

# “The Walls Have Fallen”: Emancipation Days in Black California

**ABSTRACT** In 2021, June 19 (Juneteenth) became a federal holiday commemorating the emancipation of enslaved people of African descent in the United States. Prior to Juneteenth gaining official status, January 1 (Emancipation Day) was the de facto national holiday on which African Americans celebrated the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation and the end of slavery. From 1863 until the late twentieth century, African Americans throughout the nation celebrated what the black-owned journal *The Elevator* called “the greatest event in the history of the Colored people of America.” While several scholarly works focus on Emancipation Day celebrations throughout the United States, these studies have largely ignored how black westerners celebrated what was essentially “independence day” for African Americans.

This essay examines Emancipation Day celebrations in the African American communities of San Francisco, Sacramento, and Los Angeles. Emancipation Day celebrations illustrate how black Californians in the state’s largest African American communities used ritualized celebration and public dialogue to construct their new civic identities as free black men and women. Emancipation Day celebrations provided black Californians opportunities to testify to their aspirations as members of the American polity, and to their vision of themselves as upholders of liberty and beacons of freedom in post–Civil War America. Black Californians forthrightly used public commemorations of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation to illustrate black community consciousness through the spirit of public festivals and civic celebrations, otherwise known as “public festive culture.” These public rituals did more than celebrate liberty: they legitimated black freedom and citizenship, honored the memory of Abraham Lincoln as God’s servant, and elaborated a political ethos powerful enough to unify African Americans as members of the American polity. **KEYWORDS:** Emancipation Proclamation, Emancipation Day, holidays, Juneteenth, festivals, African American, commemoration, Black California, Freedom Day, San Francisco, Sacramento, Los Angeles



**FIGURE 1.** This sketch by an artist for *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* shows the First South Carolina Volunteers' color guard addressing a joyful crowd of African Americans after the reading of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. *Courtesy of Library of Congress*

ON A STORMY New Year's afternoon in 1868, Reverend Jeremiah B. Sanderson, minister of Oakland's First African Methodist Episcopal Church (FAME), stood before the faithful at the city's Emancipation Day celebration and delivered the day's oration. His remarks reminded the crowd, who had braved the inclement weather, of the monumental importance of the deed that was responsible for their salvation from bondage: "Five years ago, that immortal document, the Emancipation Proclamation of President Abraham Lincoln, went forth over the nation, proclaiming 'Liberty throughout the land and unto all the inhabitants thereof.' Americans, loyal to the Union, lovers of liberty everywhere, felt that this was the act of national repentance of our great sin and crime—that the new year of the nations' jubilee had come."<sup>1</sup> The Reverend in biblical eloquence recited scripture that linked the plight of African Americans to the enslaved in Moses' Egypt by quoting Exodus 3:7–8: "I have surely seen the afflictions of my people. I have heard the cry by reason of their taskmasters, I have come down to deliver them. I have also seen the oppression wherewith this people oppress them. I have surely visited them and will bring them up out of their afflictions."<sup>2</sup>

The linking of African American bondage to the enslavement of Israelites in ancient Egypt repeated the allegorical symbolism used throughout national and state emancipation

celebrations. This linkage had been part of black theology from the ascent of the hidden black churches of the plantation era to the founding of organized, separate black church denominations. The effect was to give the celebrations a divinely inspired spiritual message.

Long before Juneteenth became a federal holiday, from 1863 until well into the late twentieth century, African Americans in San Francisco and other cities throughout California had celebrated what the black-owned journal *The Elevator* called “the greatest event in the history of the Colored people of America.”<sup>3</sup> Emancipation Day (January 1) was, by all measures, a de facto national holiday commemorating the end of American slavery (Figure 1).<sup>4</sup>

This article examines Emancipation Day celebrations in San Francisco, Sacramento, and Los Angeles from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century. Emancipation Day celebrations in California’s three most populated cities served as ritualized public events for African Americans that allowed them, as Ellen M. Litwicki notes, to “reconstruct America, to imagine the nation through the eyes of group members.”<sup>5</sup> African Americans in California, as well as the nation, sermonized how a reconstructed America provided a stage to challenge racism, articulate fidelity to the nation, demand the liberties granted to them by the U.S. Constitution, and showcase a level of black excellence hidden behind the walls of segregated cities. An examination of Emancipation Day celebrations can contribute to our understanding of how a “public festive culture” allowed for the imagining of communities where black Californians created the sense of a common destiny, a post-emancipation identity, and shaped the public sphere to reflect on their understanding of the responsibilities of citizenship in post-emancipation America.<sup>6</sup> The relative size of each city’s African American population shaped their Emancipation Day celebrations and the content of their public celebrations of freedom.

No other American public ritual had the capacity to demonstrate African Americans’ grasp of the responsibilities of citizenship, nor did any other public event offer a safer national platform from which to denounce white supremacy in both word and deed. By reading Emancipation Day celebrations as public rituals, as scholars Geneviève Gabre and Jürgen Heideking put it, we see that they convey “deeply held particular attitudes and values,” serving African Americans as “mechanisms for social integration” capable of forging political unity within their own communities.<sup>7</sup> While there are significant scholarly works on Emancipation Day celebrations elsewhere in the United States, no comparable works explore how blacks in the West, and specifically black Californians, celebrated Emancipation Day.<sup>8</sup> This article addresses that omission.

## STRUCTURE OF THE CELEBRATIONS

African American Emancipation Day celebrations shared several similarities. First, they provided arguments that legitimized black freedom and citizenship. Second, they were undergirded by a strong religious dimension through prayer, song, and the recitation of scriptures that linked their delivery from slavery to accounts of the Israelites’ exodus from Egypt. Third, they featured the near-deification of Abraham Lincoln as God’s servant; celebrants often described Lincoln as the American Moses who led



**FIGURE 2.** “Abraham Lincoln and his Emancipation Proclamation,” The Strobridge Lith. Co., Cincinnati, Ohio, 1888. Poster includes the text of the Emancipation Proclamation, with two U.S. flags and an eagle above the head-and-shoulders portrait of Abraham Lincoln, flanked by allegorical figures of Justice and Liberty. *Courtesy of Library of Congress*

bondsmen and women from slavery to freedom’s land. Fourth, Emancipation Day celebrations included a full reading of that document (Figure 2), typically heralded in sweeping, global terms as one of the greatest pronouncements in human history. And lastly, black Californians used Emancipation Day events to proclaim their political identities as free men and women, entitled to all the rights and responsibilities granted

to them under the U.S. Constitution. Emancipation Day celebrations in California followed this national pattern.

