

February 2, 2016

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Dear xxxxxx,

Curators and educators at the Missouri History Museum are preparing a new exhibit exploring St. Louis's important - and often forgotten - role in our country's civil rights history. Our city's civil rights story is filled with people and events that are complex and compelling and ones that will spark inspiration and dialogue. There is no better time to tell this story, and we need your help.

We are forming an advisory committee to help us plan, produce, and promote this important new exhibit, which is scheduled to open in March 2017. We will meet as a group five or six times over the next year to discuss plans for the exhibit, to read and comment on labels, to review design, to help create a communications plan, and to brainstorm ways to continue the discussion once the exhibit has opened.

We are looking for a team of people who are knowledgeable, creative, and who work well as a team. I am confident that our team and our exhibit will be better because of your service. I hope you will agree to join us. You can reach me at 314-454-3146. We hope to have our first team meeting at the end of February.

Over the past couple of years, the Missouri History Museum has reached more people with more history than we ever have before in our 150-year history. We have seen more people visit our exhibits, more people attend our programs, and more people engage with us online and in the community. It is now time to engage those growing audiences with the civil rights history of this city in a way we never have before - with a 6,000 square foot gallery that explores the court cases and the protests that made a movement; that features the life-long activists as well as those people who joined the movement for short periods of time; that explains to our audience that the civil rights struggle did not begin with Ferguson, nor did it begin at Jefferson Bank.

We have a long, distinguished, complex, and proud history of struggle in our community, and we hope you will help us bring that story to hundreds of thousands of people from our area and beyond.

Thank you,



Dr. Frances Levine
President

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

In March, the Missouri History Museum will open **#1 in Civil Rights: The African American Freedom Struggle in St. Louis**. This exhibit examines the local civil rights movement and the city's leading role in advancing the cause of racial justice.

This exhibition has already received tremendous local support from the educational community and we are grateful for your enthusiasm. We want to use the exhibit to draw faculty from across the region's universities, community colleges, and colleges to create opportunities that will bring students together to create learning tools and dialogue that will live beyond the exhibition.

I'd like to invite you to a reception at the Missouri History Museum to hear more about the exhibit and discuss ways to involve you, our local universities, and the students. Please share this invitation with your colleagues.

I look forward to seeing you!



Frances Levine

Thursday, January 19

Drinks and light hors d'oeuvres: 5:30pm

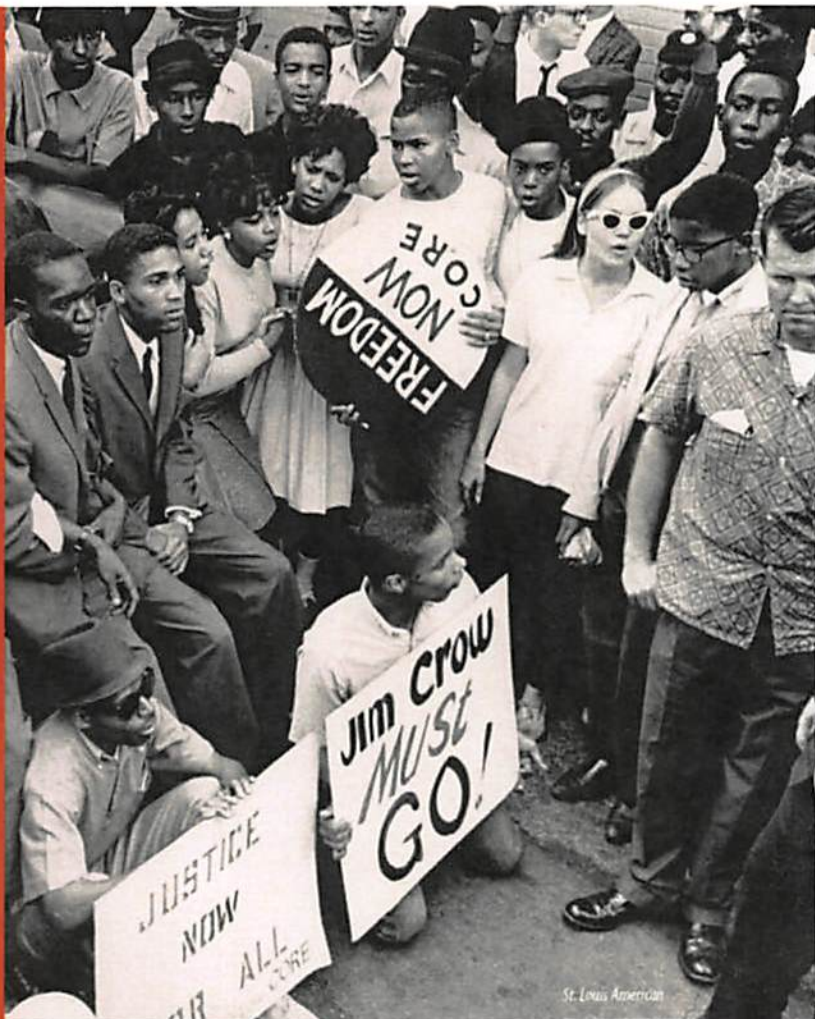
Brief presentation: 6pm

Missouri History Museum
5700 Lindell Blvd.

