

SEPARATE IS NOT EQUAL

BROWN v. BOARD OF EDUCATION

Teacher Briefing Sheet: 15th Amendment Print

Glossary of the Print

The parade and celebration that took place in Baltimore, Maryland, on May 19, 1870, was the largest and remains the best-known public celebration of the passage of the 15th Amendment. Created in 1870 by James C. Beard and published by Thomas Kelly in New York, this lithograph is one of four known prints of the event, and is only one to be reproduced in color. The central image depicts the parade itself, which lasted for more than five hours, stretched over a mile in length, and was viewed by more than 20,000 spectators. The surrounding images represent both individuals and groups who participated in the parade and those people, events, and concepts that were central to the achievement of the 15th Amendment or that represented the hopes of African Americans as a result of its passage.

Left Side of the Print

1. Portrait of Ulysses S. Grant

a. Grant, a West Point graduate and commander-in-chief of the Union Army in the Civil War, accepted Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox and was elected president in 1868. Grant fully supported the adoption of the 15th Amendment in 1869. For his service in the Civil War, many African Americans considered him their liberator.

b. For more information on Ulysses S. Grant, see <http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/ug18.html>

2. Quote from Declaration of Independence

a. The Declaration of Independence was written by Thomas Jefferson and adopted on July 4, 1776. Along with the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence is one of the founding documents of the United States. In declaring the colonies' separation from England, Jefferson wrote, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

b. For the full text of the Declaration of Independence, see http://www.archives.gov/national_archives_experience/declaration.html

3. Man reading the Emancipation Proclamation

a. President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1st, 1863, freeing all slaves in the Confederate territories. Although the federal government had little ability at that time to enforce the proclamation and it therefore had more symbolic than practical impact, it did signal that the war was not about simply preserving the Union, but also about ending slavery. As the Union Army

gained control of more and more Southern territory, the promises of the Emancipation Proclamation were made a reality as thousands of slaves were freed.

b. For the full text of the Emancipation Proclamation, see <http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/24.htm>

4. Masons

a. Caption: We unite in the bonds of fellowship with the human race.

b. The Masons, a fraternal order with roots in medieval Europe, has been active in American culture since before the Revolution. Many of the founding fathers, including George Washington, claimed membership in Masonic orders. African Americans have also long held membership, beginning in 1776, when a group of African Americans in Boston received a charter from the English Masons. By the 1780s, these Masons had formed their own Masonic Lodge, called the Prince Hall Masons in honor of the first head of the Boston Lodge. Despite difficulty in gaining recognition from white Masonic groups, several other Prince Hall Lodges sprang up throughout the country during the first half of the nineteenth century. In the years following the Civil War, many African American men hoped to join this and other fraternal orders as a means of gaining and exercising their political and social rights.

c. For more information, see <http://www.indianamasons.org/imomiddle/prince.html>

5. Bible

a. Caption: Our Charter of Rights—The Holy Scripture

b. Over the course of American history, many groups have argued that the rights granted in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are derived from the Bible. For example, the Declaration of Independence includes the phrase, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." In the abolition movement, this language was used to argue for equal rights.

6. Portrait of Lincoln

a. Holding office during the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln was the sixteenth President of the United States. He signed the Emancipation Proclamation and was widely held by African Americans to be their "Great Liberator."

b. For more information on Abraham Lincoln, see <http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/al16.html>

7. Schoolroom Scene

a. Caption: Education will prove the equality of the races.

b. Almost every group in America considered access to education essential for achieving political, social, and economic success. During slavery, few educational options existed for African Americans. In many states, laws designed to make it easy for slave owners to control their slaves made it illegal to teach slaves to read and write. After emancipation, African Americans had high hopes of finally gaining the opportunities afforded by a quality public education.

