Negro Building

*Black Americans in the World
of Fairs and Museums*

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Contents

Introduction

In 1991 an advisory committee of the Smithsonian Institution, the United States' national museum, released a report proposing that a new entity—the National African American Museum—be established on a prominent site on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. This bid to establish a national museum of black history and culture was not the first time one had been proposed for the nation's capital; there had been other previous but failed attempts.[1] The report's findings suggested that the new museum be housed in the historic Arts and Industries Building that sat between the high-modernist Hirshhorn Museum and the neo-Romanesque Smithsonian Castle. Composed of leading scholars, curators, and museum experts, the committee cited three main reasons for starting this new institution. First, the purpose of the museum would be to promote the display, collection, preservation, and study of the historical and cultural legacy of black Americans. Second, the museum would provide a stable and constant presence of black heritage within the United States' largest museum and research complex. And third, by attracting visitors from around the country and the world the museum would change adverse perceptions of black Americans by dispelling long-standing racist beliefs and stereotypes.[2] Supporters and congressional representatives used the report's recommendations to request federal funding to create the new museum.

At public hearings and in newspapers, a debate ensued about the merits of the proposed institution. Boosters praised the significance of a na-

tional museum that would raise the public's understanding of black history as American history. It would be a long overdue gesture of inclusion after decades of neglect by the nation's premiere museum. However, not everyone agreed that the establishment of a national black museum was necessary or desirable, and resistance to the project emerged from many camps.[3] Some black citizens did not want the national black museum to be located in the Arts and Industries Building—the second-oldest of the Smithsonian's museums—that was over one hundred years old. This group lobbied for increased funding to construct a new edifice. Taking a different stance, representatives of other black museums from around the country expressed valid concerns that a national entity might siphon funds, visitors, and artifacts from their smaller institutions. However, it was Senator Jesse Helms, a white Republican from North Carolina, who successfully delayed the passage of the bill in a Senate committee in 1994, thereby derailing the endeavor. The archconservative and racist politician stated as the rationale for his obstruction that if government gave blacks their museum, then we would have to do the same for other groups. He gave special emphasis to how the Smithsonian would address "requests by other groups—e.g. the Nation of Islam, or the 'black separatist' groups that might want to use the museum space?"[4] Senator Helms's angst-ridden desire to exclude any representation of black nationalism from the museum highlights a critical question for the national institution: who would control curatorial content and use of the museum's space?

Today in cities and small towns around the United States, tourists and locals can visit museums exclusively devoted to the collection, conservation, and display of black history and culture. These new museums have been built in cities that had long violent histories of racial segregation. Birmingham hosts a stately brick edifice—the Civil Rights Institute—that commemorates the Alabama steel town's bloody skirmishes between protestors and racist factions in the 1960s. Elsewhere, Memphis's National Civil Rights Museum occupies the renovated Lorraine Motel, where exhibits and programs memorialize the site where an assassin's bullet took the life of civil rights leader Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968.[5] Two of the first public museums—Detroit's Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History and Chicago's DuSable Museum of African American History—occupy new and renovated buildings in the civic centers of their respective cities. These institutions comprise a small cross section of the hundreds of museums, memorials, interpretive centers, and historic sites that have been established over the past fifty years since the

FIGURE 1. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, National Civil Rights Museum, Memphis, 1998. Author's photograph.

first grassroots museums opened in Chicago, Boston, and Detroit in the 1960s.[6] And there are soon to be new additions to the growing list. Non-profit organizations led by determined citizen groups allied with cultural commissions and local municipalities are busily raising monies and planning new museums in various regions around the United States. The most significant endeavor on the boards will be the Smithsonian's new National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC). After decades of racist elected officials rejecting citizen-led initiatives and debates about the efficacy of a national institution, the new 300,000-square-foot museum and research facility will finally rise on the last remaining unbuilt site along the National Mall across from the Washington Monument. Taking stock of these laudable advances, what does it mean for black Americans to claim a physical space in the nation's symbolic cultural landscape and a symbolic space in the nation's historical consciousness, two spheres in which their presence and contributions have been calculatingly rendered invisible and abject for over two centuries?

centuries?
[Figure 1
about here.]

A FAIR WORLD

For architectural and curatorial precedents to these contemporary black museums of history and culture, we must look back over one hundred years beginning in the period after Reconstruction to explore the great world's fairs' Negro Buildings that were first erected in 1895 (with the last appearing in 1936), and we must survey the forgotten Emancipation expositions that began after 1910 and continued through the 1960s. For several decades, black Americans actively participated in mainstream world's fairs in the United States and abroad, but only after demanding inclusion, which often necessitated protesting to white organizing boards and politicians. To understand this public sphere of engagement, we will tour the fairgrounds of the large international expositions staged in the cities of Philadelphia, New Orleans, Chicago, Atlanta, Buffalo, Charleston, Jamestown, Philadelphia, Dallas, and Paris, France. We will also roam the aisles of the expositions organized by black Americans to commemorate their hard-fought struggle to gain freedom from enslavement. These Emancipation expositions happened in cities with growing black populations—Philadelphia, Atlantic City, New York City, Richmond, Chicago, and Detroit. Through a unique curatorial ethic that governed the content of these mainstream and segregated events, black men and women created and circulated public narratives of who they were and wanted to become—ideologies of history and progress that transformed over time in relation to changing economic, social, and political forces.

At these spectacular events, black Americans joined what historian Robert Rydell has called the "world of fairs."[7] World's fair mania commenced in 1851 with the staging of London's immensely popular Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations. Countries vied to surpass architect Joseph Paxton and his ethereal Crystal Palace's rousing success as a brilliant architectural and engineering feat. The extraordinary glass and iron pavilion proved to be a great booster of the British Empire's industrial and imperial prowess. As these events grew in popularity, countries jockeyed to host these grand international expositions that pit region against region and nation against nation. European and American governments not only staged these extravagant competitions to ascertain whose economy was the most industrious, but the contests also gauged whose society was the most culturally refined, racially evolved, and hence civilized.

