



Black Lives Matter, Black Culture Matters

Hope College Kruizenga Art Museum

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Table of Contents

Exhibition Introduction: Black Lives Matter, Black Culture Matters.....	1
Section 1: Emancipation Unfulfilled.....	2
Section 2: The Great Migration	12
Section 3: Fighting for Equality and Justice.....	20
Section 4: Black Pride to Black Lives Matter	28
Section 5: Celebrating African American Art and Culture.....	35

Black Lives Matter, Black Culture Matters

"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

-James Baldwin

The phrase "Black Lives Matter" first appeared as a hashtag on social media in July 2013 following the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the death of Trayvon Martin, an African American teen who was fatally shot by Zimmerman in 2012 while walking home from a convenience store in Sanford, Florida. It subsequently became the rallying cry of a national protest movement that emerged in 2014 after the police killings of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri and Eric Garner in New York City. Over the past six years, the Black Lives Matter movement has continued to evolve, and is now a driving force in the national effort to identify and counteract the effects of systemic racism not only in the criminal justice system, but also in education, jobs, health care and housing.

The name Black Lives Matter is not meant to suggest that other lives do not matter or matter less than Black lives. Rather, it emphasizes that Black Americans continue disproportionately to experience injustice and inequality as a result of specific political, social, economic and cultural forces that in many cases have existed in this country for centuries. The name also affirms the numerous positive contributions that Black people have made to many areas of American life and culture, from art, literature and music to film, food, and fashion, among others. Black Lives Matter because Black people have played an essential and valuable role in making the United States the nation it is today.

This exhibition is divided into five sections that address a variety of topics in African American history and culture from the end of the Civil War to the present. It does not pretend to be comprehensive, but is offered in the hope that it will lead to contemplation, conversation and ultimately change. The artworks in the exhibition all belong to the permanent collection of the Kruizenga Art Museum. Most of the artworks have been acquired over the past six years as part of the museum's mission to educate, engage and inspire the communities of Hope College and West Michigan while fostering the qualities of empathy, tolerance and global understanding that are part of Hope College's mission to provide an outstanding Christian liberal arts education. The museum is immensely grateful to all the donors who made this exhibition possible: Dr. Ronald '62 and Mrs. Gerri Vander Molen, Judith Kingma '56 Hazelton, Roberta VanGilder '53 Kaye, Dr. Arthur and Mrs. Kristine Rossof, Dr. Bruce and Mrs. Ann Haight, and David Kamansky and Gerald Wheaton.

Emancipation Unfulfilled

The institution of slavery existed in America from 1619 when the first shipment of enslaved Africans arrived in the Virginia Colony, until 1865 when it was formally abolished by the 13th Amendment to the US Constitution. During the 246 years that slavery existed in America, it was opposed by a variety of individuals and groups who argued that depriving people of their freedom and full humanity was morally wrong and a violation of the Christian duty to love others as ourselves. The efforts of these abolitionists—both Black and white—resulted in slavery being outlawed throughout the northern United States by the first decade of the 19th century, but the practice remained legal in the southern states and ultimately became the most important factor leading to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861.

A crucial turning point in the history of American slavery occurred on January 1, 1863 when President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation and declared all enslaved people in the Confederate States of America to be free. Although the ongoing Civil War prevented Lincoln from immediately enforcing this proclamation, by making the war explicitly about slavery, the Emancipation Proclamation energized the Union side and ensured that slavery would end when the North finally prevailed.

However, the end of slavery was only the beginning of the struggle to achieve true freedom and full civil rights for Black Americans. Despite good intentions, the federal government failed to provide adequate material assistance to formerly enslaved individuals and families after the Civil War, leaving many Black people in the South economically and geographically trapped by poverty. Moreover, although the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution that were passed in the years following the war theoretically gave Black people the full rights of US citizenship, weak federal enforcement of those amendments left many African Americans vulnerable to white supremacist laws at the state and local levels that continued to oppress them well into the 20th century.



Emancipation

Thomas Nast (American, 1840-1902)

1863

Electrotype engraving

Purchased with funds donated by Roberta VanGilder '53 Kaye, 2020.52.1

This print was published in *Harper's Weekly* magazine on January 24, 1863, just three weeks after the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect. The left side of the print features three images depicting some of the horrors of slavery. In the upper left corner, slave catchers with dogs and torches chase a group of terrified Black people who are escaping through a marshy landscape. The middle left scene portrays a slave auction, where an enslaved Black man is being sold while his wife and children beg a white slave buyer to keep their family together. In the lower left corner, a white man whips an enslaved Black woman who is chained to a tree stump, while nearby an enslaved man is branded by yet another white man. The right side of the print features a second set of images depicting the happier conditions that the artist imagines will prevail after slavery is abolished. The upper right corner portrays a simple farmstead where a formerly enslaved family can live freely and independently. The middle right scene depicts a free Black mother sending her children off to be educated in a public school. In the lower right corner, free Black men and women wait in line to receive fair wages for their work. The image in the print's central panel portrays the ultimate goal of emancipation: an intact, multi-generational, prosperous Black family enjoying life together in a comfortably furnished home that includes a Union-brand stove and a picture of Abraham Lincoln hanging on the wall. The central image of the Black family is one of the first in American art to portray African Americans in a positive light without resorting to stereotypes of them as either a brutish or a brutalized people.



Zion School for Colored Children

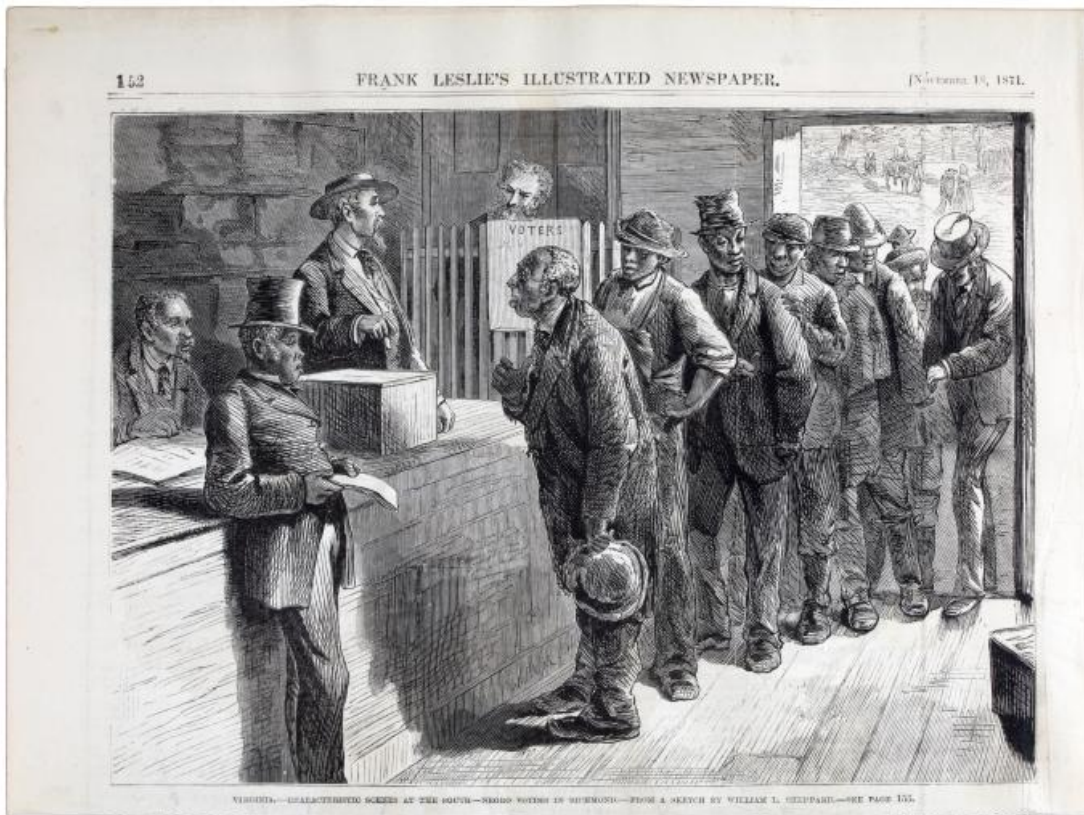
Alfred R. Waud (American, 1828-1891)

1866

Electrotype engraving

Hope College Collection, 2020.47.1

Even before the Civil War ended, the US federal government created the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands (commonly called the Freedmen's Bureau) to provide material aid and services to formerly enslaved people in the South after they were freed. One important initiative led by the Freedmen's Bureau was the establishment of schools to educate these formerly enslaved people and help them understand their rights. The Zion School for Colored Children in Charleston, South Carolina was one such school. Founded in late 1865, the Zion School employed thirteen teachers and enrolled more than 850 students. Rather unusually for a Freedmen's school at the time, most of the teachers at the Zion School were free Blacks from the North who came to Charleston under the auspices of the American Missionary Society. By 1870, there were more than 1000 Freedmen's schools spread throughout the former Confederate states. But as Northern interest in Southern reconstruction waned after the 1870s, the number and quality of the schools open to Black students gradually diminished, and by the end of the 19th century most Black students in the South were forced to attend poorly funded, segregated schools, if they were allowed to attend school at all.



Negro Voting in Richmond

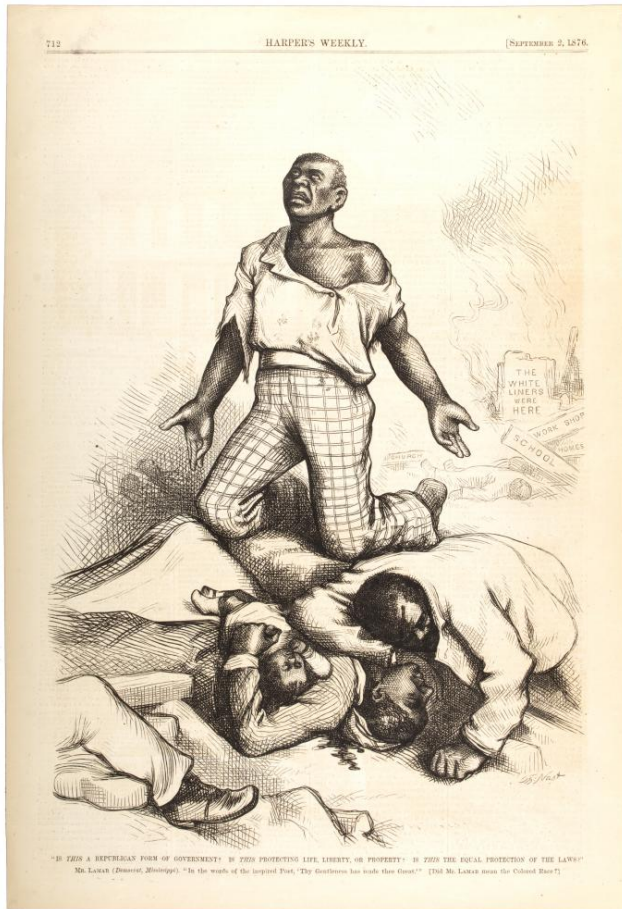
William L. Sheppard (American, 1833-1912)

1871

Electrotype engraving

Hope College Collection, 2020.47.3

Recognizing that the right to vote would be crucial to the fate of freed Black people after the Civil War, the great African American abolitionist and orator Frederick Douglass declared in 1865: "Slavery is not abolished until the Black man has the ballot." White supremacists in the South also realized that a large Black electorate posed a threat to the continuation of white political, social and economic dominance, so as soon as the war ended they began a sustained campaign to suppress the Black vote through a combination of legal tactics and terroristic acts of violence. The US Congress responded to Southern voter suppression efforts by passing a Civil Rights Bill in 1866 and the 15th Amendment to the Constitution in 1870 which declares: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude." Many African Americans enthusiastically exercised their right to vote, and a significant number of Black politicians were elected to state and federal offices in the late 1860s and 1870s. In the 1880s and 1890s, however, the states of the old Confederacy began once again to impose obstacles such as poll taxes and literacy tests to discourage African Americans from voting, and by the early decades of the 20th century most Black people in the South were effectively disenfranchised.



