



THE ROOM

A READING SERIES

via
ZOOM



THE LION

written & performed by

MANNY BUCKLEY



BACKSTAGE GUIDE

A publication of **COMMUNITY SERVICE** at
AMERICAN BLUES THEATER

BACKSTAGE CALLBOARD

THE LION

written & performed by
Manny Buckley*

STARRING



Manny Buckley*

The Lion tells the compelling story of arguably the nineteenth century's most famous African-American civil rights activist, Frederick Douglass. Douglass rose from beginnings as a slave in Maryland to become a self-taught writer, publisher, orator, abolitionist, and politician.

**Ensemble member of American Blues Theater*

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DIGITAL LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

To create art in a new digital format, we use equipment and high-speed internet not available in many Indigenous communities. This technology, which has now become central to our daily lives, leaves a significant footprint and contributes to changing climates that disproportionately affect Indigenous people. As we make use of this digital format, it is imperative that we recognize the Indigenous Land, regardless of our geographical location. It is land once occupied and inhabited by hundreds of Native tribes and stolen from these Indigenous people by European settlers. The genocide and forced removal of Indigenous people from these lands is a history that must be acknowledged, and the current struggles of Indigenous people must be brought to the forefront, so that their plight is never forgotten.

This digital land acknowledgement is inspired by the work of producer & artist Adrienne Wong. Learn more [here](#).

ABOUT THE **ARTISTS**



MANNY BUCKLEY he/him (*writer & performer*) is a proud Ensemble member of American Blues Theater. Blues credits include *It's a Wonderful Life: Live in Chicago!*, *Six Corners*, *Looking Over the President's Shoulder* (Jeff Award Nomination-Best Solo Performance), and *Dutchman/TRANSit* (Black Theatre Alliance Award Nomination). Manny toured nationally as "Satchel Paige" in the original production of *The Satchel Paige Story*, and appeared in *The Father* (Helen Hayes Award Nomination) at Studio Theatre in Washington, D.C. He originated the role of "Carson" in *Hit the Wall*, which sold out extensions in Steppenwolf's Garage Rep. Select Chicago credits include *The Brothers Size*, *1984*, and *Of Mice and Men* (Steppenwolf); *Dorian* (House Theater); *In the Heat of the Night* (Shattered Globe Theater); *Southbridge* (Chicago Dramatists); and *Love's Labor's Lost* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre). Mr. Buckley is the recipient of a Black Theatre Alliance, and Black Excellence Award. Film credits: *Proven Innocent*, *Chicago Fire*, and *Mrs. Stevens Hears the Mermaids Singing*.



CARA PARRISH she/her (*stage manager*) is a proud Ensemble member of American Blues Theater where she is also the Human Resources Coordinator. Chicago credits: *Gem of the Ocean*, *Electra*, *Hard Problem*, *Photograph 51*, *Five Guys Named Moe*, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, & *Lady From the Sea* (Court Theatre); *WITCH*, *Port Authority*, *Yellow Moon*, *The Letters*, *The Caretaker*, *Death of a Streetcar Named Virginia Woolf*, & *The Blond*, *The Brunette*, and *the Vengeful Redhead* (Writers Theatre); *Too Heavy for Your Pocket* & *The Vibrator Play* (TimeLine Theatre Company); *James and the Giant Peach* (Drury Lane Theatre Oakbrook); *Jabari Dreams of Freedom* (Chicago Children's Theatre); *Romeo and Juliet*, & *Emma* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre); *Beauty's Daughter* & *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* (American Blues Theater). Cara is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association.

ABOUT **FREDERICK DOUGLASS**

Frederick Douglass (c. February 1818 – February 20, 1895) was an American social reformer, abolitionist, orator, writer, and statesman. After escaping from slavery in Maryland, he became a national leader of the abolitionist movement in Massachusetts and New York, becoming famous for his oratory and incisive antislavery writings. Accordingly, he was described by abolitionists in his time as a living counter-example to slaveholders' arguments that slaves lacked the intellectual capacity to function as independent American citizens. Likewise, Northerners at the time found it hard to believe that such a great orator had once been a slave.