## SAN FRANCISCO AND SACRAMENTO

Historians Lawrence de Graaf and Quintard Taylor have noted that, by the 1850s, San Francisco and Sacramento each had African American communities built on a foundation of “churches, social clubs, literary societies, fraternal orders, civil rights organizations—which embodied the legacy of their past, the values they shared, and their vision of a common destiny defined by social justice.”<sup>9</sup> African Americans had lived in Sacramento since the 1850s, yet their population was the smallest of the state’s three main cities and remained relatively low over the course of decades. In 1860, the black Sacramento population was 394 residents; it peaked in 1880 at 455, but by 1900 had fallen to 402 residents.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, the city’s reputation among African Americans outside the state remained high. For example, black news journal *The Pittsburgh Courier* described Sacramento in 1947 as “near Utopia.”<sup>11</sup>

Yet Sacramento was no racial utopia. Restrictive covenants kept Sacramento African Americans out of white neighborhoods. As in San Francisco, black Sacramentans lived in the city’s poorest housing stock. Even so, African Americans were politically conscious and fought all forms of racial discrimination. Historian Damany Morris Fisher has noted that, from 1855 to 1865, black Sacramento hosted several conventions defending the rights of black Californians.<sup>12</sup>

Sacramento’s all-male “Committee of Arrangements” typically organized the city’s Emancipation Day observances. In 1867, Grant’s Guards, a black military company, launched the early-morning festivities with a gunfire salute. Committee members led a formal procession to the capitol building for a literary ceremony in the assembly chamber. An R. C. Ferguson gave the opening prayer, followed by a reading of the Emancipation Proclamation.<sup>13</sup>

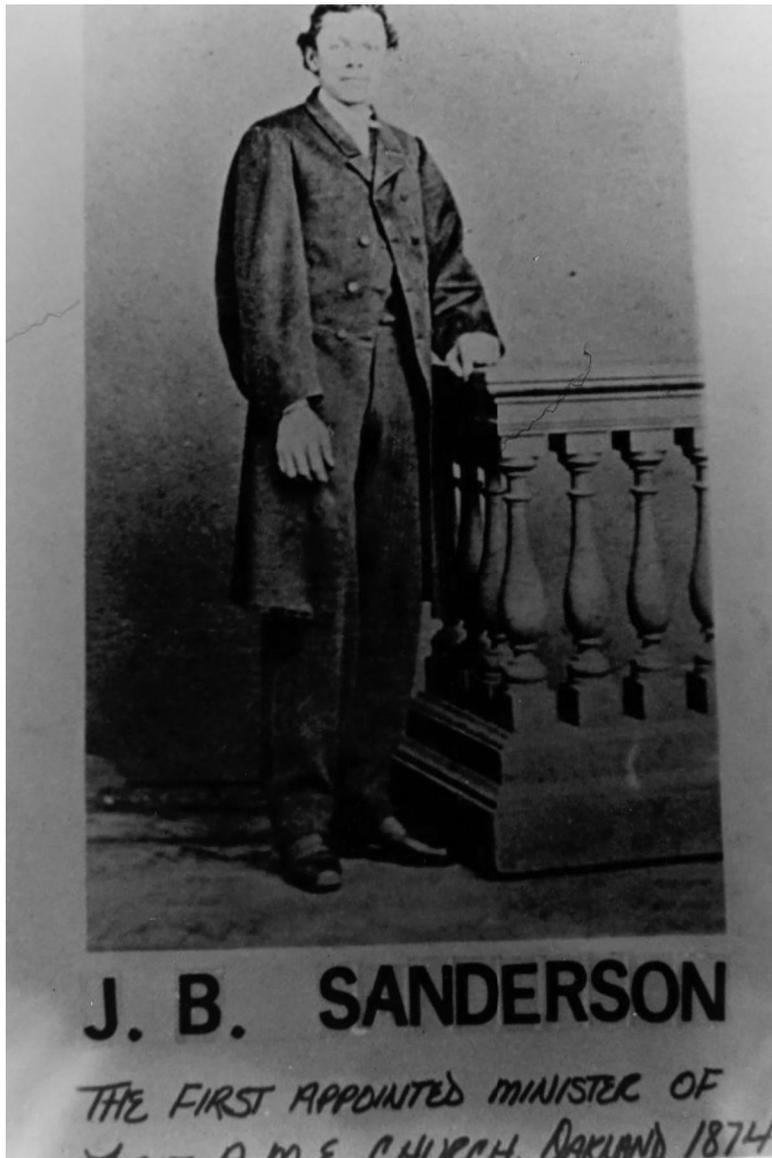
The transcript of only one 1867 Emancipation Day speech survives: a forcefully worded ten-point manifesto read by a Committee of Arrangements member and printed in its entirety in *The Elevator*. The ten resolutions illustrated black Sacramento’s keen understanding of state, national, and global politics, and of the enormous political significance of the Emancipation Proclamation.<sup>14</sup> Resolutions 1 and 2 affirmed black Sacramentans’ willingness to take up arms again for freedom’s struggle. “We, as citizens of California,” wrote the committee, “do most solemnly vow our fidelity to the Government of the United States.” The committee vowed that African Americans would “in the future, as we have in the past, show our attachment to the Constitution, the laws and to the Government of the United States,” taking up arms if needed to maintain “her supremacy against traitors at home and foes abroad.”<sup>15</sup> Authors directly traced that willingness to “the immortal Proclamation of freedom to our race, issued on the first day of January, A.D. 1863.” For that reason, if no other, black Sacramentans proclaimed “to the world that we will at all times take our muskets on our shoulders and our lives we will trust [to] the God of Battles, and go forth to fight for freedom and the laws of our country.”<sup>16</sup>

Resolutions 3 and 4 affirmed a global commitment to suffrage solidarity with the disenfranchised of Great Britain who were then pressing their leaders to reform that nation's franchise system.<sup>17</sup> "We sympathize with the poorer classes of Great Britain," wrote the committee, "who are struggling for the extension to them of the right of suffrage." Recently enfranchised by the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, black Sacramentans held out their hope "that the light of freedom in this country" would "dispel the dark cloud of tyranny and oppression which has hung so long over the poorer classes of Great Britain." Their recent acquisition of the vote prompted the committee to lecture British lawmakers "that impartial suffrage is the only safeguard to the prosperity and perpetuity of any government."<sup>18</sup>

Resolutions 5, 6, and 7 were a clear repudiation of President Andrew Johnson's abandonment of Lincoln's reconstruction plan. The committee labeled President Johnson the "arch-traitor to our country" for his "abandonment of the course adopted by his worthy and illustrious predecessor." The committee's resolutions took aim at Johnson for his failure to carry out his often-quoted declaration that "treason is a crime, and crime must be punished." Upon taking office, however, Johnson abandoned that stance. Radical Republicans and African Americans were quick to remind Johnson of his failure to punish Confederates. Resolution 7 called upon the California legislature to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment.<sup>19</sup> Sadly, pro-slavery and states' rights sentiments kept California from ratifying that amendment until May 1959; ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment waited until April 1962.<sup>20</sup> Resolution 8 added an international dimension by "sympathizing with all nations and people who are struggling to free themselves from tyranny and oppression." Resolution 9 endorsed the work the "present loyal Congress" and praised the "loyal people of the North" in returning members who were "lovers of freedom" back to Congress. The tenth resolution urged future generations to continue celebrating Emancipation Day.<sup>21</sup>