The U.S. world's fairs were founded on the mutually beneficial tethering of the mythos of democratic republicanism to the liberalism of the

market economy.[8] To initiate these *grandes fêtes,* the elites of a particular city or region—railroad titans, industrialists, newspaper publishers, and scions of privileged families—proposed to local and national governments to host expositions around themes of international trade and national commemoration. These massive undertakings were financed through the incorporation of private exposition companies that lobbied for state monies and raised additional funds through stock offerings. These companies established organizing boards that managed finances, invited participants, and planned various events, including the opening-day ceremonies. The organizing board also selected architects, engineers, and landscape architects to plan the grounds and pavilions. These events also necessitated the mobilization of a large local labor force to clear the land, erect the expansive temporary halls and exhibits, and provide services during the period of operation. At the completion of the fair's run, the administrative bodies prepared reports that outlined the planning process and featured highlights of the exposition. For their part, local governments would devote open areas within the city limits to host the fairs, which could last from six months to a year. With entry priced modestly and profitability as one goal, these events attracted thousands of fair-goers from the region and in some instances millions of visitors from all over the world. Likewise the Emancipation expositions' fair builders, who came from the black elites, also formed private exposition companies and solicited funding from federal and state governments. These smaller events, often lasting a week to two months, were held in parks or inside expansive public armories and privately owned exhibition halls built to host events catering to large urban crowds.

The ideological agenda of the U.S. world's fairs endeavored a twofold mission: as public platforms to promote the promise of industrialization and American manufactures; and as international public spheres to advance American cultural hegemony by demonstrating its superiority and its historical legitimacy. With this mandate in hand, exposition masterminds presented to the promenading crowds stunning displays of American progress. The grand halls, magnificent exhibits, and elaborate performances at these exhilarating events, however, veiled inequalities absent from the sanguine pronouncements of a prosperous future for all. Rydell's critical analysis of the political economy of the great expositions elaborates on these Janus-faced circumstances when he reminds us that, "at a time when the American economy was becoming increasingly consolidated and when the wealth generated by the country's economic expansion was concentrated in fewer and fewer hands,

the exposition builders promised that continued growth would result in eventual utopia."[9] The fanciful presentations of cultural advancement and displays of material abundance on parade inside the fairgrounds masked the uneven distribution of power and wealth outside the fair's grand gates.

The fair organizers enlisted the great architectural talents of the time—Frederick Law Olmsted, Daniel Burnham, Louis Sullivan, Paul Cret, Raymond Hood, and others like the lesser known Bradford Gilbert, Vertner Tandy, and William Pittman—to build the phantasmal dream worlds that appeared for several months in metropolitan centers around the country. These men, and on occasion women, planned everything: the fairgrounds, the pavilions, and the layouts of the exhibits. The resulting temporary landscapes compartmentalized wares and peoples according to a strict system of classification formulated by experts in the social sciences, such as French sociologist Ferdinand LePlay's methodical arrangement for Paris's Exposition Universelle in 1900. With the industrialization of Europe and America presented as the logical outcome and inevitability of civilization's advance, class difference could be rationalized and naturalized through a visual taxonomy of humans, plants, animals, products, and machines. An enraptured audience of future workers, managers, and owners marveled at the colorfully festooned halls and toured the impressive pavilion structures. Amid the wide-open sunlit interiors filled with machines and manufactures that turned raw materials into products before their very eyes, visitors witnessed a stunning visual teleology and geopolitical atlas about how past and future innovations (industrial capitalism) could transform their lives and the fortunes of the nation to lead the world.

At a time when the U.S. government was testing its imperial ambitions in the Caribbean, the Philippines, and eventually World Wars I and II, the great world's fairs also served as a means to define and boost national identity through commemorative events, as with Philadelphia's 1876 centennial and 1926 sesquicentennial of the nation's founding and Chicago's 1893 celebration of the European discovery of the continent at the World's Columbian Exposition. The fairs paraded the nation's history as the natural outcome of an exceptional people destined to be great. Those powerful white politicians, manufacturers, and transportation titans who set the ideological tone for the expositions (and who also funded the great museums) put the world—from primitive to civilized—on display so that the common sense of nation, race, and class could be known by those privileged to witness the spectacles. Within this comparative

framework, what and who was shown (or excluded) reinforced beliefs that historically nonwhite peoples belonged in the lower ranks of civilization and the nation's advance. As a consequence of this racialized as well as spatialized sociocultural hierarchy, certain groups, especially Asians, Native Americans, Africans, and American Negroes, were deemed exploitable for their resources and labor. In particular, this confirmed that black peoples were incapable of reason and judgment and therefore were unworthy of basic human and democratic rights. Beyond the fairgrounds, it was collectively determined that, given their natural limitations, black Americans should be by law and custom excluded from the mainstream public sphere, segregated into their own areas of the city, and by extension set apart in their own corner of the fairgrounds. This validated, as activist Ida B. Wells protested at the World's Columbian Exposition, the rise of Jim Crow *de jure* racial segregation and the structural dominance of white supremacy for decades to come.[10]

Because the expositions were in fact public spheres, they were open, if unintentionally, to alternative representations of American industry, culture, and national identity. When confronted with these powerful and persuasive narratives of civilization, black Americans used the fairs to vigorously respond to how they were being portrayed and positioned. Wells, Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, Mary Church Terrell, Kelly Miller, Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller, Carter G. Woodson, Alain Locke, Claude Barnett, Horace Cayton, Margaret Burroughs, and a host of other fair builders (primarily from the black elite and intelligentsia) sought to disprove the bleak forecasts augured by their fellow white citizens by taking measure of their own advancement. Inside the ideologically charged atmospheres of the mainstream fairs' Negro Buildings in Atlanta and Charleston and of the Emancipation expositions in New York and Chicago, the spacious wood and stone halls offered prospects where black citizens could witness their own progress as a race and a nation. Groups of black citizens formulated bold counternarratives to American progress. They created public spaces where disenfranchised blacks from across the African diaspora could imagine a world free from Euro-American subjugation. At the expositions and eventually in the early grassroots museums of the 1960s, they offered a range of strategies—from acquiescence (accommodation), to dissent (civil rights), to self-determination (black nationalism), to alternative national belonging (Pan-Africanism)—about how to elevate their collective fortunes against the rising tide of antiblack racism in the United States and around the world. This book tells the story of their visionary responses and daring propositions.

