

MINISTRIES OF FREEDOM

Re-Inventing Classroom 1



Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum: Classroom 1

The purpose of this partnership between **SCADserve** and the **Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum** is to reimagine Classroom 1 and bring emphasis to the significance of Special Field Orders No. 15. Our long-term goal is to foster engagement between the Museum and the vibrant community of Savannah.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

01

Curatorial Team
Timeline and
Didactics

02

Design Team
Installation

03

Educational Team
Educational
Programming for
Students

04

**Community
Engagement
Team**
Community
Engagement

05

Closing
Summary and
Proposal

TIMELINE & DIDACTICS

Curatorial Team

CURATORIAL ————— Kate Pointer, Addison Thornton, Alexi Romero, Caroline Reide, Lillian Holley

Plan for Classroom 1:

- Didactics
 - Opening Didactic
 - Didactics on the Ministers
 - *The Meeting*
 - Closing Didactic
- Visuals
 - *The Meeting*
 - 7 Ministers & Map of Savannah circa 1868
 - Flag of Remembrance
- Lasting Impact
 - Closing Question on the chalkboard for guests



Plan for Classroom 1:

Object Checklist

- *The Meeting*, Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum
- *Flag of Remembrance 1865*, Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum
- Printed copy of city of Savannah 1868 map including the coastal islands
- Seven portraits of the Ministers and leaders



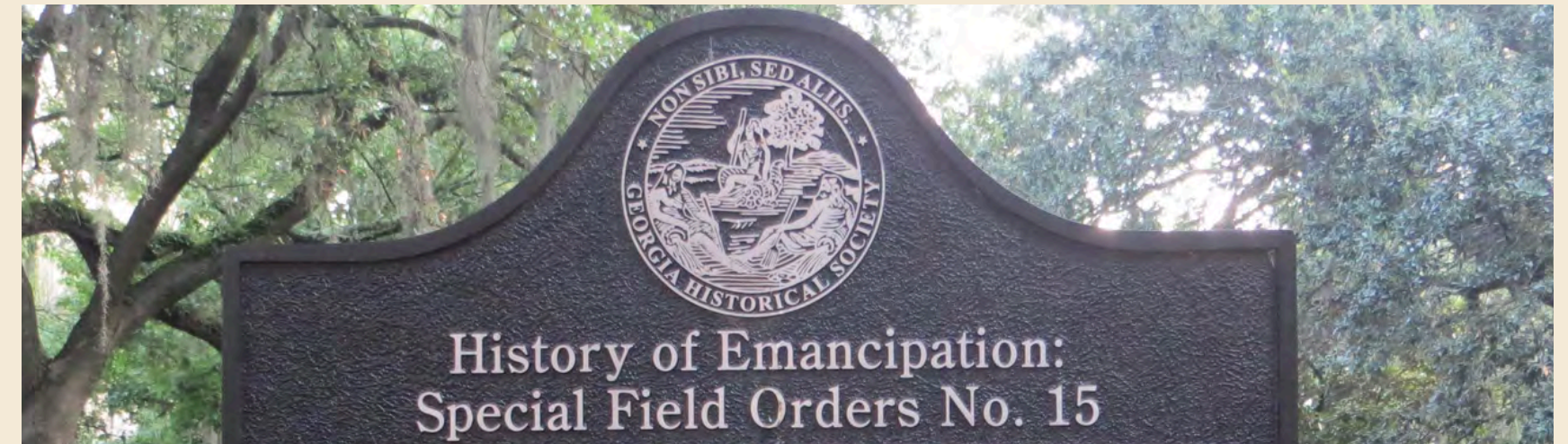
Opening Didactic ← → Closing Didactic



Key Points:

- End of the Civil War
- Sherman's March to the Sea
- Meeting with General Sherman and Secretary of War Stanton with 20 Black ministers
 - What did freedom mean to them?
- January 16, 1865, SFO No. 15
- Redistributed land became transformative for the voices of Black Savannahians.

The city became a testing ground for Reconstruction policies and the redefinition of freedom.



Key Points:

- Allocation of land and the Freedman's Bureau
- Assassination of President Lincoln and President Andrew Johnson's rescission of SFO No. 15
- Reconstruction Amendments (13th, 14th, & 15th)
 - Abolishment of slavery; citizenship and equal protection under the law; protection against discrimination in voting
- Legacy of *The Meeting* in the context of freedom

The Meeting

- Debates between the need for education versus land and private ownership
- Issuance of SFO No. 15 on January 16, 1865
- Explanation of SFO No. 15
- How this moment and the Orders affected Savannah as a city and American national policy

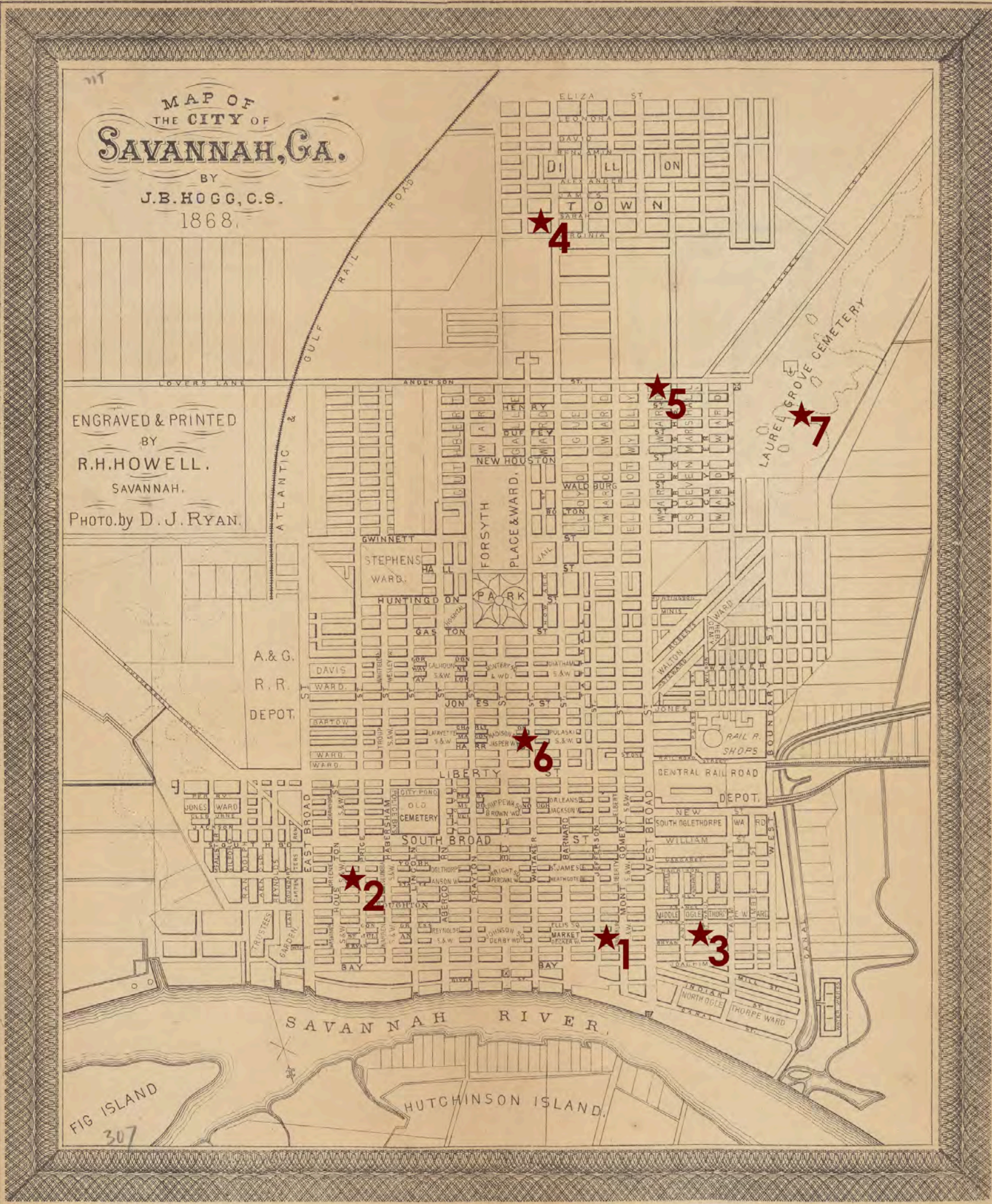


Thom Buchanan, *The Meeting*, date unknown, oil on canvas, 47 x 72 in.,
Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum.



The Ministers

- Having a main focus on 7 ministers pictured with didactics beside them
- 13 other ministers are mentioned through the use of a QR code linking to smaller didactics
- A map of Savannah that shows where the churches are
- 6 churches in total



1. First African Baptist Church of Savannah
2. Second African Baptist Church
3. First Bryan African Baptist Church
4. Andrews Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church
5. St. Stephen Protestant Episcopal Colored Church of Savannah
6. Green-Meldrim House
7. Laurel Grove Cemetery

Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, Map of the city of Savannah, GA, 1868, medium unknown, map; 23x 18 cm, sheet; 27 x 23 cm, New York Public Library.

