

We the People

The Constitution's Promise

One of the National Archives' basic missions since its establishment has been to *document* the rights to which every American is entitled and that are guaranteed under the United States Constitution.

For more than 60 years, the National Archives has been the custodian of the Constitution itself, and millions have made the pilgrimage to Washington, D.C., to see it in the National Archives Building.

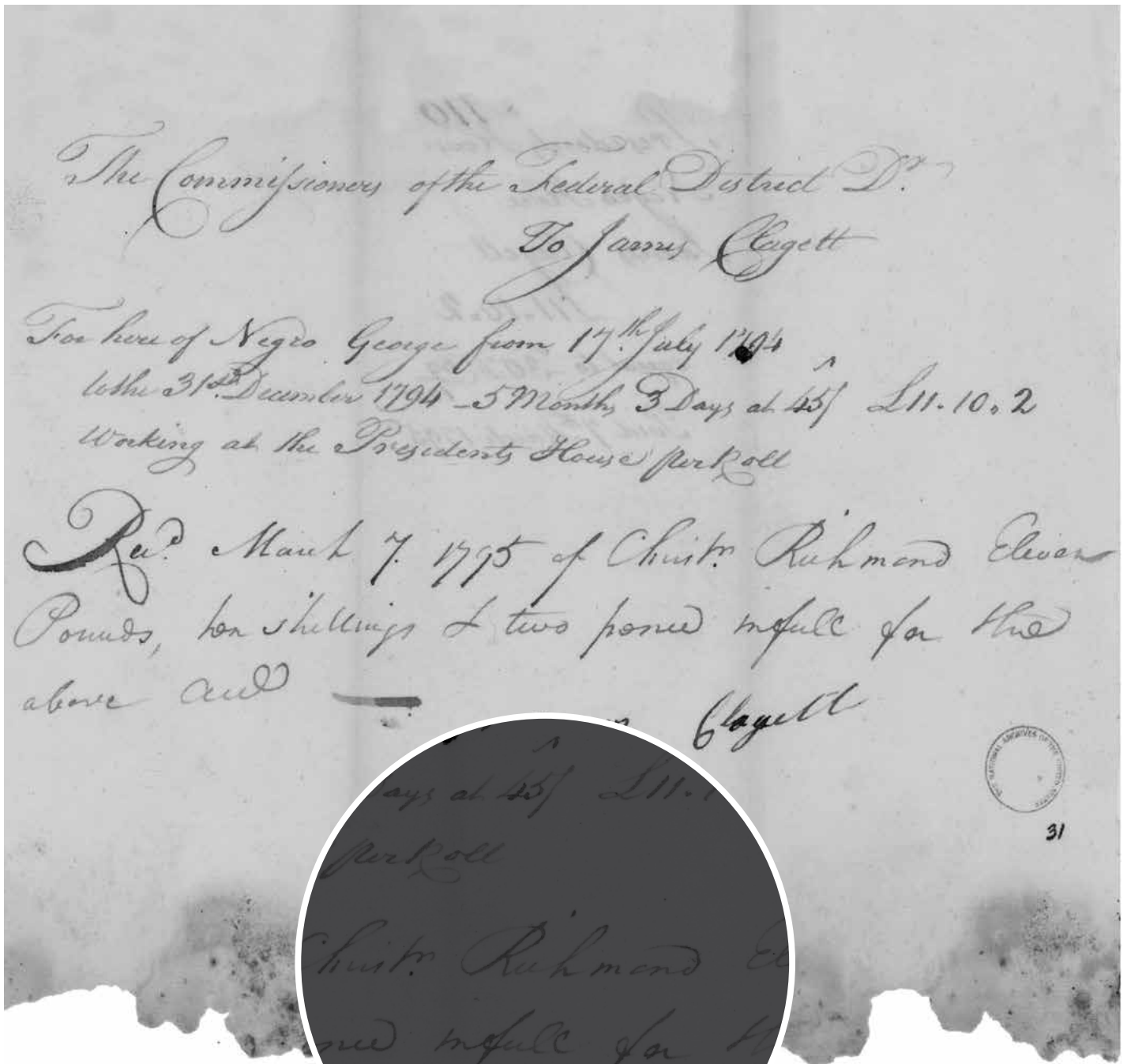
But the Constitution was just the beginning of the fight for individual rights for every American. At one time or another, segments of our population have had to struggle to be able to exercise the rights spoken of so clearly in the Constitution and its amendments.