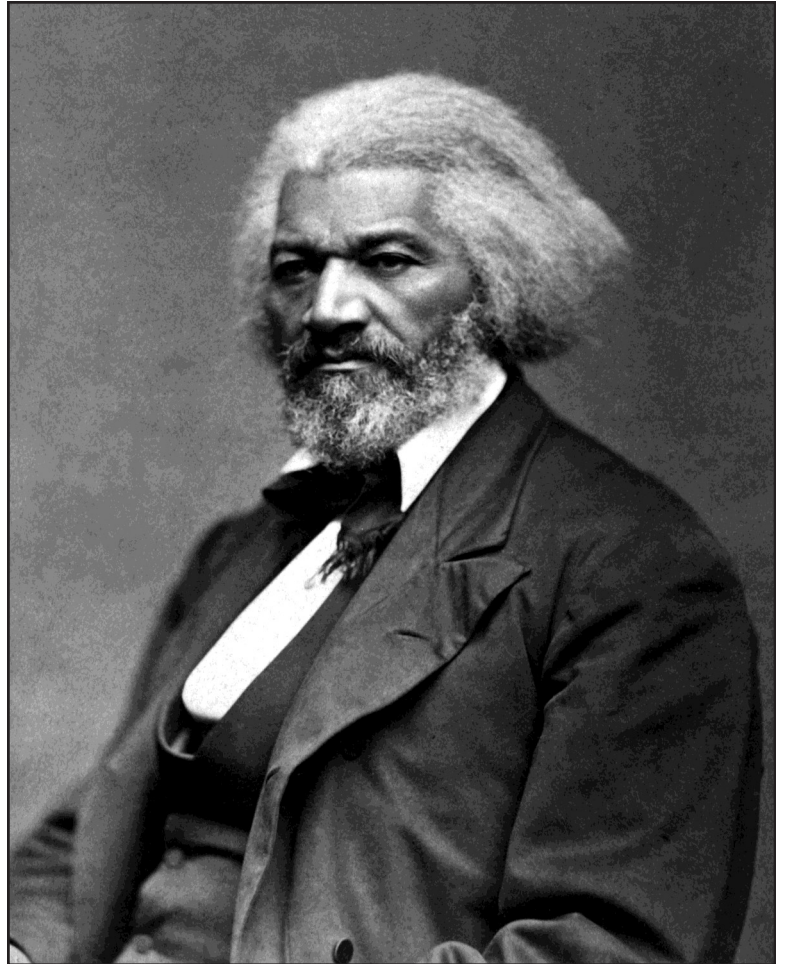
Douglass wrote several autobiographies, notably describing his experiences as a slave in his *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845), which became a bestseller, and was influential in promoting the cause of abolition, as was his second book, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855).

Douglass started publishing his first abolitionist newspaper, the *North Star*, from the basement of the Memorial AME Zion Church in Rochester, New York in 1847. The *North Star's* motto was "Right is of no Sex – Truth is of no Color – God is the Father of us all, and we are all brethren." Besides publishing the *North Star* and delivering speeches, Douglass also participated in the Underground Railroad. He and his wife provided lodging and resources in their home to more than four hundred escaped slaves. In 1851, Douglass merged the *North Star* with Gerrit Smith's *Liberty Party Paper* to form *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, which was published until 1860.

During the Civil War, Douglass and the abolitionists argued that because the aim of the war was to end slavery, African Americans should be allowed to engage in the fight for their freedom. Douglass publicized this view in his newspapers and several speeches. Douglass conferred with President Abraham Lincoln in 1863 on the treatment of black soldiers, and with President Andrew Johnson on the subject of black suffrage.

After the Civil War, Douglass continued to work for equality for African-Americans and women, and held several public offices. In 1870, Douglass started his last newspaper, the *New National Era*, attempting to hold his country to its commitment to equality. His last autobiography, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, was first published in 1881 and revised in 1892, three years before his death. The book covers events both during and after the Civil War.

On February 20, 1895, Douglass attended a meeting of the National Council of Women in Washington, D.C. During that meeting, he was brought to the platform and received a standing ovation. Shortly after he returned home, Douglass died of a massive heart attack. He was 77.



