, ushering in a half century of Jim Crow.

Bring this story to your community, organization, or classroom free of charge! We'll send you the files for the eight posters (40" x 30"). You decide how to print and mount them. We'll also include an accompanying school curriculum.

Email historyexhibits@nyhistory.org to request your free poster exhibit

Lead support for this traveling exhibition provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities: Exploring the human endeavor. Major support provided by the Ford Foundation, Crystal McCrary and Raymond J. McGuire, and Agnes Gund.

FIGHTING TO BELONG

Dred and Harriet Scott sued for their freedom from slavery. Their lawsuits had a chance of success because the Scotts had lived in free states with their owners.

Dred's case reached the Supreme Court in 1857. The justices decided against him, saying that he could not sue because he was not a citizen. Further, they ruled that no African American could ever be a US citizen. The decision angered abolitionists, emboldened slave owners, and widened the breach between North and South.

Then, in 1860, Abraham Lincoln, a Republican, won the presidency. Southern states in favor of expanding slavery seceded and formed the Confederacy. The nation erupted into war. African Americans tried to join the Union's military but were turned away until the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation allowed black men to enlist.

When the Civil War ended, black soldiers made up ten percent of the North's forces.

Following the Union's victory in 1865, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution permanently abolished slavery in the United States.

BUILDING BLACK HARLEM

In 1900, Harlem was a white neighborhood of New York City, and landlords evicted black renters to keep it white. The tide turned quickly after black entrepreneur Philip Payton began buying Harlem buildings and renting only to black tenants. Large numbers of African Americans moved to Harlem, seeking the safety and community of a black neighborhood. They came from the South, from the Caribbean, and from downtown neighborhoods plagued with race riots.

Harlem became an epicenter of black cooperation. Mutual aid organizations like the White Rose Mission provided services for black female migrants who needed resources and a place to stay. St. Philip's Episcopal and other churches provided fellowship and spiritual guidance. Black-owned businesses, from small shops to Madam C.J. Walker's beauty empire, saved Harlem residents from the abuse often met in white establishments. New political organizations coordinated marches to protest racial violence. At a Harlem intersection known as the Speaker's Corner, Hubert Harrison spoke to large crowds about class consciousness and racial pride.

Harlem flourished, even as Jim Crow expanded and intensified. The neighborhood emerged as a national base and symbol of resistance to racial oppression.

PROCLAMATION

President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, declaring that most persons held as slaves in the rebellious states were free.

EMANCIPATION

Portrait of Dred Scott by an unidentified artist
New-York Historical Society

Thomas W. The Recruiter

Harlem War an I of b Alice Merr

Hair product
New-York Historical Society

Madam C.J. Walker's salon on West 136th Street
Museum of the City of New York

Teachers of the White Rose Mission
Columbia University Library