The struggle to secure and exercise individual rights to all Americans continues to this day—in state legislatures and Congress, in written and spoken words, in street demonstrations, and in courtrooms at all levels.

Now, the story of this long struggle is documented *permanently* in one place for all to see: the new David M. Rubenstein Gallery at the National Archives Building in downtown Washington, D.C. The gallery and the “Records of Rights” exhibit are made possible in part by the Foundation for the National Archives through the support of David M. Rubenstein.



David M. Rubenstein



This article was written by Bruce Bustard, with contributions from Jennifer Johnson, Michael Hussey, and Alice Kamps of the National Archives Exhibitions Staff.

America's founding documents—the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights—are icons of human liberty. But the ideals enshrined in those documents did not

initially apply to all Americans. They were, in the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., “a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir.”

“Records of Rights,” a new permanent exhibition in the David M. Rubenstein Gal-

lery at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., allows visitors to explore how generations of Americans sought to fulfill this promise of freedom. The exhibit showcases original and facsimile National Archives documents and uses an innovative interactive experience to illustrate how

Above: This voucher for slaves who built the White House illustrates how our nation wrestled with the conflict between the promise of freedom and the realities of slavery and racism.

Americans throughout our history have debated and discussed issues such as citizenship, free speech, voting rights, and equal opportunity.

“Records of Rights” begins with the 1297 Magna Carta, on display courtesy of Rubenstein, which inspired the Founding Fathers to assert their freedom.

A record of the customary laws and liberties of medieval England, Magna Carta is concerned mostly with property, labor, taxation, and courts. But in the centuries since its creation, scholars have argued that the document contains key ideas about the rule of law.

These ideas provided a basis for English subjects to challenge their kings when they believed their rulers had violated English liberties. For them and their heirs, Magna Carta established that no one—not even the king—is above the law and that everyone has the right to the law.

The founding documents of the United States were written by men who saw Magna Carta as their own, “a document” as Rubenstein puts it, “that inspired our Founding

Fathers, . . . because they thought they had certain rights as English citizens, and [denial of those rights] led them to break away.”

The colonists believed they were entitled to the same rights as Englishmen, rights guaranteed in Magna Carta. They encoded those rights into the laws of their states and later into the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

On the eve of the American Revolution, Massachusetts adopted a seal depicting a soldier holding a sword in one hand and Magna Carta in the other. While working on the U.S. Bill of Rights, authors of the Fifth Amendment



borrowed from Magna Carta when they wrote that citizens have the right to due process of law.

Magna Carta is a charter of ancient liberties “given and granted” by a king to his subjects; the Constitution established a government by “We the People.” But both documents are fundamental legal charters for their nations.



A New Welcome for Visitors

By Christina Rudy Smith



Stairs and ramp from the Constitution Avenue entrance to the Orientation Plaza.

In 2003 and 2004, the National Archives opened its new museum at the National Archives Building, in Washington, D.C.

