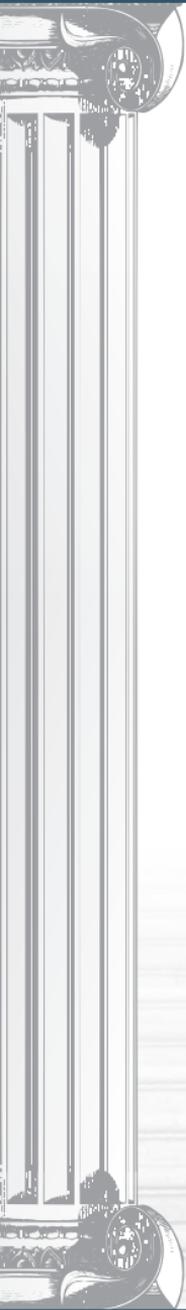




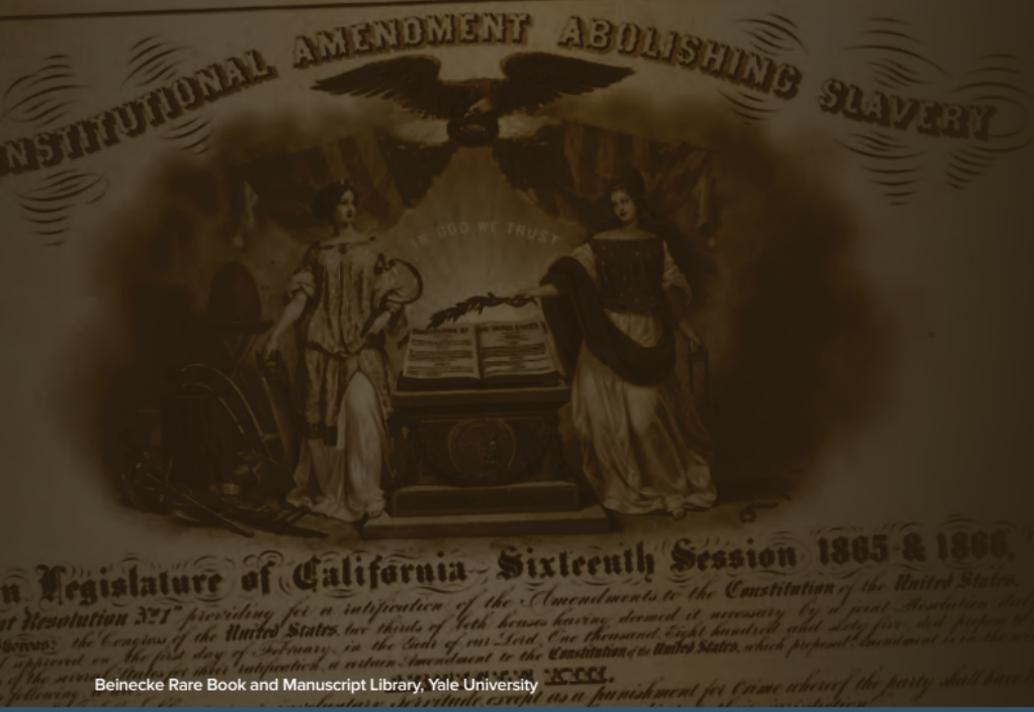
Let Freedom Ring



In 2013 America celebrates the 150th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and his Gettysburg Address, and the 50th anniversary of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's memorable speech, "I Have A Dream." This exhibit, presented by the California Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District and others, honors these heroes but it is also fitting to honor the struggles and triumphs of many other brave and dedicated Americans whose courage and commitment "Let Freedom Ring!"

California's Constitution of 1849 prohibited slavery, and California was a free state. But the freedom guaranteed to Californians had limits, and slaves coming with their masters from other states found that they were not free in California. Bridget "Biddy" Mason was among the first African Americans to claim freedom for herself and her family. They came to California in 1851 with





their master, and when he decided to return to a slave state, Mason went to court where she won their freedom in 1856. She continued to live in Los Angeles, where she has been commemorated as a highly successful entrepreneur and philanthropist.

Seven years later, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring that persons held as slaves were “then, thenceforward and forever free.” Even then freedom had limits and some basic rights — the right to vote, to attend the schools of their choice, to marry the spouse of their choice, and to reside in any neighborhood they chose — were limited or denied to African Americans.





Challenges to Freedom

When Mr. Frank Drye, a decorated veteran of World War II, purchased a house in an upscale Los Angeles neighborhood white neighbors tried to keep his family from moving into their new home. The neighbors cited a provision in the property deed, a restrictive covenant, that prohibited occupancy by African Americans. In 1947 Judge Stanley Mosk of the Los Angeles Superior Court ruled the restrictive covenant unconstitutional and unenforceable. In 1948 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled restrictive covenants unconstitutional and prohibited in all States.