Is This a Republican Form of Government?

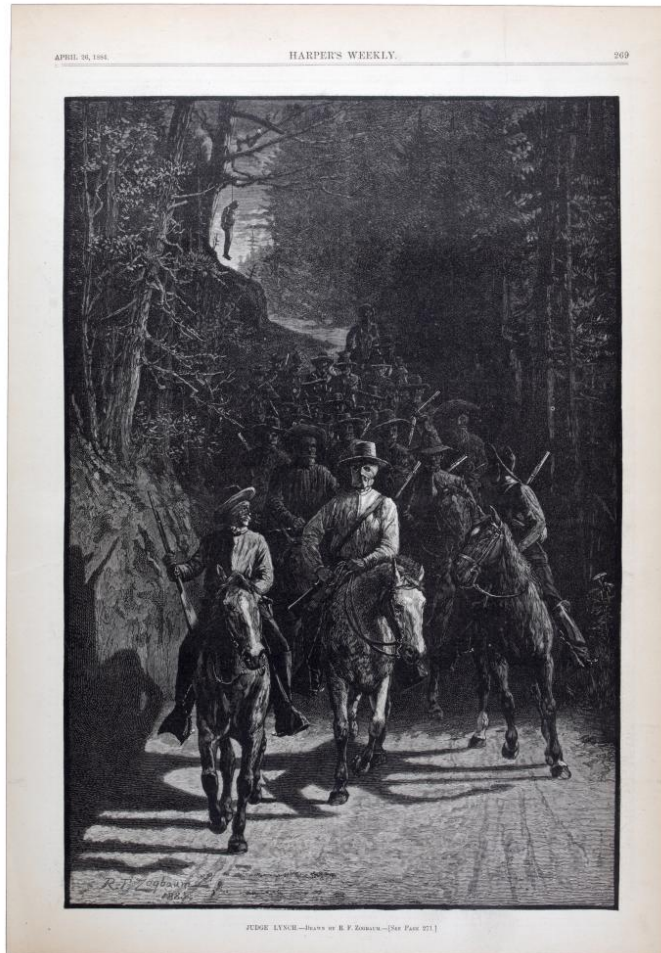
Thomas Nast (American, 1840-1902)

1876

Electrotype engraving

Hope College Collection, 2020.58

An African American man in torn clothing looks up toward heaven with a grief-stricken expression as he kneels beside the bodies of a murdered Black family. The explanation for this horrific scene is provided by a sign visible in the background that reads: "The White Liners were here." Composed mainly of Confederate veterans, the White Liners were dedicated to maintaining white supremacy in the South by terrorizing African Americans. They were especially active during the election season of 1876, when they murdered hundreds of Black people in communities across the South in an effort to keep them from voting in the presidential election. The tight race between Republican Rutherford B. Hayes and Democrat Samuel J. Tilden ended in a dispute over which candidate had won the Electoral College votes for Louisiana, South Carolina, Florida and Oregon. In the end, the Southern Democrats conceded the election to Hayes in exchange for his promise to remove federal troops from the South and end Reconstruction. This move cleared the way for Southern states to impose fresh laws curtailing the rights of African Americans that would last into the 1960s.



Judge Lynch

Rufus F. Zogbaum (American, 1849-1925)

1884

Electrotype engraving

Hope College Collection, 2020.46

Lynching refers to the unsanctioned killing of a person or persons by another group of people, usually for some perceived or real crime against the community. The term is said to derive from the name of Charles Lynch, a Virginia Justice of the Peace who advocated for the extrajudicial hanging of Loyalists during the American Revolution. In the decades following the end of Reconstruction, lynching was commonly used by white supremacists across the South to terrorize African Americans. It is estimated that at least 4000 Black Americans were murdered by lynching between 1877 and 1960. This illustration from the April 26, 1884 edition of *Harper's Weekly* depicts a group of heavily armed, masked men riding away from the scene of a lynching where the body of the victim still dangles from a tree branch. White supremacist organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan and Knights of the White Camellia often wore masks to disguise the identities of their members, many of whom were prominent figures in their home communities.



Cotton Culture: Covering the Seed

Edwin A. Abbey (American, Ca. 1852-1911)

1875

Electrotype engraving

Hope College Collection, 2020.59

Cotton was America's most important commodity during the 19th century. It was central to the agricultural export economy of the South and also crucial to the industrial and banking economies of the North. The entire country benefited from the tremendous profits generated by cotton, most of which was planted, harvested, processed and packed by African Americans. Cotton production was hard work. Typically, fields were plowed and planted in March and April. For the next four or five months the fields had to be regularly weeded using hand-held hoes. The cotton harvest usually began in September or October and could last until December. Cotton pickers spent all day bent over the cotton bushes, plucking the sharp-edged cotton bolls by hand. A strong, fast picker could pick upwards of 300 pounds of cotton a day. The cotton was then taken to a mill where it was processed by a mechanical cotton gin to remove seeds and other debris from the fibers. Finally, the clean cotton fibers were packed into bales weighing approximately 500 pounds each and shipped to textile mills in New England and Great Britain for spinning and weaving into cloth.



In a Cotton Field

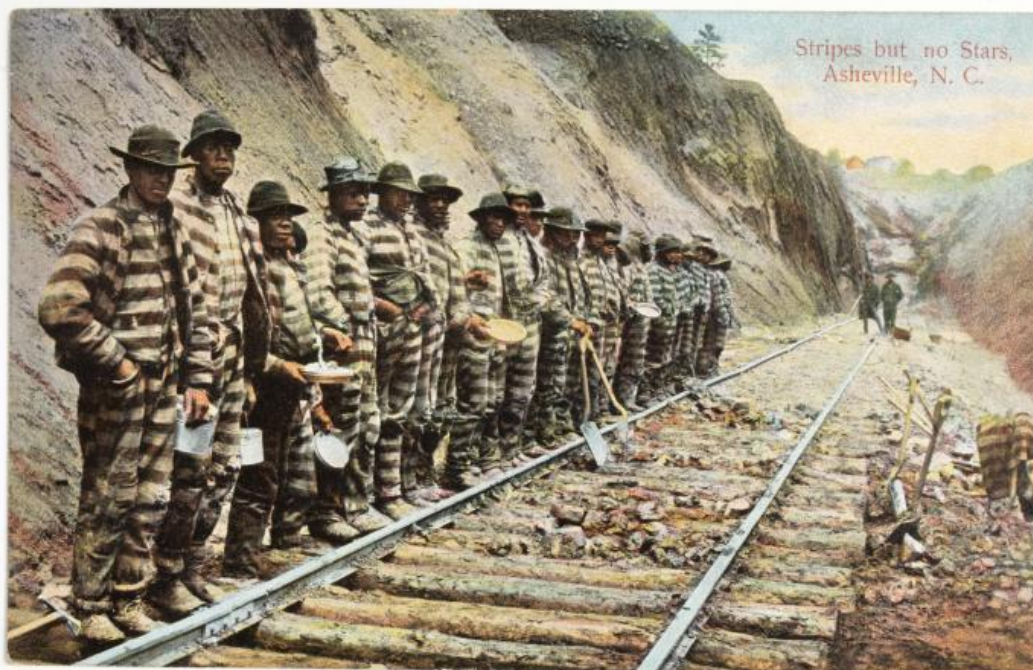
Horace Bradley (American, Ca. 1860-1896)

1887

Electrotype engraving

Hope College Collection, 2020.40

Before 1865, the profitability of America's cotton economy depended on the unpaid labor of millions of enslaved Black people. After slavery was abolished, the federal government originally planned to help the freedmen gain a share of this wealth by giving them farmland that had been abandoned by or confiscated from former Confederate soldiers. However, this plan quickly ran into stiff resistance from Southern politicians who passed state and local laws restricting the ability of African Americans to own land and pass it down to their heirs. Instead, many newly freed Black people were coerced into sharecropping relationships with white landowners in which they essentially rented a portion of land in exchange for a percentage of the land's annual crop yield. The share of the crop they were required to pay typically varied between thirty and fifty percent. Moreover, the sharecroppers were often forced to rent tools, draft animals and other supplies from the landowners, who deducted those costs from the amount they returned to the sharecroppers after the harvest was sold. If the harvest was small or cotton prices were low, the sharecroppers ended up with no money and in debt to the landowners, which in turn reduced their ability to negotiate better rents or leave for a better situation. If they were even aware of it, many white people at the time chose to ignore this exploitive situation, preferring instead to imagine that Black sharecroppers were happy, independent farmers, as is suggested by this cheerfully colored print from an 1887 edition of *Harper's Weekly*.



Stripes but No Stars, Asheville N.C.