THE BLACK COUNTERPUBLIC SPHERE

The extensive scholarship on the U.S. world's fairs identifies black presence as one of many positions vying for recognition within the larger mainstream expositions.[11] If we expand our scope to study a series of events and institutions, rather than focus on one or two, then we can discern in greater detail how black Americans utilized the fairs as public forums both within mainstream and segregated social spheres. By inserting the early grassroots museums, such as Detroit's International Afro-American Museum (IAM) and Chicago's Ebony Museum of Negro History and Art, into this historical trajectory, we can also trace a different genealogy that emerges from the urbanization of black populations. I am keenly aware that there were hundreds of fairs and several museums—particularly those within black educational institutions—that existed during the period this book studies; thus all of them cannot be reviewed in this single volume (I will leave that task to other scholars). However, by examining the particular set of fairs and museums this book presents, as extensions of what is called the black counterpublic sphere, we can begin to understand them as places where different agendas for social advancement, cultural identity, and national belonging could be presented, seen, and debated publicly. Conceptually, the most productive methodology to study this subject matter is to examine the social spaces of the expositions and museums, along with their exhibitionary culture, built environments, and urban contexts, as the intersection of cultural and urban history and visual cultural analysis. Undertaking an interdisciplinary approach allows us to assess the social and spatial dynamics of race, nation, and class that shaped these complex cultural landscapes.

First and foremost, antiblack racism limited access to the key areas of American society that the mainstream world's fairs celebrated: the ability to exercise full rights of citizenship in a democratic republic and the right to earn wages as laborers in the market economy. This marginalization proved to be a double blow to blacks because, one, it curtailed their ability to operate within the mainstream public sphere to change social relations as well as within state structures in order that they might continue to make gains through legislative victories. And two, it eliminated the leverage that can be exerted through the private acquisition of wealth and property in an economy rapidly expanding under industrial capitalism. The rise of Jim Crow segregation after Reconstruction incrementally ratcheted back the public rights and private opportunities gained by former slaves after Emancipation. These racist practices and customs

grew out the antebellum southern Black Codes that regulated the activities of slaves and freedman. By the 1880s these customs were revived to limit the movement and activities of black citizens in cities and towns around the South. By the 1890s these practices were inscribed into Jim Crow laws that forbid blacks from public waiting rooms, trolleys, and railcars and disenfranchised black males from voting.[12] The core mission of why black Americans organized and participated in the fairs was, therefore, to regain these rights and privileges. But their fight was not without, as we shall see, the imperative to launch critical counterattacks on the latent inequalities embedded in the American ethos of democracy, freedom, and the market economy and to offer more just alternatives.

Since they were barred from participation in government and mainstream civic associations, black citizens formed their own "counterpublic sphere" that operated at the margins of the dominant American bourgeois public sphere and civil society.[13] While a lengthy presentation of public sphere discourse cannot be made here, it is important to mention key ideas that inform the arguments this book undertakes.[14] Through the writings of Jürgen Habermas, in particular *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society,* the concept of the public sphere has been defined as the universal realm wherein a society freely debates and discusses its collective affairs—outside of influence of the state and economy. A productive formulation of sociopolitical negotiations within nation-states, Habermas's theories have been critiqued and expanded by a host of scholars and theorists, most notably Nancy Fraser and Rosalyn Deutsche. Fraser argues that historically the nineteenth-century bourgeois public sphere of France, the subject of Habermas's analysis, was never outside of the economy or the state. Nonbourgeois concerns had fractured France's ideal public sphere "into a mass of competing interest groups."[15] Against the grain of this universalism, Fraser posits the emergence of "subaltern counterpublics . . . where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses, so as to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs."[16] Counterpublics allowed groups to recalibrate their methods and tactics to assure effective influence on what I call the mainstream public sphere.[17] As Fraser illustrates, the concept of a universal and transparent public sphere, particularly in the United States, falsely assumes it speaks for everyone. This evocation of a cohesive polity conjures an enduring image, unaltered by time or place. This polity consists of subjects who as citizens ideally approach and occupy this realm as equals, free to participate fully in the politics of de-

mocratic rule. However, as Deutsche suggests, drawing upon Fraser, this powerful timeless image of the democratic public sphere conceals social inequities, especially those informed by racial, class, and gender difference, that limit full participation. This image of universality renders the public utopic and ahistorical, thus veiling those power relations at play. Deutsche's cultural and spatial analysis, drawing upon the theories of the social production of space from sociologist Henri Lefebvre, also makes important links between social actions within the public sphere and how they are lived within urban space. Her review of the redevelopment of areas around New York City in the 1980s focuses on discourses deployed to legitimate the removal of homeless people from public places. According to Deutsche, claiming a space to be public, a universal social sphere supposedly open it to all, cultivated a powerful image of the public that excluded rather than included those not so easily accommodated within its neat social strata. Given how social inequalities operate to produce categories of difference, not all citizens therefore appeared equally within the public sphere and its physical analogue, public space. Thus by legislating who, what, and how public space should be used, dominant groups foreclosed the possibility of public space ever becoming political—open to contestation and difference. Deutsche's analysis of the city argues that urban space operates as a public sphere in which forces of production and the reproduction of social relations coalesce in conflicting ways to form political subjects.[18]

We will examine the world's fairs, Emancipation expositions, and grassroots black museums as extensions of the black counterpublic spheres within various cities around the United States. However it is important to note that within America's public spheres (both mainstream and counter) black participation was not always welcomed or allowed.[19] As scholar Michael Dawson observes, "The system of stratification in the United States based on race and its ideological components served to exclude African Americans both formally and informally from participation within the American bourgeois public sphere." But he notes as well that "this system also encouraged exclusion of African Americans from subaltern counterpublics such as those associated with the labor, populist and women's movements of the late-nineteenth century."[20] Thus the way that race and racism, in particular Jim Crow segregation, structured this domain of social engagement enabled the disempowerment and economic marginalization of black Americans. Because segregation through custom and law kept black citizens out of public and private amenities, stripped them of political rights, and kept them at the bottom of the wage

structure, it rendered them invisible—behind the veil in Du Bois's terms—within the dominant public sphere. The fairs and museums offered social spaces through which black Americans made their presence known to their fellow white citizens as well to their own counterpublic sphere (which was fraught with its own class and intraracial exclusions) within segregated black neighborhoods.