San Francisco's geographic proximity to Sacramento, added to the former's close monitoring of the state legislature, ensured a certain consistency in the two communities' Emancipation Day celebrations. In 1860, San Francisco's African American population totaled 1,176. According to historian Albert S. Broussard, the African American population lived on the "margins" of San Franciscan society, which relegated black men and women to menial occupations and denied them access to such public services as streetcars and public education.<sup>22</sup> The majority of black San Franciscans had migrated from the East Coast, and at least a third came from the South. The majority of African Americans who migrated to the city stayed for economic reasons, although the city did not provide much work outside the service sector. San Francisco's black population grew steadily, outpacing other metropolitan areas in California until 1900, when Los Angeles became the city with the state's largest black population.<sup>23</sup>

Black San Franciscans began celebrating the de facto holiday on January 1, 1863, the very day that the Emancipation Proclamation became official. Although programs and newspaper articles regarding the day are scarce, those that survive provide insights into how black San Franciscans organized their celebration. *The Elevator* covered the city's 1868 Emancipation Day ceremony, which began with the customary morning parade. A literary program followed, with introductory remarks by the president of San Francisco's



**FIGURE 3.** Reverend Jeremiah B. Sanderson, ca. 1860. Photograph labeled “J. B. Sanderson: The First Appointed Minister of Zion A.M.E. Church, Oakland 1874.” A free, New Bedford–educated black man, Sanderson was active in the abolitionist movement in the Northeast. He moved to California in the gold rush and became one of the state’s most influential spokesmen and educators. In addition to serving as minister of the First A.M.E. Church in Oakland, Sanderson successfully petitioned the legislature in the 1850s–1870s to fund “colored schools” in Sacramento, San Francisco, and Stockton. Black families from around the state sent their children to his school in Stockton. Sanderson was also a key organizer of state and district conventions that called for black civil rights in California.  
*Courtesy of UCLA Open Collections*

Committee of Arrangements, J. P. Dyer. The Emancipation Proclamation was then read by a Mr. R. A. Hall, and “The Associated Twelves” sang “Union and Liberty Forever.” Reverend J. B. Sanderson of Oakland’s FAME called the Emancipation Proclamation the most

significant statement of liberty since the Declaration of Independence (Figure 3). Dyer remarked on the significance of the Civil War having ended “the midnight of oppression,” which “vanished before the rising sun of American liberty.”<sup>24</sup> He elaborated: “No Slave clanks his chains beneath the broad stripes and bright stars of the flag of our common country. Freedom waves her wand from the Atlantic to the Pacific, while the Palmetto and the Old Bay State, ‘arm in arm,’ each give to black Americans the right to vote, speak and write.”<sup>25</sup> Dyer combined the language of the Emancipation Proclamation with biblical imagery to evoke a defiant community committed to its freedom: “We are, in the language of the martyred President, ‘henceforth and forever free.’ The brazen heel of the oppressor’s foot shall never more rest upon our necks. Never, while the sun rolls through ‘the blue vault of Heaven.’”<sup>26</sup>

Dyer reached far back through history to link the plight of enslaved African Americans to Caesar crossing the Rubicon to face his enemies. They would never cover their faces and die an “inglorious death at the foot of Pompey’s statue”; instead he and his people planned to “gird ourselves anew with the panoply of Religion, Unity and Truth and battle manfully for our rights.” Echoing Sacramento’s ten resolutions of 1867, Dyer’s “Declaration of Sentiment” reaffirmed his community’s right to “Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness,” and went on to demand civil and human rights for all African Americans, not just those in San Francisco. “We reiterate our abhorrence of slavery and oppression under any form,” wrote Dyer, and express our sympathy for “the oppressed of whatever race, clime, or peoples.” Dyer also offered his opinions on Reconstruction, insisting that “the only method to reconstruct the Union, is that proposed by Congress.” He explained: “The surest way to prevent future rebellion” and “to make treason odious and loyalty honorable” was “to invest all loyal citizens with equal political rights”—especially African Americans who had so faithfully served the Union cause in the Civil War. For Dyer, love of country was surpassed only by love of God. “We declare our love of country is unalterable,” he concluded, “and our reverence for the free institutions of a Republican Government are steadfast as our faith in the final justice of God.”<sup>27</sup>

Emancipation Day celebrations in San Francisco could be grand affairs. The 1873 commemoration marked a clear departure from earlier events. Held on the proclamation’s tenth anniversary, that day’s observance included no literary component, nor past events’ challenges to white supremacy. Instead, reports of the program focused on the civility of the celebration, including the “graceful mien and agreeable flirtations” of the attendees, and the grand military ball sponsored by a black volunteer military company, the Brannan Guard. The well-attended ball apparently attracted California’s black elite, including attendees from as far as Sacramento. *The Elevator* was incensed by the frivolity of the observances held “on so important an occasion as a First of January anniversary,” meant to mark the end of American slavery. “We hope this dullness . . . will be looked upon with better care” in forthcoming celebrations; editors instead urged Californians to treat the day “as has been heretofore.”<sup>28</sup>

Editors might have been thinking of the city’s 1868 celebration, when Reverend J. B. Sanderson used the occasion for a remarkable reexamination of the nation’s racial politics. Sanderson reminded his listeners that the white Americans who had so benefited from declaring their independence from Great Britain had willingly enslaved nearly one-seventh

of the country's black population for the next seven decades. Not only that, they had "gagged" slavery's critics from Washington to Sacramento, resulting in a subversion of the country's founding principles: "In seventy-five years the good results of the Revolution of '76 were almost destroyed. That noble truth of the Declaration of Independence, 'all men are created equal, and endowed with an inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,' was scoffed at as a rhetorical flourish, and men feared to utter it. Where was freedom of speech?"<sup>29</sup>

Black San Franciscans also used Emancipation Day celebrations to discuss world affairs. In 1869, a Mr. J. R. Starkey, organizer of African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church's observances, spoke of the Emancipation Proclamation's effect on international politics. He noted that the American colonists' 1776 Declaration of Independence "produced no startling effect on the moral or political world," which "fell cold and sterile on the ears of Europe, whose despots considered it as but the ravings of a few discontented colonial politicians who would soon succumb to the prowess of the British Empire." In contrast, "the Emancipation Proclamation struck Europe with amazement," because it overthrew the hopes of "the aristocratic rulers of the old world" for "dismemberment of the great Republic of the West." Its impact was just as profound in the United States, observed Starkey. With it, "the Southern Confederacy" saw their efforts "to break up the Union and build a slave Empire upon its ruins vanish before them." Americans in the North received the proclamation as "the salvation of the loyal Union," renewing the independent yeoman farmer's, the industrialist's, and the small business owner's "hopes of success" over the unfair advantages of the southern slaveowner. "The slaves of the South," of course, received the Emancipation Proclamation "as the dawn of a brighter day; they received it as a great day of redemption" for which "they had so long prayed. They received it with joy unspeakable, and shouted hosannah and praise to the great God of the Universe, and honor and glory to President Lincoln."<sup>30</sup>