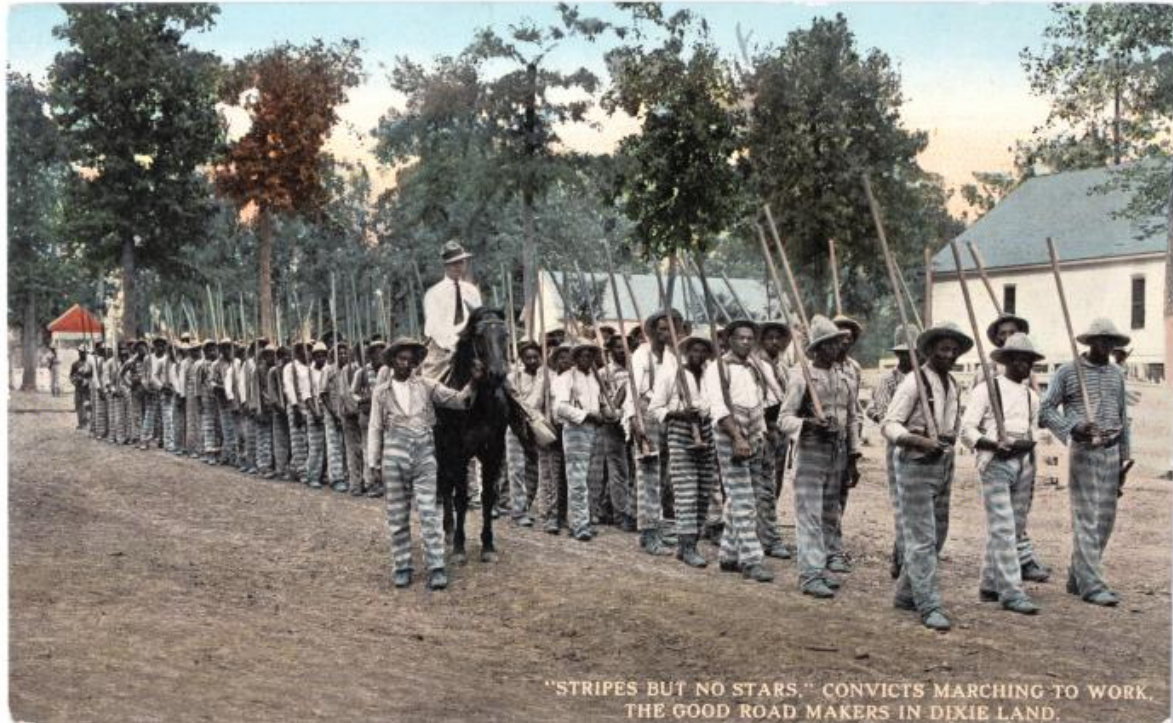
International Postcard Company, after Thomas H. Lindsey (American, 1849-1927)

Ca. 1905-1915

Offset lithograph

Hope College Collection, 2020.39

In the years after the Civil War ended, many Southern states transformed their old Slave Code laws into new Black Code laws that aimed to restrict the rights and opportunities afforded to newly freed African Americans. The Black Codes in many states included laws against vagrancy and loitering, which could be applied to any Black person who was unemployed or traveling away from home without proper identification and documentation of purpose. People convicted of vagrancy or loitering could be sentenced to months or even years of incarceration and were often forced to “repay their debt to society” by working in prison labor gangs. Although the purpose of these labor gangs was ostensibly to punish offenders, state governments quickly discovered that they could be a significant source of revenue if the gangs were rented out to work for commercial businesses in areas such as logging, mining, manufacturing and construction. Between the 1880s and 1940s, tens of thousands of mainly young, male African Americans were ensnared by this unjust system that often ruined their lives while the states that imprisoned them earned millions of dollars from their forced labor. Despite the horrors of the prison labor system, some people in mainstream white society found it a suitable subject for whimsical tourist picture books and postcards such as the ones displayed here. The image on this postcard was taken by photographer Thomas H. Lindsey in about 1890. It depicts a prison gang comprised of twenty-three Black convicts who were working to construct a new line for the Western North Carolina Railroad near Asheville. Records show that at least 125 Black convicts died during the construction of that rail line.



Stripes but No Stars, Convicts Marching to Work: The Good Road Makers in Dixie Land

Curt Teich and Company

Ca. 1911

Offset lithograph

Hope College Collection, 2020.45

Although the title of this postcard suggests that the prisoners it depicts are heading out to work on a road construction project, in fact it portrays convicts from the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman carrying hoes on their shoulders as they march to work in the prison's agricultural fields. After Mississippi abolished its convict leasing program in 1894, it began to construct prisons where convicts would perform profit-earning work for the benefit of the state. Parchman Penitentiary was built in 1901 on a 3800-acre former plantation and included both agricultural and manufacturing operations. In 1905, Mississippi earned 185,000 dollars from the Parchman operations, which is equivalent to about 5.4 million dollars today. Ninety-one percent of the 1100 prisoners who were serving time at Parchman in 1905 were African American, and Black people continued to constitute a disproportionately large percentage of the prison's population for the remainder of the 20th century. Parchman Penitentiary is still in operation today.

The Great Migration

Between 1915 and 1970, more than six million African Americans left the rural South and moved to industrial cities in the Northeast, Midwest and West in search of better lives. Known as the Great Migration, this mass exodus created new economic, political and social opportunities for many Black people, but also led to increases in racial tensions and violence as white Americans struggled to adapt to the realities of a more geographically dispersed Black population.

The Great Migration was driven by a combination of historical factors. By 1910, the prevalence of oppressive “Jim Crow” laws that restricted the rights and threatened the safety of African Americans had made life increasingly intolerable for many Black people in the South. An opportunity to escape those conditions was provided by the outbreak of World War I in 1914, which depressed immigration from Europe and created new job opportunities in the factories of the Northeast and Midwest. Those jobs became even more enticing after a boll weevil epidemic began sweeping the South in 1915, severely damaging the region’s cotton economy and reducing demand for Black agricultural workers. As greater numbers of Black people moved northwards and westwards, informal networks of family and friends emerged, creating a support infrastructure that encouraged still more migration. Although the Depression slowed the pace of African American movement in the 1930s, the Great Migration picked up again in the 1940s and 50s as the economic growth sparked by World War II created still more job opportunities.

The outflow of African Americans from the South began to slow in the 1960s and finally stabilized around 1970. The tremendous impact of the Great Migration is evident in population statistics from the period. According to US Census records, in 1910 more than 90% of African Americans lived in the rural South. By 1970, just over 50% of African Americans still lived in the South, and a majority of the Black population in both the South and the North had moved to urban areas.



First World War Soldier

American

Ca. 1917-18

Photograph

Hope College Collection, 2020.38

When the United States entered World War I in 1917, it opened new opportunities for African American men to serve in the military and to experience for the first time the world beyond the rural South. Altogether more than 380,000 African Americans served in the US military during the First World War. All branches of the armed forces were racially segregated at the time, and most African American units were relegated to support roles such as transportation and construction. However, there were two Black Army divisions, the 92nd and 93rd, which fought in combat and performed valiantly despite being given inferior weapons and equipment. Whether they served in support or combat roles, most African American soldiers took great pride in their military service. Such pride is evident in this unusually large, custom-framed studio portrait of a Black First World War soldier. Many African American soldiers hoped that serving their country overseas would help them win respect and equal treatment at home. Sadly, many Black soldiers returned from their military service to face continued racial discrimination and violence in both the South and the North. Indeed, white-on-black violence actually increased across the country in the year after the war ended, which saw the lynching of at least eleven newly returned military veterans.



Country Road, Missouri

Henry Bannarn (American, 1910-1965)

1941

Watercolor and graphite on paper

Purchased with funds donated by Judith Kingma Hazelton '56, 2019.81.1

African American artist Henry Bannarn experienced the effects of the Great Migration as a child when his family moved from Oklahoma to Minnesota. He grew up in Minneapolis and studied at the Minneapolis School of Arts before moving to New York City in the 1930s, where he was hired to teach at the Harlem Art Workshop. Known primarily as a sculptor and painter, Bannarn was a central figure in the Harlem Renaissance art world. This painting of a modest house along a country road in Missouri reflects the nostalgia felt by many African Americans for the simpler, rustic life they left behind as a result of the Great Migration. It is notable that this painting dates to 1941, the same year that Bannarn's former student, Jacob Lawrence, also completed a major series of paintings inspired by the Great Migration.



The Hanging

Hans Weingaertner (American, 1896-1970)

1932

Oil on canvas

Hope College Collection, 2015.54.1

The disruptions to established social and economic orders caused by the Great Migration in both the South and the North led to an upsurge in lynchings and other forms of racial violence across the United States in the years between the two world wars. Civil Rights organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) used these lynchings to shock the consciences of liberal white Americans and to press for greater racial equality and justice. This unsettling painting from 1932 reflects the growing awareness of lynching in American culture during those interwar years. It depicts a lynching from the perspective of the person being hanged. Looking down past a pair of bound feet at the faces of the lynch mob, we are forced to imagine the terror of the victim, and to wonder at the level of hatred and moral indifference to human life that could inspire such a grotesque act of violence. The painting was created by Hans Weingaertner, a German-born artist who emigrated to the United States in 1922. Before he left Germany, Weingaertner had been associated with the New Objectivity Movement, a loose association of politically progressive artists active in the years after the First World War who believed that art should reflect social reality, even if that reality was ugly and uncomfortable.



United We Win

Alexander Liberman (American, 1912-1999)

1943

Offset lithograph

Purchased with funds donated by Roberta VanGilder '53 Kaye, 2020.52.2

The Second World War provided fresh impetus for African Americans to move from the rural South to Northeastern, Midwestern and West Coast cities where they filled factory jobs left vacant by men who had joined the military to fight overseas. Recruiters working for both the US government and for private manufacturing companies traveled the South looking for Black men and women to fill open positions on the assembly lines. The recruiters often pitched the jobs not only as economic opportunities, but also as opportunities to demonstrate a patriotic commitment to the war effort. This poster issued by the government's War Manpower Commission in 1943 presents an idealized view of racial cooperation in an integrated aircraft engine factory. In reality, however, many African Americans worked in segregated shops and faced discrimination both at work and in the new communities where they settled. The wartime promises of a happier, more prosperous life faded even further after the war, when numerous factories reduced production and laid off their Black workers or gave their jobs to returning white veterans.

Beaumont to Detroit: 1943

By Langston Hughes

Looky here, America
What you done done—
Let things drift
Until the riots come.

Now your policemen
Let your mobs run free.
I reckon you don't care
Nothing about me.

You tell me that hitler
Is a mighty bad man.
I guess he took lessons
From the ku klux klan.

You tell me mussolini's
Got an evil heart.
Well, it mus-a-been in Beaumont
That he had his start—

Cause everything that hitler
And mussolini do,
Negroes get the same
Treatment from you.

You jim crowed me
Before hitler rose to power—
And you're STILL jim crowing me
Right now, this very hour.

Yet you say we're fighting
For democracy
Then why don't democracy
Include me?

I ask this question
Cause I want to know
How long I got to fight
BOTH HITLER—AND JIM CROW.



Third Grade Class, West Main Street School, Chattanooga, TN

Harry Granert (American, 1894-1980)

1940

Photograph

Hope College Collection, 2020.44

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, most African American children in the South, as well as some in the North, were compelled to attend segregated schools. These schools were authorized by the 1896 Supreme Court decision *Plessy v. Ferguson* which permitted segregation as long as the Black and white schools were “separate but equal.” In practice, most Black schools were given only a fraction of the funding allotted to white schools and were often forced to operate in dilapidated buildings with inadequate supplies. Despite this unequal treatment, most Black schools strove to provide a good education to their students and functioned as important focal points of their local African American communities. The pride that many teachers and students took in their education is clearly evident in this 1940 class photo from the all-Black West Main Street School in Chattanooga, Tennessee, one of five segregated schools that served the Black residents of that city in the 1940s.