THE HISTORY OF “WHAT TO THE SLAVE IS THE FOURTH OF JULY?”

The below article by Olivia B. Waxman was originally published on the *Time* website on July 3, 2019, and was last updated on June 26, 2020. It has been edited here for length. You can read the full article [here](#).

Frederick Douglass’ speech best known today as “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”...was originally delivered at a moment when the country was fiercely locked in debate over the question of slavery, but there’s a reason why it has remained famous more than 150 years after emancipation, says David Blight, author of the 2019 Pulitzer Prize winning biography *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom*.

To some, celebrations of American independence on July 4 are a reminder of the country’s hypocrisy on the matter of freedom, as slavery played a key role in the nation’s history; even today, America’s history of racism is still being written, while other forms of modern-day slavery persist in the U.S. and around the world. For those who feel that way, July 5 may be an easier day to celebrate: on that day in 1827, 4,000 African Americans paraded down Broadway in New York City to celebrate the end of slavery in their state.

One person who felt that way was Douglass, the famous abolitionist, who was himself born into slavery. When the Ladies Anti-Slavery Society of Rochester, N.Y., invited Douglass to give a July 4 speech in 1852, Douglass opted to speak on July 5 instead.

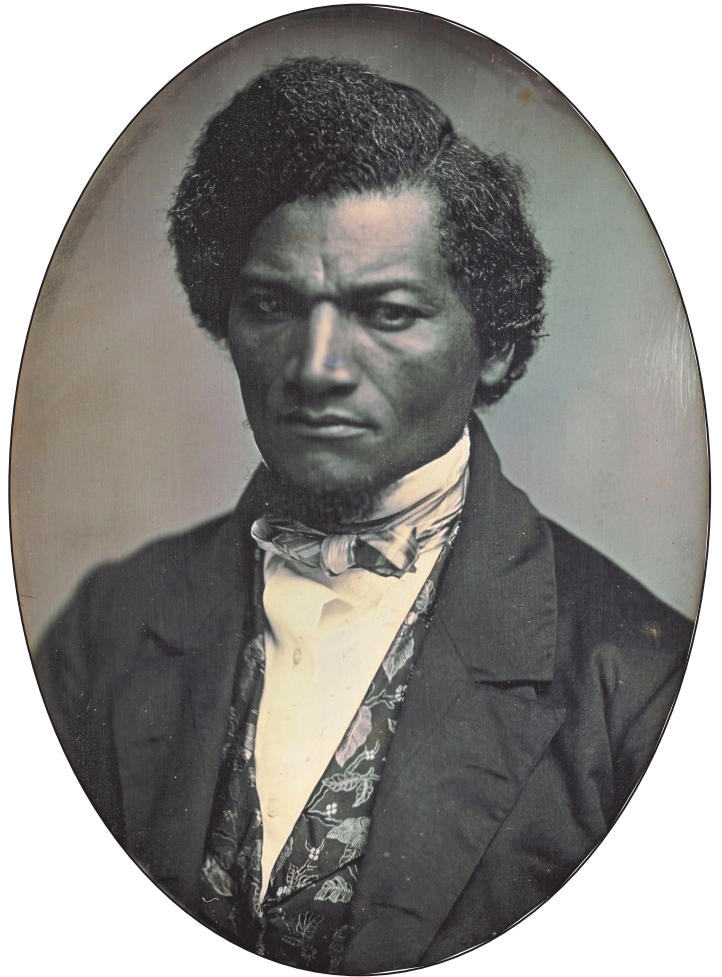
Addressing an audience of about 600 at the newly constructed Corinthian Hall, he started out by acknowledging that the signers of the Declaration of Independence were “brave” and “great” men, and that the way they wanted the Republic to look was in the right spirit.

But, he said, speaking more than a decade before slavery was ended nationally, a lot of work still needed to be done so that all citizens can enjoy “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Above “your national, tumultuous joy” — the July 4th celebrations of white Americans — were the “mournful wails of millions” whose heavy chains “are, today, rendered more intolerable by the jubilee shouts that reach them.”