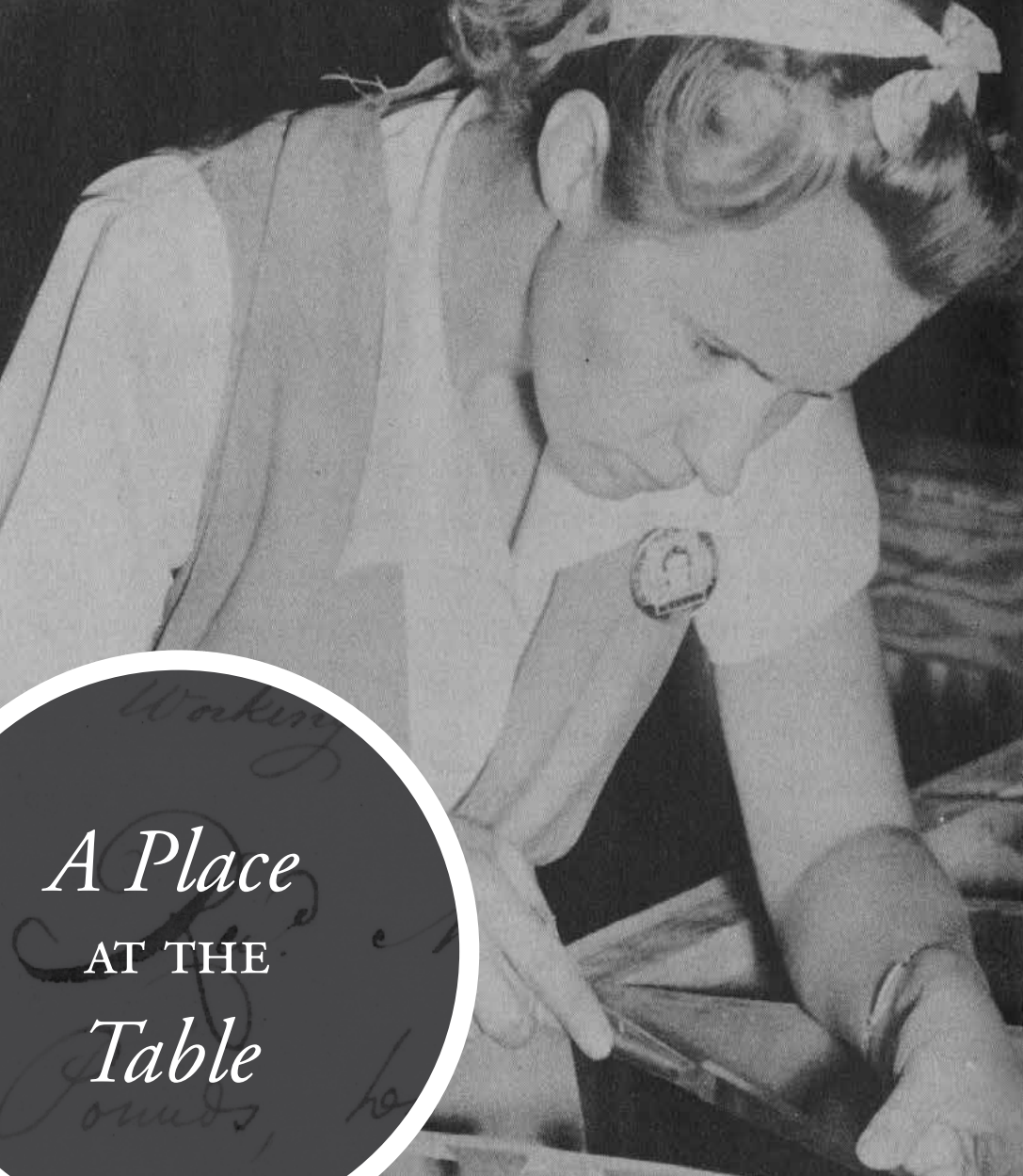
Renovations were made in the Rotunda, and the Archives, in partnership with its Foundation, opened the new Public Vaults exhibit (with its groundbreaking interactive displays), the William G. McGowan Theater, the Lawrence F. O’Brien Gallery, and the Boeing Learning Center.

All this transformed the experience of visiting the National Archives, tripling the average time people spend in the building and dramatically improving our survey results for visitor awareness and satisfaction.

Within a few years, staff realized that the new museum, although popular and well attended, could be improved for visitors by making a few changes, especially to the areas where they first come into the building.

At the same time, in recognition of the ongoing digitization of

Right: Some of these woman suffrage supporters were heckled, arrested, and imprisoned when they picketed the White House in 1917.



A Place AT THE Table

A central feature of “Records of Rights” is a 17-foot-long computer interactive experience, showcasing more than 350 National Archives documents, photographs, and films. This “interactive table” can accommodate school groups and families as well as individual visitors and celebrates what Martin Luther King referred to as “the great glory of America . . . the right to protest for the right.” Images of records chronicle protests waged by the rhythm of marching feet, by stacks of hand-lettered petitions, and by lone voices that dared to challenge injustices in court.

At the touch of a finger, visitors can delve into remarkable stories about Americans’

struggles to find “a place at the table” and the debates and events that helped determine the outcomes of those struggles.

The table is designed to allow visitors to explore the records based on topics or themes of their choosing, including workplace rights, First Amendment rights, equal rights, rights of privacy and sexuality, rights of the accused, and Native American rights.

Visitors can also shape the experience of others, by highlighting particular records and tagging them with terms that capture the surprise, inspiration, sadness, or other emotional response to individual records. These records are then delivered to other visitors at the table

and may also appear on two large projection walls, enticing bystanders to participate. A web version of the interactive table is available at RecordsOfRights.org for those who would like to continue their exploration at home.

Above: The pamphlet, “You’re Going to Employ Women” was created by the War Department. It gave tips to employers about hiring, training, and supervising women working in World War II defense industries.