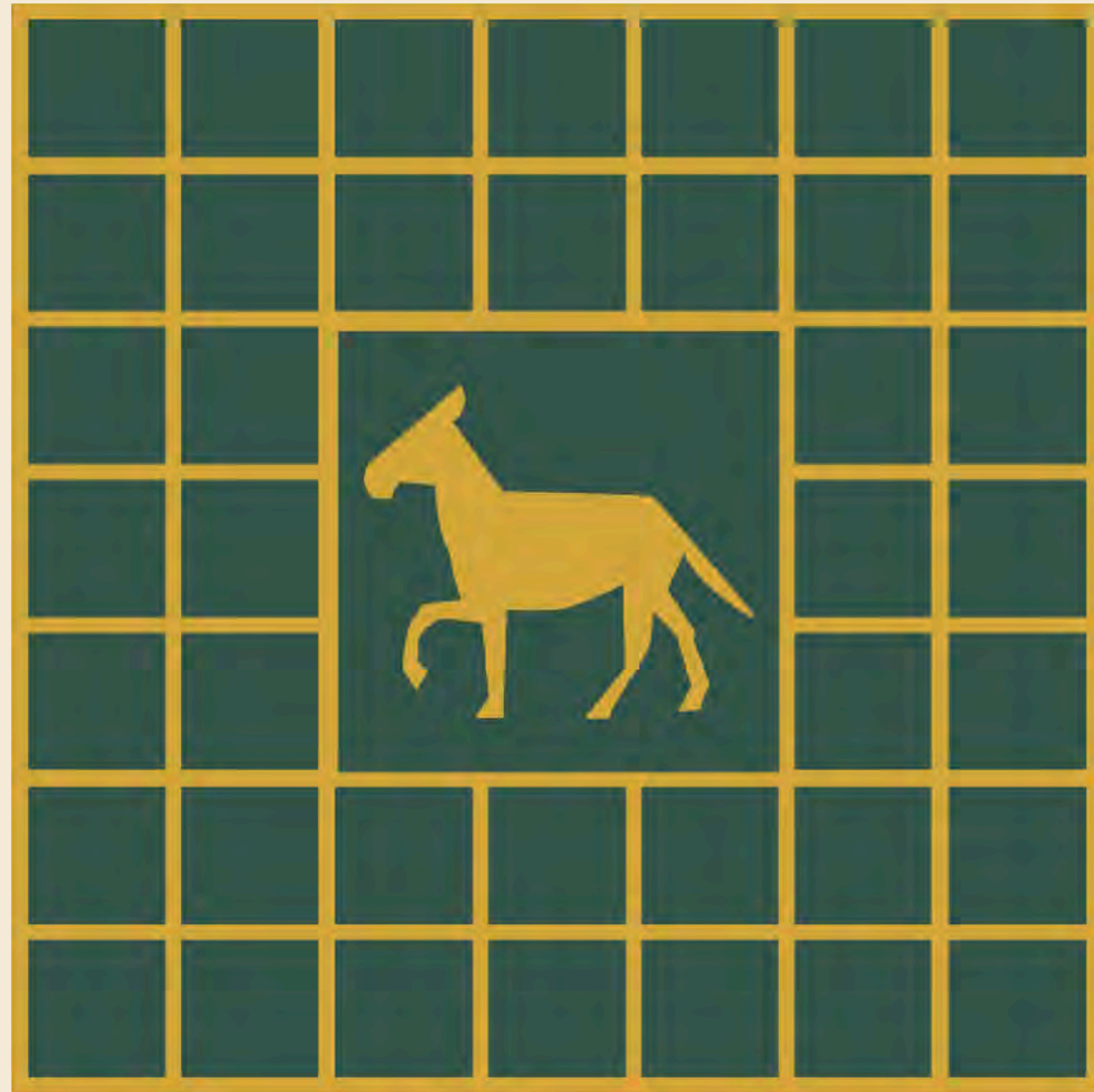
INSTALLATION

Design Team

DESIGN

————— Minnie Mae August, Carrie Jones, Peyton Dixon, Avery Solt

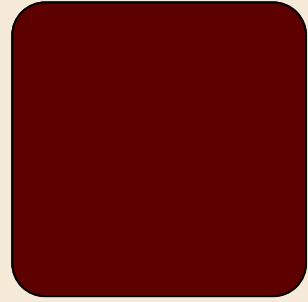
1 Logo



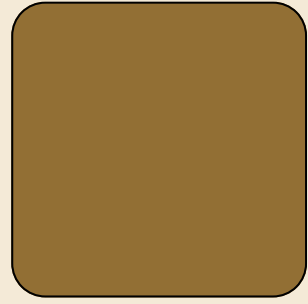
2 Color Palette & Mockup



#3B4354



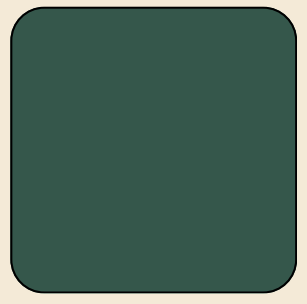
#5C0000



#926F34



#281B0D



#35574B



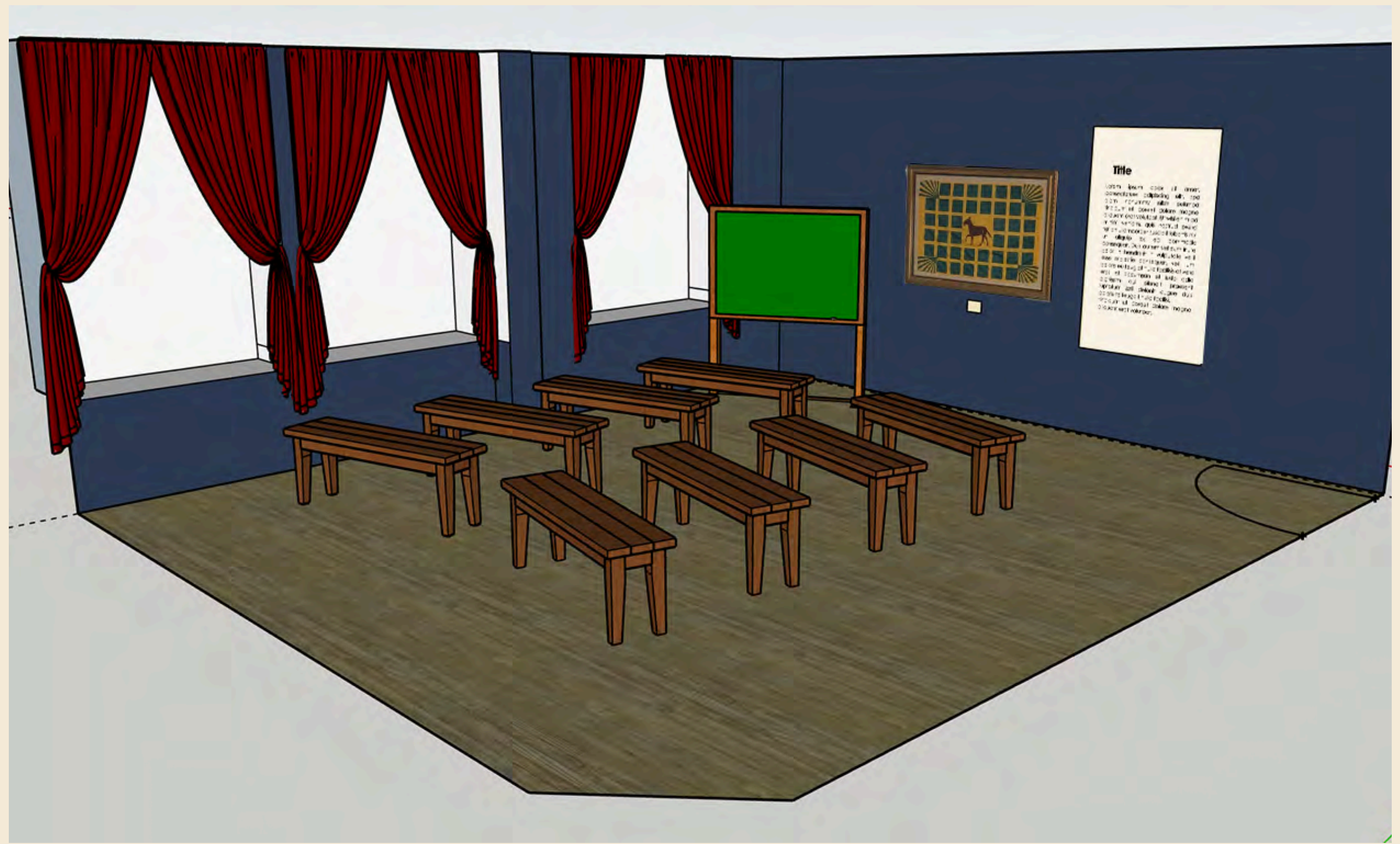
#F8F0E3



2 Color Palette & Mockup



- #3B4354
- #5C0000
- #926F34
- #281B0D
- #35574B
- #F8F0E3



3 Type & Didactics

Century Gothic
 Century Gothic
 Lorem ipsum
 dolor sit amet,
 consectetur
 adipiscing elit,
 sed diam

Typeface

Moving Forward

In the months that followed the issuing of Special Field Order No. 15, land was allocated to upwards of 40,000 African Americans by the Freedman’s Bureau, the federal agency formed to fulfill the Order. This would be short lived however as following the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, Vice President and known racist Andrew Johnson took office and rescinded the Order, returning the land to the white Southern landowners and giving full pardons to ex-Confederates. With a restricted access to economic opportunity due to lack of landownership, many of the newly emancipated were pressured to sign sharecropper contracts, often laboring for their former enslavers.

