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The Harrowing Journey of African Americans in the Reconstruction Era
Freedom! A Promise Disrupted: North Carolina, 1862-1901



Raleigh, N.C. – On Friday, January 25, the North Carolina Museum of History unveiled its newest exhibit, [*Freedom! A Promise Disrupted: North Carolina, 1862-1901*](#). This exhibit depicts the struggle that newly freed African Americans faced to maintain their freedom in the post-Civil War and Reconstruction Era of North Carolina.

Freedom! A Promise Disrupted: North Carolina, 1862-1901, allows visitors to step through time and view how the Civil War and Reconstruction affected North Carolina’s citizens. This powerful exhibit highlights African American’s flight to freedom and their involvement in the Civil War.

“North Carolina suffered under slavery for two hundred years until the 13th Amendment was ratified in 1865,” said Earl L. Ijames, curator of American-American history at the N.C. Museum of History. “After the Civil War formerly enslaved people formed families, established churches, educational institutions and communities for the first time in history only to see racism and segregation reverse those gains by the turn of the 20th century.”

Following the Civil War, African American citizens pushed for Radical Reconstruction that would guarantee them more rights and protections under the law. This was followed by heavy and violent white backlash. Visitors will be able to follow along with the journey it took for African American citizens to gain equality.

“After the Civil War, African Americans in North Carolina helped to rebuild the nation on a new foundation, one that for a brief moment hoped to fulfill to the promise of liberty for all,” said Susanna Lee, exhibit curator and Associate Professor at North Carolina State University’s Department of History.

The exhibit combines photographs, artwork, and music. *Freedom! A Promise Disrupted: North Carolina, 1862-1901*, will be displayed on the third floor of the North Carolina Museum of History through July 14.

VIDEO: For footage of interviews with Earl L. Ijames, Curator of American-American history, as well, as b-roll, [CLICK HERE](#)

For information about the NC Museum of History, a Smithsonian-affiliated museum, call 919-814-7000 or access ncmuseumofhistory.org or follow on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), or [YouTube](#).

About the NC Museum of History, a Smithsonian Affiliate

The N.C. Museum of History, a Smithsonian Affiliate, is located at 5 E. Edenton Street in downtown Raleigh. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. The museum collects and preserves artifacts of North Carolina history and educates the public on the history of the state and the nation through exhibits and educational programs. Each year more than 400,000 people visit the museum to see some of the 150,000 artifacts in the museum collection. The Museum of History, within the Division of State History Museums, is part of the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

About the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

The NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDNCR) is the state agency with a vision to be the leader in using the state’s natural and cultural resources to build the social, cultural, educational and economic future of North Carolina. NCDNCR’s mission is to improve the quality of life in our state by creating opportunities to experience excellence in the arts, history, libraries and nature in North Carolina by stimulating learning, inspiring creativity, preserving the state’s history, conserving the state’s natural heritage, encouraging recreation and cultural tourism, and promoting economic development.

NCDNCR includes 27 historic sites, seven history museums, two art museums, two science museums, three aquariums and Jennette’s Pier, 39 state parks and recreation areas, the NC Zoo, the nation’s first state-supported Symphony Orchestra, the State Library, the State Archives, the NC Arts Council, State Preservation Office, and the Office of State Archaeology, along with the Division of Land and Water Stewardship. For more information, please call 919-807-7300 or visit www.ncdcr.gov.

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