

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Gallery Guide FEBRUARY 2020

WELCOME TO THE VALENTINE

Our mission is to engage, educate, and challenge a diverse audience by collecting, preserving, and interpreting Richmond's history. Use this guide to discover, celebrate and reflect on some of the stories of black Richmonders on display throughout the museum.

MAIN LOBBY CASE

Section of rope, 1890/Section of rope, 2019

In our main lobby, you will find two pieces of rope that tell very different stories, both related to the black experience in Richmond; one piece of rope was used to haul the Lee Monument on Monument Avenue, while the other was used to unveil the Kehinde Wiley statue.

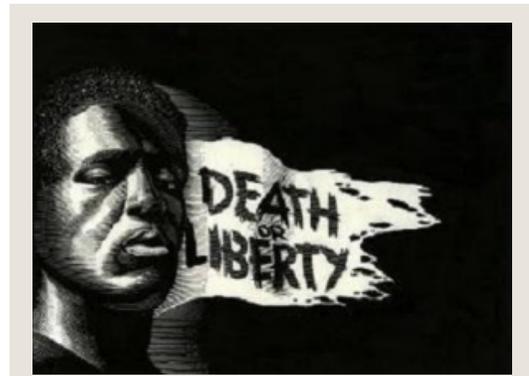


THIS IS RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

In our main exhibition you will find stories of enslavement and rebellion, tragedy and triumph. Walk the aisles and open the drawers to find the items listed below.

Why the Fall Line? Leg Shackles ca. 1825

Richmond was an integral player in the domestic slave trade from our beginning. By the 1850s, the slave trade had become the largest form of commerce in Richmond. This system was abolished at the end of the Civil War. How do black people power the city's economy today?



Who Has a Voice? Gabriel Prosser 1993

Gabriel (1776-1800), enslaved by Thomas Prosser, plotted to seize Richmond and free himself and others under a banner emblazoned with "Death or Liberty." The failure of the American Revolutionary War to free enslaved Africans created an environment ripe for rebellion. On August 30, 1800, a betrayal and heavy rains caused the plot to collapse. Gabriel and his cohorts were publicly hanged in Richmond.

What Do We Value? Ebenezer Baptist Church Plate 1958

This plate commemorates the centennial anniversary of the 1858 dedication of Ebenezer Baptist Church (founded as Third African Baptist Church). Following Emancipation (1865), this Jackson Ward church made educating freedmen a priority. It operated Richmond's first public school for black children, starting in 1866.

Who Has a Voice? Woolworth's Lunch Counter and Stools ca. 1950

On February 1, 1960, student activists began sit-ins at the segregated lunch counter of F. W. Woolworth's in Greensboro, North Carolina. On February 20, 1960, Virginia Union University students started a similar sit-in at Woolworth's on E. Broad Street in Richmond. By the summer of 1963, more than 100 of Richmond's 400 restaurants and cafés had integrated. Have you ever considered protesting in support of a cause you care about?

Where Do We Live? Robinson's Barber Shop Chair from Fulton, 1910s

Charles Robinson (1905-1910), a second generation African-American barber, owned Robinson's Barber Shop in the Fulton neighborhood. The shop served white customers during segregation, pulling down the shades when attending African-American family members. *Open the drawer below the chair to learn more.*



What Do We Produce? Interior of St. Luke Penny Savings Bank early-20th Century

In 1903, the St. Luke Penny Savings Bank opened in Jackson Ward. Started by Maggie L. Walker (1864-1934), it was one of the country's first black-owned banks. Patrons accessed services denied at white-owned financial institutions while supporting the African-American community.

Also of Interest...

Our newest exhibitions, *#BallotBattle: Richmond's Social Struggle for Suffrage* and *Voices from Richmond's Hidden Epidemic*, explore different facets of the black experience in Richmond. While *#BallotBattle* explores how five Richmonders, including prominent black leaders John Mitchell, Jr. and Maggie Walker responded to the fight for women's suffrage, *Voices* provides a nuanced look at Richmond's HIV/AIDS crisis, highlighting the often-untold stories of how this disease has dramatically impacted Richmond's African American community.

What else can you find in in the museum about black history? Were you surprised by what you saw today? Did you learn anything new? Share your discoveries with us online [@thevalentineRVA](https://twitter.com/thevalentineRVA).

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