Artist

Title, Date

Material, Size

Short Description: Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat

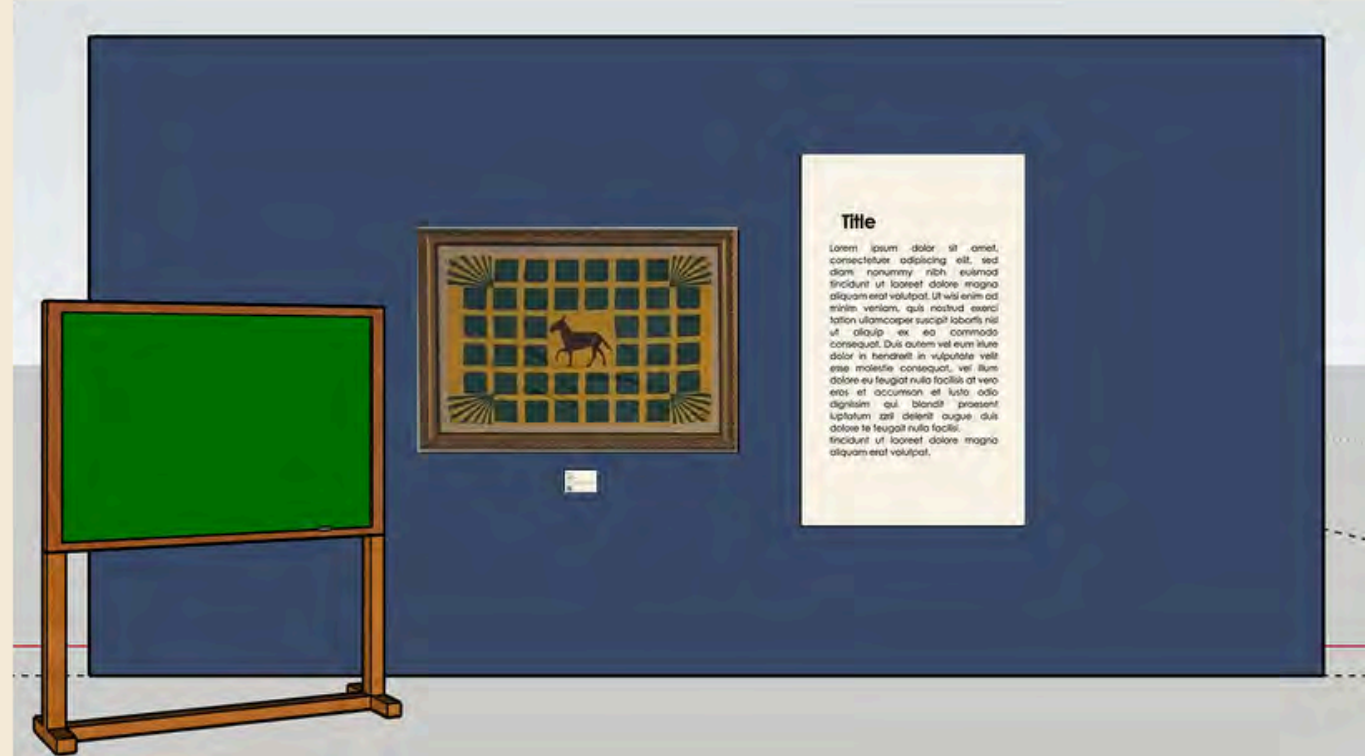


www.website.com

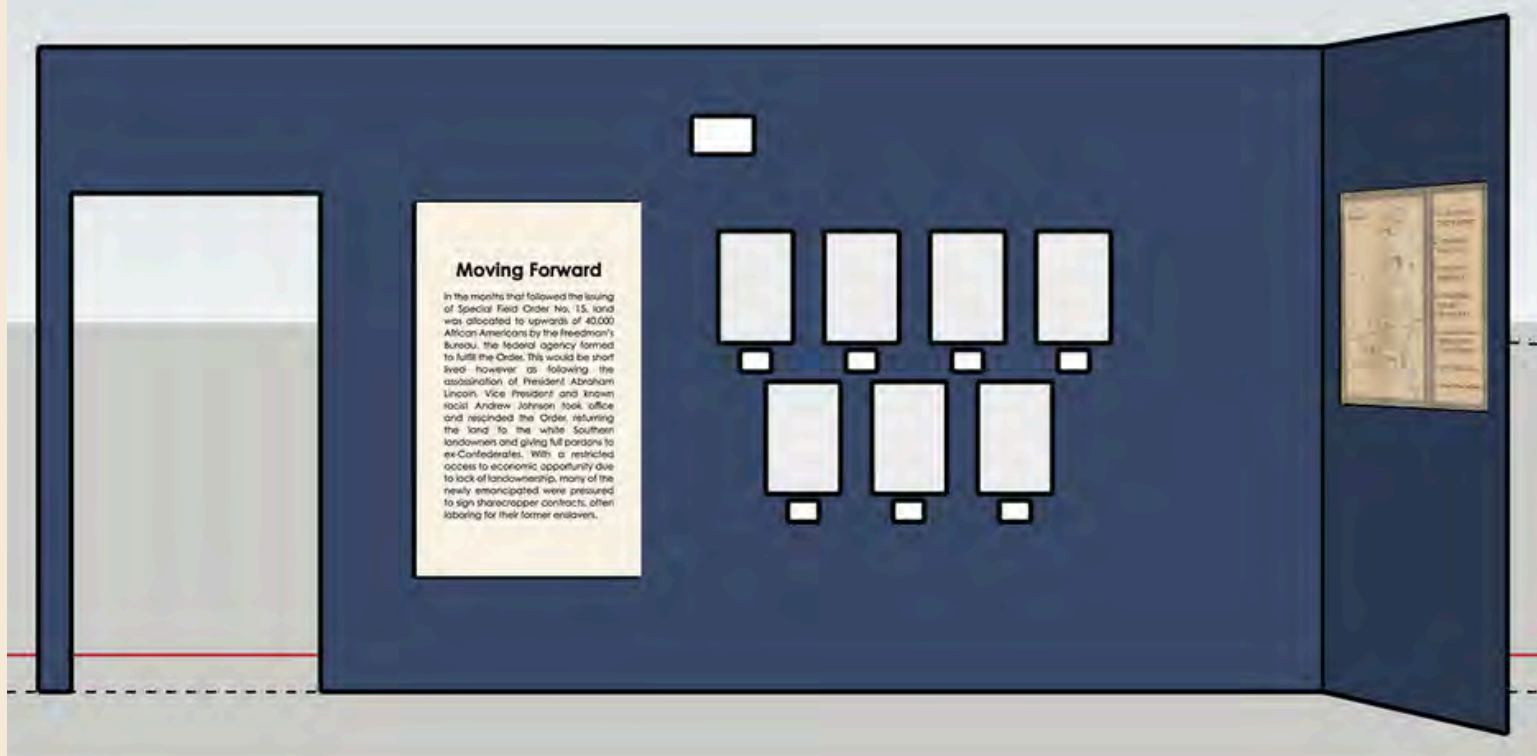
3.5 x 5 in Small Didactics - \$17.95 / Didactic