Untitled (Children in West Oakland, CA)

Joanne Leonard (American, born 1940)

1967

Gelatin silver print

Purchased with funds donated by Roberta VanGilder '53 Kaye, 2020.60

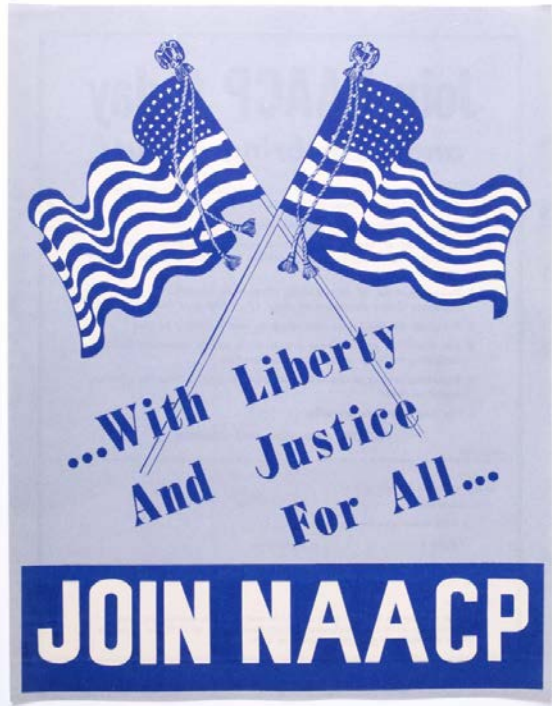
Black people who migrated from the South to the Northeast, Midwest and West Coast between 1915 and 1970 often found their housing options limited by a combination of discriminatory real estate laws and bank lending practices. Some residential areas had “white-only” covenants that made it illegal to sell homes to Black families, while banks frequently refused to offer mortgages or business loans to African Americans wishing to settle in white-majority areas. The result was that many Black people ended up living in communities that were every bit as segregated as the ones they had left in the South. This photograph portrays two African American children playing in front of a house in West Oakland, California, an urban area that transitioned from predominantly white to predominantly Black during the 1950s and 60s. It was taken by Michigan-born photographer Joanne Leonard, who spent eight years during the 1960s living in West Oakland and documenting its vibrant Black community.

Fighting for Equality and Justice

The period from 1950 to 1970 was a time of intense Civil Rights activism across the United States. This activism was fueled by a growing unwillingness among both Black and white people to accept the hypocritically unjust, unequal treatment of African Americans in a country that considered itself—especially following its victory in World War II—to be the world's greatest champion of democracy and freedom.

The Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 60s used a combination of court proceedings and direct action to challenge the racial status quo and fight for fairer, more equitable treatment for African Americans. Notable achievements of the movement during these decades include the 1954 Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* that paved the way for the desegregation of public schools; the 1955-56 Montgomery bus boycott and 1960 Greensboro Woolworth lunch counter sit-in that led to the end of segregation in other public facilities; the 1963 March on Washington, and the 1964 Civil Rights Act that outlawed discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin; the 1964 Freedom Summer voter registration drive, and the 1965 Voting Rights Act that invalidated state and local impediments to voting based on race; and the 1967-68 Poor People's Campaign, and the 1968 Fair Housing Act that prohibited discrimination in the sale, rental and financing of housing based on race and other factors.

The successes won by the Civil Rights movement during this period came at a steep cost. Movement leaders including Medgar Evers, Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. were assassinated. Police crackdowns on Black activists and citizens led to events such as the 1965 Bloody Sunday clash on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama as well as to numerous uprisings and riots in cities across the US between 1964 and 1968. Yet, despite the tragedies and turmoil, more real progress was made toward achieving racial equality and justice during these decades than any time since the end of the Civil War.



With Liberty and Justice for All: Join NAACP

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

1956

Offset lithographs

Hope College Collection, 2020.42.1-2

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded in 1909 by a coalition of Black and white activists to protect and advance the civil rights of African Americans. From the 1910s to the 1930s, the top priorities of the NAACP included the eradication of lynching and the reform of racially discriminatory criminal justice laws. Although the organization's efforts to win passage of federal anti-lynching laws in Congress were blocked repeatedly by Southern conservatives, the group did see wins in legal challenges to convict leasing schemes and racially segregated juries during that period. In the late 1930s and 40s, the NAACP focused more on economic equality and access to jobs for African Americans. Their efforts in these areas played an important role in the establishment of the federal Fair Employment Practices Commission in 1941, which gave Black people greater access to jobs in the US government, military and defense industries. In the 1950s and 60s, the NAACP focused heavily on desegregation and the restitution of civil and voting rights for African Americans. The group's efforts in these areas played an important role in the 1954 Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* and in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965. The posters displayed here were printed by the NAACP in April, 1956 for display and distribution mainly in Black-owned businesses across the US as part of an effort to expand the organization's membership and influence during a period of intense Civil Rights activism.



Students Taken from School by National Guard Troops

AP Wirephoto

1956

Gelatin silver print

Hope College Collection, 2020.36.2

On August 31, 1956—two years after the Supreme Court outlawed the racial segregation of public schools—eight African American students registered to attend the all-white Sturgis High School in Sturgis, Kentucky. The first day of school was tense, but the Black students met no overt opposition. On the second day of school, however, a crowd of approximately 300-500 white townspeople blocked the doors to the school and refused to let the Black students enter. When white protesters showed up again on the third day, the governor of Kentucky deployed more than 200 state policemen and National Guard troops to Sturgis to protect the Black students and escort them to and from school. Although the Black students were able to attend class, the situation in town remained volatile and the school's operations were severely disrupted when many white families refused to send their children to class. In late September, the Kentucky State Attorney General ruled that although the Black students were entitled to attend Sturgis High School, the local school board had failed to provide an adequate plan for their integration, and therefore the students were required to withdraw until an effective integration plan could be formulated. Completing the integration plan took almost a year, but in August 1957 the local all-Black Dunbar High School was closed and its students were transferred to Sturgis High School. This time there were no major protests, and although racial tensions lingered, the school was successfully integrated.



Chair

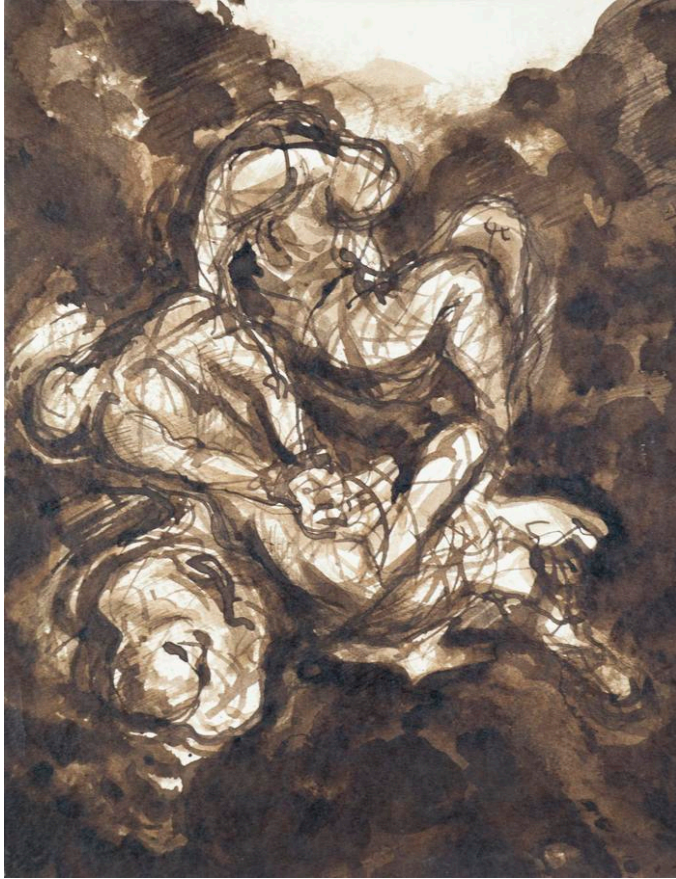
Calvin Burnett (American, 1921-2007)

1956

Lithograph

Hope College Collection, 2018.20.1

Many studies have shown that since the end of the Civil War, African Americans—and African American men in particular—have consistently been punished by the criminal justice system with greater frequency and severity than other racial and ethnic groups. For example, of the 455 people who were executed in the United States for the crime of rape between 1930 and 1967, 405 of them were Black. The inherent unfairness of the criminal justice system was a major concern of the Civil Rights movement during the 1950s and 60s, and is reflected in this highly stylized, Cubist-influenced image of an electric chair created by the African American artist Calvin Burnett in 1956. Burnett was inspired to create this image not only by the deaths of many African American prisoners, but also by the executions of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in 1953. The Rosenbergs were American citizens who were convicted of passing nuclear secrets to the Soviet Union after World War II. They were the only Americans executed for espionage during the Cold War period, and many critics at the time and later believed that anti-Jewish bias played a role in their death sentences. Burnett's reference to the deaths of the Rosenbergs in this print emphasizes the point that injustice is injustice, regardless of skin color.



Missippi

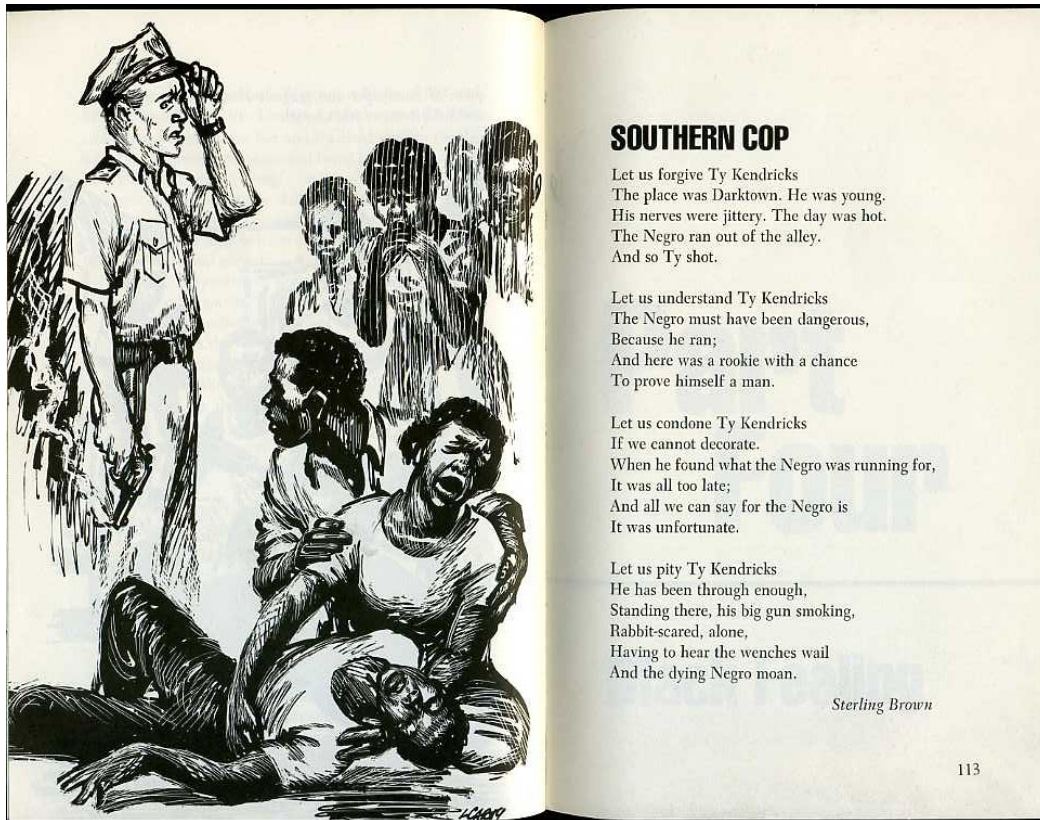
Milton Derr (American, born 1932)

1965

Ink and wash on paper

Hope College Collection, 2018.20.2

Along with desegregation and criminal justice reform, the restoration of voting rights to African Americans was a central goal of the Civil Rights movement during the 1950s and 60s. This dark, emotive drawing portrays the bodies of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, three Civil Rights workers who were murdered by the Ku Klux Klan in Mississippi while campaigning to register African American voters during the so-called Freedom Summer of 1964. The bodies of the three activists were buried in an earthen dam and remained hidden for two months before their remains were finally discovered. Public outrage over the murders fueled support for passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. When Mississippi state officials refused to prosecute the killers, they were tried in federal court for Civil Rights violations and seven defendants were found guilty. However, because the federal Civil Rights charges carried lighter sentences than state murder charges, none of the convicted killers served more than six years for their crime. The title of the drawing is deliberately misspelled to approximate the vernacular pronunciation of Mississippi in that state.



