Inside the Vault:
Highlights from the Gilder Lehrman Collection

February 18, 2021

The session will start shortly. Please note:
• Your video and audio will automatically turn off.
• You can participate through the Q&A function.
• If you have technical difficulties, please email collectionprograms@gilderlehrman.org so we can assist you.
Our Team

Panelists

• Sandy Trenholm - Collection Director
• Mandel Holland - History Educator at Woodlands Middle High School in New York
• Marcus John - Universal Swing in *Hamilton*
• Allison Kraft - Assistant Curator
During the Session

- If you would like to ask a question, you can use the Q&A feature, which is at the bottom of your screen.
- Viewing in full screen is recommended to see the presenters and the presentation at the same time.

For Security and Privacy

- Your microphone is automatically muted.
- Your camera is automatically turned off.
Today’s Documents

- Autobiographical Sketch
- Quotation from Address at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
- Frederick Douglass to Thomas B. Pugh, November 17, 1870
- Frederick Douglass to unknown recipient, November 23, 1887

Gilder Lehrman Collection
Frederick Douglass, 1818-1895

- February 1818 - Born in Talbot County, Maryland, on a plantation belonging to Aaron Anthony
- September 3, 1838 - Escaped bondage
- September 15, 1838 - Married Anna Murray
- January 24, 1884 - Married Helen Pitts
- February 20, 1895 - Died

“The principle thing I desired in making the inquiries I have of you was to get some idea of my exact age. I have always been troubled by the thought of having no birthday.”

--Frederick Douglass to Benjamin Auld, March 24, 1894
“A slave 1837.
Free man 1838.
Took refuge in England from slave hunters in 1845.
Ransomed 1846.
Editor. 1847.
In England 1859. on account John Brown raid.
Raised colored troops during Rebellion.
Sent by General Grant with Commission to Santo-Domingo 1871.
Elector at large, New York 1872.
Appointed Recorder of Deeds for the D.C. by President Garfield 1881.
Appointed Minister and Consul General to Hayti, by President Harrison 1889 –

Frederick Douglass”
Address at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, 1871

- Decoration Day was first celebrated in 1868 as a way to honor the Civil War dead.
- On May 30, 1871, Douglass delivered a speech at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery.
- Section 27 contains the graves of black Civil War troops.
- Section 27 also contains graves of former enslaved men, women, & children.
“We are sometimes asked in the name of patriotism to forget the merits of this fearful conflict and to remember with equal admiration those who struck at the nation’s life and those who struck to save it—those who fought for slavery and those who fought against it.”
Dear Sir,

I accept your kind invitation to deliver one of the lectures of the "Star Series" and in the progress in the Academy of Science at Philadelphia. I have learned with some surprise containing our recently increased agitation, that in several instances it is a vulgar and scandalous prejudice against the long abused and proscribed people. The Directors of their proper Hall permit the refusal to allow it to be used for a lecture to which my name shall be 

Washington, D.C., Nov. 23, 1870

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1870 - Douglass was invited by T. B. Pugh to speak in the Star Course series at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia.

The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments have been passed and Douglass was hopeful for an end to the “caste” system.

Douglass learns that the Academy of Music “does not admit Black people on terms of equality with others.”

He cancels the lecture and sends a strong letter to Pugh.
“I have learned with some surprise considering our recently improved civilization, that in servile deference to a vulgar and senseless prejudice against my long abused and proscribed people, the Directors of that popular Hall persist in refusing to allow it to be used for a lecture to which my race shall be admitted on terms of equality with others.”
“Hoping that you will not deem me too sensitive on the point, I beg to decline any such an arrangement as the procurement of another Hall ... I prefer to wait the progress of enlightenment and liberality, which will yet surely open the doors of the ‘Academy of Music’ as freely to me and my race as to other men and other races.”
"Wolfish hate and snobbish pride of race"

I believe that the ‘City of Brotherly love’ with its hundreds of Altars to the ‘Lamb of God’ stands almost alone in the intensity of its wolfish hate and snobbish pride of race. It clung longer to proscription on its cars and other modes of travel than any other city of the North, and the ‘Jim Crow pew’ is retained there more extensively than in any other place North of Mason and Dixon’s line. Nevertheless, I do not...
Douglass wrote this letter to an unknown recipient. He is clearly answering questions. He seems hopeful for the future.

“From all I can learn colored Lawyers are admitted to practice in Southern Courts, and I am very glad to admit the fact - for it implies a wonderful revolution in the public sentiment of the Southern States.”
Black Education in the South, 1887

- Black schools have less time allotted to them.
- Teachers are paid less than in White schools.
- Teachers are apathetic about their students because they are there out of necessity rather than interest in their students.
- In Kentucky - the law sees education as equal.
“Hidden practices”

“Our wrongs are not so much now in written laws which all may see - but the hidden practices of a people who have not yet abandoned the idea of Mastery and dominion over their fellow man.”

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Q&A
Transcribe! Informational session

- Learn more about our online transcription volunteer opportunities for students 13 and over
- Experience working directly with primary sources
- Regularly updated projects, and workshop sessions for building transcription skills
- Info session on Friday, March 5 at 7:00 PM Eastern Time.
- Session will be recorded
- Contact transcribe@gilderlehrman.org with questions
Upcoming Programs

- **Book Breaks**, February 21 at 2 pm ET (11 am PT)
  - Kabria Baumgartner discusses her book *In Pursuit of Knowledge: Black Women and Educational Activism in Antebellum America*.

- 22nd Annual Frederick Douglass Book Prize
  - Tuesday, February 23 at 7 pm ET (4 pm PT)
  - We invite teachers, students, and history lovers to join us for this event, which will feature remarks and a Q&A with prizewinner Sophie White as well as David Blight, Pulitzer Prize-winning author and director of the Gilder Lehrman Center at Yale University.
Upcoming Programs

● *Inside the Vault*, Thursday, March 4 at 7 pm ET (4 pm PT)
  ○ We will be discussing Lucy Knox: Loyalist’s Daughter, Patriot’s Wife, and Witness to the American Revolution.

● Nominate a teacher for History Teacher of the Year!
  ○ K-12 teachers in each of the 50 states, District of Columbia, Department of Defense Schools, and US Territories are eligible. These winners are then entered into a pool for the National History Teacher of the Year award.

● Visit gilderlehrman.org for free resources for students, teachers, families, and history enthusiasts of all ages.