

**Colored Conventions Project Teaching Guide for K-12**  
**EXHIBIT:**  
**Prosperity and Politics: Taking Stock of Black Wealth and the 1843**  
**Convention**

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**EXHIBIT:**

*Prosperity and Politics: Taking Stock of Black Wealth and the 1843 Convention*, curated by Sarah Lynn Patterson, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

**A. RESOURCES**

**Keyword Definitions (minimum 2 to 5)**

**Delegate Rolls**---Documents that listed voting delegates at Colored Conventions. More than mere attendance sheets, delegate rolls affirmed who had the right to vote at Conventions.

**Gender Politics**---the debate surrounding the roles of men and women. More specifically, pertaining to the roles within the conventions and the limitations that were placed on Black women

**Manual Labor College**---Institutions of higher education that allowed Black students to work in order to afford classes. Initially, most Black manual labor colleges only admitted men, but as the nineteenth century unfolded some Black women agitated for the right to an education, as well.

**Protestant-Capitalism**---A belief system that values individualism, free private enterprise, property ownership, and wealth accumulation. Figures such as Henry Highland Garnet suggested that individual liberty and economic self-interest constituted the proper expression of Christian faith and pointed the way to Black independence and self-sufficiency.

**People (minimum 2 to 5)**

**Abner H. and Sydna E.R. Francis**---Abner H. Francis was a business owner and politician with considerable social influence in abolitionist circles. In addition to being a secretary at the 1843 Convention, he actively advocated for improvement to Black schools and the nullification of racist exclusion laws like those in Oregon, usually publicizing his efforts through articles and letters published in the Black Press. Sydna E.R. Francis was also involved in anti-slavery societies and, like her husband, skillfully used the Press and her fame to raise awareness of her political activities in Black literary societies.

**Henry Highland Garnet and Julia Williams Garnet**---Henry Highland Garnet was a minister, orator, and activist who was a delegate to multiple Conventions. He delivered a speech at the 1843 Convention that urged enslaved Blacks to take possession of the land that they had labored on, connecting property ownership with Black self-determination and inspiring slave insurrections. Julia Williams Garnet fought hard for an education

and became a teacher. She was active in the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, directed an industrial school for women in Jamaica, and was a delegate to Colored Conventions. She collaborated with her husband Henry in writing his speeches.

**Elizabeth and James Gloucester**--- Elizabeth Gloucester was an entrepreneur who owned multiple clothing and furniture stores and other real estate. Thanks to her business and financial acumen, she rose from domestic laborer to one of the wealthiest Black women in the U.S. She and her husband, Rev. James Gloucester, used their wealth and social connections to support abolitionism and Black gathering spaces such as the Siloam Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, New York.

**Sarah Marinda Loguen-Fraser**---Loguen-Fraser was the first woman ever to earn an M.D. from Syracuse University and was one of the first Black female physicians in the United States. She had her own private practice in the U.S. as well as in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic, where she and her husband, Charles, became prominent citizens of the D.R. thanks to Loguen-Fraser's practice and her husband's pharmacy and plantation.

**Charles Bennett Ray**---Charles Bennett Ray was a minister, Underground Railroad agent, and active supporter of numerous abolitionist and fugitive slave organizations. He is probably best known for his work in journalism, as he was proprietor and editor for Black newspapers, including *The Colored American*.

#### **Places (minimum 2 to 5)**

**Buffalo, New York**---location of 1843 convention

**Prudence Crandall School for Negro Girls, Connecticut and Canaan Academy, New Hampshire**--- Julia Williams Garnet received her education at these schools. Although Canaan Academy was interracial, both schools fell victim to white mob violence, forcing her to transfer. She met her husband, Henry Highland Garnet, at Canaan Academy.

**Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic**---Sara Marinda Loguen-Fraser established a private practice here, where she became a prominent and respected physician and citizen thanks to her humanitarian efforts to provide free healthcare for Dominicans.

**Remsen House, Brooklyn, NY**---Boarding house owned by Elizabeth Gloucester. It was her main source of income and the site where she led numerous fundraising efforts for abolitionist and other social justice causes.

**Siloam Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, NY**---Church of James Gloucester, whose father had founded the first Presbyterian Church in the United States. It is still active today.

#### **Key Texts (minimum 2 to 5)**

**“An Address to the Slaves of the United States” by Henry Highland Garnet**---Delivered at the 1843 Convention. Garnet urged enslaved Blacks to take possession of the land that they had labored on, connecting property ownership with Black self-determination and inspiring slave insurrections.