Late nineteenth- and twentieth-century religious, educational, and social associations—the cornerstones of black civic life—contributed to the wellspring of materials placed on view in the expositions and museums. These institutions and associations cultivated the careers of race leaders and the black intelligentsia, the men and women of the educated elite, who formed the organizing committees for the fairs and museums.[21] These people conceived of their curatorial ethics based on their desire of what the future might portend and how their relationship to their past should be understood. These future ambitions were constantly recalibrated when confronted with the sobering reminders of present circumstances within an increasingly racist and hostile society. In particular, fair organizers became aware of their diminished power when they negotiated with white exposition directors, who often unfairly meted out exposition resources. Undeterred, black fair builders crafted their own ideological frameworks and representations of black progress, like those on view at the segregated Negro Buildings and the unique black-organized expositions that commemorated Emancipation and whose displays both echoed and contradicted the dominant narratives of American progress and civilization. Regardless of whether their tone was contentious or conciliatory, the many statements lauding great strides that emanated from the elite circles failed, in part, to diffuse the unrelenting pressures of racial hostility that burdened the daily lives of black domestics, farmers, and laborers: antiblack racism blocked most avenues to wage labor and the right to vote, two critical spheres of power that would have more quickly "uplifted the race."

Undeterred by these impediments, black fair and museum organizers made strategic use of these public forums to address mainstream and black audiences and to introduce a range of strategies for black progress. Two of the fundamental questions for charting the race's forward march in the twentieth century were posed at the fairs: One, what would be the role of black labor in the nation's burgeoning industrial economy? And two, how and when would blacks citizens achieve social equality? Acutely aware of the economic and political hurdles to achieve these goals, fair organizers commissioned displays of mechanical devices, so-

ciological data, dioramas, historical artifacts, artworks, industrial arts, pageants, performances, government propaganda, and other artifacts. Race leaders and the black intelligentsia debated important aspects of these approaches at congresses devoted to the topics of religion, agriculture, business, industry, education, sociology, the black press, the African continent, the military, and women's issues. "Racial uplift," with its emphasis on respectability and self-help—ideals resonant within American liberalism—would be a dominant message heard and seen at many of the early southern fairs' Negro Buildings. As antiblack racism grew more strident and deadly in the early years of the twentieth century, others sought more direct forms confrontation; a rallying call for civil rights to gain social equality trumped patient servitude to white interests. From the perspective of civil rights activists, the problem was not the race's supposedly inherent traits of moral and intellectual inferiority but rather the way that the newly imposed shackles of Jim Crowism stalled any real social or economic advancement. The Great Migration brought large numbers of blacks into the factories and neighborhoods of northern industrial centers. The exploitive conditions within Fordist manufacturing required a different set of tactics to improve the working conditions and life outside of the shop floor. The rise of a vanguard of creative talent, a radical Left inspired by socialism and communism, brought new representations and ideas to the exposition forum. During the New Deal era, these progressive fair participants saw their civil rights battles within the international arena of the struggles for human rights against authoritarian regimes such as Nazism. The rise of the grassroots movement of citizens who founded museums in northern ghettos of Chicago and Detroit (already in the midst of post-Fordist deindustrialization) recast racial progress in terms of black pride and self-determination, themes central to the civil rights movement and black nationalism of the 1960s.

Equally important at the fairs and the later museums were the more dissonant narratives presented to the public that questioned integration into the United States' racially fraught social order. Intonations of Pan-Africanism that promoted unity throughout the black diaspora and African continent as a means of leveraging power against Euro-American imperial ambitions could be heard and seen in exposition speeches, exhibits, and performances. Black nationalism, which fostered social, cultural, and economic solidarity and autonomy to counter racist exclusion from the nation's institutions and industries, could also be perceived amid the critical voices and displays deriding America's failed promise of inclusion.

In total, however, we must recognize that the debates around these strategies for advancing the race did not fracture into mutually exclusive factions. Instead, camps allied and shifted relative to the racial climate at the time. While black elites may have set the tone for these strategies of uplift and advancement, the twentieth century's growing black working- and middle-class populations developed their own associations, social spaces, and cultural forms that were not necessarily in lockstep with the elites' overarching bourgeois ambitions, which at times reinscribed class hierarchies along intraracial color lines.[22]

In practice, this constant measurement of black progress also prompted an appraisal of black history. After all, charting advancement required that a group take stock of their past to measure how far they had traveled on the racialized scale of civilization. In their Independence and Emancipation Day celebration speeches, black orators recounted the history of struggle and freedom as a means of accentuating those rights of citizenship that had yet to be fully recognized. Historian Geneviève Fabre identifies in these narratives an ethos that ran counter to America's national memory. Fabre contends that black commemorative celebrations were oriented toward both a past *and* future, suggesting that "its mood was subjunctive, the ought and should prevailed over the was: with a feeling of urgency, of great importance at the renewed delay, African Americans invented a future no one dared consider and forced its image upon black and white mind and spirits."[23] We can see this in the manner that the early black fair builders collected stories of struggle and perseverance from former slaves as a means of gathering evidence of black Americans' laudable accomplishments. From this collective memory, the black organizers carefully crafted exhibits and performances around historical narratives of enslavement and Emancipation that educated and fostered race pride in black audiences. In his various expositions forays, Du Bois, an organizer and contributor to several fairs, saw history as a pedagogical tool for civil rights education, especially since Negro history had been deliberately excluded from the national canon and African contributions had been expunged from world history. Woodson formed the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH) while participating in Chicago's semicentennial Emancipation exposition in 1915. The founders of the early museums, many of them ASNLH members, bolstered black pride by placing African and black American history on view for local residents, especially school-age children, so that black audiences understood their militancy as part of a historical worldwide fight for human dignity in places like the newly formed postcolonial nation

14 | Introduction

states of the African continent. "This is an important and dramatic event in World history," stated Dr. Charles H. Wright and the founders of Detroit's IAM in 1965 about the historical relevance current civil rights conflicts. So that people remembered and learned about earlier efforts to achieve social equality, "we, therefore, propose to create a permanent, international monument to symbolize this struggle."[24] A historical consciousness that comprehended what and where black Americans had been guided the path toward who they were to become in the United States and elsewhere.

THE BLACK METROPOLIS

In order to thoroughly probe the transitory world of the Negro Buildings, fairgrounds, convention halls, and makeshift galleries of the early black museums, we must also study the segregated urban landscapes in which they resided. What do we gain from examining the city as well as the fair? Certainly, the world of fairs has become a sustained topic of research for many scholars. Much of this scholarship, while critically insightful, however, confines its research to the domain of the fairgrounds. By broadening our context to consider the spaces of fairs to be lived, conceived, and perceived, to borrow Lefebvre's theorization, we can examine the social production of these spaces as extensions of the urban realms where they took place. In other words, we can examine the social spaces of the fair by also studying how the forces of industrialization and antiblack racism rapidly transformed social structures and the material conditions of life in the American city.[25]

At these mainstream and black-organized events, progress as a narrative of civilization and the nation's forward advance was, as previously noted, implicitly racialized. In speeches, exhibits, and performances, black Americans strategically wielded an essentialized discourse of black progress as a "racial project" to deflect and eradicate antiblack racism. Sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant define a racial project as being "simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute along particular racial lines."[26] They argue that racial projects operate within a "racial formation" of "sociohistorical process[es] by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed."[27] As a process that changes over time, a racial formation forges linkages between cultural representations and social structures so that "racial projects do the ideological 'work' of making these links."[28] Considering the fairs and mu-

seums as dynamic racial formations that change over time allows them to be situated within a constellation of processes that produces their institutional social spaces and those of the segregated city.