3 x 5 ft Large Didactics - \$444.08 / Didactic

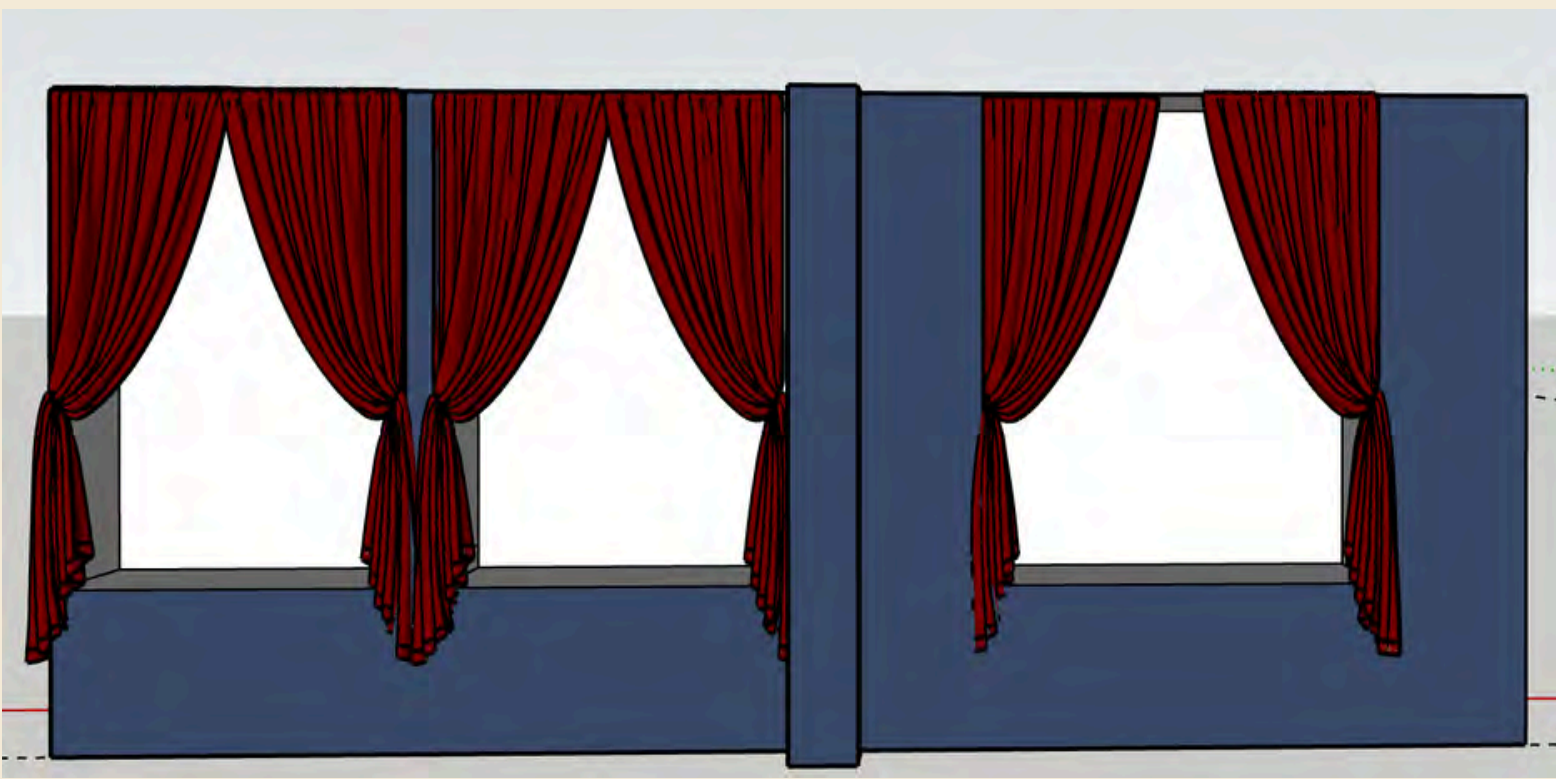
4 Individual Wall Mockups



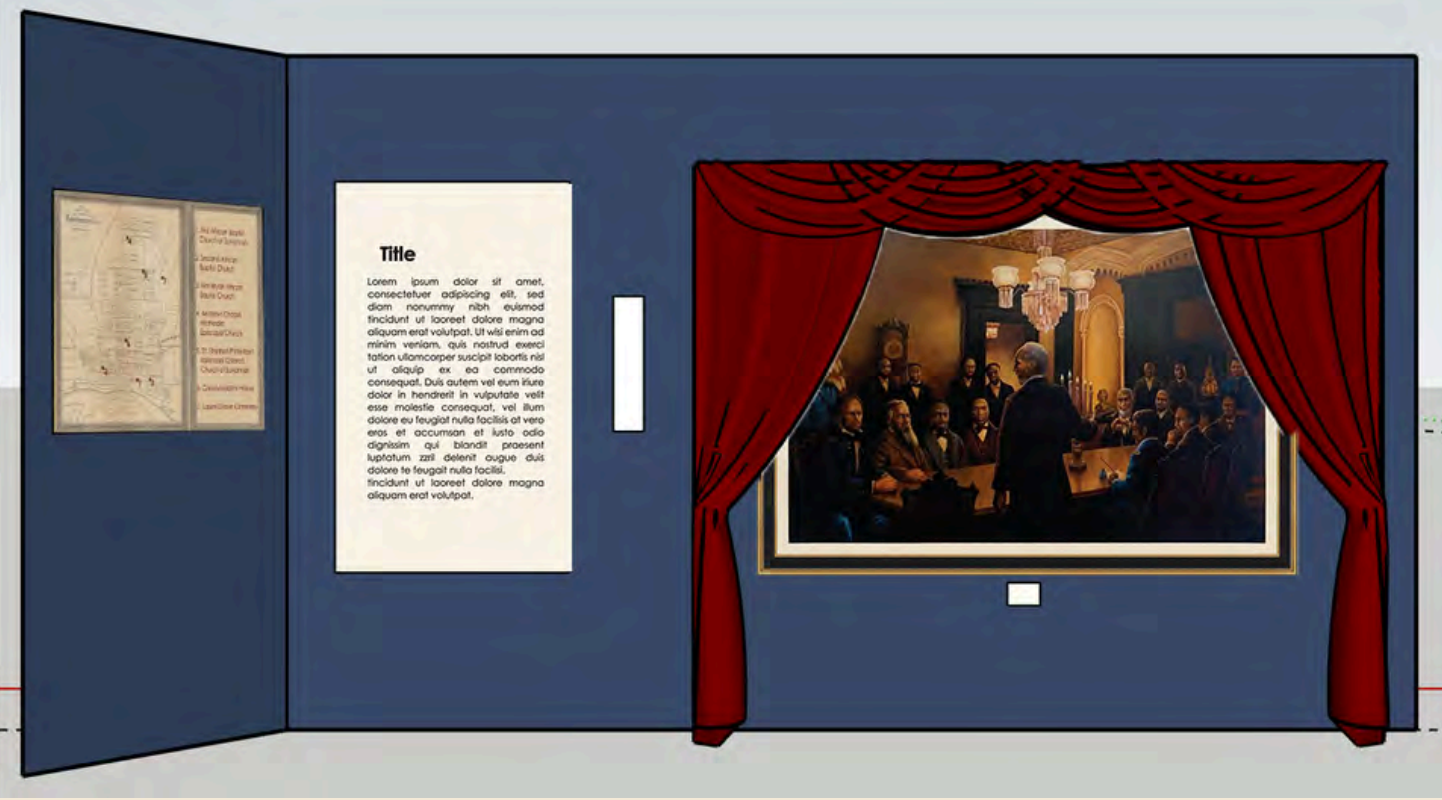
NORTH WALL



EAST WALL



WEST WALL



SOUTH WALL

5 Framing

Frame - Larson Juhl #686220

Liner - Larson Juhl #443962

Fillet - Larson Juhl #X0466

Estimate: ~\$500



8 Painting Curtain

Ottertex Polyester Ripstop - \$6 / Yard



Square Edge Spruce Board - \$17.23



Black Shelf Bracket Screws - \$4.98



Heavy Duty Shelf Bracket - \$14.48 / Bracket

6 Paint & Curtains



Paint Color: BEHR Indigo Ink - \$33 / Gallon



Flora Linen Semi-Sheer Curtains ~ \$62 / Panel

7 Chalkboard & Benches



AARCO Freestanding Wood Chalkboard - \$297
Double Pack Crayola Chalk - \$8



Valerie Solid Wood Bench - \$189 / Bench

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING FOR STUDENTS

Educational Team

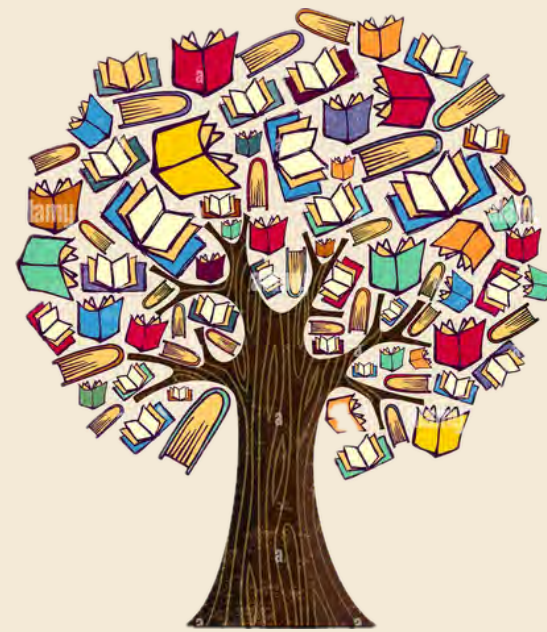
EDUCATION ————— Artemis Giles, Evarista Irby, Bella Roberge, Lucas Qin, Sofia Babineaux



1

Education Goals

- Teach the audience about Sherman's March to the Sea and The Meeting/Special Field Orders No. 15
- Emphasize the importance of community, protest, and outreach in the face of oppression



2

The Story We Will Tell

- In times of strife, the community can make a change
- Every step toward freedom is worth it, even if you have to take a few steps back
- Even though Special Field Orders No. 15 was rescinded, that doesn't put an end to the story



3

The Voice

- Highlight the perspectives of the 7 Black ministers who are shown in the exhibit
- Show the experience of African Americans of the time, who struggled for freedom