As Starkey's remarks make clear, a key motif in Emancipation Day celebrations was venerating the heroes of black freedom. Celebrations typically included expressions of sadness for Lincoln's assassination and praise bordering on deification of abolitionist John Brown—who led 1859's failed slave rebellion on Harpers Ferry, Virginia—and President Lincoln as martyrs to the cause of black freedom. Yet praise for Lincoln was far from universal. In 1868, Oakland's Reverend J. B. Sanderson expressed ambivalence about Lincoln. Either Lincoln failed to realize that his proclamation stopped short of ending slavery, or he was not fully vested in black freedom. Instead of praising Lincoln, Sanderson thanked divine intervention. It was that power, Sanderson remarked, operating "in a way incomprehensible to the human mind," that produced the Emancipation Proclamation. "Unconsciously to himself," Lincoln was simply the "the chosen instrument" of "the Spirit of God that moves upon the great deep, governs worlds, notes the sparrow's fall, that causes all events, all men, . . . to work out the accomplishment of his purposes."<sup>31</sup>

Sanderson was not alone in withholding praise for Lincoln. Speaking at the 1876 dedication of the Emancipation Memorial in Washington, D.C., no less a champion of black freedom than former slave turned abolitionist Frederick Douglass noted Lincoln's wavering commitment to black rights. "Truth compels me to admit," said Douglass, "even in the presence of the monument we have erected to his memory, that Abraham Lincoln

was not, in the fullest sense of the word, either our man or our model. In his interests, in his associations, in his habits of thought, and in his prejudices, he was a white man.”<sup>32</sup>

Black newspapers likewise scrutinized Lincoln’s image and historical role. A final assault by journalist Lerone Bennet came in 1968, with a damning *Ebony* article titled “Was Lincoln a White Supremacist?” Bennet depicted Lincoln as ambivalent about black emancipation, if not an outright white supremacist. Reappraisal of Lincoln’s role in the cause of black freedom probably led to the declining popularity of Emancipation Day, now replaced by celebrations of “Juneteenth” as the national day for celebrating black freedom.<sup>33</sup>

## LOS ANGELES

At 10:30 in the morning on January 1, 1900, the Reverend F. L. Donohoo stepped up to his pulpit of the Wesley Chapel of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Los Angeles and delivered the opening sermon, titled “The Walls Have Fallen.”<sup>34</sup> The church was ringed with bunting and American flags; a picture of Abraham Lincoln and his cabinet prominently adorned the pulpit. In keeping with the day’s historical and symbolic importance, the congregation filled the air with spirituals. Speakers glorified Lincoln, recounted the progress of the race, and, as one reporter put it, gave “praise and thanksgiving for the boon of liberty.”<sup>35</sup>

With their Emancipation Day celebrations, black Angelenos emphasized their commitment to the ideals of American citizenship, especially liberty. Reverence for liberty was deeply embedded in their community, with its historical linkages to slavery. That city’s early twentieth-century Emancipation Day celebrations linked participants’ faith in American entrepreneurship with the community’s lived memory of slavery. Annual celebrations served as testament to how far African Americans had progressed, individually and as a race, since emancipation. In black Los Angeles, the ideology of race progress was firmly rooted in the message of racial uplift embodied by Booker T. Washington. Educated at Virginia’s Hampton Normal School, founder and principal of the Tuskegee Institute, by 1890 Washington was the de facto leader of black America. African American communities around the country followed the principles of self-help that Washington articulated in his 1895 *Atlanta Exposition Address*.<sup>36</sup> The first Emancipation Day celebrations organized by black Angelenos naturally featured the experiences of former slaves who told of those experiences and detailed their growing prosperity. Their narratives gave proof to Washington’s gospel of work and wealth.

Colonists with African ancestry were among the city’s first settlers.<sup>37</sup> However, a cohesive African American community formed in Southern California’s land boom of the late 1880s. The city’s black population rose from 102 in 1880 to 1,258 in 1898.<sup>38</sup> Several excellent works on black Los Angeles illustrate the growth and dynamism of the early twentieth-century community.<sup>39</sup> Blacks initially lived scattered throughout the area, although, as historian Lonnie Bunch notes, housing, businesses, and restaurants demonstrated patterns of racial segregation, as was true throughout the nation. Blacks in Los Angeles built a spirit of community through the social, cultural, and educational organizations they founded. The city’s well-to-do and well-known blacks reaffirmed that American

capitalism could be color blind. By the turn of the twentieth century, Robert C. Owens, the wealthiest black in Los Angeles, had built a fortune by investing in real estate; the *Los Angeles Daily Times* described him as a “capitalist.” Biddy Mason, a former slave brought to Los Angeles by her owner, amassed a sizable fortune after gaining her freedom. In 1896, her descendants turned down an offer of nearly \$200,000 for their land in downtown Los Angeles.<sup>40</sup> While the labor market had racial barriers, Los Angeles continued to draw and employ blacks in a wide range of jobs. The city attracted and employed blue- and white-collar workers, including black carpenters, masons, physicians, architects, engineers, attorneys, and entrepreneurs.<sup>41</sup> Labor unions throughout Los Angeles reserved most of their racial contempt for Chinese workers. Hostility directed toward the Chinese seemingly gave blacks the social space in which to advance.<sup>42</sup> Historian Carey McWilliams noted that, by 1900, Los Angeles “had outgrown most of its early hostility toward Negroes.” Los Angeles was one of the first, McWilliams notes, “if not the first, city in America to employ Negro firemen and policemen.” As a result, Los Angeles “developed a reputation of being a good town for Negroes,” and “migrants from Negro communities in the Middle West began to arrive in a slow but steady stream.”<sup>43</sup>

The city’s earliest reported Emancipation Day observances emphasized this slow but steady rise from slavery to economic success. As was true in San Francisco, black Angelenos’ Emancipation Day celebrations typically included readings of the Emancipation Proclamation, speeches extolling the virtues of Union leaders whose “patience, compromise and education” brought about the end of slavery. However, unlike San Francisco, the 1885 Los Angeles program illustrates how close blacks felt to their communal memory of slavery and to life in the American South. A local newspaper reported a program that included a reading of the Emancipation Proclamation, musical selections titled “Slavery Days” and “Way Down on the Swanee River [*sic*],” and a poetry reading of “The Slave in the South.”<sup>44</sup>

The 1897 celebration, sponsored by the Afro-American League, took place at the African Methodist Episcopal Church on Azusa Street. “Flags and festoons of bunting,” a newspaper reported, decorated the sacred space; an “enormous” portrait of Lincoln, draped with flags and flowers, hung over the chancel. The Reverend C. H. Anderson gave the invocation, followed by a Mrs. G. W. Warner who read the Emancipation Proclamation. A choir of “twelve voices” then led the audience in singing “The Star Spangled Banner.” Mr. F. J. Cressey delivered the evening’s oration on Lincoln, whose death he likened to the crucifixion of Christ. Cressey spoke of Lincoln as though destined by fate to end slavery, the “conditions that surrounded the great emancipator in obscurity of his birth and boyhood, following him through his public career until he rose to the Presidency and carried the struggle to preserve the Union to a successful end.”<sup>45</sup> Casting Lincoln’s evolution in terms approaching the biblical temptations of Christ, Cressey recounted Lincoln’s full embrace of emancipation, despite the efforts of “lukewarm Northern men” who sought to end the war early without ending slavery. “Mr. Lincoln cut short such efforts,” however, promising he would consider only propositions that embraced “the restoration of peace, the integrity of the whole union, and the abandonment of slavery.”<sup>46</sup> In closing, Cressey praised the “white and colored” soldiers “who composed the great Union army, and whose deeds of valor and patriotic daring will never be forgotten while the world remembers the

humanity, the wisdom and sincerity of Lincoln.”<sup>47</sup> Unlike some San Francisco Emancipation Day celebrants, black Angelenos tended to be fulsome in their praise of Lincoln.<sup>48</sup>