In the oration’s most famous passages, Douglass discussed what it felt like to see such festivities and to know independence was not a given for people like him:

What have I, or those I represent, to do with your national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence, extended to us? and am I, therefore, called upon to bring our humble offering to the national altar, and to confess the benefits and express devout gratitude for the blessings resulting from your independence to us?...

I say it with a sad sense of the disparity between us. I am not included within the pale of glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice, are not enjoyed in common. The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence,



THE HISTORY OF “WHAT TO THE SLAVE IS THE FOURTH OF JULY?”

bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought light and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn...

What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer; a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciation of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are, to Him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy — a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of the United States, at this very hour.

Douglass' speech also foreshadowed the bloody reckoning to come: Civil War. “For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder,” he said. “We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

It was a turbulent time for Douglass personally, too. In the late 1840s and into the 1850s, his finances were tight, and he was struggling to sustain the newspaper he founded, *The North Star*. He'd had a breakdown in the early 1850s, and was having trouble supporting his family. His friend Julia Griffiths, the treasurer of the Rochester group that invited him to give the 1852 speech, was one of the people helping him fund-raise to keep the paper alive.

The message wasn't new — Douglass promoted those ideas year-round — but Blight says he knew the Fourth of July was a good hook, and expected the speech to be a hit. He had it printed immediately after delivering it and then went out on the road and sold it for 50 cents a copy or \$6 for a hundred. “He does some of his greatest writing in early 1850s during this terrible personal crisis,” Blight says, “and right there in the middle of it comes the greatest speech he's ever delivered, of the hundreds of speeches he delivered in his life.”

“It's the birth of American Independence, the birth of a nation, and what the speech is saying is you must destroy first what you created and remake it, or it will be destroyed — and you with it,” says Blight.

Douglass continued to add to the speech in the years that followed. On July 4, 1862 — with the war underway — he addressed an audience of about 2,000 in Himrods Corner, N.Y.; Blight argues that his shift then from addressing simply “you” to discussing the Revolution as something undertaken by “your fathers, and my fathers” indicates he believed emancipation will happen more than he did a decade earlier.

President Lincoln did issue the Emancipation Proclamation six months later — but even after the war's end, Douglass continued to use the Fifth of July to draw attention to the nation's track record on the idea celebrated on the Fourth. On July 5, 1875, as Reconstruction brought its own fears, like violence from the Ku Klux Klan, Douglass shifted his speech for the day, asking, “If war among the whites brought peace and liberty to the blacks, what will peace among the whites bring?” But the 1852 “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” speech remains the best known of his addresses on the occasion, especially as it became even more widely read in the late-20th century, with events like the public readings sponsored by the Vermont Humanities Council and a powerful reading by James Earl Jones in 2004.

Douglass' message — about America struggling to live up to the lofty goals it set for itself at the founding — continues to be relevant, says Blight.

“He would use the Fourth of July for its irony over and over and over, just like the Declaration of Independence is used to remind the country of its potential and promise, and to him, race was always the measure of that,” he says. “America, by its nature, is never quite fulfilling all of those promises.”

ABOUT DRED SCOTT

Frederick Douglass delivered an impassioned speech on the Dred Scott Decision to the American Anti-Slavery Society in New York on May 14, 1857. You can read the full speech [here](#), and learn more about Dred Scott below.

Dred Scott was an enslaved man who unsuccessfully sued for his and his family's freedom in the landmark Dred Scott v. Sandford case of 1857.