SOUTHERN COP

Let us forgive Ty Kendricks
The place was Darktown. He was young.
His nerves were jittery. The day was hot.
The Negro ran out of the alley.
And so Ty shot.

Let us understand Ty Kendricks
The Negro must have been dangerous,
Because he ran;
And here was a rookie with a chance
To prove himself a man.

Let us condone Ty Kendricks
If we cannot decorate.
When he found what the Negro was running for,
It was all too late;
And all we can say for the Negro is
It was unfortunate.

Let us pity Ty Kendricks
He has been through enough,
Standing there, his big gun smoking,
Rabbit-scared, alone,
Having to hear the wenches wail
And the dying Negro moan.

Sterling Brown

113

Illustration for the Poem "Southern Cop"

Leo S. Carty (American, 1931-2010)

1971

Offset lithograph

Anonymous loan

The history of Black men being killed by the police, either intentionally or by accident, is long and tragic. This image and poem about just such a killing were printed in *The Scene*, an anthology of African American essays, short stories, poems and artworks that was published in 1971 as part of the Scholastic Black Literature Series. The poem is by Sterling Brown (1901-1989), who served as a professor at Howard University from 1929 to 1969 and was appointed as the first Poet Laureate of the District of Columbia in 1984. The image is by Leo S. Carty, who was born in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City, and served in the US military during the Korean War before attending art school and becoming a commercial illustrator. Between the mid-1960s and early 70s, Carty illustrated a series of graphic history books detailing the lives and accomplishments of Black heroes such as Toussaint Louverture, Nat Turner, Frederick Douglass and Marcus Garvey. In 1976, Carty left New York and moved to the US Virgin Islands where he spent the remainder of his career making paintings and prints that depicted Black life and culture in the islands.



John Brown: The Crimes of This Guilty Land Will Never Be Purged Away but with Blood

Frank Cieciorka (American, 1939-2008)

1969

Offset lithograph

Purchased with funds donated by Roberta VanGilder '53 Kaye, 2020.52.3

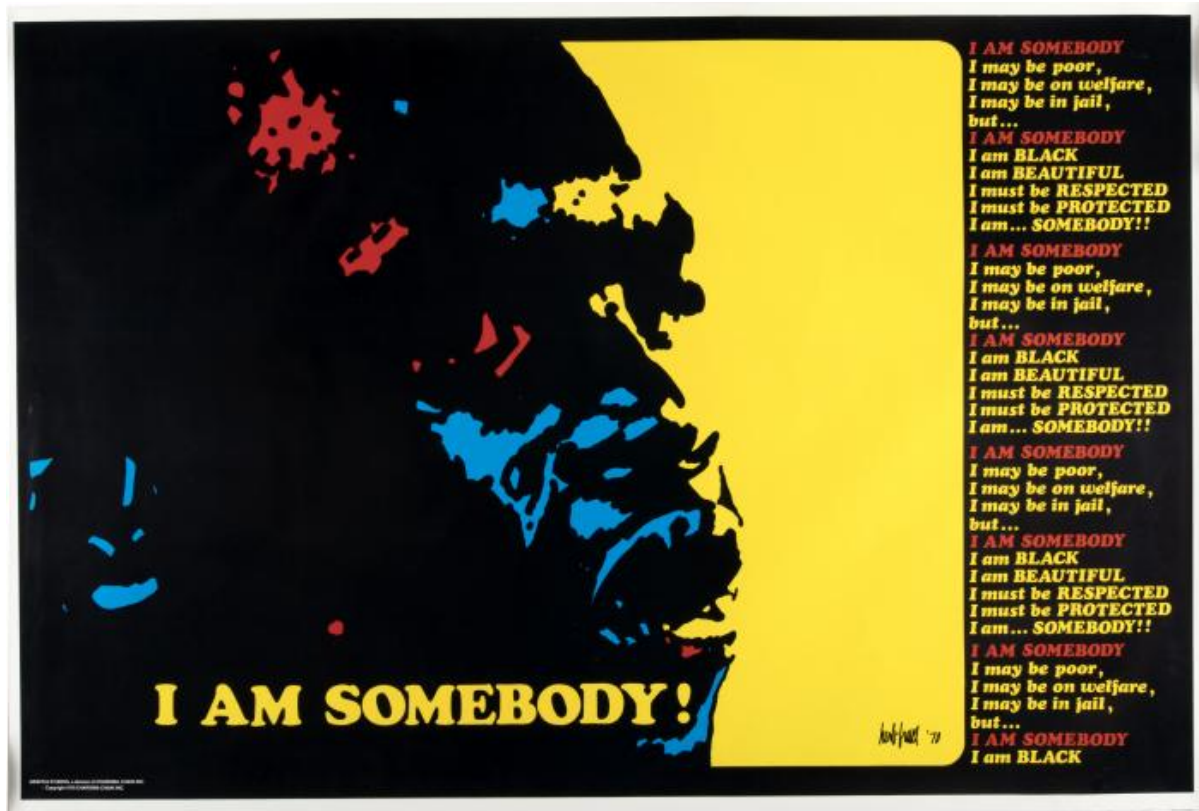
John Brown was a white abolitionist who in 1859 led an attack on a US military arsenal in Harper's Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia) as part of an effort to instigate an armed uprising that he hoped would overthrow the institution of slavery in America. Although Brown and his men were initially successful in seizing the armory, the larger uprising failed to materialize, and within two days the arsenal was re-captured and Brown arrested by an army unit under the command of Robert E. Lee, the future Confederate general. Brown was tried for treason and murder, and his execution on December 2, 1859 inflamed the conflict between pro- and anti-slavery activists and helped lead to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. Interest in John Brown was revived again in the 1960s as different factions within the Civil Rights movement debated the relative merits of pacifist non-violence versus more aggressive armed struggle. This image of John Brown first appeared on the cover of the April 1969 issue of *The Movement*, a publication produced by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee of California, and was later issued by The Movement Press as a stand-alone poster. It was designed by Frank Cieciorka, a dedicated activist who took part in the 1964 Freedom Summer voter registration campaign in Mississippi as well as other Civil Rights campaigns across the South during the 1960s.

Black Pride to Black Lives Matter

Building on the successes achieved by the Civil Rights movement during the 1950s and 60s, the Black Power and Black Pride movements of the 1970s and 80s emphasized African American political organization, economic self-determination, social cohesion and cultural pride. These movements also encouraged their followers to adopt a more Afrocentric view of the world, which celebrated the historical achievements of African and African-diaspora peoples around the globe. Yet for all the optimism generated by these movements, African Americans continued to suffer disproportionately from poverty, mass incarceration and lack of access to medical care, among other problems, during these decades.

The complexities and contradictions of African American life in the 1990s and 2000s are illustrated by two events from the beginning and end of those decades. In 1991, African American motorist Rodney King was savagely beaten by white Los Angeles police officers during a traffic stop. The acquittal of those officers by an all-white jury in 1992 led to the worst rioting in the US since the 1960s. On the other end of the spectrum, Barack Obama was elected as the first Black president of the United States in 2008. Under his leadership, African Americans made significant political, economic and social gains, leading some people to begin dreaming of a post-racial world.

The reality of the ongoing injustice and inequality experienced by many Black Americans came back into focus in the 2010s with the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement. This movement began as a response to abusive policing but has since broadened its focus to confront systemic racism in all areas of American life. By combining elements of traditional Civil Rights and Black Pride activism, Black Lives Matter is now a leading force in America's centuries-long effort to fully live up to the ideals of freedom and democracy that are central to our national identity.



I Am Somebody

Herb Bruce (American, active 20th century)

1970

Offset lithograph

Hope College Collection, 2020.57

The title and text inscribed on this poster derive from a poem written in the 1950s by Civil Rights activist Rev. William Holmes Borders, Sr. (1905-1993). That poem championing the dignity of the poor and affirming the intrinsic beauty and value of African Americans was adopted by the Civil Rights and Black Pride movements during the 1970s and 80s. This poster was designed for Grafica Studios in Chicago by African American artist Herb Bruce. Though little known today, Bruce was an illustrator and graphic designer whose work seems to have been inspired by AfriCobra, a radical African American artists' collective formed in 1968 to promote Black pride and culture. The poster was printed with special inks that fluoresce in ultraviolet light. These fluorescent inks were originally developed by the Day-Glo Color Corporation for use by the US military but were adopted in the 1960s by artists associated with various counter-culture movements, including the Civil Rights movement.



Courting

Varnette Honeywood (American, 1950-2010)

1986

Photolithograph

Hope College Collection, 2020.50

This print depicts a young African American couple sitting on a couch in the parlor of a well-appointed, upper middle-class home. The young woman offers tea to her suitor while her parents sit nearby, the mother crocheting and the father reading *The Crisis*, the official magazine of the NAACP. A much smaller child peers over the arm of the couch to see what is going on as an older woman, perhaps a grandmother, walks serenely down a hallway behind the group. The entire scene is carefully constructed to convey an impression of stability, prosperity and respect for traditional family values. The print was created by Varnette Honeywood, an African American artist from Los Angeles whose parents had moved to that city from Mississippi and Louisiana as part of the Great Migration in the 1940s. She earned her undergraduate degree in Art from Spelman College in Atlanta in 1972 and a master's degree in Education from the University of Southern California in 1974. After working for several years as an art outreach instructor in the Los Angeles public school system, Honeywood established an art studio and greeting card company to promote her own artwork depicting images of African American life. Honeywood acknowledged that her strongly patterned, boldly colored artworks were influenced by the art of Jacob Lawrence and Romare Bearden, as well as by a trip she took to Nigeria in 1977. In the early 1980s, Honeywood's positive representations of Black American life attracted the attention of comedian and television star Bill Cosby, who began to collect her work and featured it on the sets of *The Cosby Show*, which similarly broke with negative stereotypes to portray an intact, affluent and highly cultured African American family.