Part of the difference between celebrations in Los Angeles and the other two cities likely reflects the larger size and greater economic success of L.A.’s black community. At the turn of the twentieth century, an entrepreneurial spirit flourished in the black community. Blacks invested in real estate, buying and building homes and commercial buildings. As residential restrictions began to take hold in Los Angeles, many blacks resided along the Central Avenue corridor, making that street the epicenter of black life in the city. The black population of Los Angeles continued to grow modestly through the first decades of the twentieth century, increasing from 2,131 in 1900 to 7,599 in 1910 and 15,579 by the end of World War I.<sup>49</sup> As the population increased, black Angelenos established institutions and organizations that, as historians Lawrence de Graaf and Quintard Taylor put it, “defined and defended the community.”<sup>50</sup>

Los Angeles supported three black newspapers: *The Liberator*; Frederick M. Roberts’s *Los Angeles New Age*; and *The California Eagle*, owned by Charlotta and Joseph Bass. These newspapers were instrumental in keeping readers abreast of municipal, state, national, and global politics, race relations, and local community affairs, shaping the black community’s sense of its identity and best interests. Black-owned newspapers promoted the works and ideas of black intellectuals, supported black candidates for political office, and were heavily involved in what were called “race politics.” The *Eagle* and the *New Age* were both fervent supporters of Republican causes.<sup>51</sup>

Visitors to Los Angeles commented on the high standard of living enjoyed by its black residents. After a 1913 visit, W. E. B. Du Bois wrote: “Los Angeles is wonderful. Nowhere in the United States is the Negro so well and beautifully housed, nor the average efficiency and intelligence in the colored population so high.”<sup>52</sup> As historian Lonnie Bunch has stated, Du Bois understood that there was no racial paradise in the West or in Los Angeles in particular. Still, Du Bois wrote, “out here in this matchless Southern California, there would seem to be no limit to your opportunities, your possibilities.”<sup>53</sup>

Black-owned businesses, women’s clubs, and churches supported each other and helped to develop the sense of community experienced by black Angelenos. California’s most successful black business, the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company (GSM), was located in the Central Avenue district. Dr. H. Claude Hudson, a prominent dentist and president of the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), built the Hudson-Liddell Building at 41st and Central. This building and several others were designed by African American architect Paul Revere Williams and became a symbol of black aspirations in Los Angeles.<sup>54</sup> Local businesses formed symbiotic relationships with local black churches and associations: GSM, for example, built its clientele by advertising through what were called “race churches,” or churches organized for and by black people. Outsiders commented on the community’s high-profile black-owned businesses, which generated enormous pride in the black community.<sup>55</sup> The Women’s Day Nursery, Women’s Civic League, and Sojourner Truth Industrial Club supported local women, both new arrivals and established residents. Several of L.A.’s black social organizations began as church projects, and churches provided the early meeting places for the NAACP chapter and the Urban League.<sup>56</sup>

Central Avenue offered cultural attractions for both black and white patrons. After a 1922 speaking tour, Chandler Owen, cofounder with A. Phillip Randolph of the socialist journal *The Messenger*, declared the avenue a “veritable little Harlem in Los Angeles.”<sup>57</sup> This was a remarkable statement coming from Owen, a Harlem resident, in that Harlem was then the symbolic heart of black America. Many years later, Betty Yarbrough Cox recalled that Central Avenue “was to Los Angeles what 125th Street was to Harlem.” It was “not only the place where many lived but also the source of their dreams for a successful future. Those dreams often centered on the vibrant music and active club life on the street.”<sup>58</sup> By the early 1920s, New Orleans musicians such as Jelly Roll Morton and Joe “King” Oliver dominated both the Los Angeles and San Francisco music scenes. Oliver and Morton often performed at Central Avenue’s Lincoln Theatre, which was known as the “West Coast Apollo,” for that Harlem music venue.<sup>59</sup>

The rising cultural and social status of Central Avenue could, in part, be attributed to the 1928 opening of the Somerville Hotel. The only Los Angeles hotel that catered to blacks, this three-story structure boasted one hundred rooms, shops, and banquet facilities, making it the ideal home for visiting black musicians and entertainers. As Betty Y. Cox noted, “Lena Horne, Count Basie, Fats Waller, Sarah Vaughan, Lionel Hampton, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Billy Eckstine, Jack Johnson, and Cab Calloway” were patrons.<sup>60</sup>

The Central Avenue district spread south from 1st Street (Little Tokyo) to roughly 42nd Street as black-owned nightclubs, theaters, savings and loan associations, automobile dealerships, newspaper offices, and retail businesses gathered there. Central Avenue attracted what were known at the time as “hot colored” nightclubs, including the Kentucky Club, Club Alabam (Apex), the Savoy, Jack’s Bird-N-Basket, La Caribe Lounge, Lovejoys, the Downbeat, the Memo Club, Ivy’s Chicken Shack, the Clark Hotel, and Brothers. As a jazz mecca, Central Avenue rivaled any other American city.<sup>61</sup>

From 1890 to 1940, Los Angeles was the only city in the U.S. West where African Americans exercised significant political power.<sup>62</sup> The electoral strength of black Angelenos first became apparent in the 74th State Assembly District, which encompassed a large portion of the Central Avenue community. In 1918, that district elected California’s first black legislator, editor Frederick Roberts, who held his seat for sixteen years and served as the only African American in the state legislature.<sup>63</sup>

The economic and social status of black Angelenos shows up in their Emancipation Day celebrations. In contrast to the African Methodist Episcopal Church’s 1897 celebration, Reverend F. L. Donohoo (Figure 4) divided the 1900 program into three separate services. The first service began at 10:30 A.M. The morning program highlighted Donohoo’s “The Walls Have Fallen” speech. At 2:30 P.M., the congregation met again at a “Freedman’s Jubilee” praise meeting, which included remembrances of slavery and a reading of the Emancipation Proclamation. Reverend Donohoo opened the afternoon’s celebrations with his own testimonial of slavery. He recalled that his mother was sold away from eastern Tennessee when he was a baby and that she made her way back to him after emancipation. Donohoo’s father was most likely a soldier in one of the Union’s colored regiments. Donohoo stated that he remembered his father appearing near the war’s end wearing a military uniform. Other former slaves also testified to their experiences as bondsmen