RSVP: tamaki@mohistory.org or (314) 361-4866

**Missouri
History
Museum**

Lindell and DeBaliviere in Forest Park
mohistory.org/civilrights



March 11, 2017–April 15, 2018

Free admission

#1 in CIVIL RIGHTS

The African American Freedom Struggle in St. Louis

PRESENTED BY



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***"If one American city had to be chosen for a complete study of the civil rights movement –
that city would properly be St. Louis."
– Judge Nathan B. Young***



1 in Civil Rights
The African American Freedom Struggle in St. Louis
March 11, 2017 – April 15, 2018

#1 in Civil Rights: The African American Freedom Struggle in St. Louis examines the local civil rights movement and the city's leading role in advancing the cause of racial justice. From ground-level activism to ground-breaking court rulings, St. Louis has been front and center in contesting racial inequities. *#1 in Civil Rights* uncovers a history that's compelling and complex, but that all too often has been overlooked in the telling and retelling of the larger national narrative. That narrative includes four precedent-setting Supreme Court civil rights cases that originated in St. Louis—possibly the most to ever reach the High Court from one source. It also includes events and battles that had significant and lasting impact and that continue to shape the city today.

VISITOR OUTCOMES

- Visitors will recognize that St. Louis has an important civil rights history but that it has often been overlooked.
- Visitors will appreciate the long arc of the struggle for racial equality in this city and in the country at large.
- Visitors will understand how often historic moments that seem unforgettable at the time are, in fact, forgotten.
- Visitors will compare past cases of racial injustice – and the responses to those injustices – to present-day struggles.
- Visitors will be inspired by those who fight what seem like insurmountable odds.

EXHIBIT FEATURES

- Original art works created by local African American artists
- Oral histories that both explain the importance of the civil rights movement in St. Louis and that give eyewitness accounts of some of its biggest moments
- Documents and photos representing everything from battles to end slavery to the events of Ferguson
- Artifacts ranging from a “White Only” sign that hung in St. Louis to the uniform of a member of FIRE, a group formed to fight for the interest of African American firefighters in St. Louis
- A recreated courtroom where visitors can learn about four Supreme Court cases that originated in St. Louis
- Live theater throughout the gallery
- A film featuring the exhibit’s curator discussing the exhibit and why it is important to reflect on St. Louis’s civil rights history
- A feedback station where visitors can leave their own opinions about past civil rights battles and can reflect on continuing struggles today

SECTION OVERVIEWS

Servitude or Freedom (1819-1864)



Histories of the civil rights movement are often limited to a brief period between 1954 and 1968, but battles over equality, freedom, and justice have been part of this country's history since its founding. In the early days of the U.S., most of those conflicts revolved around slavery, including right here in St. Louis.

From open protests and freedom suits to planned rebellions and escapes, blacks in St. Louis, at times with the aid of friendly whites, engaged in individual and collective acts of resistance. St. Louis was home to one of the first civil rights demonstrations in the country, was the site of the historic Dred Scott case and hundreds of other freedom suits, and was the first place in the country where emancipation was declared.

Stories:

Protests over Missouri entering Union as slave state; Freedom Suits including Dred and Harriet Scott, Winny, and Lucy Delaney; fears of rebellion and those who fought for freedom including Elijah Lovejoy and Moses Dickson; John and Mary Meachum who helped enslaved people buy their freedom and escape through the Underground Railroad; John Freemont and the issuing of the first Emancipation Proclamation in St. Louis.

Features:

Oral histories, database of freedom suits, visitor interactive asking visitors to choose which road to freedom they would have taken, original artist portraits.

A Northern City in a Southern State (1865-1916)



The end of the Civil War didn't bring the end of racial conflict. Rather, it was a low point in American race relations characterized by extreme white hostility toward blacks. St. Louis was often called "a Northern city in a Southern state" and included a unique blend of the two regions.

Black citizenship was often accepted, but black equality was not. This led African Americans to press harder for fair and equal treatment.

One of the most dramatic racial battles in St. Louis was over the integration of the streetcar system. Black St. Louisans, and one man in particular, fought for equal access to streetcars throughout the 1860s. As the country moved toward the 20th century, new organizations formed to make sure the city was living up to its promise, and white resistance showed how difficult these battles were going to be.

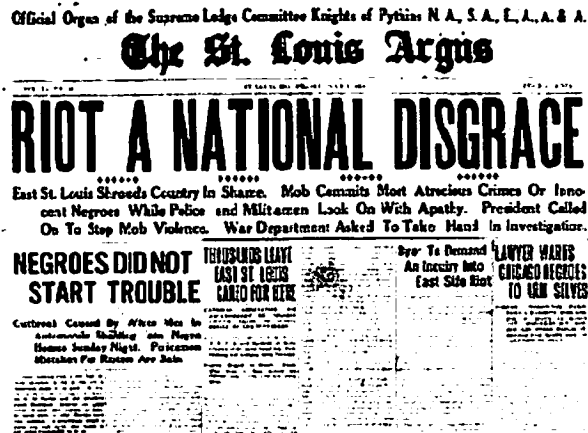
Stories:

Slavery abolished in the state at the Missouri Constitutional Convention in St. Louis; James Milton Turner and the Missouri Equal Rights League lobbied for African Americans to be given the vote; Charlton Tandy fought to integrate the St. Louis streetcar system; St. Louis was segregated more by custom and practice than by law but those were equally effective; the local branch of the NAACP was established in 1914 with a white man serving as president; St. Louisans voted for an official segregation law in 1916 despite civil rights activists organized efforts to defeat the measure.

Features:

Missouri Emancipation Proclamation, artist portraits, streetcar interactive, White Only sign, NAACP fan, 1916 segregation ordinance and related propaganda.

Massacre at East St. Louis (1917)



On July 2, 1917, one of the deadliest riots in U.S. history took place in East St. Louis. White rioters burned more than 200 homes and destroyed hundreds of loaded freight cars belonging to the Southern Railway. Between 40 and 200 black people were killed, and approximately 600 were left homeless. Many more fled across the Mississippi River to seek safety in St. Louis.