Center of the Print

1. Portrait of Dulany, Douglass, and Revels

This panel presents three leaders of the African American community who were active in the abolitionist movement and who had ties to the Maryland area. From left to right, they are:

a. Martin Dulany, a physician trained at Harvard Medical School, was the author of *The Condition, Elevation, Immigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States*. He founded the African Civilization Society in 1858. A leader of the free black community, Dulany criticized plans to re-colonize blacks in Africa and became the highest ranking African American in the Union Army, serving as a major in the 104th Colored Infantry during the Civil War.

b. Frederick Douglass was perhaps the most famous African American of the nineteenth century. Born in slavery in Talbot County, Maryland, Douglass taught himself to read and write and eventually escaped to the North by dressing as a sailor. He soon became involved with William Lloyd Garrison's abolition movements and, as a fugitive slave, toured the North and Europe as an anti-slavery speaker and an advocate of the enslaved. His first-person narratives, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* and *My Bondage and My Freedom*, were popular both in the United States and abroad and were center-pieces of the abolitionist movement. After friends and supporters purchased his freedom, he remained an outspoken advocate for abolition and considered the Civil War a crusade against slavery. In the years following the war, he remained an outspoken advocate for the rights of the newly freed.

c. A former minister, Hiram Rhodes Revels helped organize African American regiments in Maryland during the Civil War. In 1870, he was the first African American from Mississippi elected to the United States Congress, replacing former Confederate President Jefferson Davis. As a senator, he was active in Reconstruction and an outspoken opponent of segregated education in Washington, D.C. (For more information, see Kenneth Estell, *African America: Portrait of a People*.)

2. Parade in Baltimore commemorating the 15th Amendment

a. Caption: Celebration of the 15th Amendment, May 19, 1870

b. Called "the greatest, grandest, and most important gathering of Colored men in Maryland," the parade pictured in this print was held in Baltimore on May 19, 1870, to commemorate the passage of the 15th Amendment to the Constitution. According to the *Baltimore Sun*, "the entire colored

population of Baltimore seemed to have come forth upon the streets and entered into the spirit of the occasion." Col. William U. Saunders served as chief marshal, and twenty carriages carried honored guests including Frederick Douglass, General H. H. Heath of New Mexico, several local politicians, United States senators, and high-ranking officers from the Union Army. The procession included a double platoon of policemen, a chariot mounted with a bell on which was inscribed "Ring Out the Old, Ring in the New, Ring out the False, Ring in the True," fraternal organizations including The Knights Templar of Baltimore, the Odd Fellows, the Good Samaritans, several bands and detachments of the military, brigades of firemen, schoolchildren, and African American tradesmen.

In addition to the soldiers, fraternal organizations, and school children, a spectator would have seen a portrait of Lincoln with the caption "Our Liberator," a portrait of Grant with the caption "The Peacemaker," and a portrait of Thaddeus Stevens with a caption reading "No Government can be free that does not allow all her citizens to participate in the formation and the execution of her laws." One group carried a banner reading "Soldiers in War should be Citizens in Peace," and members of the John Brown Club and the Colfax club were also among the celebrants.

The parade was approximately five hours in duration. Upon reaching Monument Square, the participants held a ceremony that featured the reading of letters by abolitionists Charles Sumner and William Lloyd Garrison as well as several speeches, including one by Frederick Douglass. The event was followed by a ball at the Douglass Institute with "some few white people attending."

3. Image of Marriage

a. Caption: Liberty protects the marriage altar

b. During slavery, African Americans often did not have the freedom to choose a marriage partner or plan a marriage ceremony. Slave marriages were often arranged by masters, or required the master's approval. These marriages were not legally recognized, and very often the ceremony consisted simply of "jumping the broom" and did not include a religious or civil ceremony. With the end of slavery, African Americans looked forward to gaining the rights of their fellow citizens, which included the right to choose their own partners, to mark that decision with a ceremony of their choice, and to have that decision legally recognized.

4. Image of Man Voting

a. Caption: The ballot box is open to us.

b. The 15th Amendment guaranteed that the right to vote would not be denied on the basis of race. For African Americans, the right to vote brought hopes that they would finally have a voice in the politics of their country.