**FIGURE 4.** Reverend F. L. Donohoo. Photograph by C. M. Bell, Washington D.C., ca. 1873–1890. Courtesy of Library of Congress

and bondswomen. Their testimonies linked emancipation with biblical themes of liberation. A. A. Watkins, who had been a slave in South Carolina, referred to Jesus Christ and Lincoln as “the Saviors and liberators of the human race.”<sup>64</sup>

Former slaves blended themes of liberation and racial uplift. According to a *Los Angeles Times* report, Reverend Ancey Morton told listeners that he had once been a “poor slave” without education, yet he had managed to accumulate property and now lived a happy life. Morton “was not ashamed of having been born a slave,” but he preferred “to think of what the race had done since emancipation, rather than dwell on their condition to that time.”<sup>65</sup> A Mr. Sawyer, described as a “patriarchal-looking colored man,” also spoke of slavery. He stood before the congregation on crutches and relived his slave days in Texas, where owners forced slaves to hold their religious meetings in secret, or “steal away” to Jesus



**FIGURE 5.** Grace Murray (Mrs. Charles) Stephenson, “Emancipation Day Celebration band, June 19, 1900,” Austin, Texas.

*Courtesy of Austin History Center, Austin Public Library*

(Figure 5). He recounted how emancipation came to Texas on June 19, 1865, and praised God for freedom. After Sawyer’s testimony, the congregation joined in singing “Steal Away (to Jesus)”.<sup>66</sup>

Steal away, steal away, steal away to Jesus!  
Steal away, steal away home,  
I ain’t got long to stay here.  
My Lord, He calls me,  
He calls me by the thunder;  
The trumpet sounds within my soul,  
I ain’t got long to stay here.  
Green trees are bending,  
Poor sinners stand a-trembling;  
The trumpet sounds within my soul,  
I ain’t got long to stay here.  
My Lord, He calls me,  
He calls me by the lightning;  
The trumpet sounds within my soul,  
I ain’t got long to stay here.<sup>67</sup>

The slave spiritual demonstrated how close the experience of slavery still felt to black Angelenos, more than three decades after emancipation.<sup>68</sup> A “happy brother” sang “Is Anybody Here Ready to Die?” and, in call and response, the congregation joined with shouts of “Yes Lord.”<sup>69</sup>

The 1900 program reveals little about the feelings of local black women because only two women appeared in local reports. Miss Birdie Cooper read the Emancipation Proclamation, while an unnamed woman gave what the reporter described as one of the best remembrances of slavery. A double blindness of both race and gender rendered local black women almost invisible. The little we know of Birdie Cooper is about her mother, Betty. Widowed and alone, Betty Cooper came to Los Angeles around 1891 with daughters Pearl and Birdie. In a testament to the tenacity of black women, Betty worked and saved and, in time, purchased property on 20th Street between Figueroa and Flower Streets, in what is now the hub of the city’s downtown business district, and erected a ten-room residence. A believer in the value of real estate, Cooper also acquired income property, eventually purchasing a second residence in Pico Heights, then considered one of the most beautiful neighborhoods in Los Angeles. Birdie Cooper’s wealth may explain her inclusion in the program, being named in the article, and appearing again in a 1909 *Los Angeles Times* article.<sup>70</sup>

Many of those present at the 1900 commemoration emphasized the rights and responsibilities that came with citizenship. A G. M. Warner reflected on the flags that covered the church walls. “Colored people,” he said, were not yet “entirely free” because in many locations throughout the United States, “the flag does not protect” them.<sup>71</sup> Yet Warner insisted he had no ill will toward the government. He believed that responsibility for the plight of black people lay within themselves, but “we must stand together. We must educate the hand, the head and the heart. Let us learn to help ourselves. I am proud I am a free man and an American citizen.”<sup>72</sup> The 1900 program illustrated black Angelenos’ vision of themselves as citizens ready and able to participate equally in America. The evening session offered such oratory themes as “The Negro in Slavery,” “The Horrors of Slavery,” “Agitators of Emancipation,” “The Negroes in American Wars,” and “The Wrongs Suffered by the Negro since Emancipation.” These speeches were followed by a poem titled “The Negro as Freedmen.” Another theme concerned “The Negro’s Progress,” in which orators spoke on the progress of their race “In Morals and Religion,” “In Education and Schools,” “In Citizenship and Politics,” “In Skilled Arts and Professions,” and “In Business and Wealth.” G. E. Watkins, Esquire, spoke on “What Shall Be Our Future.” Former Texan J. J. Neimore spoke on “The Present Negro: His Possibilities,” a perfect topic for Neimore: starting with only a rudimentary education purchased by “private tuition,” he spoke as editor of a black-owned newspaper, the *Los Angeles Eagle*, which work had earned him the praise of the *Los Angeles Times* for writing in “strong, fearless English” as “an unterrified champion of the rights of men.”<sup>73</sup>

At the close of the program, participants committed themselves to helping unfortunate black brothers and sisters in the South. In the spirit of Christian benevolence, organizers appealed to the congregation for funds. “Let every ex-slave bring 1 cent for each year of our freedom,” thirty-six cents in 1900, to help southern African Americans. For those who had never been slaves, they asked each to “bring 1 cent each” for each year they had “not been a slave, as the twentieth century thank [*sic*] offering.”<sup>74</sup> In an Emancipation Day act of

solidarity, black Angelenos symbolically bridged the distance between West and South, and between slavery and freedom.

## EMANCIPATION DAY CELEBRATIONS: CALIFORNIA AND THE NATION

As historian William B. Gravely has thoughtfully argued, in communities across the nation, Emancipation Day celebrations echoed the African American's double consciousness as a Negro and an American.<sup>75</sup> Los Angeles Emancipation Day celebrations followed another pattern. In 1885 and 1897, Emancipation Day observances showed no sign that black Angelenos felt the need to challenge what Gravely called "stratum arrangements" that relegated African Americans to second-class status. This is a conspicuous omission, given the predominance of southerners in the city's black population, men and women with firsthand experiences of both slavery and Reconstruction. One possible explanation is that the black Angelenos who participated in these celebrations chose to focus on all that they had accomplished.

The contrast is striking between Los Angeles Emancipation Day celebrations in 1885 and 1897 and those held in other parts of the nation. The 1887 Emancipation Day celebration in Norwich, New York, for example, featured an address by John R. Lynch, the first African American to serve in the U.S. Congress (1872–1877, 1881–1883); Lynch spoke on the efforts of African Americans to gain equal employment opportunities since the end of the Civil War.<sup>76</sup> In contrast, surviving accounts of Los Angeles's 1885 and 1897 Emancipation Day observances offered no agenda for furthering black civil rights.