Right: Chinese living in San Francisco in 1910 protested the opening of the Angel Island Immigration Station in this handbill. It objected that Angel Island’s location made it difficult to visit relatives and that inspectors were “exceedingly harsh” toward Chinese. It also asserted that “We must with one accord protest for the equal rights which were enjoyed by us.”

When A

INTERVIEW her for education
experience, home obligations

Give her a physical examination
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requiring strength, tolerance
tures, or toxic substances s

Test her for dexterity, precision
skills.

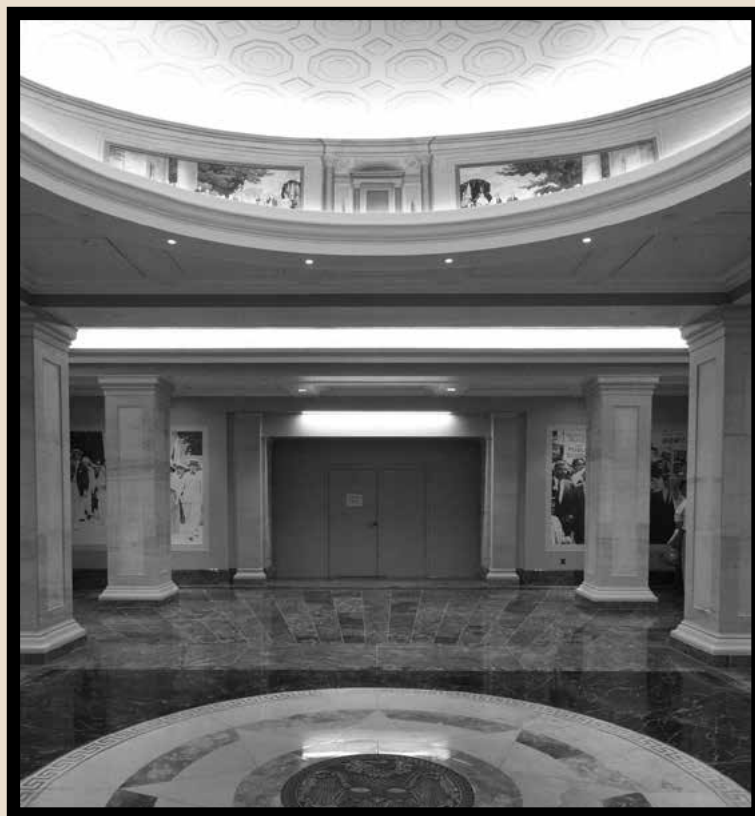
Favor (all else equal)
small children or infirm

Hiring Women

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sion, and rapidity—trade



Trompe l'oeil painting and marble compass rose in the Orientation Plaza.

National Archives holdings, there was an opportunity to improve the experience of researchers coming to the building.

With funding from Congress for the building changes and with a generous donation from David M. Rubenstein to the Foundation for the National Archives to support the project, the National Archives launched the construction project, and its exhibits team began planning the new exhibit. The highlight of the new spaces is the David M. Rubenstein Gallery, which houses the “Records of Rights” exhibit and the 1297 Magna Carta.

Now, visitors enter through the Constitution Avenue doors into an elegant new Orientation Plaza that offers them a place where they can plan their visits.

A new electronic orientation wall gives information about all the venues in the National Archives Building; it can be updated by staff within minutes with news about events in the building. A Directory Station offers maps of all three floors of the museum with directions to every space. A three-minute orientation film shown on eight high-definition screens will introduce visitors to the important work of the National Archives.

Because visitors use architectural clues to find their way, the stairways adjacent to the Orientation Plaza, which lead to the Rotunda and exhibit galleries on the floor above, have been opened up with new glass doors and lighting. In the floor of the Plaza, a marble compass rose

中華會館傳單

啟者現在碼頭木屋遷往煙治埃崙種種行為不勝苛虐昨各
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團體以取罪戾可也此佈
宣統元年十二月廿五日
中華眾梓里同啟



NOTICE TO ALL OF ENEMY NATION

★ The United States Government requires all alien or Japanese nationality to apply at post offices near their residence for a Certificate of Identification. Apply between the period February 9 through February 28, 1942. *postmaster today for printed directions.*

EARL G. HARRISON,
Special Assistant to the Attorney General.