**News Coverage of 1843 Colored Convention in the Black and Abolitionist Press**---Black and abolitionist newspapers printed notices and commentaries about the 1843 Convention. As the 25 August article in *The Liberator* shows, reception of local conventions was not always enthusiastic: “A Convention like that proposed to be held in Buffalo the present month, is not necessary ...”

*Sketch of the Life of Rev. Charles B. Ray* by H. Cordelia Ray and Florence Ray (1887)---Biography of Ray's life, written by two of his daughters.

**Predominant Themes (minimum 2 to 5)**

**Higher education**---CC delegates recognized that higher education was key to growing Black wealth and self-sufficiency. Resolutions at the 1831 and 1853 conventions enabled the foundation of manual labor colleges. The 1831 resolution, however, was only for a men's college, causing the 1853 resolution to stipulate that both men and women had the right to an education at the college.

**Debates in the Black Press**---Black and abolitionist newspapers ran news coverage of the 1843 convention. However, commentaries on the Colored Conventions that appeared in the papers were not always positive, as we see in the 25 August article in *The Liberator*. The diversity of opinions in the Black Press demonstrates that Black opinions perspectives were never monolithic and that the Black Press was committed to the free exchange of ideas and arguments.

**Black Business and Property Ownership**---All of the people in this exhibit owned businesses or their own property. The wealth and independence created by property ownership allowed them to be influential activists in abolitionism, Black education, and healthcare. Henry Highland Garnet argued that Black property ownership, enterprise, and free trade empowered the entire race and would liberate Black people from white supremacist oppression.

**Organizations & Associations (minimum 2 to 5)**

**African Civilization Society**---Henry Highland Garnet founded the African Civilization Society in 1858 for the purpose of exporting capitalist economics to Africa in order to break the United States' use of slave labor to produce commodities like cotton. A free trade relationship between the U.S. and a capitalist Africa, Garnet believed, would present the U.S. economy with an alternative to slave labor and spread wealth to Africans as well as Black Americans.

**Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society**---Abolitionist organization of women who argued that slavery was incompatible with Christianity. Julia Williams Garnet was a member.

**Iron Chest Company**---A Black-owned real estate firm established in 1839. Exemplified successful Black business and property ownership in the antebellum U.S.

**Ladies' Literary and Progressive Improvement Society of Buffalo**---An organization for Black women to study and discuss literature, art, and ideas aimed at social reform and personal development. Sydna H. Francis was its president.

### Points of Interactivity

Exhibit Page Name + Link	Data Visualization Name	Visualization Type
<a href="#">Roll of Delegates</a>	Rates of Delegate Attendance	Graph
<a href="#">Henry Highland Garnet</a>	Garnet's Travels	Interactive and annotated map

### Further Reading on the Stills and the Haydens

[The Legacy of Henry Highland Garnet \(Kent Country History\)](#)

[Overlooked No More: Elizabeth A. Gloucester, "Richest" Black Woman and Ally of John Brown \(New York Times\)](#)

[Sarah Loguen-Fraser MD \(Upstate Medical University\)](#)

[Abner Hunt "A.H. Francis" \(ca. 1812-1872\) and Isaac "I.B." Francis \(1798-1856\) \(Oregon Encyclopedia\)](#)

## B. METHODS

To successfully teach these exhibits we strongly encourage teachers to explicitly teach the following methods used to tell more complete stories of African American, African Diaspora history and American:

### Historiography

1. What is [historiography](#)?

*Historiography can be understood as the history of history. A historiographical piece or essay discusses how history has been written over time and tracks the debates historians grappled with in a certain field. (Included is a link to video by Study.com; the first two [2] minutes of the video are free.)*

2. How can students practice historiography as they study this exhibit?
3. How does historiography get written? Who gets to write history?

*Suggested Exercise: Have students discuss the historiographical contributions of each exhibit.*

### Primary Documents

1. What are [primary documents](#)?
2. How do we [research and analyze](#) primary documents?
3. Is there a [tool](#) that we can use to help us think about primary documents?

**4. What is the proper MLA [citation](#) practice for primary documents?**

***Suggested Exercise:** Students must locate, review and use the following primary documents:*

- Refer to the [News Coverage](#) section of the exhibit for resources.