Commemorating Every Black Man Who Lives to See Twenty-One

Carrie Mae Weems (American, born 1953)

1992

Glazed and gilt Lenox bone china

Hope College Collection, 2017.67.2

Carrie Mae Weems is an African American, multi-media artist whose work often deals with race, gender and social justice issues. This plate comes from a series Weems created in 1992 to commemorate aspects of Black life that are often ignored or marginalized by the white majority culture. The gut-wrenching inscription on the plate was originally a lament for the large numbers of young Black men who were killed by drugs, gangs and police violence in the 1980s and early 90s, but it has taken on new relevance today in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement. There is intentional irony in the fact that Weems created this artwork using Lenox bone china. Until the Covid-19 pandemic forced its bankruptcy in early 2020, Lenox was one of America's oldest and most prestigious ceramic manufacturers, best known for providing dinner services to the White House and other elite clients.



Boo Hoo

Kara Walker (American, born 1969)

2000

Linocut

Hope College Collection, 2017.14

Kara Walker is best known for creating images in which black silhouette figures are set against a white background to create sometimes mysterious, sometimes shocking images that raise uncomfortable questions about race, gender and history. This print depicts a bare-breasted, weeping woman with an Afro hairstyle who holds a snake in one hand and a whip or flail in the other hand. The imagery recalls the story of Cleopatra, the last ruler of Egypt's Ptolemaic Dynasty who committed suicide in 30 BCE by allowing a poisonous asp to bite her exposed chest. Applying the details of that story to this picture, the snake in the woman's hand is the asp, while the flail represents a traditional symbol of Egyptian royal power. By portraying the woman with a stereotypically Black hairstyle, Walker encourages us to think about Cleopatra's race and the status of Egypt as an African civilization. Cleopatra's ancestors were Macedonian Greeks and she has traditionally been portrayed in European and American art with Caucasian features. However, many scholars have noted that ancient Egypt was a racial and cultural melting pot, where many Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and African civilizations came together. Cleopatra was the sixth generation of her family to live in Egypt, and it is entirely possible that her physical characteristics were quite different from those usually depicted in popular culture.



George

Rashid Johnson (American, born 1977)

1999

Van Dyke brown print

Hope College Collection, 2015.9

In the late 1990s, artist Glenn Ligon and curator Thelma Golden coined the term “post-black art” to describe the work of younger African American artists that is rooted in their Black identities but is not defined by those identities. Post-black art is intersectional art that often addresses a wide range of issues beyond race, including class, gender, sexuality and cultural history. The maker of this print, Rashid Johnson, was included in the first-ever exhibition of post-black art held at Harlem’s Studio Museum in 2001. The print is based on a photograph Johnson took while he was an undergraduate student at Columbia College in Chicago. The photograph belonged to a larger series of portraits of homeless people that Johnson created to explore social and economic inequality in contemporary America. The print was created using the Van Dyke brown process, in which ultraviolet light is used to expose a large-format negative on specially prepared paper. The Van Dyke printing process was invented in the 19th century, and is named after a brown oil paint associated with the 17th century Flemish painter Sir Anthony Van Dyke.



Civil Rights

Police Shooting

Cleon Peterson (American, born 1973)

2015

Screen prints

Hope College Collection, 2020.61 and 2020.54

Los Angeles artist Cleon Peterson created these prints in 2015 after the first wave of Black Lives Matter protests drew national attention to the appalling history of police violence against African Americans. They are two of many paintings and prints created by Peterson since the late 1990s that explore issues of violence, oppression, intimidation and fear.

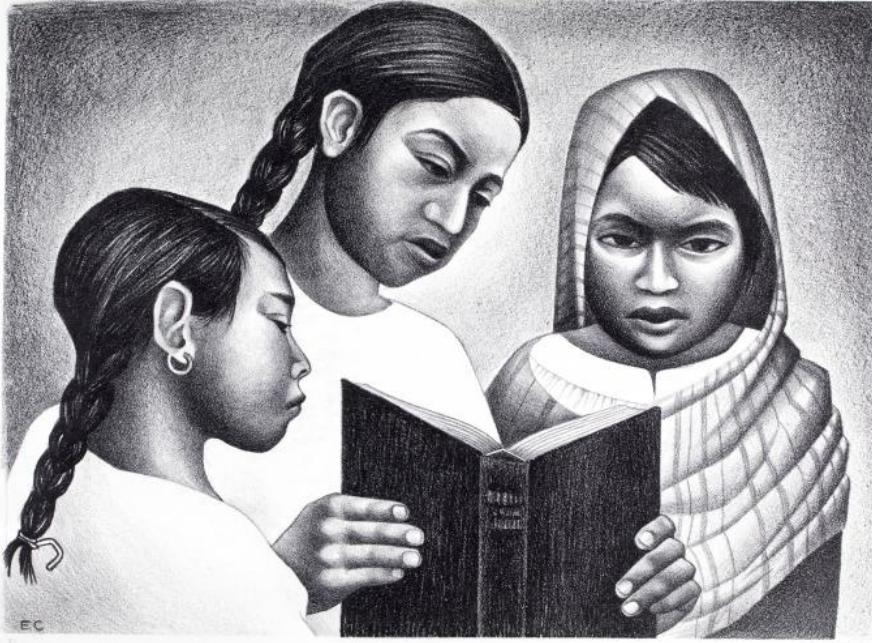
Celebrating African American Art and Culture

African American history is not solely a history of struggle against oppression, injustice and inequality. It is also a history of creativity and positive contributions that have greatly enriched the fabric of American culture in areas ranging from art, literature and music to filmmaking, food, and fashion.

Before 1900, the artistic achievements of African Americans were rarely recognized by mainstream white society. Most of the artworks made by Black artists and craftsmen in fields such as ceramics, painting, sculpture and textiles were unsigned and quickly became anonymous after leaving their makers' workshops. Only a handful of Black artists managed to gain any public acclaim during the 19th century, and even so their works were typically praised for resembling the art of their white contemporaries.

This situation changed during the 20th century as African Americans gained better access to art education and became more economically independent. For the first time, a large cadre of Black artists was creating art that reflected Black history and Black life experiences. This new African American art was directed at both Black and white audiences, and by affirming the intrinsic value of African American history and culture, it became an important element in the ongoing fight for Civil Rights.

The market for African American art today is highly competitive and works by the most sought-after artists can fetch millions of dollars. The commercial success of this art paradoxically undercuts its social and cultural impact, since many works end up in the collections of wealthy individuals where they are seldom seen by the general public. It is therefore essential for museums and other public institutions regularly to exhibit African American artworks and to make them available through digital resources so that everyone can continue to benefit from their distinctive perspectives and insights.



Girls Reading (*Niñas leyendo*)

Elizabeth Catlett (American, 1915-2012)

1950

Lithograph

Purchased with funds donated by Ronald '62 and Gerri Vander Molen, 2019.59

Elizabeth Catlett was born and raised in Washington, DC. Her maternal and paternal grandparents had been born into slavery, and she grew up hearing first-hand family stories about the cruel treatment of African Americans in the South both before and after the Civil War. Catlett initially studied art at Howard University under the tutelage of Lois Mailou Jones. She then enrolled in the graduate program at the University of Iowa, and in 1940 was the first African American woman to earn the MFA degree from that institution. After graduating from Iowa, Catlett worked as a teacher in New Orleans, Chicago and the Harlem neighborhood of New York City, where she became friendly with many leading artists, writers and musicians of the Harlem Renaissance. Catlett's ambitions to work professionally as an artist were frustrated by the fact that she was African American and female, so in 1946 she moved to Mexico in search of fresh opportunities. In Mexico, Catlett joined the People's Graphic Workshop (*Taller de Gráfica Popular*), a left-wing artists' collective that was associated with the Mexican Muralist movement. She created this print of three young girls learning to read while working in Mexico with the People's Graphic Workshop. The issues raised by this image—race, gender, class and the importance of education—were all common themes in Mexican Muralist art at the time but were also themes that resonated with Catlett personally as a result of her own life experiences.



Harriet Tubman, Our Moses

Margaret Burroughs (American, 1917-2010)

First printed 1953; this impression printed 2001

Lithograph

Purchased with funds donated by Judith Kingma Hazelton '56, 2019.81.2

Harriet Tubman (1822-1913) was born into slavery on a plantation in Maryland. In 1849, she escaped from bondage and made her way to Philadelphia where she proclaimed her freedom. Over the next ten years, Tubman returned to the south thirteen times to rescue other enslaved family members and friends, bringing them north to freedom along the Underground Railroad. During the Civil War, Tubman served in the Union Army as a cook, nurse, armed scout and spy, and helped to liberate more than 700 additional enslaved people. Tubman eventually settled in upstate New York and became an activist for women's right to vote. Even during her lifetime, Tubman was regarded as a hero by many African Americans, who sometimes referred to her as "our Moses."

This image of Harriet Tubman was created by Margaret Burroughs in 1953. When she was three years old, Burroughs' family moved from Louisiana to Chicago as part of the Great Migration. Burroughs earned a teaching certificate from the Chicago Teacher's College in 1937, and bachelor's and master's degrees from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1946 and 1948. She worked as an art teacher at DuSable High School in Chicago from 1946 to 1969, and as a humanities professor at Kennedy-King College in Chicago from 1969 to 1979. In 1961, Burroughs and her husband founded the Ebony Museum of Negro History and Art (now called the DuSable Museum of African American History), where she served as director until 1985. Throughout her career, Burroughs was proud to promote African American history and identity, but she also believed in bringing different communities together through the power of art.