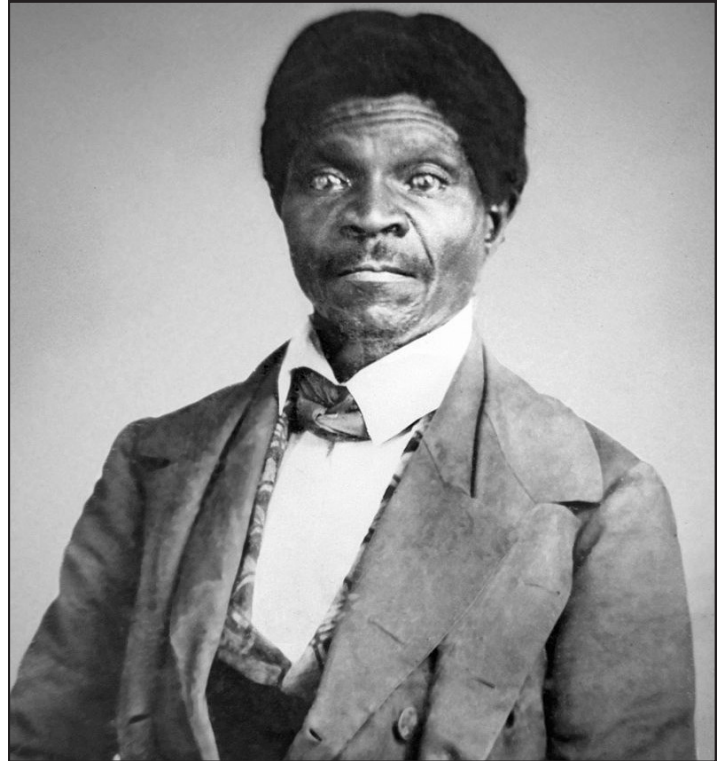
Dred Scott was born into slavery c. 1799 in Southampton County, Virginia. In 1818, Scott was taken by Peter Blow and his family to Alabama, where the family ran an unsuccessful farm. The Blows gave up farming in 1830 and moved to St. Louis, Missouri, where they ran a boarding house. Dred Scott was sold to Dr. John Emerson, a surgeon serving in the U.S. Army. After Scott learned this, he attempted to run away. Scott was temporarily successful, but eventually, he was captured in the "Lucas Swamps" of Missouri and taken back.

As an army officer, Emerson moved frequently, taking Scott with him to each new army posting, first to Fort Armstrong in Illinois, and then to Fort Snelling in what was then in the free territory of Wisconsin. There, Scott met and married Harriet Robinson.

Emerson moved to Jefferson Barracks in Missouri in 1837, leaving the Scott family behind in Wisconsin and leasing them out to other officers. The Scotts returned to Missouri in 1840. After Emerson died in 1843, his widow Irene Emerson inherited his estate, and she continued to lease out the Scotts as hired slaves. In 1846, Scott attempted to purchase his and his family's freedom, offering \$300. Irene Emerson refused his offer. Scott and his wife separately filed freedom suits to try to gain their family's freedom. The cases were later combined by the courts.

The Scotts' cases were first heard by the Missouri circuit court, which upheld the precedent of "once free, always free" and ruled the Scotts had gained their freedom. Irene Emerson appealed, and in 1852 the Missouri supreme court overruled the circuit court decision, on the basis that the state did not have to abide by free states' laws, especially given the anti-slavery fervor of the time.

In 1853, Scott again sued for his freedom; this time under federal law. Irene Emerson had moved to Massachusetts, and Scott had been transferred to her brother, John F. A. Sanford. Because Sanford was a citizen of New York, while Scott would be a citizen of Missouri if he were free, the Federal courts had diversity jurisdiction over the case. After losing again in federal district court, the Scotts



appealed to the United States Supreme Court in Dred Scott v. Sandford. (The name is spelled "Sandford" in the court decision due to a clerical error.)

The U.S. Supreme Court decided 7–2 against Scott, finding that neither he nor any other person of African ancestry could claim citizenship in the United States, and therefore Scott could not bring suit in federal court under diversity of citizenship rules. Moreover, Scott's temporary residence outside Missouri did not bring about his emancipation under the Missouri Compromise, as the court ruled this to have been unconstitutional, as it would "improperly deprive Scott's owner of his legal property".

While Chief Justice Roger B. Taney had hoped to settle issues related to slavery and Congressional authority by this decision, it aroused public outrage, deepened sectional tensions between the northern and southern states, and hastened the eventual explosion of their differences into the Civil War.

The Scotts were manumitted by a private arrangement in May 1857. Dred Scott died of tuberculosis a year later.

ABOUT HOWARD UNIVERSITY

Frederick Douglass' history and connection with Howard University—where he was a trustee from 1869-1874—and Howard alumna Charlotte E. Ray are both a part of *The Lion*.