The East St. Louis riot, sparked by white concerns over jobs as more and more blacks migrated from the South, remains

one of the darkest moments in the region's freedom struggle. It drew national attention to the area and foreshadowed racial conflicts that would linger for decades to come. Today, the East St. Louis riot serves as an example of how events that seem permanently burned into the national consciousness can be quickly forgotten.

Stories:

One of deadliest riots in U.S. history happens on July 2, 1917, in East St. Louis; Urban League established in St. Louis in 1918 when the Committee for Social Services Among

Colored People officially became a branch of the league; congressman L. C. Dyer introduced an anti-lynching bill in 1918 as a response to the riots.

Features:

Photography from the riot, infographic giving context for riots, oral history station where visitors can listen to several first-hand accounts including those from national figures, headlines from various newspapers and a full copy of the *Argus* from the day after the riots.

Fighting for Democracy at Home (1918-1941)



World War I was seen as a global, yet distant, conflict, but at home the war had a direct effect on race relations. Black Americans who'd fought to keep the world safe for democracy were less willing to accept a gradual approach to full citizenship at home. As masses of African Americans moved from

the South to the North to seek a better life, the demands for equitable treatment increased. Racial violence following the war exposed the contradiction between the U.S. as a worldwide model of democratic ideals and a country that continued to enforce black inequality.

In St. Louis, African American leaders challenged political parties, employers, universities, and the government to live up to the ideals that the country was promoting across the globe.

Stories:

During and following WWI African Americans less willing to accept a gradualist approach to full citizenship; Joseph Mitchell, founder of the St. Louis Argus, calls a group of community leaders together to say Republican party cannot take black support for granted; the Negro Bar Association forms in 1922 and becomes one of the most important civil rights organizations in the city; "Buy Where You Can Work" campaign instrumental in convincing more employers to hire African Americans; the Colored Clerks Circle, formed in St. Louis in 1932, initiates a number of economic boycotts of stores; Douglass University established in 1934 to educate African Americans who could not attend any other university in St. Louis at the time; Lloyd Gaines, a graduate of Vashon High School, sues for entrance into the University of Missouri's Law School.

Features:

Artist portraits, photography of important civil rights organizations of the period; oral histories about the Buy Where You Can Work campaign and the Colored Clerk's Circle; oral histories about the Gaines case.

Victory Abroad, Victory at Home (1941-1947)

As the U.S. was embroiled in another world war overseas, battles over basic human rights were being waged at home. In 1941 the March on Washington Movement was born, and some of its biggest rallies took place in downtown St. Louis. The next year, Cleo Wright was lynched in Sikeston, Missouri, prompting both anger and activism in St. Louis. Local protesters tackled issues of workplace discrimination and participated in some of the country's earliest lunch counter sit-ins. Other protests happened at universities and in theatres.

Because all of these battles occurred while the country was fighting totalitarians in Europe and Asia, the contradiction between fighting for democracy and liberty overseas while denying basic rights at home was once again brought into sharp relief.

Stories:

The lynching of Cleo Wright in Sikeston reverberated throughout the state and in St. Louis; the March on Washington movement sees some of its biggest events in St. Louis, March on Washington organizers aimed protests at Carter Carburetor, a plant that hired 3,000 people, none of them black; Southwestern Bell also picketed; Citizens Civil Rights Committee formed in 1944 and launched some of the earliest lunch counter sit-ins in the country; Saint Louis University desegregated in 1944; Henry Winfield Wheeler known as Mr. Civil Rights because of his daily protests of the segregated American Theater and other efforts.

Features:

Cover of *Hitlerite Crime Against America* pamphlet describing the Sikeston lynching, March on Washington program, dramatic photography of March on Washington events and Carter Carburetor protests, photo album with additional photos of March on Washington and related protests, oral histories, artist portraits.

The Continuing Struggle (1947-1952)



In the years following World War II, St. Louis became the site of one of the most important civil rights cases in the country's history. J. D. and Ethel Shelley were simply trying to find a better neighborhood in which to raise their six children when they set in motion a case that would make its way to the U.S. Supreme Court and forever change the nation's housing laws. At the same time, St. Louis civil rights activists were beginning local demonstrations about employment and education—long before similar efforts gained traction nationally.

Despite victories, there were always signs pointing to the difficulties of achieving racial equality. One of those signs came on June 21, 1949, when an order to integrate the city's pools resulted in a race riot at Fairground Park.

Stories:

Parochial schools are integrated in 1947; in a case that starts in St. Louis, the Supreme Court unanimously decided in 1948 that restrictive covenants are a violation of the 14th Amendment; CORE, an interracial group of educators and students interested in social issues, forms in 1945 and becomes a force for civil rights in the St. Louis area; when the city of St. Louis announced that it would be desegregating its pools, a group of white St. Louisans reacted with violence and intimidation at Fairground Park leading the city to reverse its decision; in 1952, attorney Frankie Freeman filed suit in the U.S. District Court to halt the Housing Authority's practice of segregating public housing.

Features:

Shelley v. Kraemer film, segregated St. Louis map, CORE photos, documents, and oral histories, photos of Fairground Park race riot, quilt depicting the life and career of Frankie Freeman.



The Legacy of Gaines (1954)

The year 1954 stands out as one of the most important in American civil rights history. The U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* decreed that "separate but equal" could no longer

be the law of the land and that schools across the country would need to integrate. In many ways, the decision was the fruit of *Gaines v. Canada*, the groundbreaking St. Louis case that opened up higher education to black students in 1938.

