

COLLECTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

TEACHERS GUIDE & RESOURCES

Partners in History

PRIMARY SOURCE MATERIAL AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



CREDITS

Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This exhibition, developed by the VMHC and BHMVA explores how to historical organizations working closely together can offer a more complete understanding of our past as a source of inspiration for the future. This exhibition is made possible by the Community Foundation. Looking forward, a generous grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), will ensure that this work continues through further digitization efforts.

IMAGE CREDITS

All images and objects are from the Black History Museum and Cultural Center or the Virginia Museum of History & Culture collections, unless otherwise noted.









INTRODUCTION

In 2019, the VMHC and the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia (BHMVA) began a long-term partnership to share collections and resources to connect more people to the story of Virginia. Through this partnership, various collections from the BHMVA are being housed within the VMHC's purpose-made secure collections storage and digitized to make them more accessible to the public. Staff from both museums are collaborating to select collections for cataloging and digitization, which will make many of these items and their remarkable stories widely discoverable for the first time. The important work of documenting and preserving these collections is a multi-year endeavor but also a labor of love for partners who share a common goal of making the rich tapestry of Virginia's history accessible to all. There is much to look forward to!

READING AND ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCE MATERIAL

Background: Primary Source Material

This resource packet is designed to help familiarize students with a variety of primary and secondary source materials from the Black History Museum and Cultural Center and Virginia Museum of History and Culture exhibition *Partners in History*. The sources included will expose students to a variety of collection materials, including office documents, objects, photographs, ephemera, and letters. Prompt your students to consider the intersections of things like race, gender, and socioeconomic status. When analyzing the materials, keep in mind the origin of the source – was it meant to be public or private? Who is to, and who is it from? Does it contain opinions or facts, and can you tell the difference? Is it written or illustrated? Is it a paper source or an object? These questions, the material in the corresponding source packet, the contextual information and images, and the guidelines below will provide an avenue for integrating museum collections into the classroom.

Background: Black History Museum & Cultural Center Collections

"I would like to see more historical sites in favor of Black people, such as a museum, a shrine or a place of national history." – Carroll W. Anderson, BHMVA founder

The Black History Museum & Cultural Center of Virginia was founded in 1981 to preserve and share the inspirational stories of Virginia's African American community. It opened to the public in 1991 and was first located at 00 Clay Street in an 1832 mansion built by prominent Richmond baker Adolph Dill. A private residence through the late 1800s, the house later served as a school, an officer's club for Black servicemen during World War I, and a branch of the Richmond Public Library. Open High School – a progressive public school focused on independent study – occupied the site from 1979 to 1986. In 2016 the BHMA moved into an expanded facility at the Leigh Street Armory, in the neighborhood of Jackson Ward. Built in 1895 to house African American militia, this impressive structure later served as a school and then a

reception center for Black soldiers during World War II. Today, the BHMVA serves as a community gathering place that is welcoming and engaging for local residents and visitors alike.

In the sources and objects below, the idea of community will occur time and time again. After the Civil War, the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments guaranteed African Americans new opportunities. Suddenly, Black southerners were free to determine the course of their lives by working for wages, owning businesses, pursuing an education, and for Black men – voting. To maintain the prewar social order, white Virginians created hurdles to the opportunities by segregating black individuals from white society, denying them meaningful employment, and creating a political system that by the end of the century successfully negated or

deterred many Black voters. Equality remained an unfulfilled goal. However, the Black communities persisted. They looked internally to develop and strengthen systems of mutual aid that provided financial and emotional support to African Americans in need. They established parallel economies to find jobs and basic services such as grocery stores, banks, and hotels — and to own their own businesses, many of which thrived in areas like Richmond's Jackson Ward.