AVVISO

Il Governo degli Stati Uniti ordina a tutti gli stranieri di nazionalità Tedesca, Italiana e Giapponese di fare richiesta all' Ufficio Postale più prossimo al loro luogo di residenza per ottenere un Certificato d'Identità. Le richieste devono essere fatte entro il periodo che corre tra il 9 Febbraio e il 28 Febbraio, 1942.

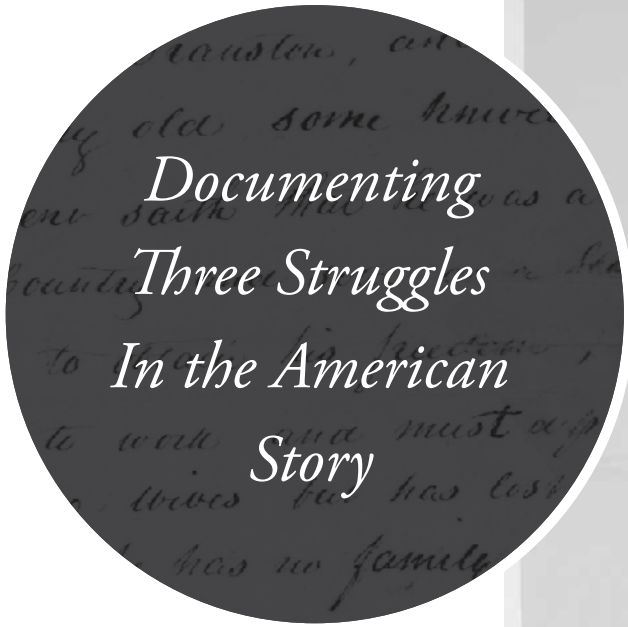
Andate oggi dal vostro Capo d'Ufficio Postale (Postmaster) ricevere le istruzioni scritte.

BEKANNTMACHUNG

Die Regierung der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika fordert Auslaender deutscher, italienischer und japanischer Staatsangehoerkeit auf, sich auf das ihrem Wohnorte naheliegende Postamt zu begeben, um einen Personalausweis zu beantragen. Das Gesuch muss zwischen dem 9. und 28. Februar 1942 eingereicht werden.

Gehen Sie noch heute zu Ihrem Postmeister und verschaffen sich die gedruckten Vorschriften.

2-1-42 (C-1) 225



The exhibits surrounding the interactive table in "Records of Rights" highlight documents related to the struggles of Americans to define and realize their civil rights through the stories of African Americans, women, and immigrants.

These three areas contain original documents, facsimiles of milestone documents, film presentations, and graphic treatments using National Archives documents, photographs, and drawings.

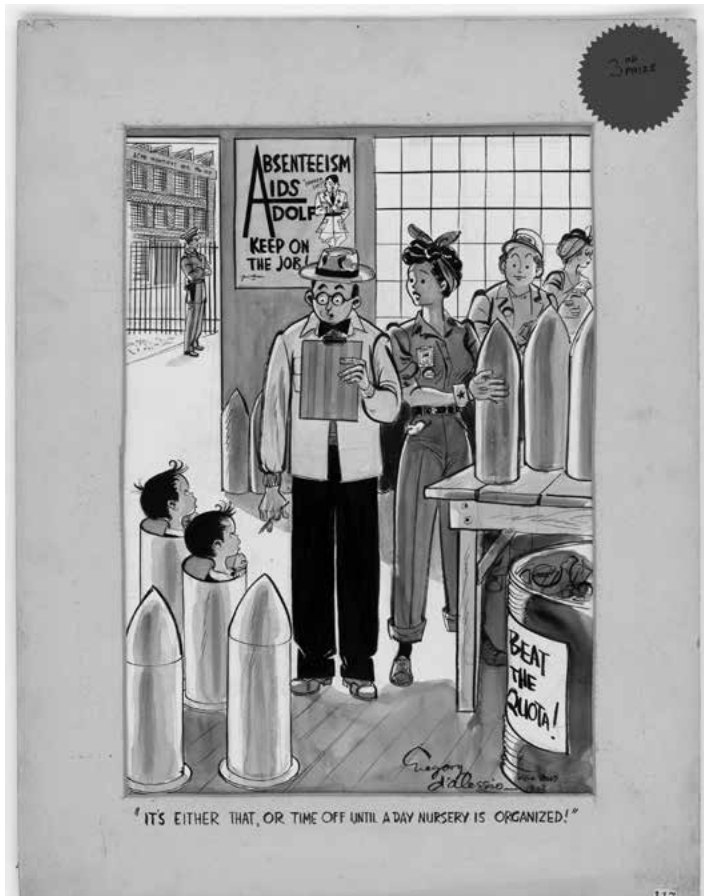
Curators focused on these three groups as a way to invite visitors to explore the richness of National Archives records and discover individual stories of courage, determination, even cruelty in the records.