Following the Brown case, students, faculty, administrators, and communities struggled to figure out how this new system of integrated education would work. St. Louis and surrounding school districts implemented desegregation in the fall of 1955, but the battle for integrated education would continue into the 1960s and 1970s—and right up to today.

Stories:

Brown v. Board of Education decision was the fruits of *Gaines v. Canada*, the groundbreaking St. Louis case; area schools work to integrate following Brown case.

Features:

Documents related to local efforts following Brown, oral history of Patricia McKissack discussing attending newly integrated schools in Kirkwood, excerpt from Guggenheim film *A City Decides*.

Mobilizing for Justice (1955-1967)



St. Louis's modern civil rights movement has been marked by the unrelenting leadership of individuals who have dedicated themselves to organizing groups of committed citizens fighting for the same goals.

Whether it was Bill Clay, Margaret Bush Wilson, and Dr. Fredda Witherspoon organizing the NAACP Youth Council or Percy Green leading the Action Council to Improve Opportunities for Negroes, these individuals became role models for activists throughout the city and the nation. They're also just some of the most visible examples of individual leadership during this period of the civil rights movement in St. Louis. Then, as is true today, countless others worked behind the scenes to ensure the struggle for equality and freedom would continue.

Stories:

Bill Clay was one of the most active and influential civil rights leaders during the late 50s and early 60s; Clay became the first African American from Missouri to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1968; Margaret Bush Wilson, the first female president of the St. Louis City NAACP, and Fedda Witherspoon, a lifetime NAACP member, reorganized the

NAACP Youth Council in 1959; the youth council picketed Scruggs, Vandervoort and Barney and participated at sit-ins and protests at segregated eating facilities throughout the city. Percy Green and Ivory Perry, who led the Jefferson Bank protests while initial leaders were jailed, went on to assume dominant roles in St. Louis civil rights history ushering in a new era of militancy and confrontation; Green went on to form ACTION (Action Council to Improve Opportunities for Negroes), a homegrown organization focused on St. Louis issues with no national body to answer to.

Features:

Photos of Clay; Clay campaign brochures, fliers, and buttons; photos of NAACP leaders; oral history about Scruggs protests; front page of *Argus* covering sit-ins; *Why We Must Raise Hell* book, Ivory Perry buttons, Percy Green's beret and jacket, oral histories.

Jefferson Bank: A Defining Moment (1963)



The largest and most contentious civil rights struggle in St. Louis history began on August 30, 1963. A group of demonstrators decided that they would defy a court order by staging a sit-in at the Jefferson Bank and Trust Company. The sit-in, organized by CORE to protest the bank's refusal to hire African American clerical workers, lasted seven months and resulted in an estimated 500 people being arrested.

Jefferson Bank's record on hiring was in many ways no worse than most businesses, but the bank made itself a target by adamantly refusing to even consider hiring blacks for any jobs other than menial positions. It went so far as to claim no African American in all of St. Louis was qualified to do clerical work. After the long-running protest concluded, the bank relented by hiring six black tellers.

Stories:

The actions of a group of demonstrators protesting employment discrimination at the Jefferson Bank and Trust Company ignited the largest and most contentious Civil Rights struggle in St. Louis history, one that mobilized hundreds and resulted for the first time in mass arrests.

Features:

Photographs of Jefferson Bank protests, recreated Jefferson Bank environment where visitors can step inside the 1963 demonstrations.

A Memorable Year (1968)



The year 1968 was pivotal for race relations in the U.S. Two African American athletes made national headlines when they raised their fists for Black Power at the Olympics, and both Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Bobby Kennedy were assassinated. Moreover, an official government report said the country was veering toward two societies, separate and unequal, and that erasing this division must become the nation's biggest priority.

In St. Louis another housing case made its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, black firefighters organized the Firefighters Institute for Racial Equality, and thousands of people—black and white—peacefully marched from the grounds of the Gateway Arch to Forest Park to honor the life of Dr. King.

Stories:

The Supreme Court rules that Barbara and Joseph Lee Jones were illegally denied the purchase of a home in the Paddock Woods subdivision of North St. Louis because Mr. Jones was African American; Firefighters Institute for Racial Equality forms in 1968 to advocate for the hiring and promotion of African American firefighters; more than 50,000 St. Louisans marched in a peaceful, 8-mile march in the wake of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Features:

Photographs of Barbara and Joseph Lee Jones, fair housing pamphlets and documents, FIRE gear, oral histories, photographs and buttons from MLK march.

Black Power (1965-1970s)



The national Black Power movement stressed black self-determination and control of African American communities, and a number of St. Louis groups identified with at least some aspects of that philosophy. These groups included the Black Liberators, the Black Nationalists, and the Jeff Vander Lou Community Action Group.

The Black United Front, a coalition of organizations that included ACTION, CORE, the West End Community Conference, representatives from the Pruitt-Igoe apartments, and others, was formed in 1968. The group was involved in a number of civil rights actions, including

lobbying St. Louis mayor Alfonso Cervantes to address African American poverty. Mayor Cervantes shot back that many black citizens didn't have the work habits or the energy to succeed and that the government had already tried to help such people. His response angered the African American community and increased St. Louis's interest in the Black Power movement.

Stories:

The Black Power movement stressed self-determination and control of African American Communities; a number of groups in St. Louis, including the Black Liberators, the DuBois Club, the Jeff Vander Lou Community Action Group, and the Zulu 1200s, identified with aspects of the philosophy of Black Power.

Features:

Photographs, militant ribbons, oral history.

Ferguson: Moment or Movement (2014-Present)



On August 9, 2014, white police officer Darren Wilson shot and killed African American teenager Michael Brown. That local tragedy helped spark a nationwide movement and reinvigorated calls for economic justice, police reform, and measures to address a range of issues that continue to plague communities of color. For many, Ferguson has become synonymous with a new civil rights movement and a broad new civil rights agenda. But questions remain.