The urbanization of black populations occurred simultaneously with expansion of the United States' industrial base shortly after the end of the costly Civil War—a process influencing southern cities like Atlanta, whose powerful oligarchs hosted one of the first world's fair to invite black participation, the Negro Building at the Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition. These urban communities became home to groups with a myriad of motivations for organizing, contributing, and visiting the fairs. Neighborhoods in the North, some already home to old settlers, grew exponentially as black migrants drawn by alluring prospects of well-paying industrial jobs (that never materialized) moved to cities to escape the harsh and exploitive sharecropping system. Eventually their growing numbers formed a "Black Metropolis," the name given to Chicago's Black Belt, but nonetheless applicable to other black urban communities, by sociologists St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, both contributors to the city's American Negro Exposition in 1940.[29] Once settled, these migrants entered into an urban milieu that included a cadre of elites who became the representative race leaders. Alongside them was a small bourgeoisie that included educated professionals and growing ranks of working-class families. Collectively, the middle strata embraced ideals of respectability and social uplift as markers of class status. And then there were the urban poor, what many derogatorily labeled as the "black masses," who struggled to survive living in substandard housing and toiled in underpaid unskilled jobs. Historian Christopher Reed's term *social grades* proves useful in characterizing early black urban social development. Borrowed from R. R. Wright Jr., a sociologist who organized of the Emancipation exposition in Philadelphia in 1913, and more fully developed later by Drake, the concept argues that this nascent social structure did not stratify into the Black Metropolis's unique classed hierarchy until the 1930s.[30] (It should be noted that Du Bois, Wright's mentor, had earlier used the term *social grades* in his groundbreaking study *The Philadelphia Negro*.). Reed cogently argues that at the turn of the twentieth century the power structures of a classed social order had not yet been put into place in black urban communities—especially since the majority of blacks labored as lumpenproletariat.

Outside the domain of the Black Metropolis, power bases of colluding white political leaders and businessmen lorded over key resources. They herded black residents onto undesirable land—prone to floods and

other adversities—and into overcrowded neighborhoods with high rents and dilapidated buildings. Knowing they were eager to find employment of any kind, white factory owners hired black workers as strikebreakers. Accepting these jobs, however, pitted the replacements against hostile white and immigrant workers. Even with the concerted efforts to hinder black access to economic and political power, white Americans still relied on black labor in the South, and political parties depended on blacks' votes in cities throughout the North. For shrewd and enterprising black leaders this economic and political dependency opened channels of negotiation to leverage many things. This included participation in mainstream world's fairs and financial support for black-organized expositions and museums.

Positioning the expositions as an extension of dynamic urban space allows us to discern how the fairs drew together various groups of blacks and whites, immigrant populations and foreign participants, in the roles of organizers who assembled intellectual and financial capital. These groups provided the workers who produced and staffed the spaces of display and who rallied the fairgoers who witnessed the cavalcade of exhibits, performances, amusements, and speeches. Workers and fairgoers came from all classes, races, and ethnicities. Mirroring the segregated social sphere of city outside the fairground gates, black visitors, however, often encountered prohibitions and endured poor treatment as they toured the halls and midways. Additionally, in exchange for access, white businessmen in charge of fairs and municipal leaders who controlled the exposition halls could earn lucrative profits by charging black fair organizers inflated fees for concession services and high rates for white unionized labor. Because expositions could last between several days to several months, they nevertheless offered an accessible albeit temporary public forum. Black fair builders could tactically utilize these centrally located urban sites even though segregation limited black occupation to a short period of time. The early museum builders of Detroit adopted this strategy in their Mobile Museum whose exhibit on African and African American cultural history traversed the streets of the Motor City. The eventual construction of permanent museum buildings in civic districts like Detroit and Chicago in the 1980s marked a significant shift in the power of black populations to claim space in U.S. cities, although the black counterpublic sphere, an outcome of segregation and critical to the formation of the fairs and early museums, had fragmented by the 1970s.[31]

This book, *Negro Building,* begins its historical narrative with Philadelphia's centennial fair in 1876 because it encapsulates the problem of

why black Americans fought for inclusion (but failed to gain access) to the United States' first world's fair that commemorated national history and celebrated the country's industrial potential. Chapter 1 offers an in-depth study of Atlanta to examine how urbanization in the South fostered the formation of a black counterpublic that contributed to the first Negro Building dedicated to black progress at a mainstream world's fair. As we shall see, its strategy of social uplift centering on industrial education and the ideology of accommodation as conceived by Washington offered one strategy to negotiate the emerging segregated landscape of the Jim Crow South. However, as chapter 2 explores, other tactics for racial advancement soon emerged from Atlantans and those living elsewhere in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. One such alternative viewpoint can be seen in Du Bois's research on the Georgia Negro included in the "American Negro" exhibit that debuted at Paris' Exposition Universelle in 1900 before it traveled to two other fairs in Buffalo and Charleston. Here in the public forums of the exhibits and Negro Buildings we discover the emergence of a new ethos of civil rights put forth by those race leaders willing to advocate for social equality. The black-organized northern semicentennial Emancipation expositions and the mainstream fairs that chapter 3 reviews provided platforms to formulate and represent black contributions to U.S., Pan-African, and world histories. These commemorative events introduced new modes for the presentation of black history, such as pageants and objects of mass culture that were geared toward the tastes of urban audiences. As this chapter narrates, Jim Crow segregation took new forms of antiblack racism in the North and the fair organizers conceived of new strategies of protest that challenged these obstacles to advancement. Chapter 4 explores two Emancipation expositions held in the Black Metropolises of Detroit and Chicago in 1940. In response to the growing presence of black middle and working classes in large urban centers, the agenda of the black elites could no longer rely solely on Washington's message of racial progress and uplift. Instead race leaders collaborated with a new Left vanguard of black cultural workers, part of the Popular Front, to provide fair content that drew upon southern vernacular and popular culture that resonated with urbanites. Their charge was to improve the conditions of work and life and end antiblack racism in the segregated northern city. Their radical spirit of protest and tactics of institution building led to the formation of the first black museums in Chicago in 1961 and Detroit in 1965. Chapter 5 provides a detailed study of the establishment of Detroit's International Afro-American Museum as it navigates the tur-

bulent era of civil rights, black nationalism, and virulent racism of a northern industrial city. As an effort mounted by ordinary citizens who were not trained museum experts, this early museum initiated a program to educate black Americans about their history so that they could self-determine the future of their community and its institutions. The conclusion takes us through the post–civil rights era to understand how the rise of globalization and neoliberalism has affected the cities, institutions, and groups this book reviews.