Externally, Black leaders championed equality. Oliver W. Hill was inspired to become a lawyer after reading the U.S. Constitution in college. Hill could not understand how a document which professed to provide protections for African Americans did not address the injustice of racial discrimination. The Richmond native became one of America's most celebrated civil rights attorneys and played a vital role in *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, the landmark Supreme Court decision which struck down racial segregation in U.S. public schools in 1954. Along with her business savvy, Maggie L. Walker championed women's suffrage. John Mitchell Jr. served on Richmond's City Council in 1890 and was known to be a man who would

"walk into the jaws of death to serve his race." Giles Beecher Jackson was born enslaved and ultimately became the first African American attorney certified to practice law before the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals. Virginia Estelle Randolph and Rosa Dixon Bowser spent their lives in pursuit of educational reform for Black students and teachers. Dr. Zenobia Gilpin, one of the earliest practicing female physicians in Richmond, treated both Black and white patients and developed health clinics and nutrition aid programs for the Black community, at a time when most city hospitals exclusively treated white patients. These individuals focused their efforts on building and bettering their communities, both internally and externally. Today, issues of systemic inequality and lack of access to resources like those discussed above still disproportionately affect Black Virginians. Finding connections between the BHMVA and the VMHC collections helps to understand the roots of this history, tell a more inclusive story about how Virginians live and work, and champion the countless stories of African Americans who excelled in business, served their communities, and campaigned for equality for all.

LIST OF SOURCES

Coin Holder, Independent Order of St. Luke, 20th Century

United Order of Tents Southern District No. 1 (Norfolk) Blanket, 20th century

Industrial Accident Policy, Southern Aid Life Insurance Company, Inc., mid-20th century

Virginia State Highway Marker for Jackson Ward, DHR, 2005

Painting, "Five Legendary Leaders: The Jackson Ward Legacy," Robert L. Foster, 1997

Photo, Maggie L. Walker High School Golden Twirlers, 1965

Desk, Oliver W. Hill, 20th century

U.S. Army Pay Receipt, Oliver W, Hill, 1944 Advertisement, Chalmer's Beauty School, 1938

Letter, Christine W. Banks, 1965

*All letters are transcribed as written. Spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors have been retained.

OVERALL DISCUSSION AND GUIDING QUESTIONS

OBSERVE

- 1. What do you notice first?
- 2. Find something small but interesting.
- 3. What do you notice that you didn't expect? What do you notice that you can't explain? What do you notice now that you didn't earlier?

REFLECT

- 1. Where do you think this came from?
- 2. Why do you think somebody made this? What do you think was happening when this was made?
- 3. Who do you think was the audience for this item?
- 4. What tool was used to create this?
- 5. Why do you think this item is important?
- 6. If someone made this today, what would be different?
- 7. What can you learn from examining this?

QUESTION

1. What do you wonder about...who? what? when? Where? Why? How?

CONTEXT AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR EACH SOURCE

Coin Holder, Independent Order of St. Luke, 20th Century VMHC Object Number 2005.341.15

The BHMVA collections are rich with stories of Virginia's Black mutual aid societies and fraternal organizations, which have provided financial and emotional support to African Americans for centuries. Educator Mary Prout founded the Grand United Order of St. Luke in 1867 to offer financial aid to the sick and funds for burials. In 1869 Richmond members broke off from the organization and formed the Independent Order of St. Luke, which became one of nation's largest mutual aid societies under the leadership of businesswoman Maggie L. Walker. The daughter of a former enslaved woman, Maggie Walker (1864–1934) became nationally renowned as one of the most influential and accomplished black civic leaders in Richmond's Jackson Ward neighborhood. This coin holder emblazoned with Walker's portrait is a fitting tribute to her commitment to black empowerment in the face of rampant discrimination.

- 1. Why might the black community in 1867 need organizations focused on financial aid?
- 2. What message does it send to have Maggie L. Walker's image on an object like this?