**Data Visualization**

**1. What is data visualization?**

*The act of showing data (information) using images such as pictures, maps, graphs, drawings. This [infographic](#) is a good example. (Source: Simon Rogers. *The Guardian* newspaper, International Edition. Friday, March 7th, 2014)*

**2. What does digital data visualization allow you to see and analyze differently than data presented in textbooks?**

***Suggested Exercise:** Have students choose one data visualization in the exhibit and narrate the story it tells.*

**Attribution and Citation**

**1. Why is it important to cite sources?**

**2. What information does citation communicate?**

***Suggested Exercise:** Students will learn to accurately and appropriately cite this exhibit and the works referenced within, including:*

- [Primary documents](#) within the exhibit (eg. [News Coverage](#) of the 1843 Convention)
- [Tables and Maps](#) within the exhibit (eg. *Maps and graphs* written by the creator of the exhibit).

**C. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

**1. What is the argument or main idea of the exhibit?**

The main idea of [Prosperity and Politics: Taking Stock of Black Wealth and the 1843 Convention](#) is that professional advancement via education and property ownership was a salient concern of the Colored Conventions. Despite steep obstacles, some Black women became successful business owners. Other figures like Henry Highland Garnet explicitly connected property ownership and business success to the advance of all African Americans.

**2. Who are the subjects of the exhibit?**

Black business owners like Elizabeth Gloucester, Sara Loguen-Fraser, and Abner and Sydna Francis; public literary/political figures including Henry Highland Garnet and Charles Bennet Ray.

**3. What are the topics of the exhibit?**

The exhibit explores: Black business ownership and philanthropy, literary societies and abolitionist organizations, higher education and women's rights.

**4. What is the timeline of the exhibit?**

Roughly 1831-1853. 1831 marks the first proposal for a manual labor college at that year's Colored Convention, and 1853 marks the shift of extending this education to women. The 1843 convention is the centerpiece of the exhibit.

**5. What are the major events of the exhibit?**

The Colored Conventions of 1831, 1843, and 1853; the deliverance of Garnet's "Address to the Slaves of the United States"; the establishment of manual labor colleges.

**6. Where do these major events take place?**

These events take place in Buffalo, NY, Brooklyn, NY, and Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic.

**7. What are other places/things of significance discussed in this exhibit?**

Who was allowed to vote at Colored Conventions/procedures for unelected delegates or participants from areas without representation at the conventions/ exclusion of women in intellectual spaces/Black philanthropy, wealth, and entrepreneurship

**D. QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS**

**8. Now that you have learned more about these events, why does this exhibit matter?**

Despite deep structural barriers and historical erasure, African Americans did own property before the Civil War, and some of these property owners became wealthy business people and successful professionals. At the same time, the graphs and tables pulled from the Committee Upon the Condition of the Colored People's research demonstrates the deep disparity between Black and white wealth in that era, a disparity that persists today.

**9. Why do these events matter?**

These events matter because their existence counters conventional narratives that have proliferated about African Americans. Contrary to the popular image of universal destitution, some Black Americans were able to secure wealth and own businesses. These events also provide insight into the economic philosophies in circulation among Colored Conventions delegates and other Black thinkers in the antebellum era, in particular the belief of some in free market capitalism. More interestingly, they point to the deep structural barriers and impediments to the creation and sustaining of Black Wealth in the United States.

**E. SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**

The prompts below in purple are from the Exhibit, [\*Prosperity and Politics: Taking Stock of Black Wealth and the 1843 Convention\*](#).

1. How does this exhibit help fill gaps in the following?
  - Black women's contributions and political engagement
  - Documentation of Black history
  - The Colored Conventions movement
  
2. How does this exhibit create a richer context for the following?
  - Black political practice
  - The Black Press
  - Black intra-community dynamics
  - Black wealth and entrepreneurship
  - Black Philanthropy
  - The Underground Railroad
  
3. How does this exhibit address or intervene in the historiography of the following themes?
  - Women's participation in the Colored Conventions movement
  - Black business and property ownership
  - The influence of Protestant-capitalism in movements for Black advancement and social reform

## F. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out for you the most in reviewing and studying this exhibit?
2. What did you find most exciting about what you learned from this exhibit?
3. Why does this exhibit matter?
4. How does this information connect to the racial wealth disparity that exists in the United States today?

## G. STANDARDS

Standards are taken from the [Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies and Writing](#) in grades 11 and 12. Note: *Teachers should use these standards as a guide and align their lessons with the specific standards for their individual state.*

### Key Ideas and Details:

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1**

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2**

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3**

Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

**Craft and Structure:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4**

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5**

Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6**

Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7**

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8**

Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9**

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

**Research to Build and Present Knowledge**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7**

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.8**

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9**

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.