Overcoming



HATEFUL THINGS

STORIES FROM THE JIM CROW MUSEUM

VISITOR'S GUIDE

JIM CROW MUSEUM
witness, understand, heal

Exhibit Overview

The Jim Crow Museum's new traveling exhibit, *Overcoming Hateful Things: Stories from the Jim Crow Museum*, explores the Jim Crow system, the African American experience through the Jim Crow era, and the legacies of this system in modern society. *Overcoming Hateful Things* will cultivate understanding and empathy for victims of racial intolerance throughout history to the modern day and allow visitors to bear witness to the need to guard against the dehumanizing characterizations of others, so they do not become further culturally entrenched.

The traveling exhibition contains over 150 items of material culture from the late 19th century to the present, embodying the terrible effects of the Jim Crow legacy. In addition to items from popular and commercial culture, the traveling exhibit contains images of violence against African Americans as well as Civil Rights activists struggling for racial equality. Signage for each primary source places it in its proper cultural or historical context. The disturbing objects have been lifted from their original purposes to now serve as powerful reminders of America's racist past—and as teaching tools. But more importantly, *Overcoming Hateful Things* acquaints viewers with African American pushback, through activism, achievement, and living with dignity in their daily lives.

Content Warning from the Jim Crow Museum

Some of the artifacts and media pieces in the *Overcoming Hateful Things* exhibit contain explicit images of violence, offensive language, and other graphic and explicit historical content. Some viewers will find the subject matter offensive or disturbing. Because of this, the exhibit is strongly recommended only for those 12 years of age and older. Jim Crow Museum staff encourage all school-aged children to be accompanied by a guardian or adult.

The exhibit has the following thematic sections:

- Who & What is Jim Crow?
- Jim Crow Laws
- Caricatures
- Jim Crow Violence and Terrorism
- Teaching Racism & Internalizing Bias
- Jim Crow… in Public Spaces, at Home, for Sale
- We are not Jim Crow: *Demanding Civil Rights, Braving Terror, Building Communities, Raising Families, Expressing Creativity, Taking Pride*
- *Jim Crow Will End When…*



Image from The Jim Crow Museum Collection

Enduring Understandings

- During the period of Jim Crow, 1877-1965, racist imagery of Black people permeated American society, as evidenced by the proliferation of anti-Black everyday items.
- Jim Crow laws had a lasting impact on the social, cultural, and economic opportunities for African Americans.
- Racial caricatures and stereotypes were used as propaganda to support anti-Black prejudice and segregation.
- Fear, violence, and intimidation were used to uphold anti-Black legislation and social customs.
- There are many powerful examples of Black people pushing back against racist stereotypes, segregation and violence by demanding civil rights, promoting nonviolence, building communities, and expressing creativity.
- Jim Crow-like images are still being created and distributed.
- True dialogue and a confrontation of difficult histories, even when painful, is a necessary prerequisite for addressing racial problems.

Continue the Learning

The Jim Crow Museum YouTube Channel

- This channel includes interviews, footage from the Jim Crow Museum, historical photographs, and animated shorts. These videos are excellent teaching tools to introduce learners of all ages to topics like discrimination, segregation, and racism in an accessible and impactful manner. Additionally, stories and biographies highlight Black achievements and trailblazers, demonstrating the significant contributions that Black people have made despite the discrimination and systemic barriers they've faced throughout American history.
- *https://www.youtube.com/@jimcrowmuseum/videos*

Explore the Jim Crow Museum Virtually

- Experience the power of a visit to the Jim Crow Museum. The Virtual Tour gives you the ability to experience the museum as if you were there in person. You can explore the exhibit cases, zoom in on the objects, listen to the didactic panels, play the videos, and engage with the collection in a variety of ways. Start your exploration here: *https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=X9ou6MvycZU&*
- Enrich this experience with the Virtual Tour Unit Plan, designed for students in grades 9-12.

Jim Crow Museum Interactive Timelines

- Africa Before American Slavery; Slavery in America; Reconstruction; Jim Crow; Civil Rights; Post Civil Rights
- *https://jimcrowmuseum.ferris.edu/timeline/homepage.htm*

Relevant Quotations. Use the following quotes as a catalyst for discussion or journaling. Consider:

- What do these quotes mean to you?
- What connections can you make to themes and issues raised in the *Overcoming Hateful Things* exhibit?

"Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will."	Frederick Douglas, August 3, 1857, speech at Canandaigua, New York
"The only tired I was, was tired of giving in."	Rosa Parks, *Rosa Parks: My Story*, 1992
"Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured."	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Letter from Birmingham City Jail, 1963
"The world changes according to the way people see it, and if you alter, even by a millimeter, the way a person looks or people look at reality, then you can change it."	James Baldwin, September 23, 1979 interview by John Romano in *The New York Times*
"We have to walk around being perfect all the time just to be seen as human. Don't you ever get tired of being a symbol? Don't you ever just want to be human?"	Christina Hammonds Reed, *The Black Kids*, 2020
"If you can control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his action. ... If you make a man feel that he is inferior, you do not have to compel him to accept an inferior status, for he will seek it himself."	Dr. Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, 1933
"The Afro-American is not a bestial race. If [my] work can contribute in any way toward proving this, and at the same time arouse the conscience of the American people to a demand for justice to every citizen, and punishment by law for the lawless, I shall feel I have done my race a service."	Ida B. Wells, *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*, 1892

Credits

JIM CROW MUSEUM

Using Objects of Intolerance to Teach Tolerance and Promote Social Justice

Overcoming Hateful Things is a traveling exhibit created by the Jim Crow Museum.

The Jim Crow Museum

We are an anti-racism institution and a testimony to African American resiliency.

This is a collection of objects and attitudes that both shaped and reflected the past—history that belongs to all Americans as inheritors of Jim Crow's legacy. We collect, study, and use these objects to create dialogue about race.

Our mission is to teach tolerance using objects of deeply rooted intolerance. We combat ignorance with truth and replace fear with understanding. Through our exhibits, programs, and resources, the Jim Crow Museum promotes personal and community awareness, social justice, and racial healing.

The Jim Crow Museum is located on the campus of Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Michigan.

Visit *https://jimcrowmuseum.ferris.edu/* to learn more. Visitor guide created by the Grand Rapids Public Museum.

INSTITUTE of Museum and Library SERVICES

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