

BLACK HISTORY ART & ARTIFACTS EXHIBIT

Sponsored By

Grace Arms of Antioch

Grace Arms is a non-profit agency which focuses on community based involvement

Exhibit Guide with Commentary

- ***Africa – The Mother Land*** - Man originated on the continent of Africa. We came from a very rich culture with kings and queens, the first universities were in Timbuktu, the land is rich with gold, diamonds, and other precious jewels, and metals. The artifacts are a sample of the items used in everyday living. Ornate art work, carving, sculpture, etc. Rug from Madagascar, Africa, a throw from Egypt, African masks, cufees (hats), etc.
- ***African & Mexican Heritage*** – The Olmec Africans settled in what is now known as Mexico and lived with the Indians population. They built pyramids in Mexico and South America. Out of that assimilation evolved the Mayan and Aztec cultures. Point the people to the story board on the back of the African panel.
- ***African & Chinese Heritage*** – Africans migrated to China and adapted to the climate and evolved with lighter skins. Point people to the poster about the Asian/ Black Connection.
- ***Middle Passage & Slavery*** - Slaves where brought here from the Ivory Coast of African and dropped off in South America, Jamaica, Haiti, and America. The conditions of the slave ships were in humane people were squeezed in like sardines. Many died from disease and malnutrition. When the slaves got to America they were sold on the auction blocks to the highest bidder, families were split up – mothers, husbands, and children were often sold separately.
- ***Plantation Life*** – the slaves were very versatile and able to adapt to the plantation life style that required them to pick cotton, farm, and serve in the slave masters house. Point out the artifacts that show how they lived, tin tub, wash board, cast iron skillets and kettles, hair care – straightening comb and curlers invented by Madam C.J. Walker, food- Aunt Jemima was famous for her pancake mix which everyone eats today in the form of pancakes and waffles. Uncle Ben was famous developing a way to process rice so it would not be gummy and sticky when cooked. The picture of the ‘Home House’ is an example of what the slaves lived in. The dolls, etc. is an example of the arts and crafts of the slaves. They often made cloths out of old cotton or flour sacks.
- ***The Church*** - The slaves found that the Bible offered a ray of hope for deliverance from their bondage. Their favorite story was Moses delivering the children of Israel. Whenever a child was born the elders would look at the child and ask are you the one? [who will be our deliverer]. The church was the only place where slaves were allowed to

gather. They often used the hymns (songs) such as “Steal Away”, to send code messages about running away on the Underground Railroad with Harriet Tubman.

- ***The Underground Railroad*** - Harriett Tubman , the conductor on the Underground Railroad. She freed over 300 slaves and guided them to the North where they were helped by white Abolitionist usually of the Quaker Christian Faith. She and Frederick Douglass were contemporaries (working to free the slaves). Douglass a former slave who lived in the North and was a great spokesman for freedom for the slaves.
- ***Emancipation Proclamation*** - The slaves were freed in 1863 when Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. However, Texas held the slaves for two years to continue harvesting their crops. Juneteenth (June 14th or the closest Saturday to the date) is celebrated to commemorate the slaves finally being freed in Texas. None of the other freed slaves around the country celebrated until all the slaves were freed in Texas. There were no reparations (money) provided for the years the slaves were in bondage so they were set free to make it on their own.
- ***Reconstruction*** - Life was hard, but the people survived and thrived to become the first Black politicians, lawyers, senators, congressman, and financial experts, etc. The white establish was still racist in the south and the north and often burned down black towns, and hung people. The Klu Klux Klan was born during this time to keep blacks in “their place”. Colored only signs were posted to keep black people from using white only bathrooms, sitting in restaurants, riding buses, etc.
- ***African American Leaders & Educators*** – During Reconstruction the first Black Colleges were built. Black people were not allowed to go to white schools or colleges. The funds came from white liberals who supported separate but equal education. Some of our historically black colleges are Fisk, Moore House, Tennessee State Univ., Howard Univ. Lincoln, Wilberforce, Spellman, Xavier, Clark/Atlanta, etc. Guide the guests to the posters that show famous lawyers, teachers who graduated from these schools.
- ***The Back to African Movement*** – Black Nationalists who were the forerunners of the civil rights movement. For example, Marcus Garvey led a movement to take back people back to Africa. On his journey he founded the country of Liberia, Africa. Many Africans from Liberia live in the United States today. W.E.B. Dubois started the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) in order to legally fight for the equal treatment and the rights of Black and other people of color.
- ***African American Scientist/ Inventors/Engineers*** – Ernst Just, Biologist, and McCoy Inventor – show the guests the pictures and descriptions in the Library section of the Exhibit.
- ***African American Physicians*** – Charles Drew invented blood plasma that helped to make blood transfusions possible. He was known as the father of the present day Blood Bank. Ironically, Dr. Drew and died from a car accident because the hospital would not give him a blood transfusion.

- ***The Civil Rights Movement*** – MLK, Jr. lead the civil rights movement to protest for integration of schools and colleges, public facilities, restaurants, voting rights, equal wages, etc. Point the people to the pictures on the wall that tell the story of Selma, Alabama, March on Washington, Noble Peace Prize, King’s assassination, etc.
- ***President Barack Obama*** – 2008 elected as the first African American President of the United States of America.
- ***Kwanzaa*** – developed by (Ron) Malanga Karenga in 1965 to focus on the 7 Principles for building strong families, community, and culture. The Principles are unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, collective economics, purpose, creativity, and faith.
- ***Musicians, Writers, & Entertainers*** – In our early history of the 30’s black people were only allowed to be entertainers, maids, etc. other avenues were closed to us. Point the guests to the music section with pictures and albums, etc.
- ***Sports Figures – boxing, tennis, baseball (Negro Baseball League, Living legends*** – Bill Russell, Wilt Chamberlain, Kareem Abul Jabar, Magic Johnson, Michael Jordan, etc. Black athletes have always been outstanding, setting national and world records.
- ***African American Military*** – Buffalo Soldiers. Military integrated during World War II
- ***Quilt Collection*** – Harriet Tubman – Underground Railroad quilt, United States –Virginia Sprinkles – hand embroidery, etc,
- ***Library & Art Collection*** – books, Ebony, Jet, Essence were the first magazines about black people. Point the to the Black History book series for children on the table.
- ***Prime Minister Nelson Mandela*** – first black prime minister of South Africa was imprisoned for 25 years but continued to lead the fight against apartheid (segregation) in his country. When he was released from prison he was voted in by black people to be the Prime Minister.