Howard University is a private, federally chartered historically black university (HBCU) in Washington, D.C. Since 1867, Howard has awarded more than 100,000 degrees in the professions, arts, sciences and humanities. The University has long held a commitment to the study of disadvantaged persons in American society and throughout the world. Its goal is the elimination of inequities related to race, color, social, economic and political circumstances.

Shortly after the end of the American Civil War, members of The First Congregational Society of Washington considered establishing a theological seminary for the education of black clergymen. Within a few weeks, the project expanded to include a provision for establishing a university. Within two years, the University consisted of the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Medicine. The new institution was named for General Oliver Otis Howard, a Civil War hero, who was both the founder of the University and, at the time, Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau. Howard later served as President of the University from 1869 to 1874.

The U.S. Congress chartered Howard on March 2, 1867, and much of its early funding came from endowment, private benefaction, and tuition. (In the 20th and 21st centuries an annual congressional appropriation, administered by the U.S. Department of Education, funds Howard University and Howard University Hospital.) In its first five years of operation, Howard University educated over 150,000 freed slaves. Frederick Douglass served on the Board of Trustees of Howard University from 1871 to 1895.

Notable alumni include Kamala Harris, Thurgood Marshall, Toni Morrison, Zora Neal Hurston, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Chadwick Boseman, Phylicia Rashad, and many more.



ABOUT CHARLOTTE E. RAY

Charlotte E. Ray (January 13, 1850 – January 4, 1911) was an American lawyer. She was the first black American female lawyer in the United States. Ray graduated from Howard University School of Law in 1872.

She was also the first female admitted to the District of Columbia Bar, and the first woman admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia. Her admission was used as a precedent by women in other states who sought admission to the bar.

Ray opened her own law office, advertising in a newspaper run by Frederick Douglass. However, she practiced law for only a few years because prejudice against African Americans and women made her business unsustainable. Ray eventually moved to New York, where she became a teacher in Brooklyn. She was involved in the women's suffrage movement and joined the National Association of Colored Women.

TERMS TO KNOW

In telling the story of Frederick Douglass' life, *The Lion* explores the below historical concepts and events.

THE BLACK CODES

The Black Codes, sometimes called Black Laws, were laws governing the conduct of African Americans. The best known of them were passed in 1865 and 1866 by Southern states, after the Civil War, in order to restrict African Americans' freedom, and to compel them to work for low wages.

In the first two years after the Civil War, white-dominated Southern legislatures passed Black Codes modeled after the earlier slave codes. Black Codes were part of a larger pattern of whites trying to maintain political dominance and suppress the freedmen, newly emancipated African-Americans. They were particularly concerned with controlling movement and labor of freedmen, as slavery had been replaced by a free labor system. The defining feature of the Black Codes was broad vagrancy law, which allowed local authorities to arrest freed people for minor infractions and commit them to involuntary labor.

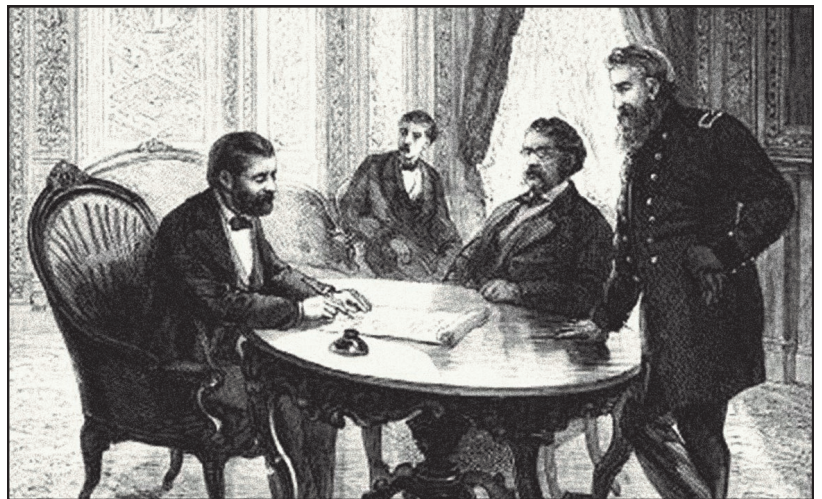
Railing against the Black Codes as returns to slavery in violation of the Thirteenth Amendment, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866, the Fourteenth Amendment, and the Second Freedmen's Bureau Bill. After winning large majorities in the 1866 elections, the Republican Congress passed the Reconstruction Acts placing the South under military rule. It is clear, however, that even under military rule, local jurisdictions were able to continue a racist pattern of law enforcement, as long as it took place under a legal regime that was superficially race-neutral.