A landmark document case at the entrance to the exhibit, near Magna Carta, features changing displays of milestone originals such as the 14th Amendment, the 1948 executive order desegregating the U.S. armed forces, the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and the 1965 Immigration Reform Act.

Each of the three thematic exhibit areas begins with facsimiles of key documents to open a conversation about the unfinished work of the Founders. "Bending Towards Justice," the section on African American civil rights, for example, displays facsimiles of the 15th Amendment and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which was titled "An Act to

enforce the fifteenth amendment to the Constitution."

"Yearning to Breathe Free," the section on immigrant struggles, shows two documents written within two years of each other that contrast American ideas about immigrants: the Deed of Gift to the Statue of Liberty alongside the Chinese Exclusion Act. "Remembering the Ladies" highlights the contested history of women's rights in America by displaying the 19th Amendment, which gave women the vote, alongside the unratified Equal Rights Amendment.



ALIENS QUALITIES

Aliens of German, Italian, or Japanese descent nearest to their place of application must be filed by March 28, 1942. Go to your

FRANCIS BIDDLE,
Attorney General.

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Bronze medallion of the National Archives eagle in the Orientation Plaza floor.

with a bronze medallion of the Archives' eagle creates a landmark and gathering place for visitors.

Above, in a small dome in the ceiling, a trompe l'oeil painting appears to reveal the Rotunda, where the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights are displayed. New signs throughout the museum help visitors more easily find their destinations.

The myArchives Store opened in fall 2012. The new store offers an array of exciting publications and products showcasing the holdings of the National Archives.

The myArchives Store, operated by the Foundation for the National Archives, includes several interactives with activities introducing visitors, including children, to research in the National Archives. The stations allow visitors to explore various types of records found in the holdings and encourage them to return to discover their own treasured records through research, either online or in person.

The myArchives Store in Washington, D.C., and online are made possible, in part, through the generous support of Ancestry.com, with additional funding from the Philip L. Graham Fund in honor of Foundation board member Patrick Butler.

Top left: During World War II, citizens of countries at war with the United States and who were living in this country were required to register with the government as "alien enemies."

Opposite bottom: As more women with children entered the World War II manufacturing workforce, they sometimes made new demands on employers.

Left: African American Revolutionary War veteran Cato Green submitted this affidavit as part of his application for a pension from the federal government.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.
RHODE-ISLAND DISTRICT.

District Court, New and Ancient Town, A. D. 1820.

On this 10th day of Nov. 1820, personally appeared in open Court, being a Court of Record within and for said District, *Cato Green*, *aged 28 years*, residing in the town of *Providence*, in said *Rhode-Island*, who being first duly sworn according to law, both on his oath declares, that he served in the Revolutionary War as follows: *That he received in said Rhode-Island, 1st Regt. Artillery of the Rhode-Island*

in Nov. 1780

that he made a previous declaration on the 10th day of *April* 1818, and that he has received a certificate for a pension, being No. 2728. And I do solemnly swear, that I was a resident citizen of the United States on the eighth day of March, one thousand eight hundred and eighteen; and that I have not since that time, by gift, sale, or in any manner whatsoever, disposed of any property, or any part thereof, with intent thereby to avoid the payment of any duty or tax, or to evade the provisions of an Act of Congress, entitled "An act to provide for certain persons engaged in the land and naval service of the United States, in the revolutionary war," passed on the eighth day of March, one thousand eight hundred and eighteen; that I have not, nor has any person in trust for me, any property or securities, contracts or debts, due to me; nor have I any income other than what is contained in the Schedule hereto annexed, and by me subscribed.

Cato Green

A SCHEDULE of Property and Income (necessary clothing and bedding excepted) of *Cato Green*, the late of *Providence* in *Rhode-Island*, and a free, sole house-keeper, of *Providence* in *Rhode-Island*, some houses of *Providence* in *Rhode-Island*. — *And this witness saith that he was a native of *Providence* and brought to this country and grew up in *Providence*, that during the war he intended to obtain his freedom, that he is now so poor as to be unable to read and must go to work for his living, that he has had two wives but has lost them both by death, that at this time he has no family.*

Sworn to and declared as *pro se* on the 10th day of *Nov. 1820* before *Daniel Maxwell* District Judge.