4

The Audience

- Children (2nd - 4th)
- Pre-Teens (5th - 7th)
- Teens (8th - 12th)
- Adults

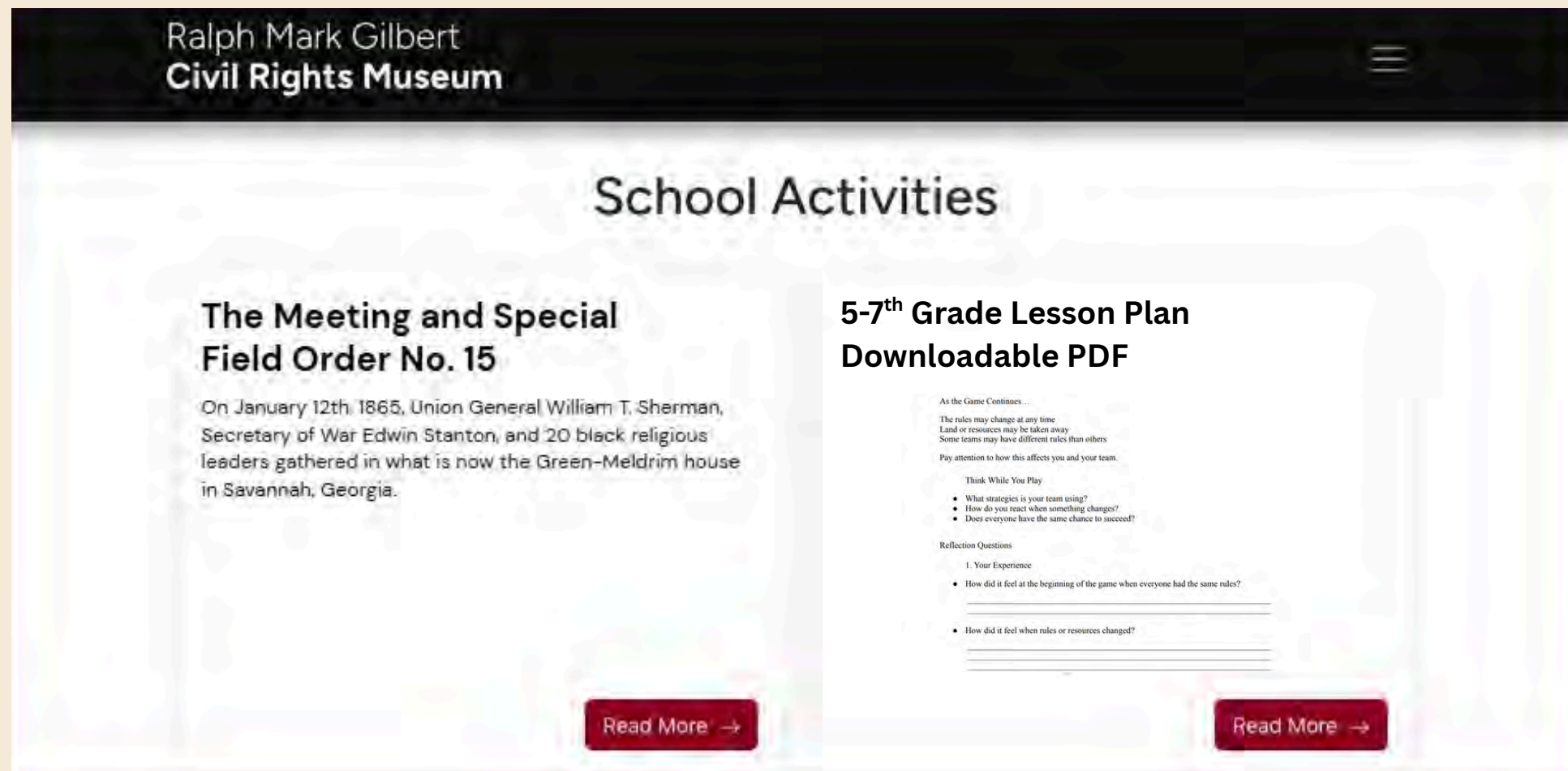
SCHOOL CURRICULUM RELATED WORKSHEETS

The Goal:

Teachers, students, and homeschool families using our material at the museum/in class to teach about The Meeting and Special Field Orders No. 15 while aligning with the Georgia Department of Education Standards, and to encourage the community to visit the museum after learning about it.

How:

Providing worksheets, lesson plans, and games through the museum's website and printed versions at the museum.



CHILDREN: 2ND - 4TH SCHOOL CURRICULUM-RELATED WORKSHEETS

Name: _____ Date: _____

Ministries of Freedom

Word Bank

40 Acres and a Mule	Flag of Remembrance	Special Field Order no. 15
Acre	Garrison Frazier	The Meeting
Emancipation Proclamation	March to the Sea	William T. Sherman

Choose the word or phrase from the bank that best completes each sentence.

- An _____ is a measurement of land area that equals to 43,560 square feet, or roughly the size of a football field.
- As the leader and spokesman of the Black ministers at The Meeting, _____ fought for the newly freed people's right to land.
- On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln signs an executive order known as the _____ which declared all enslaved people in Confederate states to be freed.
- Union General _____ gathered together 20 leaders from the Black community of Savannah in order to discuss what formerly enslaved people wanted for themselves. The museum refers to this event as _____.
- Known officially as _____, this order redistributed over 400,000 acres of Confederate land to formerly enslaved people. As part of the order, each Black family would receive 40 acres of land, which is where the term _____ originates. However, this promise was broken by President Andrew Johnson when he rescinded the order.
- The military campaign known as Sherman's _____ brought thousands of troops on a journey from Atlanta to Savannah, Georgia, destroying Confederate supplies along the way.
- The _____ is a celebratory symbol in honor of the 40 Acres and a Mule which represents freedom and unity.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Ministries of Freedom

In 1865, Union General Sherman proposed "Special Field Order #15," also known as "40 Acres and a Mule." This law gave 40 acres of land to each formerly enslaved family. But you may be asking....

HOW BIG IS AN ACRE?

Imagine a football field.

A football field is **57,600 square feet**, or **1.32 acres**.

360 ft

160 ft

The black square represents the size of an acre.

1 Acre = 43,560 square feet!

Traditionally, an acre is the amount of land that a farmer could plow in one day with a team of 8 oxen. With modern farming technology, oxen aren't needed anymore, but the measurement still stands to this day.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Ministries of Freedom

Land was an extremely important resource for the formerly enslaved because it was seen as both a symbol of **freedom** and **economic independence**. With land, they could tend their own crops under their own authority.

Think about what kinds of things freed families would have used the land for. If you owned this kind of land, what would you put on it? Use the squares below to **design a plot of 40 acres of land**. Try to consider some structures that would have been used during the time period:

- House
- Barn/Storehouse
- Livestock
- Kitchen
- Stables
- Crops (cotton, sugar, rice)

PRE-TEENS: 5TH - 7TH FLAG REDESIGN CONTEST



The Flag of Remembrance

Design your own "Flag of Remembrance", which promised land and freedom after the Civil War. Think about how you can show memory, freedom, and hope through colors, symbols, and patterns. Sketch your idea first, then color in your final flag in the box below. Be ready to explain what your flag represents.



Background Information

The *Flag of Remembrance (1865)* represents the main idea of Special Field Order No. 15, which promised land (up to forty acres) to formerly enslaved people after the Civil War. The mule on the flag stands for strength and endurance; even though it was not part of the original order, mules were given later and became an important symbol. The rays in the four corners each represent key ideas: dignity and the end of slavery (top left), respect and freedom (top right), hope and perseverance (bottom left), and equality and success (bottom right). The yellow background symbolizes freedom, healing, and people coming together, especially after the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution ended slavery. Overall, the flag honors the end of the Civil War, celebrates freedom, and reminds people today to value their rights and treat others with equality and respect.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM-RELATED WORKSHEETS

PRE-TEENS:

5TH - 7TH

- Students will learn who Earl T Shinhoster is.
- Make a sign about something in their community that they care about.
- Learn and discuss what Special Field Orders No. 15 is.
- Learn about the rescission.
- Play "Capture the Flag" to grasp the idea of community and defending your community.

TEENS:

8TH - 12TH

- Students listen to Kendrick Lamar's Super Bowl performance and analyze the lyric "40 acres and a mule."
- Make their own song, rap, or poem.
- Discuss why Spike Lee named his production company "40 Acres and a Mule."
- Analyze how film and theatre are effective ways of sending messages and teaching.
- Discuss Ralph Mark Gilbert's significance, how plays might also be effective for teaching and sending messages.
- Make their own play or movie.

The Vision

Alternate History Reflection: 40 Acres and a Mule



If Special Field Orders No. 15 was kept...