Juxtaposed against the 1885 and 1897 events, the 1900 Emancipation Day program marked an apparent attempt to claim the black experience as an American experience. In addition to highlighting black achievement, the 1900 program integrated slave narratives into the nation's historical legacy. Who might the audience have been for this coupling of a positive present self-image with the mortgage of past suffering? Careful reading of the 1900 reports reveals two principal audiences. The first was "the humblest citizens"—the uneducated, menial black Angelenos who, community leaders feared, damaged the upstanding, successful image black community leaders had struggled to build. White Angelenos were the second audience—those who were unfamiliar with the advancement of the Los Angeles black community. The lessons of the 1900 program were the endless possibilities open to African Americans, especially those willing to master the gospel of racial uplift espoused by Booker T. Washington and others who believed that thrift, industry, and self-sufficiency were the keys to success. Washington urged the African American to "own his land, drive his own mule hitched to his own wagon, milk his own cow, raise his own crop and keep out of debt," and promised that once "he acquired a home he became fit for a conservative citizen."<sup>77</sup>

Washington basically envisioned a Jeffersonian future for African American communities. Blacks had primarily been tied to the land through plantation labor. It seemed to Washington that blacks would be better able to learn self-sufficiency and make themselves valued partners in America by retaining their farming heritage or by acquiring businesses and homes.<sup>78</sup> In black Los Angeles, the hallmarks of self-help were evident decades before

Washington's 1895 Atlanta Exposition Address, but that self-help creed provided the mantra for black Angelenos intent on building a prosperous community. As historian Marne L. Campbell has noted, Washington traveled to the western states on three separate occasions beginning in 1903. Washington was impressed by the level of prosperity and intelligence within the community.<sup>79</sup>

More practically, the self-help message conveyed to community leaders that they were the protectors of the community's moral, ethical, and religious identity. Black community leaders conveyed this message liberally. The Forum Club, founded on February 1, 1903, by the First African American Methodist Episcopal Church of Los Angeles, stated the following: "In our work along moral lines, the permanent issue has been the suppression of the vicious element. To this end, we have worked in harmony with the pulpit, the press, the Chief of Police, and especially with our negro [*sic*] officers for the closing of the dens of vice. The Forum has from time to time appointed committees on strangers to keep newcomers to our City in the proper channel for his moral uplift."<sup>80</sup>

In relation to white society, Emancipation Day celebrations offered an opportunity to affirm African Americans' commitment to an American ideal that became accessible after freedom became a reality. Many white Angelenos recognized the advancement of black Angelenos and used the media to convey their feelings toward the black community. Notwithstanding the condescending tone, John S. M'Groarty, contributing writer to the *Los Angeles Times*, California booster, and editor for *West Coast Magazine*, provided white Angelenos with a personal characterization of the black community. M'Groarty, born just one month before the Emancipation Proclamation was signed, wrote this about blacks in Los Angeles in commemoration of Lincoln's birthday in 1909: "If the negroes [*sic*] of Los Angeles and Southern California can be taken as examples of the race, it would seem from their own indisputable facts that the 'negro problem' is a thing that has no existence."<sup>81</sup> The idea of the Negro problem rested on a belief by white Americans that giving newly freed slaves the franchise, the right to self-government, and the freedom to become "self-upholding citizens" was an untested social experiment.<sup>82</sup> M'Groarty continued, illustrating the African American community's overall prosperity:

They are living here among us in comparatively large numbers. We hear little of them in the police courts. They are engaged in business—some of them on a large scale; they are practicing in the professions; they maintain highly organized bodies of Christian worshippers; they have hundreds of good comfortable homes and not a few that rival the elegance and luxury [of] the best in the whole City; they buy and read books; their children attend the schools and often outstrip their white companions in the ability; music and art appeal to them and are fostered and advanced by them; and [they] are good, God-fearing, law-abiding men and women.<sup>83</sup>

In effect, the Los Angeles Emancipation Day of 1900 became an affirmation of the local community's unflinching faith in participating fully in American life and maintaining a favorable race sentiment—in spite of the known racial barriers of segregation, voting rights restrictions, fewer job opportunities, and the like that confronted black America. What explains the slowness of the black community in Los Angeles in developing a sense of race consciousness? Perhaps black Angelenos faced a far more complex set of issues

related to race than other cities throughout the nation. Given M’Groarty’s statements about the black community, black Angelenos faced subtler, yet no less pernicious, forms of racial discrimination than their national counterparts.<sup>84</sup>

Although Emancipation Day continued to be celebrated in California into the 1990s, Juneteenth became increasingly popular among African Americans. Juneteenth marked the day—June 19, 1865—in Galveston, Texas, when Union General Gordon Granger delivered the news that slavery in Texas had ended with the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation over two years earlier. Today, Juneteenth has all but effectively eliminated Emancipation Day celebrations in California.<sup>85</sup> Even so, while Emancipation Day celebrations were birthed from the politics of war and slavery, they provided black Californians an arena to demonstrate their agency in the drama of American political theater.

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## NOTES

1. “Emancipation Celebration,” *The Elevator* (San Francisco), January 3, 1868.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Scholarship has shaped our understanding of Freedom Day celebrations in African American communities. See William B. Gravely, “The Dialectic of Double-Consciousness in Black American Freedom Celebrations, 1808–1863,” *Journal of Negro History* 67, no. 4 (1982); William H. Wiggins Jr., *O Freedom! Afro-American Emancipation Celebrations* (Chattanooga: University of Tennessee Press, 1990); Richard White, “Civil Rights Agitation: Emancipation Days in Central New York in the 1880s,” *Journal of Negro History* 78, no. 1 (1993); Mitch Kachun, *Festivals of Freedom: Memory and Meaning in African American Emancipation Celebrations, 1808–1915* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003); J. R. Kerr-Ritchie, *Rites of August First: Emancipation Day in the Black Atlantic World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007).
5. Ellen M. Litwack, *America’s Public Holidays, 1865–1920* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), 3.
6. See “Introduction” in Geneviève Gabre and Jürgen Heideking (eds.), *Celebrating Ethnicity and Nation: American Festive Culture from the Revolution to the Early 20th Century* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 1.
7. Ibid.
8. It is understandable why African Americans in the West were ignored by scholars before 2001. So low, historically, was the black population of the West that Gunnar Myrdal, writing in his work *An American Dilemma* (1944), would later dismiss black participation in the development of the West because western blacks constituted only 2.2% of the nation’s total black population.
9. Lawrence B. de Graaf and Quintard Taylor, “Introduction: African Americans in California History, California in African American History,” in Lawrence B. de Graaf, Kevin Mulroy, and Quintard Taylor (eds.), *Seeking El Dorado: African Americans in California* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 3.
10. See “Table 1: African American Population Growth in San Francisco versus Sacramento, 1860–1900” in Damany Morris Fisher, “Far from Utopia, Race, Housing, and the Fight to End Residential Segregation in Sacramento, 1900–1980” (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2008), 4.
11. Ibid., ii.
12. Ibid., 3–4.
13. “Emancipation Celebration,” *The Elevator* (San Francisco), January 11, 1867.