RHODE-ISLAND DISTRICT.

Clerk's Office of the District Court, A. D. 1820.

I, *William Brewster*, Clerk of said Court, do hereby certify, that the foregoing oath, and the schedule hereto annexed, are truly copied from the record of the said Court; and I do further certify, that it is the opinion of the said Court, that the amount in value of the property exhibited in the above and schedule, is *no more than* dollars and cents. In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and affixed the seal of the said Court, on this 10th day of *Nov.* 1820.

William Brewster Clerk of said Court.

ment of *Wide Variety*
of Records
 Reflect Struggle
 for Rights

Visitors will discover in “Records of Rights” many other original and facsimile documents demonstrating how these groups struggled toward enjoying full democratic rights.

For example, a visitor can view original pension records documenting the service of an African American during the Revolutionary War. He can look at the legislative mark-up copy of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which added the word “sex” to the categories that employers would be banned from considering in employment.

Or she can examine the details on an original census schedule from the mid-19th-century immigrant community of Lowell, Massachusetts. Visitors can flip through a reproduction of a pamphlet on how to best employ female workers in World War II defense plants or another brochure enticing Swedes to settle in the American West. Photographs in the exhibit show suffrage parades, civil rights protests, and immigration processing and enforcement.

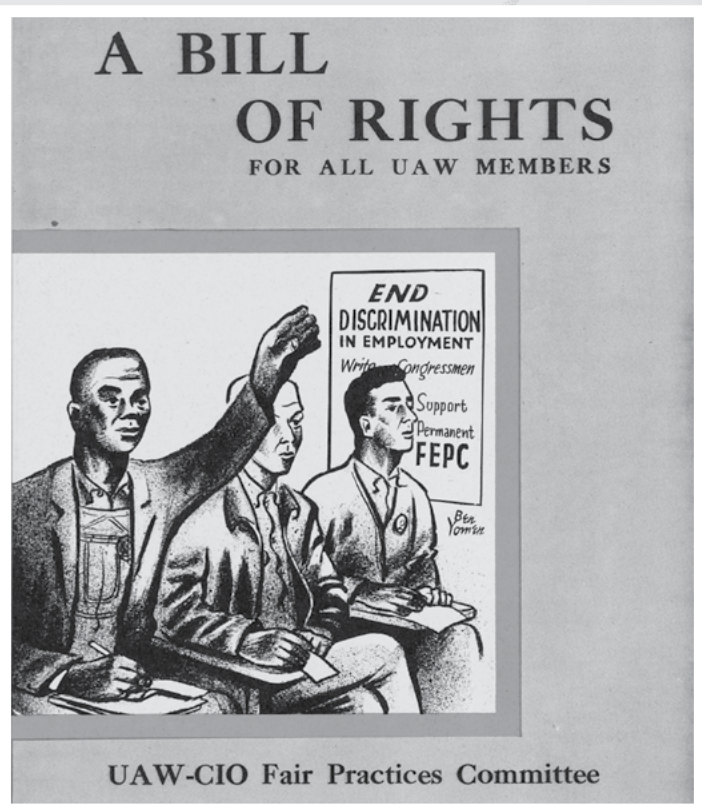
Documents in the exhibit represent a variety of perspectives. A southern journalist interviewing Martin Luther King presses the civil rights leader for his views on whether a store owner can refuse service to a customer who is African American.

Film from the 1977 National Women’s Conference shows women debating federally financed child care. Suffrage petitions represent both those who support votes for women and those who oppose woman suffrage. A telegram from the Great Depression urges the deportation of Mexican agricultural workers who are accused of taking jobs from U.S. citizens, while another telegram from World War II asks for more Mexican workers to harvest “vital war crops.”