Yellow Pitcher

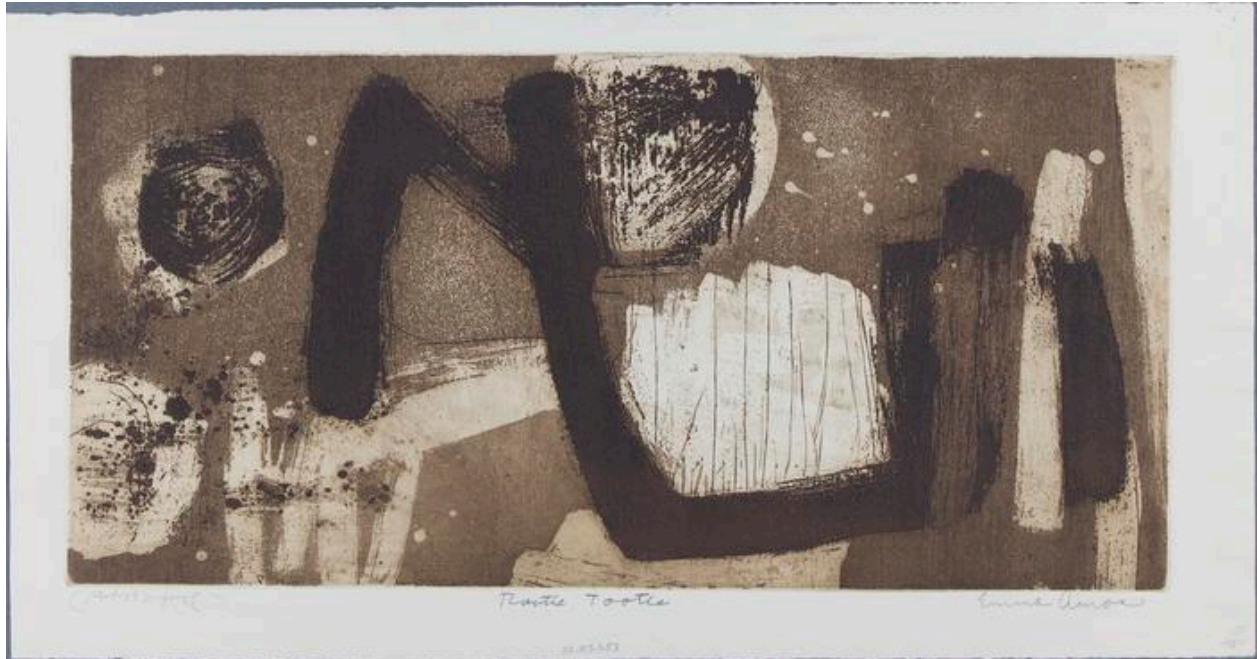
Tuskegee Institute Pottery

Late 1940s-50s

Glazed earthenware

Hope College Collection, 2020

Founded in 1881, the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama was the first institution of higher learning in the United States established specifically to educate African Americans. The Tuskegee Institute was led from 1881 to 1915 by Booker T. Washington, a nationally prominent Black intellectual and educator who emphasized education and entrepreneurship as the keys to Black progress in America. Tuskegee offered both academic and vocational training in a variety of fields, and many of its graduates went on to careers as teachers, craftsmen and small business owners. The Tuskegee Institute Pottery was established in 1937 by African American artist Isaac Scott Hathaway. This pitcher was probably made in the late 1940s or 50s, a period when the Tuskegee Institute Pottery was nationally known for its modernist forms and experimental glazes.



Rootie Tootie

Emma Amos (American, born 1938)

Ca. 1959

Etching and aquatint

Hope College Collection, 2017.67.1

The term “rootie tootie” refers to an early style of jazz music and was used by jazz pianist Thelonious Monk in the title of his 1952 composition *Little Rootie Tootie*. This abstract print, which is meant to evoke the often spontaneous, improvisational nature of jazz, is a rare early work by Emma Amos, the only female member of Spiral, an important African American artists’ group that was active in New York City during the mid-1960s. Originally from Atlanta, Amos studied at Antioch College in Ohio, the Central School of Art and Design in London, and New York University in New York City. She is highly regarded as a painter, printmaker and textile designer, and enjoyed a long career teaching at the Newark School of Fine and Industrial Arts and later at Rutgers University.



Details VII

Richard Hunt (American, born 1935)

1965

Lithograph

Hope College Collection, 1968.2.4

Chicago-based Richard Hunt is one of the first African American artists to succeed as a public sculptor, fulfilling more than 150 commissions around the world since 1967. His work is typically abstract, although he creates the forms of his artworks in response to specific physical and social environments. Hunt is also an accomplished printmaker. This print comes from a portfolio of eight lithographs that Hunt created in 1965 during a residency at the renowned Tamarind Workshop in Los Angeles. It was the first work by an African American artist acquired by Hope College for its teaching collection back in 1968.



Portrait of Marcus Garvey

Charles Bible (American, born 1937)

1968

Offset lithograph

Purchased with funds donated by Roberta VanGilder '53 Kaye, 2020.53

Jamaican-born Marcus Garvey was the founder and first President-General of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL). He was an ardent Black nationalist who opposed European colonialism in Africa and advocated for pan-African political unity. He also argued that Black people from the Americas should move to Africa to help rebuild the greatness of African civilization. Garvey lived in the United States from 1916 to 1926, and became an influential, if controversial figure in the American Civil Rights movement. His argument that African American communities should strive for financial independence by starting and supporting Black-owned businesses resonated strongly in the 1920s and again in the 1960s and 70s, as did his call for Black Americans to reconnect with their African roots. This image of Garvey wearing a military-style uniform is based on a photograph taken in 1922 when Garvey delivered a speech at the Second Convention of the Negro Peoples of the World in New York City. It was created by Charles Bible, an African American artist originally from Texas who studied art at the Pratt Institute in New York and later worked as a graphic artist and illustrator in the San Francisco Bay area.



Star-Burst Quilt

Willie Maddox (American, 1910-1988)

Ca. 1970s-early 1980s

Cotton

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Bruce Haight, 2018.3.214

The history of African American quilt making is not well documented but dates back at least to the 19th century and possibly earlier. Before 1865, enslaved African American women in the South often made quilts for their owners and sometimes for themselves using scraps of leftover fabrics. After slavery was abolished, Black women continued to make quilts for their own families and sometimes to sell commercially. This quilt was made by Willie Maddox, an African American woman who was born and raised in Alabama, and who moved to Kalamazoo, Michigan as part of the Great Migration. Maddox learned the art of quilting as a child from her mother and elder sisters and remained active as a quilter for her entire life. What began as an economic necessity became for Maddox a source of enjoyment and an outlet for her creativity. As she said once in an interview, "I do it for the pleasure...I just like to piece."



John Brown Praying

Jacob Lawrence (American, 1917-2000)

1977

Screen print

Purchased with funds donated by Ronald '62 and Gerri Vander Molen, 2020.63

In 1941, Jacob Lawrence created a series of 22 gouache paintings illustrating the exploits of abolitionist John Brown, who in 1859 tried unsuccessfully to start an insurrection that he hoped would bring an end to the institution of slavery in the United States. Unfortunately, the paints Lawrence used for this series were highly unstable and the condition of the works quickly deteriorated. By 1977, the paintings were too fragile to be publicly displayed, so the Detroit Institute of Arts, which owns the paintings, commissioned Lawrence to recreate the images as silkscreen prints. This print is number 21 from the 1977 *Legend of John Brown* series. It depicts Brown sitting with his head hung down and holding a cross as he awaits execution for the crimes of treason and murder. Although we cannot see Brown's face, the dynamic forms and bold colors convey his passionate character, while the image of the cross reminds us that Brown was a martyr whose commitment to racial justice was rooted in his strong Christian faith.



Jamming at Minton's

Romare Bearden (American, 1911-1988)

1979

Color lithograph

Hope College Collection, 2014.1

Romare Bearden was born into a middle-class, African American family in Charlotte, North Carolina. After a childhood split between North Carolina, Pennsylvania and New York, Bearden settled down in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City, where he joined a dynamic community of African American thinkers, writers, artists and musicians. Although he was employed full time as a social worker from the mid-1930s through the 1960s, Bearden spent many nights and weekends making art, and gradually earned a national reputation for his innovative paintings, drawings and collages. Bearden often drew inspiration for his art from African American religion, literature, music and folk culture. The print shown above, along with the five prints on pages 45–47, belong to a series Bearden created in the late 1970s to celebrate African American jazz culture. The titles of some prints contain references to famous New York City jazz venues such as Minton's Playhouse and Birdland, while other titles refer to various jazz styles and instruments.



Tenor Sermon

Romare Bearden (American, 1911-1988)

1979

Color lithograph

Hope College Collection, 2015.40



Introduction of a Blue's Queen

Romare Bearden (American, 1911-1988)

1979

Color lithograph

Hope College Collection, 2015.45



Bopping at Birdland

Romare Bearden (American, 1911-1988)

1979

Color lithograph

Hope College Collection, 2015.20



Out Chorus-Rhythm Section

Romare Bearden (American, 1911-1988)

1979

Color lithograph

Hope College Collection, 2016.3.2



Louisiana Serenade

Romare Bearden (American, 1911-1988)

1979

Color lithograph

Hope College Collection, 2016.3.1



Pilate

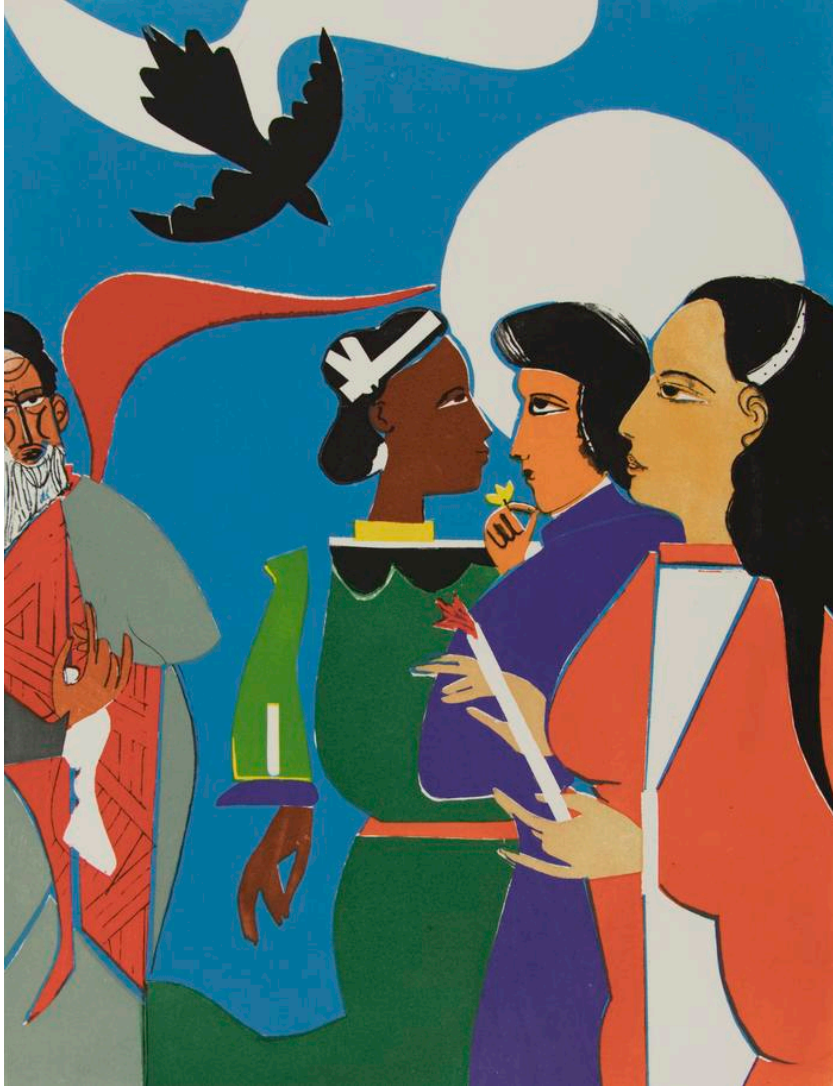
Romare Bearden (American, 1911-1988)

1979

Lithograph

Hope College Collection, 2015.19

Toni Morrison (1931-2019) was a groundbreaking African American writer who ranks among America's most celebrated authors. Some of her major awards include the National Book Critics Circle Award in 1977; the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1988; the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993; the National Book Foundation Medal of Distinguished Contribution to American Letters in 1996; and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2012. This print depicts the character Pilate from Morrison's 1977 novel *The Song of Solomon*, which first brought Morrison to national attention. Although the novel is set in Michigan, Pilate is shown here wearing West African or Caribbean dress, suggesting a connection between Pilate and the traditions of wise women in those cultures. The print was created by artist Romare Bearden as a tribute to Morrison, who was a close personal friend. The style of the print mimics the collage pieces for which Bearden is best known.