What is the most effective way to battle injustice? Were the Ferguson protests part of St. Louis's civil rights struggle, or do they represent something else? Is this moment, so seared into our memory today, destined to be forgotten like so much of St. Louis's civil rights history?

Stories:

Shooting of Michael Brown on August 9, 2014, and subsequent protests; the question is, was this a moment or has it sparked a new civil rights movement.

Features:

Ferguson mural, painting, multi-media piece, several oral histories, interactive for visitors to share their thoughts about St. Louis's civil rights history and how Ferguson fits into that history.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Learn more about the exhibit, associated programs, and the ACTivist Theater Project
 - <http://mohistory.org/civilrights>
- Questions about the Exhibit
 - Gwen Moore, Curator of Urban Landscape and Community Identity
 - gmoore@mohistory.org
 - 746-4539
- Questions about the ACTivist Theater Project
 - Elizabeth Pickard, Director of Interpretive Programs
 - epickard@mohistory.org
 - 361-4305
- Questions about Programs
 - Emily Underwood, Director of Community Programs
 - emu@mohistory.org
 - 361-7293
- Volunteer as a Gallery Attendant
 - <http://www.mohistory.org/volunteers>
- Schedule a College Class Visit/Tour
 - <http://mohistory.org/college-programs>
- Schedule a K-12 Class Visit/Tour
 - <http://mohistory.org/schools>
- Do your own Research
 - <http://www.mohistory.org/lrc-home>
- Search our Collections
 - <http://collections.mohistory.org/search/splash>

#1 IN CIVIL RIGHTS OPENING REPORT

#1 in Civil Rights: The African American Freedom Struggle in St. Louis is one of the most important exhibits we have ever created at the Missouri History Museum. It is the result of countless hours of work done by a countless number of staff and collaborators. On March 11, we shared the exhibit with the public for the first time. The reaction has been overwhelming. We can now see that this will not just be one of the most important exhibits we have ever created, we can tell that it will also be one of the most successful. We've seen that through:

- The numbers:
 - More than 5,000 people saw the exhibit in its first four days.
 - 350 people attended the VIP premiere on March 9.
- Visitor reactions:
 - Many visitors have been moved to tears by the exhibit.
 - Many have already asked us to make *#1 in Civil Rights* a permanent exhibit.
 - One visitor said she had been to the Smithsonian's new National Museum of African American History and Culture twice and that *#1 in Civil Rights* was of the same caliber. She said we could pick up our exhibit and move it to the Smithsonian in DC and it would fit right in.
 - Many visitors have said this is the best exhibit we have ever done.
- Social media comments:
 - "Spent this morning at the new Civil Rights exhibit at MO History Museum. If you are in St. Louis in the next 14 months, make time to visit. If you live here, go often. I'll definitely be back with my kids, students, and others. Such an important, and too often untold, part of our history and present, from 1820 through Ferguson and beyond. "
 - "What an outstanding exhibit the Missouri History Museum has curated. Thanks Gwen Moore!"
 - "I was there yesterday. It was a moving exhibit!"
- Media reports and reviews:
 - The opening of the exhibit has been covered by KSDK, the Riverfront Times, the Belleville News-Democrat, St. Louis Public Radio, The St. Louis American, St. Louis Magazine, and The St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Three quotes from those segments/articles:
 - "It was impossible not to have a sense of pride while walking with curator Gwen Moore through the exhibit hall as the Missouri History Museum was putting the finishing touches on their *#1 in Civil Rights: The African American Freedom Struggle in St. Louis* exhibit, which opens this weekend and continues through next April. As a member of the *St. Louis American* team, an African-American and a native St. Louisan, being

surrounded by the city's rich history at the forefront of the Civil Rights movement was overwhelming." – The St. Louis American

- "Long before Ferguson, St. Louis was an epicenter of the Civil Rights movement, from activism to landmark court decisions." – St. Louis Magazine
- "Ironically, for much of its history, the role of St. Louis in the fight to secure equality under the law for black Americans has been underappreciated or overlooked. Setting the record straight is among the goals of a new exhibition at the Missouri History Museum." – The St. Louis Post-Dispatch

#1 IN CIVIL RIGHTS MID-APRIL REPORT

#1 in Civil Rights: The African American Freedom Struggle in St. Louis has been open for a little more than a month and has achieved an amazing level of engagement and recognition. Visitors have written us notes and taken to social media to praise the depth of the history and the dramatic nature of the storytelling. The exhibit is being seen by more than 1,000 people a day and is sparking important discussions about the role that race has played in our city's history. Here are some indications of its success:

- The numbers:
 - More than 40,000 visitors have seen the exhibit since it opened on March 11, an average of 1,039 visitors a day.
 - Nearly 800 students have seen the exhibit as part of school field trips, and close to 3,000 more are already scheduled for future visits.
- Recent reactions:
 - From a teacher who left a note in the gallery:
 - “As a history teacher I’m sad I wasn’t taught about St. Louis’s civil rights history. I’m excited because I will be able to educate my students on the history of the city in which they live.”
 - From the author of the upcoming civil rights children’s book:
 - “I just had to drop a note and tell you I finally made it to the exhibit (after lo, these long months of anticipating it and writing my own take on it for the kids’ book!)...and it is spectacular. I mean, I knew the basic outline of what was coming, and it still completely took my breath away. I’ll have to come back a few times to absorb it all, but I wanted to congratulate you both on such an important achievement. I’m telling everyone I know to see it, and taking a few back with me each time, too! Bravo to you both. I’m so proud to have association with this project.”
 - From social media:
 - “Wow! St. Louis peeps, get down to the Missouri History Museum to see the current exhibit, #1 in Civil Rights: the African American Struggle in St. Louis.” It is so unbelievably deep and rich in documented history with the struggle for liberation of black people in this city beginning with slavery up to Ferguson. On the real, there is so much information I did not know. I am feeling some kind of way that this was not part of the education curriculum for many of us in St. Louis that attended schools post integration. St. Louis has always been lit for progressive struggle and activism. This is a must see exhibition!”