While today we no longer convene world's fairs, erect Negro Buildings, or host Emancipation expositions, visitors can roam the interpretive history galleries and gather in the spacious lobbies of the glass, stone, and steel structures of the nation's black history and culture museums in Cincinnati, Baltimore, San Francisco, and elsewhere. The Smithsonian's future NMAAHC, for example, will be housed in an architecturally ambitious new building centrally located on the National Mall. Standing amid the white marble archives of national patrimony, Lonnie Bunch the director of the NMAAHC proudly proclaims that its mission will be "to help all Americans remember, and by remembering, this institution will stimulate a dialogue about race and help to foster a spirit of reconciliation and healing."[32] In the long term this unique social space for critical historical reflection will in turn project a vision of the collective future for *all* American citizens. The chapters that follow show that we have much to learn from how groups of citizens negotiated changing racial and intraracial ideologies and navigated segregated public spaces in order to create a realm to show and view their own multivalent interpretations of race and nation, progress and history.

Prologue

Awash in subtle sepia tones, an albumen print that was taken around 1875 captures a panoramic view of the Lincoln Institute. The three-story brick schoolhouse was built in Jefferson City, Missouri's capital. Standing on a hillside in front their four-year-old building, seventy-five men, women, and children, all black Americans, proudly posed in their woolen suits and Sunday best. Their building was crafted in the fashionable Second Empire style, crowned with a mansard roof and topped with a stately bell tower. The new schoolhouse was a vast improvement from their former accommodations in an old barn where teachers had schooled newly emancipated slaves of all ages. Perhaps made at a gathering of the school's founders, students, teachers, benefactors, and leaders (they are not identified), the photograph celebrated a benchmark in the ten-year history of the fledging preparatory and normal school. To remember the occasion, they enlisted the evolving technology of photography, taking advantage of its ability to capture a moment in time for posterity. The large group portrait communicates the numerous ways that these citizens wished to be seen by their fellow Missourians, by people from around the country and world, and perhaps, by those in the future, like us, who would eventually view their picture. From one perspective, their confident pose and attire exuded an air of respectability and bourgeois propriety. Their manner of dress conveyed newly important signifiers of social status for many of these former slaves. As full-fledged Americans, they had finally achieved (at least for the moment) the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

But also in their vocations as laborers, draymen, farmers, and domestics, many earned wages that gave them a toehold in the burgeoning industrial economy—albeit at the bottom. There were, nonetheless, new opportunities afforded by education and hard work. From another viewpoint, their assembly highlighted the fact that they now had the individual and collective freedom to pursue an education, along with their religious beliefs, work, commercial trade, political office, military service, and family life. Since the Lincoln Institute was initially funded by pledges donated by Union soldiers of the U.S. Sixty-Second Colored Infantry, the school and its new building stood as a testament to their entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to education as the foundation of social advancement.[1]

advancement.[1]
[Figure 2 about here.]

The record of this auspicious gathering of men and women would provide irrefutable evidence as to whether institutions like the Lincoln Institute, with their curriculum of industrial education, could transition former slaves into new lives as paid craftsmen and teachers. Lincoln's student body was guided through a sensible regimen of "combine[d] study and labor," the school's proponents wrote, "so that old habits of those who always labored, but never studied, shall not be thereby changed and that the emancipated slaves who have neither capital to spend nor time to lose may obtain an education."[2] Alongside their mission to elevate the fortunes of former slaves through industrial training, their stalwart brick schoolhouse demonstrated that as citizens they had the right to erect and inhabit schools, along with private homes, stores, and churches in cities, small towns, and rural villages. Their schoolhouse stood amid a thriving black civic sphere. As Americans they had claimed a place upon the nation's land and in the nation's historical narrative. This fading and tattered photograph bore witness to that event.

When taken as a measure of "progress," a popular term of the day derived from the potential of industrial capitalism to improve the well-being of social groups, the photograph provided proof as to how far these former slaves had advanced themselves since Emancipation. It displayed the enormous potential of black Americans as a workforce and citizenry, ideals that would be encapsulated in the educational philosophy of industrial training championed by race leader Booker T. Washington, who was also a major fair booster. When we consider it as a historical record, the photograph afforded a moment of reflection on the extraordinary accomplishments of those pictured, while also distancing them from their own and America's painful history and brutal legacy of enslavement. In spite of being laudable, these advancements were becoming more difficult to maintain and surpass, since racial prejudice had not ceased to exist
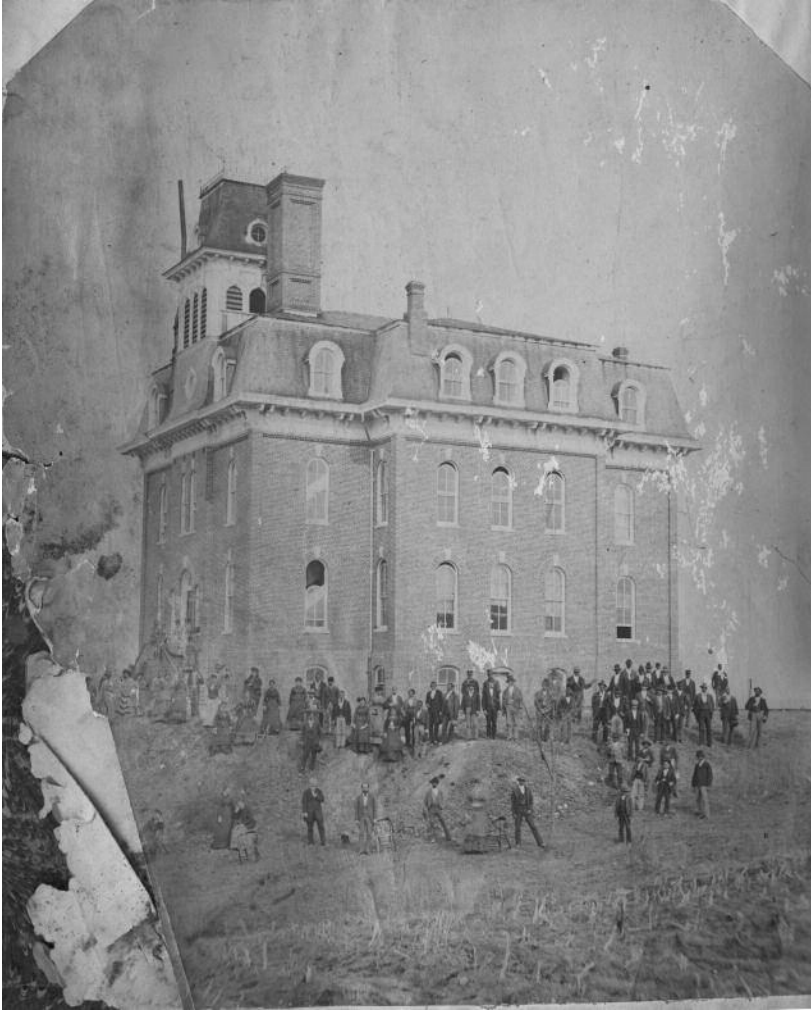
FIGURE 2. Lincoln Institute, Jefferson City, Mo., 1876. From *Lincoln Institute—Centennial Exhibit 1876* (Jefferson City, Mo: Lincoln Institute, 1876). Courtesy of Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