THE ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 1871

The Enforcement Act of 1871, also known as the Ku Klux Klan Act, Third Enforcement Act, or KKK Act, is an Act of the United States Congress which empowered the President to suspend the writ of habeas corpus to combat the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and other white supremacy organizations.

The act was passed by the 42nd United States Congress and signed into law by United States President Ulysses S. Grant on April 20, 1871. The act was the last of three Enforcement Acts passed by the United States Congress from 1870 to 1871 during the Reconstruction Era to combat attacks upon the suffrage rights of African Americans.

Grant did not hesitate to use this authority on numerous occasions during his presidency, and as a result the first era KKK was completely dismantled and did not resurface in any meaningful way until the first part of the 20th century.



FORTY ACRES & A MULE

Forty acres and a mule was part of Special Field Orders No. 15, a wartime order proclaimed by Union General William Tecumseh Sherman on January 16, 1865, during the Civil War, to allot of land to some freed families, in plots of land no larger than 40 acres. Sherman later ordered the army to lend mules for the agrarian reform effort.

Freed people widely expected to legally claim 40 acres of land and a mule after the end of the war. Some freedmen took advantage of the order and took initiatives to acquire land plots along a strip of South Carolina, Georgia and Florida coasts. However, Abraham Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson, explicitly reversed and annulled proclamations such as Special Field Orders No. 15 and the Freedmen's Bureau bills.

TERMS TO KNOW

Some land redistribution occurred under military jurisdiction during the war and for a brief period thereafter. However, federal and state policy during the Reconstruction era emphasized wage labor, not land ownership, for black people. Almost all land allocated during the war was restored to its pre-war white owners. The phrase "40 acres and a mule" has come to symbolize the broken promise that Reconstruction policies would offer economic justice for African Americans.

JUNETEENTH

Juneteenth (a portmanteau of June and nineteenth) – also known as Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Liberation Day, and Emancipation Day – is a holiday celebrating the emancipation of those who had been enslaved in the United States. Originating in Galveston, Texas, it is now celebrated annually on the 19th of June throughout the United States. It is commemorated on the anniversary date of the June 19, 1865 announcement by Union Army general Gordon Granger, proclaiming freedom from slavery in Texas.

President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation had officially outlawed slavery in Texas and the other states in rebellion against the Union almost two and a half years earlier. Enforcement of the Proclamation generally relied on the advance of Union troops. Texas, being the most remote of the slave states, had a low presence of Union troops as the American Civil War ended; thus enforcement there had been slow and inconsistent before Granger's announcement. Although this event is popularly thought of as "the end of slavery", emancipation for those enslaved in two Union border states (Delaware and Kentucky), would not come until several months later, on December 18, 1865, when ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment was announced.



SEAMAN'S PROTECTION CERTIFICATES

Protection papers, also known as "Seamen Protection Papers," "Seamen Protection Certificates," or "Sailor's Protection Papers", were issued to American seamen during the last part of the 18th century through the first half of the 20th century. These papers provided a description of the sailor and showed American citizenship. They were issued to American sailors to prevent them from being impressed on British men-of-war, during the period leading to and after the War of 1812.

Because these protection papers were used to define freemen and citizenship, many black sailors and other men also used them to show that they were freemen if they were stopped by officials or slave catchers. They also called them "free papers" because they certified their non-slave status.