Benefit Certificate of Josephine Harrison Taylor (VMHC Call Number Mss4 In2546 1)

3. How does Maggie L. Walker embody the intersection of race and gender?

United Order of Tents Southern District No. 1 (Norfolk) Blanket, 20th Century Courtesy of the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia

In 1867, Annetta M. Lane and Harriet R. Taylor, two formerly enslaved women from Virginia, founded the United Order of Tents, a Christian fraternal benevolent organization dedicated to providing shelter and assistance to the less fortunate. Today, the Order - also known as Southern District No. 1 - continues to serve communities in need by raising funds for a variety of organizations including the United Negro College Fund, Special Olympics, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital (Memphis, TN), and Shaw University Divinity School (Raleigh, NC).

- 1. Why might the black community in 1867 need organizations focused on shelter?
- 2. What symbols do you see on this blanket? What do you think they mean?
- 3. Why would someone create this blanket?

Industrial Accident Policy, Southern Aid Life Insurance Company, Inc., mid-20th Century Courtesy of the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia

Founded in Richmond in 1893, the Southern Aid Life Insurance Company was the first African American-owned and operated insurance company in the United States. Despite initial slow growth, the company soon expanded throughout Virginia as well as Washington, DC, and focused on employing Black youth as well as insurance protection.

- 1. This certificate shows an acorn on the left, and a full-grown tree on the right. Why do you think they chose these symbols?
- 2. What age is the limit for the beneficiary to receive the "principal sum" of the insured? Why do you think this might be?
- 3. What type of policy is this?

Virginia State Highway Marker for Jackson Ward, DHR, 2005

Courtesy of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources

The Virginia Historical Highway Marker Program was established in 1927 to recognize and chronicle significant events, accomplishments, and personalities. In 2020, twenty new highway markers were announced

acknowledging the significant contributions of Black Virginians.

- 1. What is one fact about Jackson Ward you did not already know?
- 2. Why do you think the Department of Historic Resources considered Jackson Ward important enough to have a highway marker?
- 3. Who are some Black Virginians, important places in Black Virginia history, or important events in Black Virginia history that should have their own marker? Why?



Exterior view of the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia on Leigh Street in Richmond, Virginia

Painting, "Five Legendary Leaders: The Jackson Ward Legacy," Robert L. Foster, 1997 Courtesy of the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia

Artist and former Virginia Commonwealth University professor Robert L. Foster collaborated with the BHMVA to create this mural depicting community leaders of the Jackson Ward district. **John Mitchell Jr.** was the fiery editor of the *Richmond Planet*, a weekly newspaper with national circulation, for nearly fifty years. A man of many talents, Mitchell was elected to Richmond City Council in 1890. **Virginia Estelle Randolph** was appointed the first Jeanes Supervising Industrial Teacher through a fund created by Quaker Anna T. Jeanes to teach African American children in rural communities. **Giles Beecher Jackson** Day was declared by the city of

Richmond on April 17, 2021. Born enslaved, he became the first African American attorney certified to practice law before the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals. **Rosa Dixon Bowser** was a key player in implementing education reforms in Virginia. A member of the first graduating class of the Richmond Colored Normal School, Bowser became a teacher and was instrumental in creating Virginia's first professional African

American teachers' association. **Dr. Zenobia Gilpin** was one of the earliest practicing female physicians in Richmond. Dr. Gilpin developed health clinic programs at a time when most city hospitals did not treat Black patients. She was also responsible for establishing nutrition aid programs in the Jackson and Monroe Ward areas of Richmond?

- 1. Why do you think Robert L. Foster and the BHMVA felt this painting was necessary?
- 2. Look at the expressions of the individuals in the paintings what words would you use to describe them?

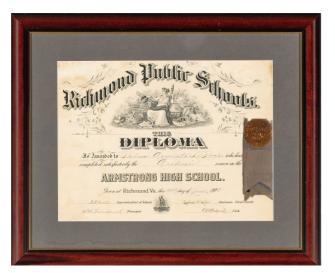


Dr. Zenobia Gilpin's Microscope (BHMVA)

3. Imagine each of these individuals existing in modern day.
What are something things you think they might be proud of in the areas of business, education, politics, and public health? What are some things you think they might still want to improve?