when slavery was ruled unconstitutional. On the contrary, antiblack racism had been recalibrated into new practices of discrimination, which by 1876 had begun to restrict access to public space, curtail male voting rights, and impede access to elected office. Despite the rising incidents of bigotry and violence, this group of proud black Americans in front of the schoolhouse that they had built had much to show the world.

The photograph of the Lincoln Institute and its educational community appeared as the frontispiece in a handwritten account of the founding, mission, and curriculum of the school, with the caption "embracing photographic view, historic sketch and classroom." Commissioned by the State of Missouri for its educational exhibit, the *Lincoln Institute* book was displayed in Philadelphia at the grand Centennial Exhibition held in 1876.[3] The five-hundred-page narrative condensed the school's unique story and included pages of student work in geology, algebra, mental philosophy, map drawing, penmanship, and other courses in a leather-bound volume suitable for public review.

The Lincoln Institute's earnest catalogue of progress may have represented one facet of black America's vision of itself, but other representations circulating around the fairgrounds revealed the way that others, particularly white Americans, viewed their fellow black citizens. These representations varied from a noble statue, *The Freed Slave,* that was part of the Austrian exhibit displayed in Memorial Hall to a disparaging spectacle of black men and women donning plantation attire who were hired to service a popular white-owned restaurant concession. None of these depictions perhaps reached a wider audience than the cover of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly,* a popular magazine that brought pictures of the most recent political, cultural, and world events to a national readership.[4]

Emblazoned on the front of the 1876 Centennial Exhibition souvenir issue of *Leslie's Weekly,* a colorful engraving illustrated a mythic gathering of the world's races. The scene depicts a very different kind of visual narrative of racial progress than the one photographed in front of Lincoln's brick schoolhouse. This fictional assembly of the family of man stands atop a grassy vista with each member adorned in costumes emblematic of her/his cultural (read racial) heritage. Together the five characters gaze outward across a fecund American landscape traversed by rivers and railroads, the conveyors of raw materials and finished products. Beyond this threshold appears the skyline of Philadelphia and the U.S. Capitol, both symbols of a civilized society and nation. In the distance, with its mass reminiscent of jagged mountain peaks, rises the exposition's impressive Main Building. The massive pavilion denotes a symbolic horizon of material and spiritual prosperity, with its expansive footprint validating the domestication of the American wilderness, a conquest of Native Americans and their land that proclaimed the might of the U.S. imperial project. In front of a globe stands the muse America. Standing broad shouldered and full bosomed in star-spangled dress, she

gestures westward to Europe. Another muse, Europe, is draped in imperial purple robes and grasps a shield encrusted with the crests of the two figures' shared paternal heritage. To the left of these paragons of white feminine virtue, and as a symbolic threshold to the west, kneels the Noble Savage, the only male figure of the quintet. In buckskin and feather headdress, he gazes upward to America. The Noble Savage yields to her wisdom and seeks guidance from those who will show him and his people the path toward civilized society. To Europe's right, and toward the east, bows the timid Asia, adorned in a simple green cotton tunic whose color blends with the grass below her feet. Lastly, next to the figure Asia and leaning back on her knees in a pose conveying deference and reticence, appears the ebony-skinned Africa. Clothed in pants and wrapped in cloth, Africa is depicted as a half bare-chested primitive clutching a rudimentary quiver of arrows. Her dress and tools symbolize basic human needs that are satisfied by the manual labor conducted by the men and women of her race. By virtue of her racial bloodlines, she foretells the likely fortunes of black Americans. Her place, last among the family of man, occupies a space in the margins of the worlds fair's sweeping cultural narrative.

This beautifully rendered engraving of the five races weaves a geopolitical allegory of progress. Its story, like the realm of the expositions, pits one nation and race against another in the quest to lead the cultural advancement of civilization according to aptitude and invention. By using women to represent heritage, *Leslie's* detailed illustration posits the female body and her reproductive capacity as the arbiter of both race and nation.[5] A nation's potential was believed to be biologically predetermined by its people's racial constitution, whose purity was safeguarded by controlling female reproduction; hence, the exaltation of white (bourgeois) womanhood during this period. In this regard, the United States' ability to lead the cultural vanguard provided the perfect subject for encapsulation in the temporary spaces of the U.S. centennial world's fair. Equally significant to the parable of human progress illustrated on *Leslie's* cover, the exhibits, pavilions, and fairgrounds at the fair also framed a new way of looking at the world.[6] As a didactic visual experience, the displays at fairs, along with those at museums, enabled privileged viewers (not everyone, of course, had access) to perform scripted national identities, underwritten by gender, sexual, racial, and class difference. This made it possible for those in the privileged subject position *to see* and others as the object of their gaze *to be seen.*

Both the Lincoln Institute's handcrafted presentation of racial progress

narrative.
[Figure 3
about here.]