Think about:

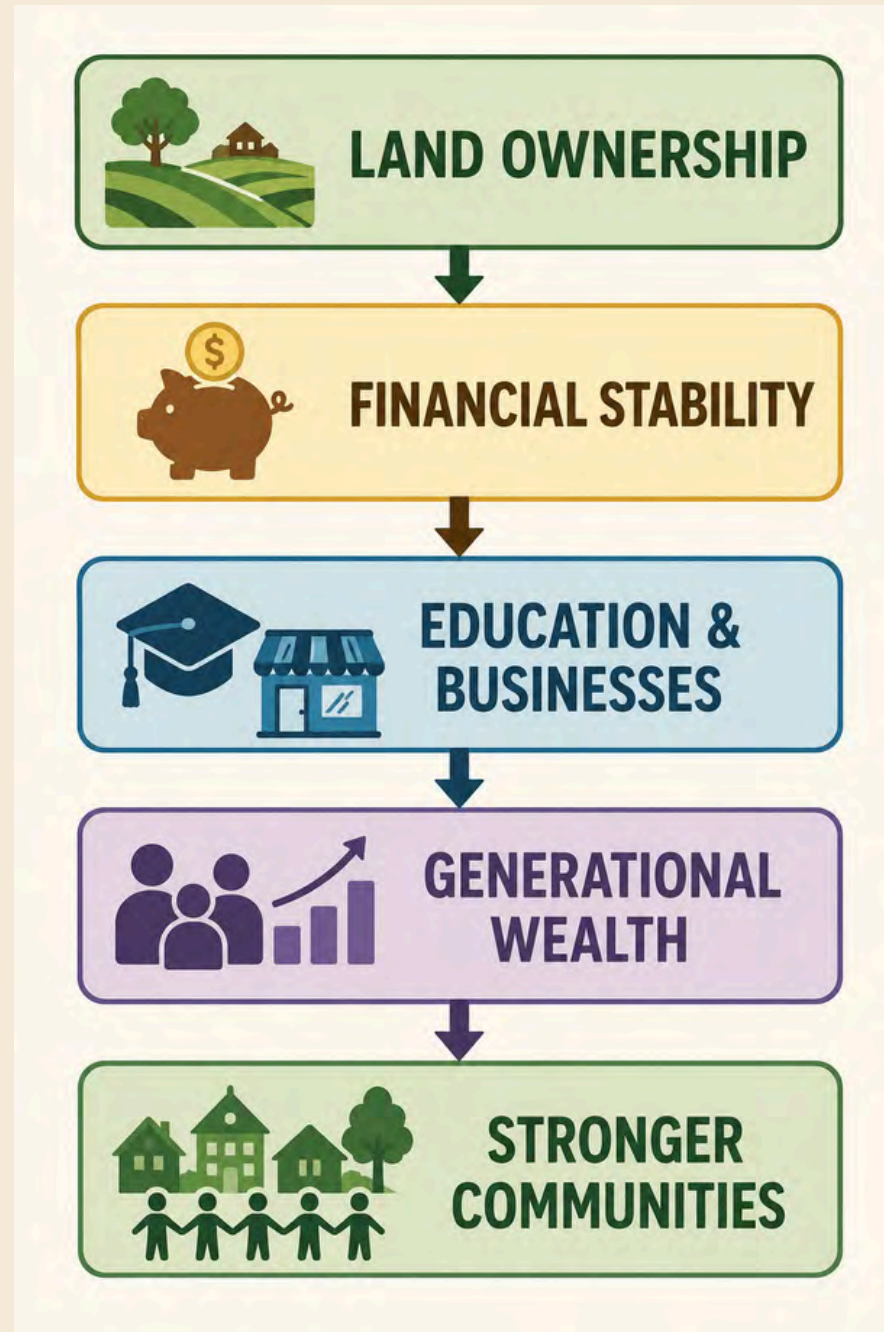
What does land ownership provide besides money?

How can property ownership affect future generations?

What might Black communities look like today?

The Vision

Alternate History Reflection: 40 Acres and a Mule



Discuss possible long-term effects on:

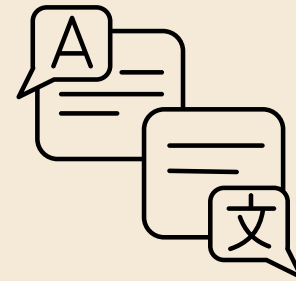
- Land & property
- Wealth & businesses
- Education opportunities
- Cultural preservation
- Community development

History is not only about what happened...
it is also about understanding what was possible,
and what was lost.

Bloomberg Connects



- Used by over 1400 museums
- Can be free or have no cost to the museum through Bloomberg Philanthropies
- Expand the digital footprint of the museum
- Starts the digital archive for the museum



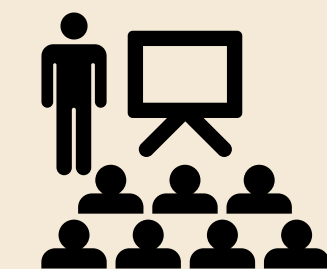
Multi-lingual options



Maps of the Museum and Surrounding area



Multi-media oppurtunities



Training available for Staff

What's on View

← Guides ♡ 🔔 📶

🔍 Search by keyword or number 🗪

TELFAIR MUSEUMS

Savannah, GA, US • [More Info >](#)

On View

Off the Coast of Paradise: Artists and Ossabaw Island, 1961–Now
March 13, 2026 – September 6, 2026

Owens-Thomas House & Slave Quarters

[Home](#) [Map](#)

Gallery Descriptions

← Back 🔍 📶

The Walter & Linda Evans Gallery of African American Art
Ongoing

DESCRIPTION

In 2023, Dr. Walter and Linda Evans donated a transformational gift of 28 significant works by African American artists to Telfair Museums. The museum is proud to organize an exciting new installation in the former dining room at the Telfair Academy that centers on this collection. It tells stories about the challenges that seminal figures like Robert Seldon Duncanson (1821–1872) and N...

[More ▾](#)

[Home](#) [Map](#)

Object Highlights

← Back 🔍 📶

Study of an American Soldier
Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859–1937)
c. 1917–1918
Hard charcoal and lead pencil on paper

DESCRIPTION

From the age of 12, Henry Ossawa Tanner aspired to be an artist, eventually enrolling at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts under the tutelage of painter Thomas Eakins (1844-1916) who influenced his naturalistic approach. After many unsuccessful years of establishing a living through his art in the American Southeast, Tanner moved to study abroad. Settling in Paris, he began to receive international acclaim for his Biblical paintings. Although Tanner gained recognition in the United States, he never permanently returned

[Home](#) [Map](#)

Benefits of Bloomberg Connects

- Makes the museum more accessible
- Could update and modernize the online visuals and tour of the museum
- Ability to down the road have an audio tour or a self-guided option
- Bloomberg could provide advertisement for the museum
- Can direct more interested visitors to more/further in depth resources





Bloomberg Can Sponsor

- Community programming
- Volunteer work
- Tours in different languages
- Training for museum staff
- Maps of the museum and the surrounding area

Next Steps ----> <https://forms.bloombergconnects.org/forms/become-a-partner>

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Traveling Exhibition



Email Campaign



Getting the attention of visitors and members can be done outside of the museum. Whether it is for advertising the memberships, special events, or new exhibitions.

Email marketing ensures the museum actively reaches out to guests and the community.

Ralph Mark Gilbert
Civil Rights Museum

Monthly Newsletter

Discover Civil Rights in Savannah



Visit the Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum.
Discover three floors of history.

New Exhibitions



Ministries of Freedom

In 1865, Union General William Tecumseh Sherman and Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton met with twenty Black ministers and community leaders met to discuss freedom. This meeting directly shaped the issuance of Special Field Order No. 15, *40 Acres and a Mule*.

Traveling Exhibition

Traveling exhibitions can offer community engagement and education outside of the museum walls. It stimulates awareness of topics, fosters connections with the local museums, and incentivizes museum visits.



Traveling Exhibition Didactic Design



Ministries of Freedom



End of the Civil War: The Meaning of Freedom

Before the end of the Civil War, a question was floating in the air of what would become of the freed African Americans if the Union won. This question sparked debates over whether to educate newly freed African Americans or offer them land ownership in the confiscated Confederate land.



After his March to the Sea in December 1864, Union General William Tecumseh Sherman and Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton met with twenty Black ministers and community leaders, led by Garrison Frazier on January 12, 1865. These leaders, many of whom had been born into slavery, asked a question: What did freedom mean to them?



For Savannah, this meeting was transformative. The city became a testing ground for reconstruction policies and the new definition of freedom. Voices of Black Savannahians – too often excluded from official narratives – directly influenced national policy and the growth of Savannah itself as a diverse community.

Following this crucial meeting, General Sherman issued Special Order No. 15 to provide land ownership to freed African Americans.

From top: General William T. Sherman, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, Reverend Garrison Frazier.

The Meeting

On January 12, 1865, 20 African American ministers, General Sherman, and Edwin M. Stanton were in attendance at the Green Meldrum House in Savannah, Georgia, to discuss the futures of African American. Speaking on behalf of the group, minister Garrison Frazier explained that freedom meant more than the end of slavery; it required land, economic independence, and the ability to live safely beyond white control and violence. The leaders argued that Black families could sustain themselves and create a commonwealth of African American communities if given access to land.