Photo, Maggie L. Walker High School Golden Twirlers, 1965 Courtesy of the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia

The Armstrong-Walker Football Classic was an annual homecoming game held each Thanksgiving weekend from 1938 to 1979 between the Armstrong "Wildcats" and the Maggie L. Walker "Dragons." Games were held at the old City Stadium and attracted nearly 40,000 fans every year. Originally known as the Colored Normal School, Armstrong High School was founded by the Freedman's Bureau in 1865 as Richmond's first public school for Black students. In 1909 the school was renamed for Gen. Samuel Chapman Armstrong, the white commander of the 8th Regiment, U.S. Colored Troops during the Civil War. Armstrong later founded Hampton Institute (now Hampton University). A second high school for Black students opened in 1938 and was named in honor of businesswoman and activist Maggie Lena Walker. The school closed in 1979 but reopened in



Armstrong High School Diploma (BHMVA)

2001 as the Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government and International Studies.

- 1. Observe how these two girls are dressed what do you think they are doing?
- 2. Observe their expressions how do you think they are feeling?
- 3. Why do you think the Armstrong-Walker Classic attracted such a large crowd?

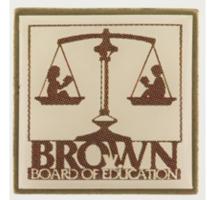
Desk, Oliver W. Hill, 20th Century

Courtesy of the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia

This unassuming desk was used to fight oppression and injustice. Five years after Samuel W. Tucker and Harold M. Marsh, Sr. Founded their Richmond law firm in 1961, they were joined by well-known civil rights

attorney Oliver W. Hill. During his twenty-two-year career with the firm, Hill worked at this desk preparing legal briefs, researching case law, and developing arguments that dismantled segregation and secured justice for all. Hill retired from the law firm in 1998 at the age of 91.

- 1. Describe this desk. Why might a museum save such a common-looking object?
- 2. What are some emotions you think Oliver Hill might have felt sitting at this desk?
- 3. What are some conversations Oliver Hill might have had sitting at this desk?



Brown v. Board of Education Lapel Pin (VMHC Object Number 2014.79.8)

US Army Pay Receipt, Oliver W. Hill, 1944 VMHC Object Number 2014.79.16

Oliver W. Hill was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1943 and served in Europe and the Pacific as an engineer during World War II. Like many Black soldiers, Hill experienced racial discrimination in an armed forces that remained segregated until 1948.

- 1. How much did this pay receipt state that Hill was getting paid?
- 2. The receipt states that Hill is getting paid for "indef" months, starting in February 1944. What do you think "indef" means? Why wouldn't they state a specific number of months instead?
- 3. What other information can you find on this form?

Advertisement, Chalmer's Beauty School, 1938 Courtesy of the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia

Jim Crow laws limited spaces where African Americans could assemble so barber shops and hair salons became gathering places where Black Virginians could socialize and chat about family, politics, and their communities. "To Please You and Courteous Attention" was the motto printed on the circular announcing the opening of The Chalmers Beauty Salon and Beauty Culture School in 1931. Born Wilnet Freeman, the multi-faceted "Madame Chalmers" attended Wenzel French Beauty College in Chicago and opened the first Chalmers Beauty Salon in Richmond in 1926. Chalmers ran a chain of beauty shops in Richmond,



Photograph of Wilnet Freeman, also known as Madame Chalmers (BHMVA)

Bowling Green, Fredericksburg, Virginia Beach, and Greensboro, North Carolina.

- 1. What words does this advertisement use to describe the business?
- 2. What does this flyer promise to the reader?
- 3. How would you redesign this flyer, including the same information, to make it look more modern?

Letter, Christine W. Banks, 1965

VMHC Call Number Mss3 C8858 a

J.P. Crowder's Deli was the place where many Richmonders went to for Smithfield hams. Hundreds of hams were baked in house and mailed across the country or sold over the counter in advance of the holidays. Twenty-four-year-old Christine Wilkins Banks started working at the counter of J.P. Crowder's Delicatessen in

1953. She managed the business for five years before Crowder agreed to sell it to her in 1965. As a young mother with two children, she put up her house and car as security and made weekly payments to Crowder for three years. Banks ran the nationally recognized deli from 1965 until her retirement in 2005.