5. Image of African American Senator

a. Caption: Our representative sits in the National Legislature

b. In addition to voting, African Americans were now able to hold elected office. By the time

the 15th Amendment was passed, this dream had become a reality with the 1868 election of John Willis of Louisiana. Most African Americans hoped that black representatives in Congress would provide a much needed voice to advocate for the rights and needs of the recently freed population.

Right Side of the Print

1. Portrait of Schuyler Colfax

a. Schuyler Colfax was the seventeenth vice-president and served in Ulysses S. Grant's administration. An outspoken opponent of the secession of the Confederacy and a supporter of abolition, Colfax advocated a moderate pace to reconstruction that would force former Confederate states to "guarantee that freedmen would be treated equally under the law" (Hatfield, 226). A former congressman and speaker of the House, his chances of becoming President ended following allegations of corruption within the Grant administration.

b. For more information on Shulyer Colfax, see http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/schulyer_colfax.pdf and Hatfield, Mark O. with the Senate Historical Office, *Vice Presidents of the United States, 1789–1993*. Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1997. pp. 223-229.

2. Image of African Americans farming

a. Caption: We Till Our Own Fields.

b. Although many slaves had worked in agriculture, the institution of slavery prevented them from reaping the benefits of their labor. After slavery ended, many African Americans hoped that they would have the opportunity to own their own land, have the means to farm it, and be able to recognize a profit from their labor.

3. Image of the Constitution and quote from the 15th Amendment

a. The Constitution of the United States is the basis for the nation's laws and the rights of its citizens. With the passage of the 15th Amendment, African Americans hoped that they would now have the opportunity to become active participants in American democracy, to exercise their rights, and to be protected by the laws. While many Americans believed that the passage of the 15th Amendment would guarantee these rights, it was not until the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1964 that the right of African Americans to vote was firmly guaranteed.

b. For a text of the Constitution, see <http://www.house.gov/Constitution/Constitution.html>

4. Image of an African American Soldier leading an African American Regiment

a. Caption: We will protect our country as it defends our rights.

b. African Americans have served in every war that the United States has fought. In each case they hoped that honorable service would lead to equality. This was particularly the case during the Civil War, when African American regiments in the Union Army fought to end slavery. African Americans believed that with the end of the Civil War and slavery that they would achieve the same rights as white citizens, and that their military service would result in a recognition of equality.

5. Portrait of John Brown

a. Along with Abraham Lincoln, abolitionists and former slaves viewed John Brown as one of the great martyrs of the abolitionist cause. Brown, a controversial figure, believed that it was his religious duty to work toward abolition, and he advocated ending slavery by any means necessary, including violence. After attempting to incite a slave insurrection in Kansas in 1855, Brown began planning a raid on the Federal Arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia. Brown's plan was to seize the arsenal, provide weapons to slaves, and incite a rebellion. His attempt failed, however, and he was quickly captured, tried, and executed. He was remembered by many abolitionists, however, as a valiant crusader against slavery.

b. For more information on John Brown, see

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/brown/filmmore/index.html>

6. Image of Family Seated Around a Table

a. Caption: Freedom Unites the Family Circle.

b. During slavery, many African Americans were unable to maintain their families. The sale of slaves often resulted in husbands being separated from wives, parents from children, and brothers from sisters. At the end of the Civil War, African Americans looked forward to reuniting with lost relatives and never again having to face the fear of having their families dismantled.

7. Image of African Americans in church

a. Caption: The Holy Ordinances of Religion are Free.

b. Although religion and spirituality were important aspects in the lives of many slaves, they often did not have the freedom to worship as they wished. In many places, slave masters hired itinerant preachers to perform services for slaves, and in many cases these preachers used the writings of The Bible to justify slavery and encourage slaves to be docile and obedient. After slavery ended, slaves looked forward to the opportunity to worship as they wished.