- “The civil rights exhibit deserves to last until no one needs a memory, perhaps forever. The story of heroism and commitment to making us, the world, worthy of the sacrifices commemorated here. Make it permanent!”
- “I’ve lived in St. Louis most of my life, but the history depicted here was hardly taught. I am white — saw the discrimination first hand — but wasn’t schooled to understand the poison of racism — the real brutality of it. This is a powerful exhibit — and the actor was a wonderful addition. We’re not in a post-racial America — it’s critically important that these messages continue to be shared.”
- “I haven’t gone to the history museum often since moving to St. Louis over 10 years ago. Wow!!! Is that going to change. I’m not sure if they have a new director or board, but whomever or whatever has changed, it’s totally gotten better. So good.... This trip was prompted by the Civil Rights exhibition. So, I grew up in NJ. Words and concepts like, "the Missouri Compromise" and "Dred Scott" were taught in small modules to illustrate the larger American narrative. This exhibit chronicles the black experience in St. Louis from being a Free Territory to Fergusson. The exhibit is interactive and has prominent St. Louis natives portrayed by actors. This is a top notch exhibit!!! Seriously, while not on scale as the Lincoln Presidential Library, it could totally stand next to it in the innovation it uses. I was more impressed with this museum than I was in paid museums in D.C. Just incredible that this museum exists and it is free. Top notch....”
- Examples of recent media/online coverage:
 - <https://www.wheretraveler.com/st-louis/st-louis-bold-civil-rights-claim>
 - <http://www.siue.edu/news/2017/04/PrinceWells.shtml#.WPd3FVxCec4.email>
 - <http://www.constructforstl.org/is-st-louis-really-1-in-civil-rights-the-missouri-history-museum-makes-a-compelling-case/>
 - http://www.laduenews.com/arts-and-culture/features/missouri-history-museum-introduces-civil-rights-exhibit/article_b1f47cba-09dc-57e9-9357-385de83ec674.html
 - http://www.stlamerican.com/news/columnists/guest_columnists/father-to-daughter-reflections-on-in-civil-rights-at-the/article_1c4f9fde-23a0-11e7-9608-b3893d7a5be3.html
 - <http://www.ksdk.com/entertainment/television/show-me-st-louis/bringing-our-citys-history-to-life/426154570>

#1 in CIVIL RIGHTS

The African American Freedom Struggle in St. Louis



“If one American city
had to be chosen for a
complete study of the
civil rights movement –
that city would properly
be St. Louis.”

— Judge Nathan B. Young,
co-founder of *The St. Louis American* newspaper

EXHIBIT FEATURES

- ◊ Original art works created by local African American artists
- ◊ More than 30 oral histories that explain the importance of this city's civil rights movement and that give eyewitness accounts of some of its biggest moments
- ◊ Documents and photos representing everything from battles to end slavery to the events of Ferguson
- ◊ Artifacts ranging from a "White Only" sign that hung in St. Louis to the uniform of a member of FIRE, a group formed to fight for the interest of African American firefighters in St. Louis
- ◊ A recreated courtroom where visitors can learn about four Supreme Court cases that originated in St. Louis
- ◊ Live theater throughout the gallery
- ◊ A film featuring the exhibit's curator discussing the exhibit and why it is important to reflect on St. Louis's civil rights history
- ◊ A feedback station where visitors can leave their own opinions about past civil rights battles and can reflect on continuing struggles today

The floor plan illustrates the complex layout of the World Trade Center site in 2002. Key features include:

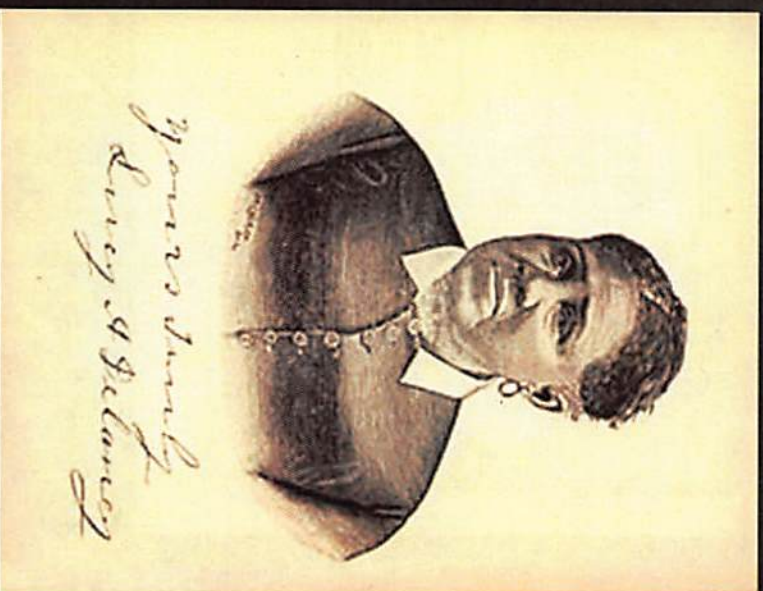
- Structural Elements:** The plan shows the structural grid, including columns and beams, and the location of the Twin Towers (1 WTC and 2 WTC).
- Rooms and Spaces:** Numerous rooms are labeled, including offices, corridors, and specialized spaces like the "11A. Sanitary or Restroom" and "11A. Storage or Warehouse".
- Corridors and Stairs:** The plan shows the network of corridors and stairs, including the "11A. Corridor" and "11A. Stair".
- Legend:** A legend in the bottom right corner defines symbols used throughout the plan, such as "Elevator", "Stair", "Door", and "Window".
- Orientation:** The plan includes a north arrow and a scale bar to provide context and orientation.