- 1. What is a summary of what this letter is saying?
- 2. How did the business name change?
- 3. Who do you think JP Crowder is writing this letter to? Why?



Smithfield Hams sign that hung outside of J.P. Crowder's Deli (VMHC Object Number 2008.101.1)

PRIMARY SOURCE MATERIAL

Partners in History

Coin Holder, Independent Order of St. Luke, 20th Century VMHC Object Number 2005.341.15

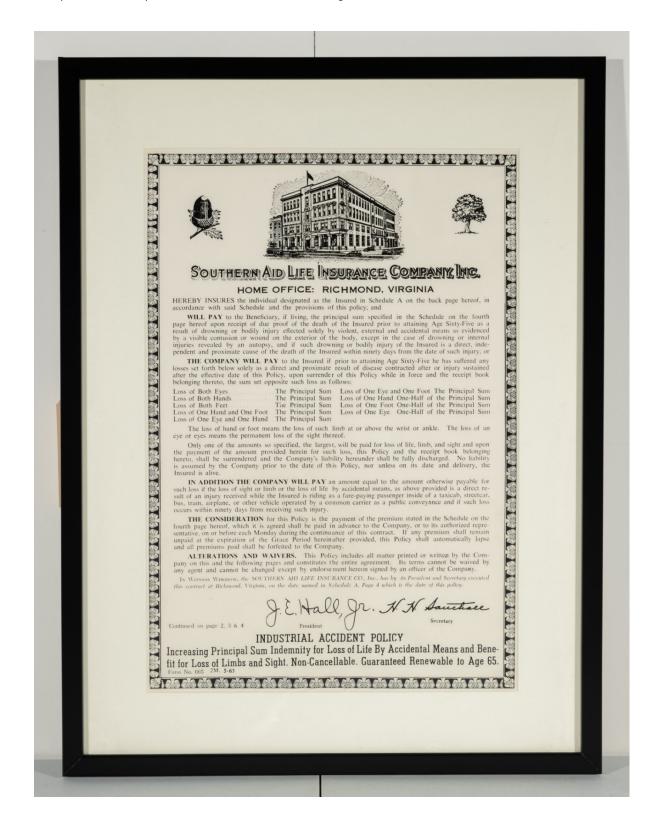




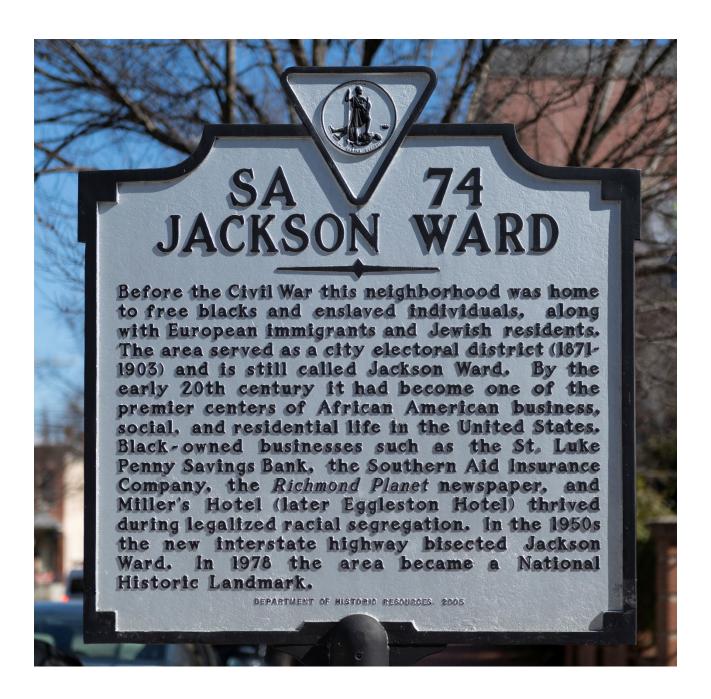
United Order of Tents Southern District No. 1 (Norfolk) Blanket, 20th Century Courtesy of Black History Museum & Cultural Center of Virginia