Many of the problems of these protection papers were that the descriptions were often vague or could apply to almost anyone. Frederick Douglass used a "protection paper" of a free black sailor to escape. He wrote in *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*: "This protection did not, when in my hands, describe its bearer very accurately. Indeed, it called for a man much darker than myself, and close examination of it would have caused my arrest at the start."

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Global network builds power to bring justice, healing, and freedom to Black people across the globe.

DUSABLE MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

Chicago museum that promotes understanding and inspires appreciation of the achievements, contributions, and experiences of African Americans.

THE FREDERICK DOUGLASS BICENTENNIAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Administered and managed by UNCF, the scholarship program awards \$20,000 in scholarships each year to students enrolled in four-year HBCUs.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

National Historic Site in Washington D.C. that preserves the home where Frederick Douglass lived from 1877 until his death in 1895. Annually, the site hosts an oratorical contest where students perform a part of a Frederick Douglass speech that they learn from memory. The National Park Service has also produced [a virtual tour of the historic house](#), in partnership with Google Cultural Institute.

NAACP LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION FUND

America's premier legal organization fighting for racial justice. Through litigation, advocacy, and public education, LDF seeks structural changes to expand democracy, eliminate disparities, and achieve racial justice in a society that fulfills the promise of equality for all Americans.

SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

A catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, SPLC works in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements, and advance the human rights of all people.

RESOURCES FOR EMOTIONAL AND RACIAL TRAUMA

Those looking for or needing counseling or a safe space to heal from emotional or racial trauma, below are some resources that can help provide you with the tools and information that you may need.

ASSOCIATION OF BLACK PSYCHOLOGISTS SELF-CARE TOOL KIT

A self-care tool kit for families & communities. Written in English and Spanish.

BLACK EMOTIONAL & MENTAL HEALTH COLLECTIVE

Collective committed to the emotional/mental health and healing of Black communities.

RACIAL TRAUMA RESOURCES

Racial trauma resources compiled by the Borough of Manhattan Community College.

RESOURCES FOR BLACK HEALING

Black healing resources from the University of North Carolina Wilmington Counseling Center.

SAFE BLACK SPACE

Creates opportunities for Black people to heal and thrive.

ABOUT **AMERICAN BLUES THEATER**

Winner of American Theatre Wing's prestigious National Theatre Company Award, American Blues Theater is a premier arts organization with an intimate environment that patrons, artists, and all Chicagoans call home. American Blues Theater explores the American identity through the plays it produces and communities it serves.

We believe in cooperative collaborations both on and off-stage. We provide community service for many not-for-profits, such as the Chicago Public Schools, The Night Ministry, Chicago House, Suits for Success, Misericordia, and the USO. Since 2009, we've held food, book, & clothing drives, distributed promotional tickets, and raised awareness for children's surgeries and health needs. We donate proceeds from "Pediatric Previews" to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

We are Chicago's second-oldest AEA Ensemble theater. As of 2020, our theater and artists have 221 Joseph Jefferson Awards and nominations that celebrate excellence in Chicago theater and 40 Black Theater Alliance Awards. Our artists are honored with Pulitzer Prize nominations, Academy Awards, Golden Globe Awards, Emmy Awards, and numerous other accolades.

American Blues Theater is committed to developing the classic plays and musicals of tomorrow. More than half of our mainstage productions are world and Chicago premieres. Our new play development consists of a variety of programs – including world and Chicago premieres, the nationally-recognized *Blue Ink Playwriting Award*, *Blueprint* play development, and annual *Ripped: the Living Newspaper Festival* of new short-plays.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT AMERICAN BLUES THEATER



The image displays three promotional posters for upcoming events at American Blues Theater. The first poster, titled 'THE ROOM', is a reading series available via Zoom, featuring a stack of books. The second poster, titled 'THE GARAGE', is a music series available via Zoom, featuring a microphone, drums, and a guitar. The third poster is for 'ONE-ON-ONE CONSULTING CLASSES FOR THE MASSES SESSION 3', featuring a megaphone. All posters include the American Blues Theater logo.

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THE GARAGE
A MUSIC SERIES
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ONE-ON-ONE CONSULTING
CLASSES FOR THE MASSES
SESSION 3

Visit AmericanBluesTheater.com to learn more.