SERVITUDE OR FREEDOM

1819-1864

Histories of the civil rights movement are often limited to a brief period between 1954 and 1968, but battles over equality, freedom, and justice have been part of this country's history since its founding. In the early days of the U.S., most of those conflicts revolved around slavery, including right here in St. Louis.

From open protests and freedom suits to planned rebellions and escapes, blacks in St. Louis, at times with the aid of friendly whites, engaged in individual and collective acts of resistance. St. Louis was home to one of the first civil rights demonstrations in the country, was the site of the historic Dred Scott case and hundreds of other freedom suits, and was the first place in the country where emancipation was declared.



A NORTHERN CITY IN A SOUTHERN STATE

1865-1916

The end of the Civil War didn't bring the end of racial conflict. Rather, it was a low point in American race relations characterized by extreme white hostility toward blacks. St. Louis was often called "a Northern city in a Southern state" and included a unique blend of the two regions. Black citizenship was often accepted, but black equality was not. This led African Americans to press harder for fair and equal treatment.

One of the most dramatic racial battles in St. Louis was over the integration of the streetcar system. Black St. Louisans, and one man in particular, fought for equal access to streetcars throughout the 1860s. As the country moved toward the 20th century, new organizations formed to make sure the city was living up to its promise, and white resistance showed how difficult these battles were going to be.



MASSACRE AT EAST ST. LOUIS 1917

On July 2, 1917, one of the deadliest riots in U.S. history took place in East St. Louis. White rioters burned more than 200 homes and destroyed hundreds of loaded freight cars belonging to the Southern Railway. Between 40 and 200 black people were killed, and approximately 600 were left homeless. Many more fled across the Mississippi River to seek safety in St. Louis.

The East St. Louis riot, sparked by white concerns over jobs as more and more blacks migrated from the South, remains one of the darkest moments in the region's freedom struggle. It drew national attention to the area and foreshadowed racial conflicts that would linger for decades to come. Today, the East St. Louis riot serves as an example of how events that seem permanently burned into the national consciousness can be quickly forgotten.

Official Organ of the Supreme Lodge Committee Knights of Pythias N. A., S. A., E. A., A. & A.

The St. Louis Argus

WED. JULY 25, 1917

RIOT A NATIONAL DISGRACE

East St. Louis Shows Country in Shame. Mob Commits Most Atrocious Crimes On Innocent Negroes While Police and Militiamen Look On With Apathy. President Called On To Stop Mob Violence. War Department Asked To Take Hand in Investigation.

NEGROES DID NOT START TROUBLE

Colliers' Claimed By White Men In Automobile Stabbing and Negroes Burned Sunday Night. Policemen Murders For Months Acre Again.

THOUSANDS HAVE LAST ST. LOUIS CARDS FOR HERE

Bye To Demand LAMER MARRS An Inquiry Into CHICAGO KIDNAPERS East Side Riot TO NEW SILVER

THE ST. LOUIS ARGUS

WED. JULY 25, 1917

PRICE 10 CENTS

FIGHTING FOR DEMOCRACY AT HOME

1918-1941

World War I was seen as a global, yet distant, conflict, but at home the war had a direct effect on race relations. Black Americans who'd fought to keep the world safe for democracy were less willing to accept a gradual approach to full citizenship at home. As masses of African Americans moved from the South to the North to seek a better life, the demands for equitable treatment increased. Racial violence following the war exposed the contradiction between the U.S. as a worldwide model of democratic ideals and a country that continued to enforce black inequality.

In St. Louis, African American leaders challenged political parties, employers, universities, and the government to live up to the ideals that the country was promoting across the globe.



VICTORY ABROAD, VICTORY AT HOME

1941-1947

As the U.S. was embroiled in another world war overseas, battles over basic human rights were being waged at home. In 1941 the March on Washington Movement was born, and some of its biggest rallies took place in downtown St. Louis. The next year, Cleo Wright was lynched in Sikeston, Missouri, prompting both anger and activism in St. Louis. Local protesters tackled issues of workplace discrimination and participated in some of the country's earliest lunch counter sit-ins. Other protests happened at universities and in theatres.

Because all of these battles occurred while the country was fighting totalitarians in Europe and Asia, the contradiction between fighting for democracy and liberty overseas while denying basic rights at home was once again brought into sharp relief.



THE CONTINUING STRUGGLE 1947-1952

In the years following World War II, St. Louis became the site of one of the most important civil rights cases in the country's history. J. D. and Ethel Shelley were simply trying to find a better neighborhood in which to raise their six children when they set in motion a case that would make its way to the U.S. Supreme Court and forever change the nation's housing laws. At the same time, St. Louis civil rights activists were beginning local demonstrations about employment and education—long before similar efforts gained traction nationally.

Despite victories, there were always signs pointing to the difficulties of achieving racial equality. One of those signs came on June 21, 1949, when an order to integrate the city's pools resulted in a race riot at Fairground Park.