Sunday Morning at Avila

Romare Bearden (American, 1911-1988)

1981

Etching

Hope College Collection, 2015.51

Artist Romare Bearden was commissioned to create this print in 1981 to commemorate a special performance of Virgil Thomson and Gertrude Stein's 1934 opera *Four Saints in Three Acts*. The opera was considered groundbreaking not only because of its avant-garde music and libretto, but because it was originally staged with an entirely Black cast, despite the story being set in 17th-century Spain and featuring a number of historical white saints. After its first production run in 1934, *Four Saints in Three Acts* was revived again several times in the 1940s and 50s. The 1981 performance for which this print was made was produced in celebration of composer Virgil Thomson's 85th birthday.



Illustrations for the First Book of Moses, Called Genesis

Jacob Lawrence (American, 1917-2000)

1989

Screen prints

Purchased with funds donated by Ronald '62 and Gerri Vander Molen, 2019.54

This special edition of the Book of Genesis contains eight screen prints by Jacob Lawrence that were inspired by his memories of the services he attended as a teen at Abyssinian Baptist Church in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City. Abyssinian Baptist Church was founded as an offshoot of First Baptist Church in 1809 by a group of free African American parishioners and visiting Ethiopian sailors who objected to First Baptist's racially segregated seating policy. When Lawrence attended Abyssinian Baptist Church in the 1930s, it was led by minister Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., whose energetic preaching style is evoked by the dynamic shapes and bright colors of these images. Jacob Lawrence grew up in New Jersey and Pennsylvania before moving to Harlem with his mother in 1930. At age 16, he began studying at the Harlem Art Workshop under the mentorship of Charles Alston, Henry Bannarn and Augusta Savage. He enjoyed a successful career as an artist in New York from the early 1940s to 1970, at which point he took a teaching position at the University of Washington in Seattle, where he lived for the remainder of his life.



III

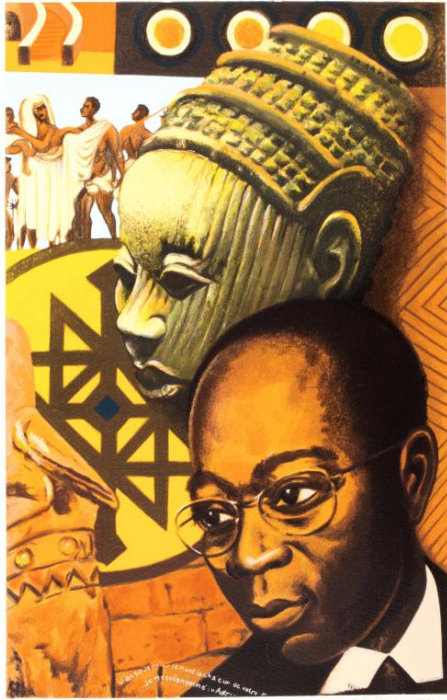
Lorna Simpson (American, born 1960)

1992

Mixed media

Promised Gift of David Kamansky and Gerald Wheaton, TR 2015.4.4

African American artist Lorna Simpson holds a BFA degree from the School of Visual Arts in New York and an MFA from the University of California at San Diego. She is best known for combining visual images with passages of text to create artworks that address troubling issues of race, gender and economic inequality. In this work, Simpson plays with the question, “What would you ask for if you had three wishes?” The three wishbones are made of different materials—bronze, ceramic and rubber—to suggest that what people wish for might vary considerably depending on their race, socio-economic status and personal history.



Portrait of Leopold Sédar Senghor

Lois Mailou Jones (American, 1905-1998)

1996

Screen print

Purchased with funds donated by Judith Kingma Hazelton '56, 2019.81.3

Leopold Sédar Senghor (1906-2001) was a Senegalese politician, poet and cultural theorist. He was elected as the first president of Senegal after it gained independence from France in 1960 and served in that position until 1980. In the 1930s and 40s, Senghor played a leading role in developing the cultural theory of *Négritude*, which affirmed the intrinsic value and global importance of African and African-diaspora cultures around the world. The ideas advanced by *Négritude* theorists like Senghor helped fuel numerous anti-colonial independence movements within Africa during the 1950s and 60s, and were also influential in the American Civil Rights movement at the same time. This portrait of Senghor was created by Lois Mailou Jones, an African American artist from Boston who taught at Howard University in Washington, DC from 1930 to 1977. During the 1930s, Jones spent many summer and holiday vacations in New York City's Harlem neighborhood, where she became a fixture in the cultural world of the Harlem Renaissance. Jones was a longtime admirer of Senghor and created this print to celebrate a special edition of his poetry that was published in 1996.



Gossip

Elizabeth Catlett (American, 1915-2012)

2005

Photolithograph and giclée

Gift of Arthur and Kristine Rossof, 2016.64.19

After earning an MFA from the University of Iowa in 1940 and struggling for several years to establish herself as a professional artist, Elizabeth Catlett moved to Mexico in 1946 and joined a left-wing artists' collective called the People's Graphic Workshop (*Taller de Gráfica Popular*). Catlett's participation in that workshop attracted scrutiny from the United States government, which considered the workshop to be a communist organization. When Catlett attempted to return to the United States in 1961 to visit her dying mother, the government refused to let her enter the country and declared her to be an "undesirable alien." In protest, Catlett renounced her American citizenship in 1962 and became a Mexican citizen. Although Catlett no longer lived in the United States, she remained closely connected to many African American artists and to the Civil Rights movement, and she created numerous artworks that were inspired by African American history and culture. This image of two women talking from near the end of Catlett's career reminds us about the importance of friendship and the crucial role that women in particular play in African American family and community life.



Pressed Iron Blossom No. 2

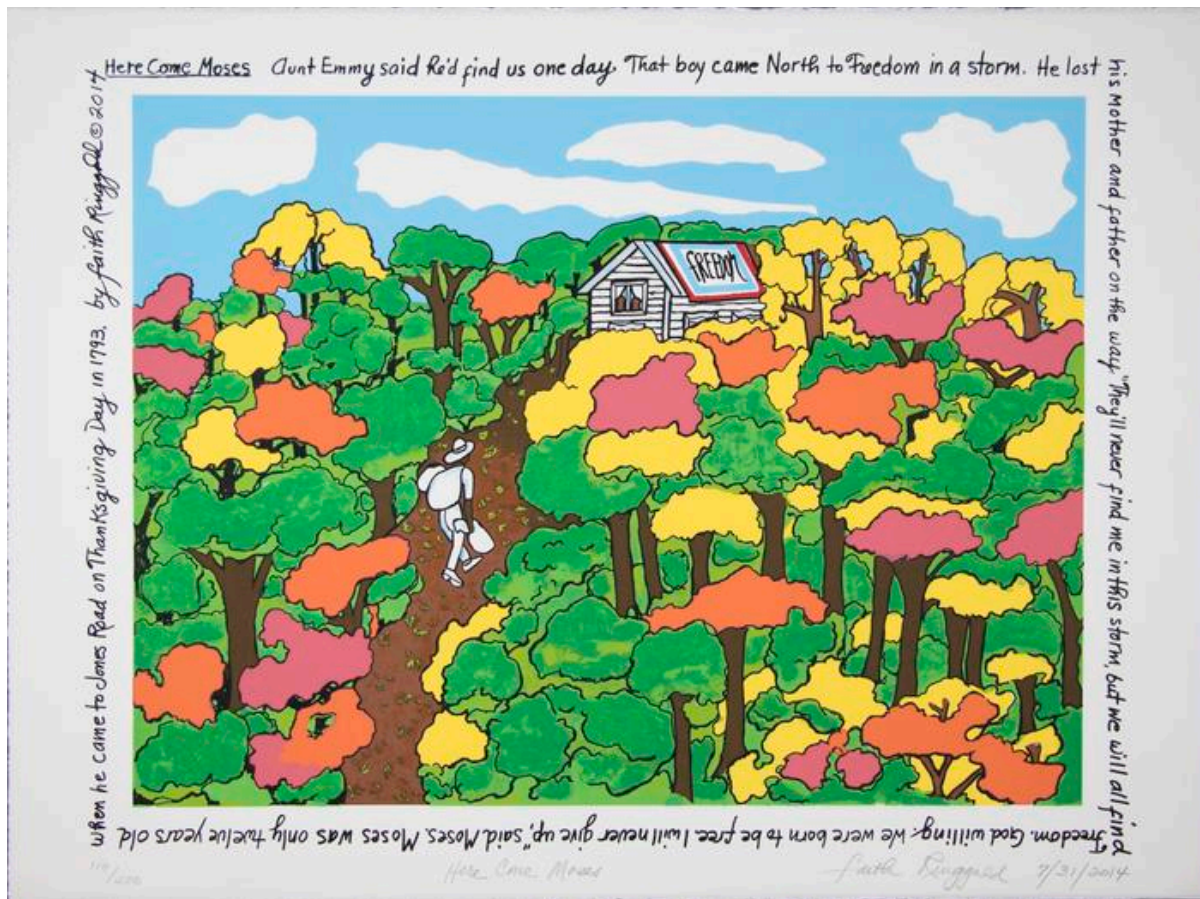
Willie Cole (American, born 1955)

2005

Color lithograph

Hope College Collection, 2014.3

Willie Cole is a contemporary African American artist best known for using found objects to create sculptures, paintings and prints that comment on race relations, social history and cultural exchange. Images of steam irons and ironing boards appear frequently in Cole's work. As symbols of domestic servitude, the steam irons and ironing boards function as reminders of class, race and gender divisions in American society. Cole also uses irons to evoke the forms and loading diagrams of 18th-century slave ships. However, in *Pressed Iron Blossom No. 2*, the negative connotations of the steam iron are belied by the cheerful colors and floral design that more closely recall African American quilt patterns.



Here Come Moses

Faith Ringgold (American, born 1930)

2014

Eleven-screen serigraph

Gift of Arthur and Kristine Rossof, 2016.64.28

The text around the perimeter of this print reads: "Here Come Moses. Aunt Emmy said he'd find us one day. That boy came North to Freedom in a storm. He lost his mother and father on the way. 'They'll never find me in this storm, but we will all find Freedom, God willing. We were born to be free. I will never give up,' said Moses. Moses was only twelve years old when he came to Jones Road on Thanksgiving Day in 1793." The print belongs to Faith Ringgold's *Jones Road* series, which was inspired by the historical experiences of African Americans who escaped slavery during the 18th and 19th centuries and made new lives for themselves as free people in the North. Ringgold was born and raised in New York City's Harlem neighborhood during the Harlem Renaissance period. After earning bachelor's and master's degrees in art education, Ringgold worked as a teacher in the New York Public School system from 1955 to 1973, at which time she quit teaching to work full time as an artist. She has been active in the Civil Rights movement since the early 1960s, and much of her work addresses issues of racial, gender and class inequalities.