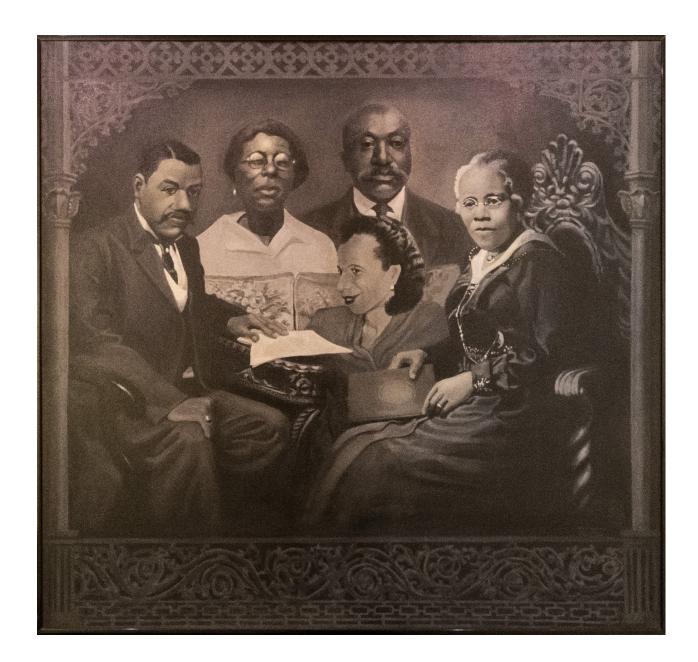
Industrial Accident Policy, Southern Aid Life Insurance Company, Inc., mid 20th Century Courtesy of Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia



Virginia State Highway Marker for Jackson Ward, DHR, 2005 Courtesy of the Department of Historic Resources



Painting, "Five Legendary Leaders: The Jackson Ward Legacy," Robert L. Foster, 1997 Courtesy of Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia



Photo, Maggie L. Walker High School Golden Twirlers, 1965 Courtesy of Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia



Desk, Oliver W. Hill, 20th Century Courtesy of Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia



US Army Pay Receipt, Oliver W. Hill, 1944 VMHC Object Number 2014.79.16

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*Strike out words not applicable. (Signature of commanding officer or personnel officer, with grade and organization) WHEN APPLICABLE TO CLASS D OR CLASS N INSURANCE, THE ORIGINAL COPY OF THIS FORM WILL BE SENT TO THE EXAMINATION, BUILDING X, 19TH AND B STREETS NE., WASHINGTON, D. C., WITH THE APPLICATION FOR INSURANCE. BE SENT TO W. D., A. G. O. FOYM NO. 29 NOVEMBER 4, 1942	(Statement below not applicable to Government insurance) for which this allotment is granted is solely for the support of wife, child, or dependent relatives; or if mad the insurance (including endowments and/or twenty (or other) payment policies) is on the life of the allot naior and not a merely incidental or collateral element of the transaction; and that the allotment is made in olicy and not in favor of a bank or other agent. (Signature of allotter)	Relationship of allottee (Applicable to individual allottees only) If allotment is in favor of a bank, the following is required to be stated: Deposit should be made to the credit of— (Name)	(Name of allottee) (Name of allottee) (Number and street or rural route) (Number and street or rural route) (Number and street or rural route) (City, town, or post office) (State) (State) Date of enlistment	(Cast name) (First name) (Middle initial) (Army serial number) (Grade) (Company, regiment, or arm or service) The Cofficer (enlisted man) named above hereby authorizes a Class (Type of allotment) allotment of his pay in the amount of \$

Advertisement, Chalmer's Beauty School, 1938 Courtesy of Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia



Letter, Christine W. Banks, 1965 VMHC Call Number Mss3 C8858 a