"The Meeting" painting, oil on canvas, 1865

The Meeting directly influenced Sherman's later issuance of Special Field Orders No. 15, a lasting symbol of the unfulfilled promise of economic freedom and reparations for African Americans after the Civil War.

[Exhibition by the Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum](#)

Special Thanks to SCAD Serve and their contributions to [research and material.](#)



Savannah Points of Interest

- First African Baptist Church
- Second African Baptist Church
- Andrew's Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church
- Green Meldrum House
- Skidaway Island
- Special Field Order No. 15
- 40 Acres and a Mule
- Flag of Remembrance



20 Ministries

The ministers present at the Savannah meeting represented some of the city's largest and most influential Black congregations, including First African Baptist Church, Second African Baptist Church, Third African Baptist Church, and Andrew's Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church. By speaking before Union authorities, these religious leaders acted as representatives of the broader Black community, articulating shared hopes and concerns during emancipation. Their testimony demonstrated the vital role of Black churches as organized spaces of leadership and resistance, where community voices could be transformed into political action during Reconstruction.

Ulysses L. Houston

Reverend Ulysses L. Houston was a pastor and state legislator in Georgia. He was a pastor at Third African Baptist Church from 1861 to 1889. During *The Meeting*, he had the desire for self-sufficiency, a reality on Skidaway Island, soon after Special Field Order No. 15 was issued. The cultural and religious bonds the community shared were strengthened by a belief in a common destiny, which was further empowered by the prospect of land ownership.

40 Acres and a Mule

After the success of the March to the Sea from Atlanta to Savannah on December 21, 1864, Union general William T. Sherman issued Special Field Order No. 15. The order redistributed 400,000 acres of land in coastal South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida to newly freed Black families, giving each 40 acres and a mule.



"Flag of Remembrance"

40 Acres and a Mule aimed to settle the confiscated Confederate land policy, a budding opportunity for economic independence and commonwealth for African Americans post-Civil War. Despite President Abraham Lincoln's approval of the Order, it was never fully realized. After Lincoln's death, Andrew Johnson rescinded it after it had been active for over a year.

The Legacy of Freedom

In the months that followed the issuing of Special Field Order No. 15, land was allocated to upwards of 40,000 African Americans by the Freedmen's Bureau, the federal agency formed to fulfill the Order. This would be short-lived, however, as following the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln in April of 1865, Vice President and known racist Andrew Johnson took office and rescinded the Order, returning the land to the white Southern landowners and giving full pardons to ex-Confederates. After being forced off the land, the Black community began rebuilding their lives and facing restricted access to economic opportunity, many free people were pressured to sign sharecropper contracts, often laboring for their former enslavers.

Yet the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery, was being ratified. This was the first of three landmark amendments ratified after the Civil War, collectively known as the Reconstruction Amendments. It was followed by the 14th Amendment, which provided protection under the law and granted citizenship to all those born or naturalized in the United States, including those formerly enslaved, and the 15th Amendment, which prohibited discrimination in a citizen's right to vote on the basis of race, color, or previous enslavement.

The Black ministers' voices endure beyond the walls of the Green Meldrum House and the order itself. Their vision of freedom became a lasting foundation for African American triumphs in independence and economic justice that persist to this day.

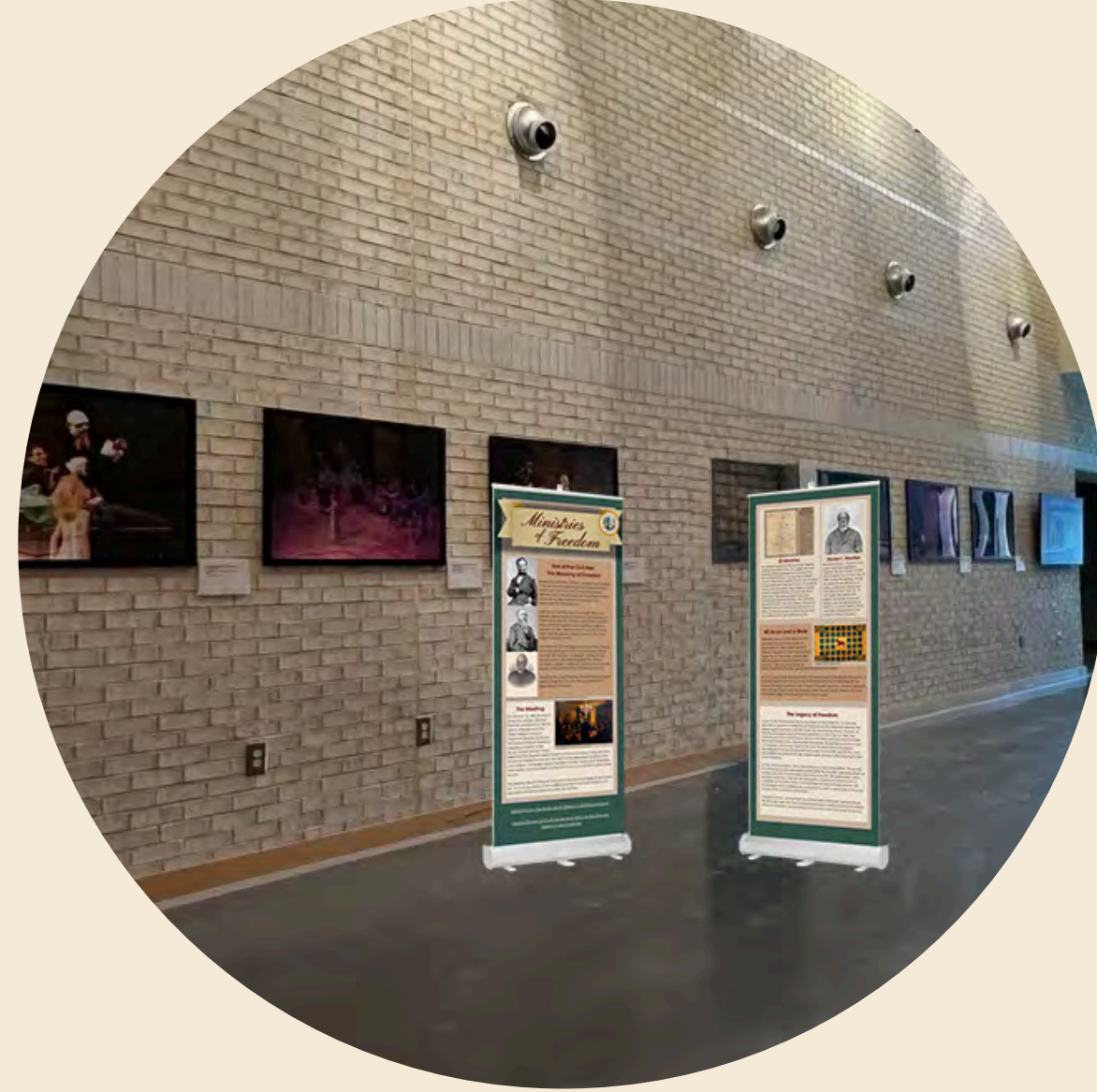
Locations



JW Marriott Savannah
Plant Riverside District



Telfair Academy



Otis S. Johnson
Cultural Arts Center

Price Breakdown

Size: 32 × 74 inches
 Format: Vertical standing display
 Material: Vinyl (durable, transportable)
 Display type: Retractable stand