School segregation severely restricted the freedom to learn for African Americans, and it was not until 1954 that the U.S. Supreme Court, in the landmark case, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, ruled that separate educational facilities are inherently unequal and unlawful.



Kansas State Historical Society

Freedom to Play: African American Leaders in Sports

Until the middle of the twentieth century African American athletes were restricted from playing in major league sports. The leadership of Jesse Owens, Joe Louis and Jackie Robinson changed the way the games were played.

Jesse Owens was the first Olympian to win four gold medals in the Olympic Games. He set this record at the 1936 Berlin Olympics and it was not matched until 1984, almost 50 years later.

Born in Alabama and later educated in Detroit, Joe Louis knew poverty. As a very young man he studied cabinetmaking, but soon learned that boxing was his talent and his calling. He reigned as world champion from 1937 until 1949, and he defended his title successfully in 25 bouts.



Jackie Robinson, the first African American to play in Major League Baseball, was a natural for the game and for the challenge of integrating the sport. In 1945 Robinson signed with Branch Rickey to play with the Montreal Royals. Rickey had a life-long engagement with baseball as a player, a manager and an owner, as well as a keen interest in civil rights. After a year with the Royals, Robinson moved to the Dodgers and in his 10-year career, he played in 6 World Series, compiling a lifetime .311 batting average. Robinson was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962 and Rickey's election followed in 1967.

Freedom's Dream: Tragedy and Triumph

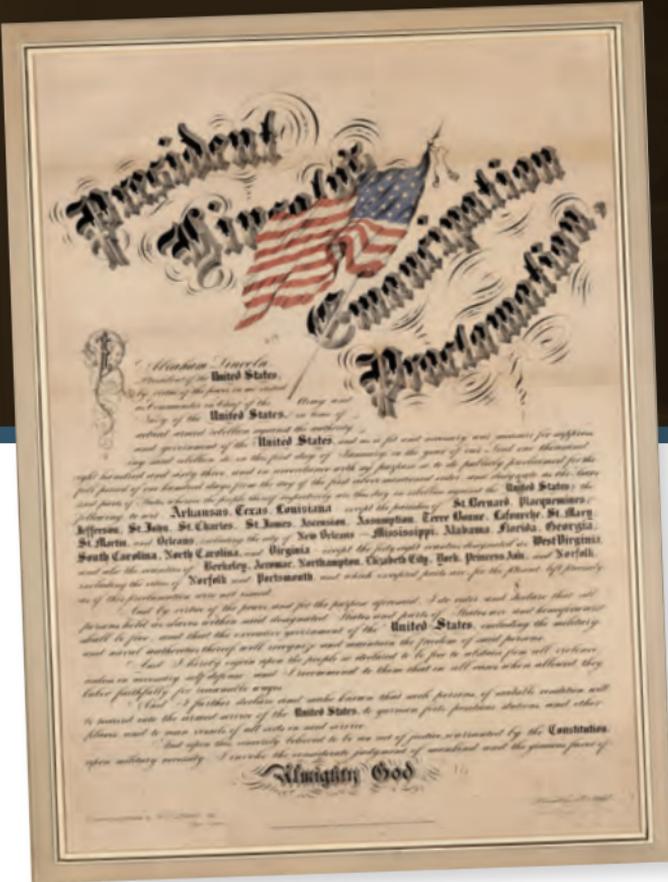
The struggle for freedom and equality continued in the years that followed. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. emerged as the leader of non-violent protest. Despite the tragedies suffered by all who worked for freedom Dr. King's belief in peaceful protest engaged hundreds of thousands of Americans of all races and they joined together to work for justice and harmony.



Leaders of the nation also joined in support and new laws, intended to guarantee equal rights for all, were enacted to keep America's promise of freedom.

Dr. King's eloquence, widely-recognized, was never more evident than in his "Dream" speech, which captured the nation's heart. When he was assassinated, on April 4, 1968, the world grieved and mourned with all who had worked with him, believing in justice, freedom and peace.

In 2013 America remembers heroes and martyrs in the cause of freedom: Medgar Evers and civil rights workers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner in Mississippi; and four young girls, Denise McNair, Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson and Addie Mae Collins, who died in the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham. The nation also recalls that there are many others, whose names may not be known, but whose heroism was essential for freedom to triumph, with hope in the promises of the Constitution, and sharing in Dr. King's belief that "right temporarily defeated is stronger than evil triumphant" and that "unconditional love will have the final word."



Additional resources:

The Emancipation Proclamation

<http://foundationnationalarchives.org/EP150/>

The Struggle for Civil Rights

<http://civilrights.jfklibrary.org/>

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/>

Exhibit Partners

California Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District,

www.courts.ca.gov/3dca.htm.

California Judicial Center Library,

<http://library.courtinfo.ca.gov>.

California Supreme Court Historical Society,

www.cschs.org.

e.Republic,

www.erepublic.com.