THE LEGACY OF GAINES 1954

The year 1954 stands out as one of the most important in American civil rights history. The U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* decreed that “separate but equal” could no longer be the law of the land and that schools across the country would need to integrate. In many ways, the decision was the fruit of *Gaines v. Canada*, the groundbreaking St. Louis case that opened up higher education to black students in 1938.

Following the Brown case, students, faculty, administrators, and communities struggled to figure out how this new system of integrated education would work. St. Louis and surrounding school districts implemented desegregation in the fall of 1955, but the battle for integrated education would continue into the 1960s and 1970s—and right up to today.

DEMANDS EXPRESSION:

Community Frustrated Over School Policies

THE ST. LOUIS

★ AMERICAN ★

A NEWSPAPER FOR ALL AMERICANS

7607 19 GRAFT

Parent Favor
Demonstration

The newspaper will not be able to continue its publication unless it is able to raise the necessary funds to cover its operating expenses. It is a plea for the support of the community and the business world. The newspaper is a non-profit organization and its survival depends on the generosity of its readers and subscribers. It is a plea for the support of the community and the business world. The newspaper is a non-profit organization and its survival depends on the generosity of its readers and subscribers.

MOBILIZING FOR JUSTICE

1955-1967

St. Louis's modern civil rights movement has been marked by the unrelenting leadership of individuals who have dedicated themselves to organizing groups of committed citizens fighting for the same goals.

Whether it was Bill Clay, Margaret Bush Wilson, and Dr. Freda Witherspoon organizing the NAACP Youth Council or Percy Green leading the Action Council to Improve Opportunities for Negroes, these individuals became role models for activists throughout the city and the nation. They're also just some of the most visible examples of individual leadership during this period of the civil rights movement in St. Louis. Then, as is true today, countless others worked behind the scenes to ensure the struggle for equality and freedom would continue.



JEFFERSON BANK PROTESTS

1963

The largest and most contentious civil rights struggle in St. Louis history began on August 30, 1963. A group of demonstrators decided that they would defy a court order by staging a sit-in at the Jefferson Bank and Trust Company. The sit-in, organized by CORE to protest the bank's refusal to hire African American clerical workers, lasted seven months and resulted in an estimated 500 people being arrested.

Jefferson Bank's record on hiring was in many ways no worse than most businesses, but the bank made itself a target by adamantly refusing to even consider hiring blacks for any jobs other than menial positions. It went so far as to claim no African American in all of St. Louis was qualified to do clerical work. After the long-running protest concluded, the bank relented by hiring six black tellers.

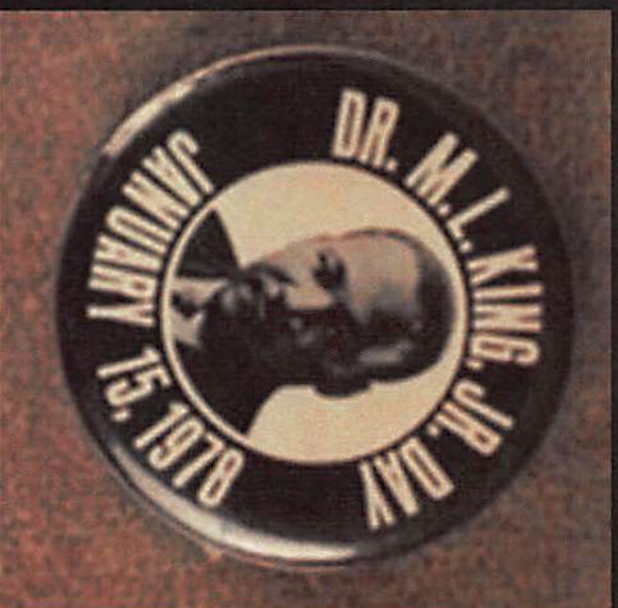


A MEMORABLE YEAR

1968

The year 1968 was pivotal for race relations in the U.S. Two African American athletes made national headlines when they raised their fists for Black Power at the Olympics, and both Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Bobby Kennedy were assassinated. Moreover, an official government report said the country was veering toward two societies, separate and unequal, and that erasing this division must become the nation's biggest priority.

In St. Louis another housing case made its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, black firefighters organized the Firefighters Institute for Racial Equality, and thousands of people—black and white—peacefully marched from the grounds of the Gateway Arch to Forest Park to honor the life of Dr. King.



BLACK POWER

1965-1970s

The national Black Power movement stressed black self-determination and control of African American communities, and a number of St. Louis groups identified with at least some aspects of that philosophy. These groups included the Black Liberators, the Black Nationalists, and the Jeff Vander Lou Community Action Group.

The Black United Front, a coalition of organizations that included ACTION, CORE, the West End Community Conference, representatives from the Pruitt-Iggoe apartments, and others, was formed in 1968. The group was involved in a number of civil rights actions, including lobbying St. Louis mayor Alfonso Cervantes to address African American poverty. Mayor Cervantes shot back that many black citizens didn't have the work habits or the energy to succeed and that the government had already tried to help such people. His response angered the African American community and increased St. Louis's interest in the Black Power movement.



FERGUSON: MOMENT OR MOVEMENT

2014-Present

On August 9, 2014, white police officer Darren Wilson shot and killed African American teenager Michael Brown. That local tragedy helped spark a nationwide movement and reinvigorated calls for economic justice, police reform, and measures to address a range of issues that continue to plague communities of color. For many, Ferguson has become synonymous with a new civil rights movement and a broad new civil rights agenda. But questions remain.

What is the most effective way to battle injustice? Were the Ferguson protests part of St. Louis's civil rights struggle, or do they represent something else? Is this moment, so seared into our memory today, destined to be forgotten like so much of St. Louis's civil rights history?