14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Note that British legislators did not heed *The Elevator's* advice. The 1867 British Reform Act did not significantly expand suffrage to the poorer classes. See Gertrude Himmelfarb, "The Politics of Democracy: the English Reform Act of 1867," *Journal of British Studies* 6, no. 1 (1966): 97–138.
18. "Emancipation Celebration," *The Elevator* (San Francisco), January 11, 1867.
19. "Editorial," *America's Civil War* 14, no. 2 (May 2001).
20. Steve Cottrell, "It Took 92 Years for California to Ratify the 15th Amendment," *The Union: News for Nevada County, California*, June 26, 2020, <https://www.theunion.com/news/steve-cottrell-it-took-92-years-for-california-to-ratify-the-15th-amendment/>.
21. "Editorial," *America's Civil War*.
22. Albert S. Broussard, "In Search of the Promised Land: African American Migration to San Francisco, 1900–1945," in de Graaf et al., *Seeking El Dorado*, 183; Lynn Maria Hudson, *The Making of "Mammy Pleasant": A Black Entrepreneur in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2003).
23. Broussard, "In Search of the Promised Land," 182.
24. "Emancipation Celebration," *The Elevator* (San Francisco), January 3, 1868.
25. Ibid.
26. Dyer used biblical imagery of the Hebrew notion of the *firmament*. See Isaiah 42:5 and Psalms 136:6 (King James Version).
27. "Emancipation Celebration," *The Elevator* (San Francisco), January 3, 1868.
28. "Emancipation Celebration," *The Elevator* (San Francisco), January 4, 1873.
29. "Emancipation Celebration," *The Elevator* (San Francisco), January 3, 1868.
30. "Sixth Anniversary of President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation," *The Elevator* (San Francisco), January 8, 1869.
31. "Emancipation Celebration," *The Elevator* (San Francisco), January 3, 1868.
32. Quoted in Barry Schwartz, "Collective Memory and History: How Abraham Lincoln Became a Symbol of Racial Equality," *Sociological Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (1997), 475.
33. Ibid.
34. "Freedmen Celebrate: Colored Citizens' Observance of Emancipation Day," *Los Angeles Times*, January 2, 1900.
35. Ibid.
36. See *HistoryMatters.gmu.edu*, "Booker T. Washington Delivers the 1895 Atlanta Compromise Speech," <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/39/>.
37. For an account of the early African heritage of California and Los Angeles, see Jack D. Forbes, "The Early African Heritage of California," in de Graaf et al., *Seeking El Dorado*, 73.
38. Douglas Flamming, *Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 24.
39. Lawrence B. de Graaf, "The City of Black Angels: Emergence of the Los Angeles Ghetto, 1890–1930," *Pacific Historical Review* 39, no. 3 (1970); de Graaf et al., *Seeking El Dorado*; Flamming, *Bound for Freedom*. A book by Marne L. Campbell, *Making Black Los Angeles: Class, Gender and Community, 1850–1917* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), covers much of the same terrain as Flamming's book but also focuses on women, class highlights, and the personalities that made black Los Angeles a prosperous community. These works and a growing number of studies focusing on black Los Angeles now constitute what I call "Black Los Angeles Studies."
40. Ibid., 329. An inflation calculator adjusted the \$200,000 figure to \$6,104,619.05 in 2020 dollars; OfficialData.Org, Inflation Calculator, <https://www.officialdata.org/>.
41. "Progressive Business League Roster," *California Eagle*, January 20, 1919.
42. de Graaf, "City of Black Angels," 329.
43. Carey McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land* (Salt Lake City, UT: Peregrine Smith Books, 1990 reprint ed.), 324.
44. "Emancipation Day," *Los Angeles Times*, December 23, 1885.
45. *Los Angeles Times*, January 2, 1897.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. White, "Civil Rights Agitation," 22.
49. de Graaf, "City of Black Angels," 330; Lonnie G. Bunch III, "'The Greatest State for the Negro': Jefferson L. Edmonds, Black Propagandist of the California Dream," in de Graaf et al., *Seeking El Dorado*, 130.
50. Lawrence B. de Graaf and Quintard Taylor, "Introduction: African Americans in California History, California in African American History," in de Graaf et al., *Seeking El Dorado*, 19.

51. Flamming, *Bound for Freedom*, 29–30, 107, 170–171.
52. W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Crisis* (August 1913), 192–193.
53. Bunch, “Greatest State for the Negro,” 29.
54. de Graaf and Taylor, “Introduction,” 22.
55. William Nickerson Jr., “A Brief Story of the Foundation, History and Objectives of the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company,” Golden State Mutual Archives, University of California at Los Angeles, Special Collections Library, box 1, file 3, 1.
56. *Ibid.*, 21.
57. de Graaf and Taylor, “Introduction,” 21–22.
58. Betty Yarbrough Cox, “The Evolution of Black Music in Los Angeles, 1890–1955,” in de Graaf et al., *Seeking El Dorado*, 250.
59. *Ibid.*, 258.
60. *Ibid.*, 259.
61. *Ibid.*, 257–266.
62. Flamming, *Bound for Freedom*, 279.
63. *Ibid.*, 92; see also de Graaf and Taylor, “Introduction,” 24.
64. *Los Angeles Times*, January 2, 1900.
65. *Ibid.*
66. *Ibid.*
67. “Steal Away to Jesus” is a well-known “Negro spiritual.” Songwriting credit is attributed to enslaved field hand Wallace Willis, who may have created the song circa 1860–1862; see Frances Banks, “Narrative,” in T. Lindsay Baker and Julie P. Baker (eds.), *The WPA Oklahoma Slave Narratives* (United States Work Projects Administration: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996). The song also was used on the Underground Railroad to alert slaves escaping slavery. See *DSpace.NJStateLib.org*, “Steal Away Steal Away: A Guide to the Underground Railroad in New Jersey,” <https://dspace.njstatelib.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10929/24563/h6732002.pdf?sequence=1>.
68. *Ibid.*
69. *Ibid.*
70. Kate Bradley Stovall, “The Refined and Cultured in Life,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 12, 1909.
71. *Los Angeles Times*, January 2, 1900.
72. *Ibid.*
73. Dr. A. C. Garrot, “Negro Professional Men in the City,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 12, 1909.
74. *Los Angeles Times*, January 2, 1900.
75. Gravelly, “Dialectic of Double-Consciousness,” 302.
76. White, “Civil Rights Agitation,” 16.
77. Louis Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Making of a Black Leader: 1856–1901* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 207.
78. Booker T. Washington, *Character Building: Being Addresses Delivered on Sunday Evenings to the Students of Tuskegee Institute* (Amsterdam: Freedom Books, 2005; reprinted from 1903 ed.), 29; Booker T. Washington, “A Sunday Evening Talk: How to Build a Race,” speech, October 2, 1898.
79. Campbell, *Making Black Los Angeles*, 169.
80. Theodore W. Troy, “The Forum,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 12, 1909. See also Flamming, *Bound for Freedom*, 25.
81. John S. M’Groarty, “The Emancipated,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 12, 1909.
82. “The Negro Problem,” *Atlantic Magazine*, November 1884.
83. M’Groarty, “Emancipated.”
84. Bunch, “Greatest State for the Negro,” 12.
85. “The Historical Origin of the Juneteenth Holiday,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, June 19, 2003; “Gov. Davis Signs Bill for Day of Observance,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, July 25, 2002; “Juneteenth Is Our Independence Day,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, June 16, 2005.