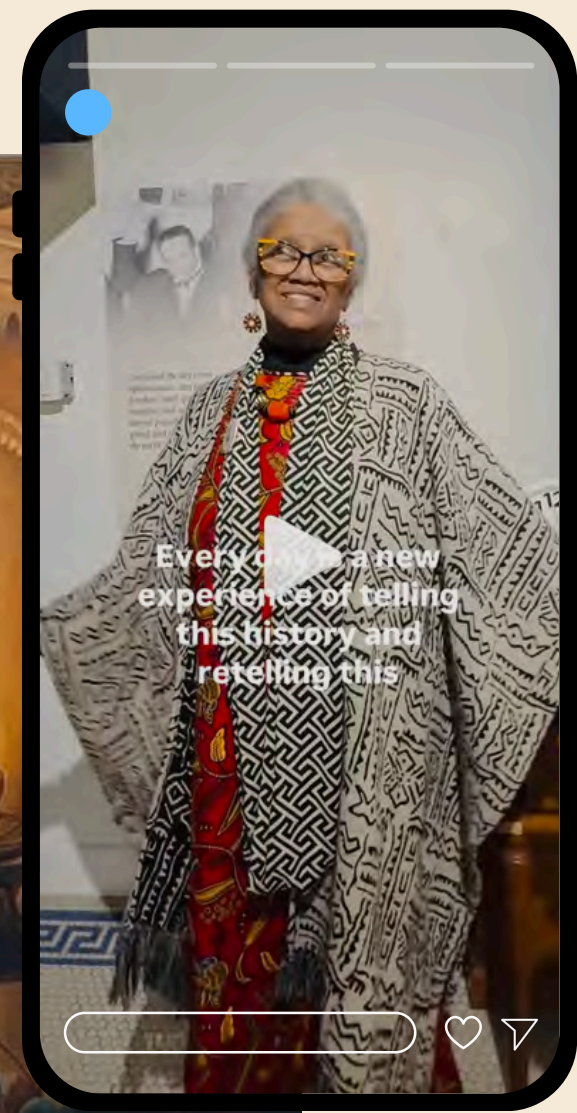
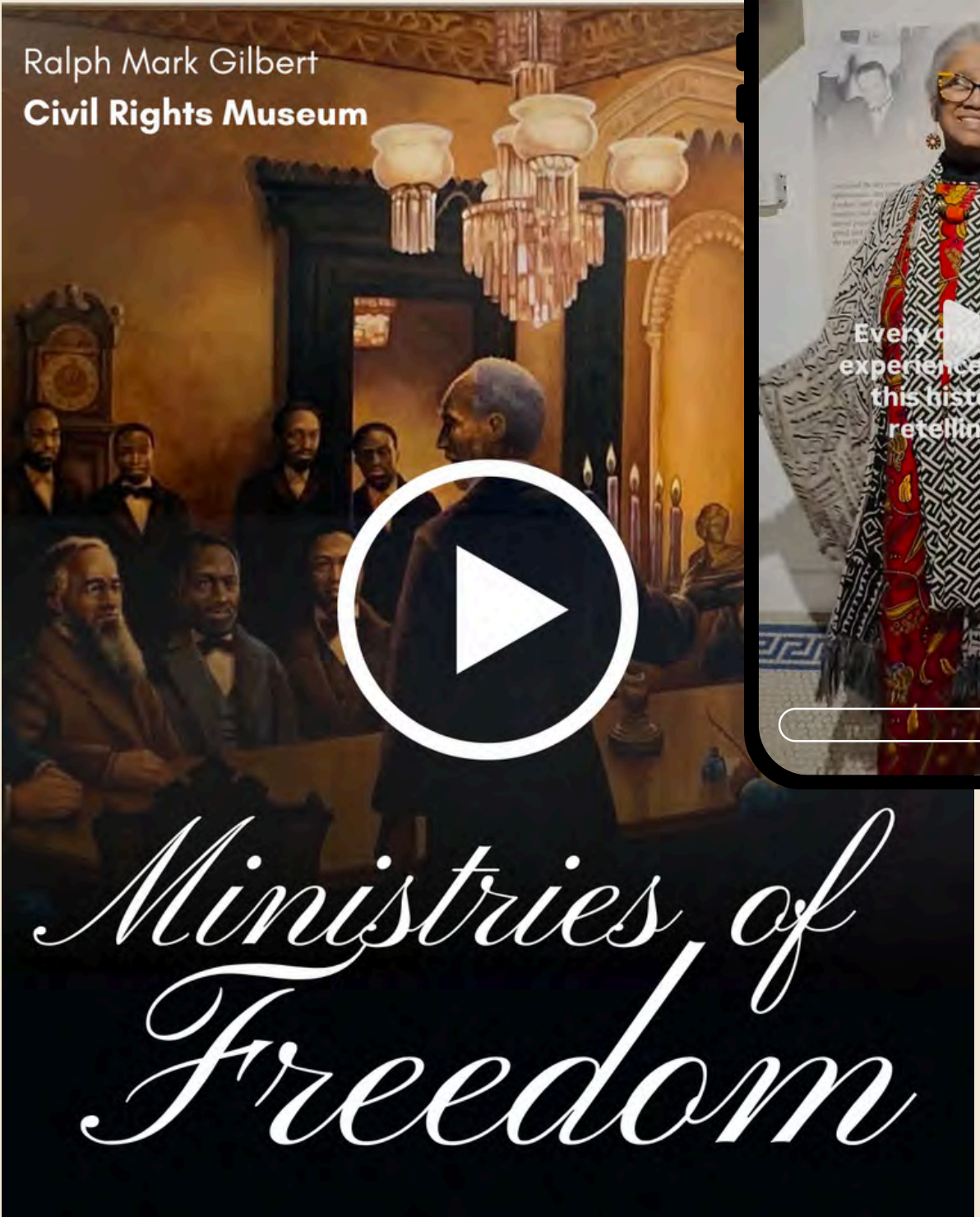
Printing: \$70–120
 Stand: \$80–200
 Design: \$50–150
Total per unit: \$200–300
Total (2 posters): \$400–600



Social Media Campaign

Leveraging the museum's already strong social media presence, we can increase awareness of current events and exhibitions.

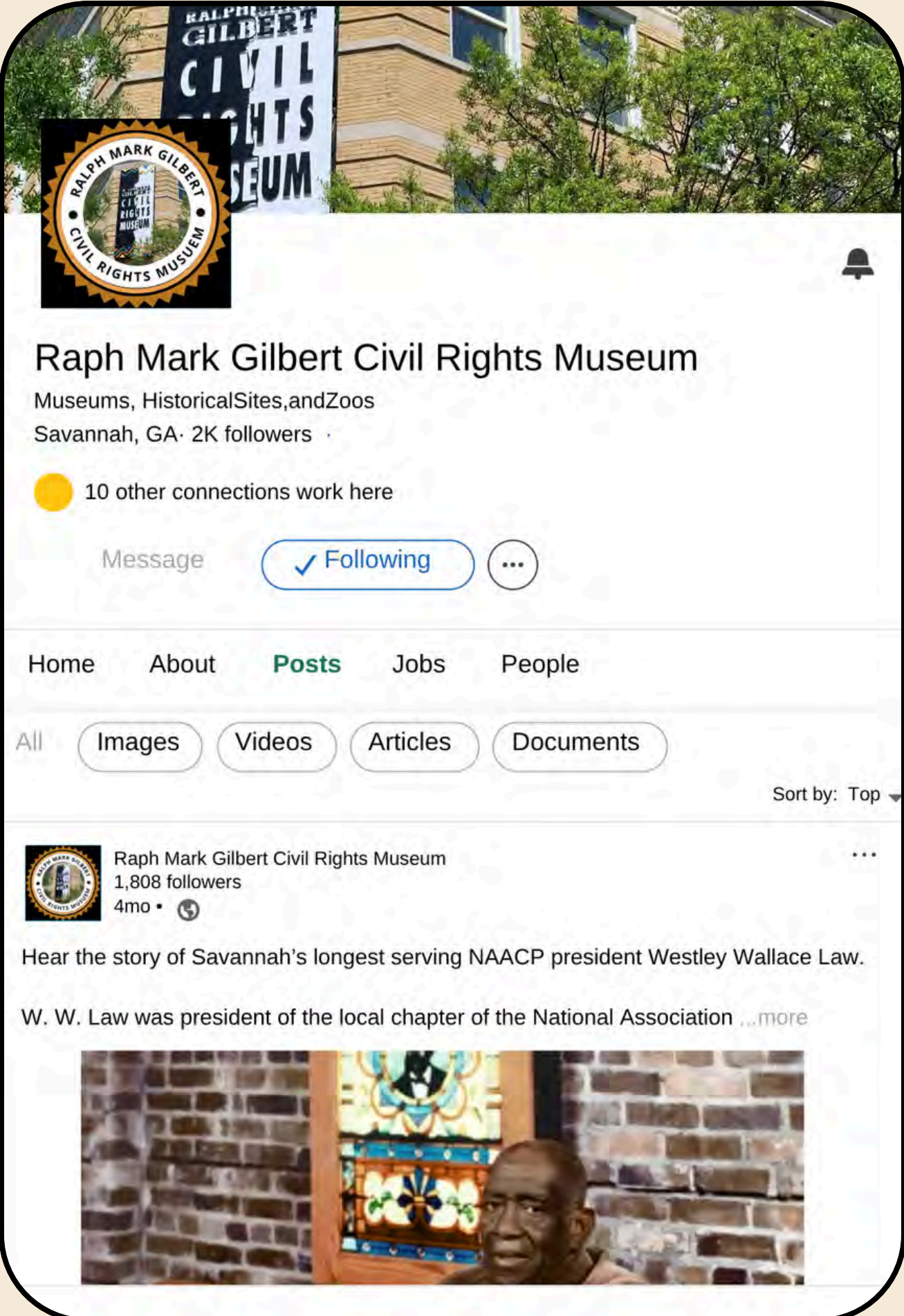




Content

A short-form video featuring students and the museum director introducing the exhibition's significance, historical context, and placement within the museum.





Raph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum
 1,808 followers
 4mo •

What is Special Field Orders No. 15?

After the success of the March to the Sea from Atlanta to Savannah on December 21, 1864, Union general William T. Sherman issued Special Field Orders No. 15. The Orders redistributed 400,000 acres of land in coastal South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida to newly freed Black families, giving each 40 acres and a mule each.

40 Acres and a Mule aimed for the settlement of confiscated Confederate land policy was a budding opportunity for economic independence and commonwealth for African Americans post-Civil War.

Despite President Abraham Lincoln's approval of the Orders, it was never fully realized. After Lincoln's death, Andrew Johnson rescinded it after it had been active for over a year. With limited access to economic opportunities, many newly emancipated were pressured to sign sharecropper contracts, often laboring for their former enslavers. Yet, with emancipation came greater control over labor for African Americans.



THANK YOU

For Listening