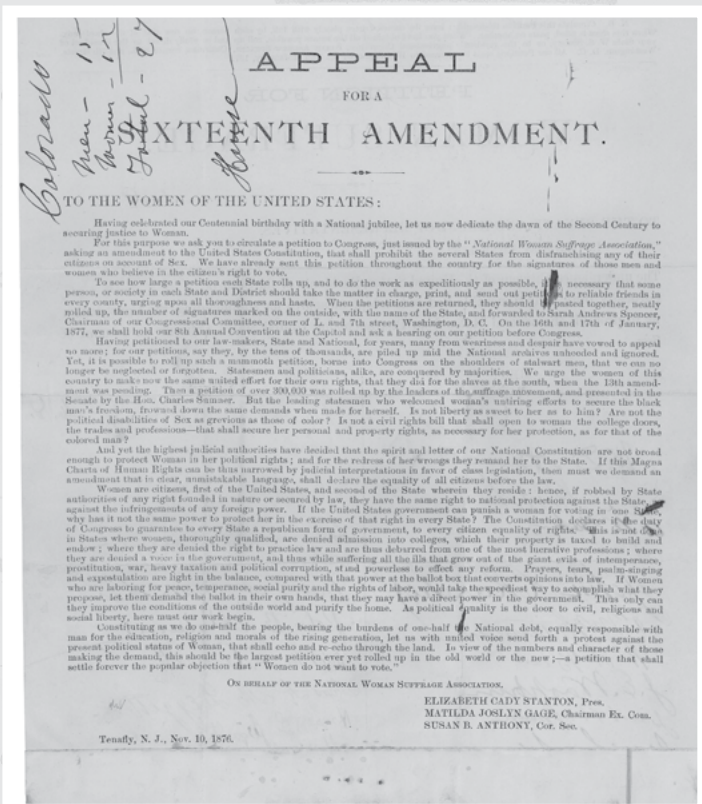
Many of these issues are featured in today’s headlines. We continue to debate how to fulfill the promise of liberty in the Charters of Freedom. The National Archives documents in “Records of Rights” offer visitors a historical perspective on controversies that affect them today and bring to life two centuries of debate among Americans about fulfilling the ideals of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.

The exhibit, says Rubenstein, is an “opportunity to come to the Archives to . . . learn more about our history, more about the rights, more about the documents that gave us these rights.”

Opposite: This marked-up copy of H.R. 5152 added the word “sex” to the categories that employers would be banned from considering in employment. H.R. 5152 would eventually become the Civil Rights Act of 1964.



The United Auto Workers Union published this pamphlet in 1945 to convince its rank-and-file members to support their union’s program of nondiscrimination.



This 1876 “Appeal for a Sixteenth Amendment” was issued by the National Woman Suffrage Association and signed by suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony.

Amendment offered by Mrs. Bolton of Ohio

O.K. ✓
ACCEPTED
FEB 10 1964
PER JFB

(1) Page 68, line 18

After the word "religion"

Strike out } the word "sex"
Insert }

and

(2) on page 69, lines 3 and 5, after

(3) the word "religion" insert the word "sex"

and

(4) on page 70, lines 6 and 7, after the

(5) ~~and insert~~ word "religion" insert the word "sex"

and

(7) on page 71, line 7, after the words

"religion" insert a comma and the word "sex" (in both instances.)

(Mrs. Bolton, by U.C., include Page 71, line 5)

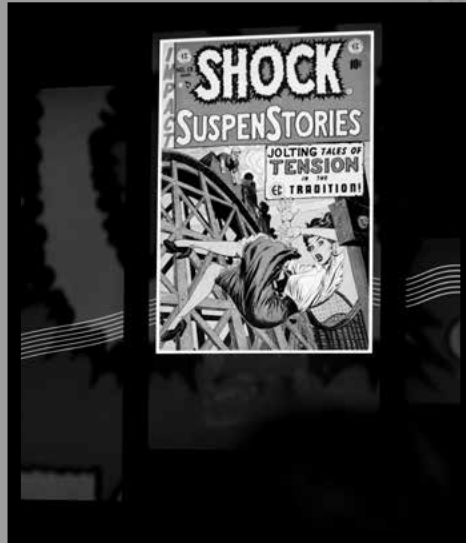
duplicate O.K. 9/13.

ENGROSSING COPY

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 63520-1

21 (d) It shall be an unlawful employment practice for
22 any employer, labor organization, or joint labor-management
23 committee controlling apprenticeship or other training pro-
24 grams to discriminate against any individual because of his

act.
O.K.



The Opening

On December 11, 2013, the “Records of Rights” exhibit opened to the public after a brief morning ceremony. That evening, at the Foundation for the National Archives’ reception to observe the opening, an official ribbon was cut.

In his remarks, Archivist of the United States David Ferriero saluted Rubenstein’s role.

“David Rubenstein is a passionate advocate for the National Archives and for educating all Americans about our shared history,” Ferriero said. “His many gifts to us and to other cultural institutions have done much to promote public awareness of our nation’s history.”

The “Records of Rights” exhibit has an online version at RecordsOfRights.org.