FIGURE 3. Cover of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly,* special Centennial Exhibition issue, 1876. Courtesy of Special Collections Research Center, California State University at Fresno.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. As chapters 4 and 5 examine in detail, the National Memorial Association proposed a national Negro memorial (and museum) in 1915. That same year, scholar Kelly Miller also conceived of a new national library of Negro Americana for Howard University's campus in Washington, D.C. In 1965 a white Democratic congressman from the Bronx, New York, James Scheuer, proposed a bill to form a committee to study the creation of a national Negro museum of history and culture.

2. Claudine Brown, *Final Report of the African American Institutional Study* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1991), 6–7.

3. Raoul Dennis, "Who Axed the African American Museum on the Mall?," *Crisis,* February–March 1998, 8–13.

4. Jacqueline Trescott, "Helms Stalls New Museum; Backers Still Hope to Free African American Project," *Washington Post,* September 29, 1994, D1.

5. Mabel O. Wilson, "Between Rooms 307," in *Sites of Memory: Perspectives on Architecture And Race,* ed. Craig Evan Barton (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2001), 13–26.

6. Chicago's DuSable Museum of African American History was founded as the Ebony Museum of Negro History and Art in 1961; Boston's Museum of the National Center for Afro-American Artists was founded in 1963 (it would later be called the Museum of the National Center for Afro-American History); and Detroit's Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History was established in 1965 as the International Afro-American Museum. An excellent overview of black history institution formation can be found in Fath Ruffins, "Mythos, Memory and History: African American Preservation Efforts, 1820–1990," in *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture,* edited by I. Karp and C. M. Kreamer (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 506–611.

7. See Robert Rydell, *All the World's a Fair* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), and *World of Fairs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

8. New York City held a world's fair, the Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations, in 1853–54. Philadelphia hosted a small regional fair in 1865, but it was the nation's first commemorative exposition held there, the 1876 Centennial Exhibition, that positioned the United States as an important international presence. Events in Boston and Louisville (1883), St. Louis (1884), New Orleans (1885), Buffalo (1889), Chicago (1893), and San Francisco (1894) followed. See Robert Muccigrosso, *Celebrating the New World: Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893,* The American Ways Series (Chicago: I. R. Dee, 1993); and Pieter van Wesemael, *Architecture of Instruction and Delight* (Amsterdam: 010 Publishers, 2001).

9. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair,* 4.

10. Ida B. Wells-Barnett and Robert W. Rydell, *The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999).

11. Adam P. Green, *Selling the Race: Culture and Community in Black Chicago, 1940–1955* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Christopher Robert Reed, *All the World is Here! The Black Presence at White City,* Blacks in the Diaspora (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000); Rydell, *All the World's a Fair;* Rydell, *World of Fairs;* Shawn Michelle Smith, *Photography on the Color Line: W. E. B. Du Bois, Race, and Visual Culture* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004); Deborah Willis, "The Sociologist's Eye: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Paris Exposition," in *A Small Nation of People: W. E. B. Du Bois and African American Portraits of Progress,* ed. the Library of Congress (New York: Amistad and Harper Collins, 2003), 51–76; Deborah Willis and Carla Williams, "The Black Female Body in Photographs from the World's Fairs and Expositions," *Exposure* 33, no. 1/2 (2000): 11–20; Theda Perdue, *Race and the Atlanta Cotton States Exposition of 1895,* Georgia Southern University Jack N. and Addie D. Averitt Lecture Series (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010).

12. The name Jim Crow was taken from a minstrel character. Typically performed by a white male in blackface, Jim Crow was first popular in the 1830s. See Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class,* Race and American Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); and Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black: Images of African and Blacks in Western Popular Culture* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995).

13. Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," in *The Phantom Public Sphere,* ed. Bruce Robbins and Social Text Collective (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 1–32.

14. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society,* Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989); Bruce Robbins, ed., *The Phantom Public Sphere* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

15. Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," 5.

16. Ibid., 14.

17. Ibid., 15.

18. Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996), "Questioning the Public Space," *Public* 6 (1992): 49–64, and "Art and Public Space: Questions of Democracy," *Social Text* 33 (1992): 34–52.

19. Arjun Appadurai et al., "The Black Public Sphere," *Public Culture* 7, no. 1 (1994): 11–14.

20. Michael C. Dawson, "A Black Counterpublic? Economic Earthquakes, Racial Agenda(s), and Black Politics," *Public Culture* 7 (1994): 199–200.

21. Reed, *All the World is Here!*

22. St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (New York: Harper and Row, 1945); Kevin Kelly Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Reed, *All the World is Here!* Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

23. Geneviève Fabre, "African American Commemorative Celebrations in the Nineteenth Century," in *History and Memory in African American Culture,* ed. Geneviève Fabre and Robert O'Meally (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 73. Adam Green also notes the significance of this inflection in the black collective memory. See Adam P. Green, "Selling the Race: Cultural Production and Notions of Community in Black Chicago, 1940–1955" (Yale University, 1998).

24. "International Afro-American Museum (A Statement of Purpose)," n.d., Charles H. Wright Papers, Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit.

25. In *The Production of Space,* Lefebvre identifies "social space" as a product of the relationships between people, making it indistinguishable from mental and physical space. Through its lived condition, social space supports the relations of production and reproduction of capitalism. Under capitalism (mercantile, industrial, and global), according to Lefebvre, the modern city presents itself not as an object but as a network of spaces and representations. Urban space ensures that the links are properly maintained between flows of energy, labor, commodities, and capital. See Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space,* trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1991), 55. Also see Henri Lefebvre, *State, Space, World: Selected Essays,* trans. Gerald Moore, Neil Brenner, and Stuart Elden (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

26. Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1980s,* Critical Social Thought (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), 56.

27. Ibid., 55. Racial formations include the paradigms of ethnicity, class, and nation, none of which alone can fully encompass "the specificity of race as an autonomous field of social conflict, political organization, and cultural/ideological meaning." Ibid., 48. Importantly, Omi and Winant link theories of cultural representation to structural issues of labor, class, and social phenomenon.

28. Ibid., 56.

29. Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis.*

30. Citing Chicago at the time of the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, Reed notes that the elites "dominated black society in terms of status, but in absolute terms of their influence over all black society, their role was tenuous at

best." Reed, *All the World is Here!,* 83. Also see Davarian L. Baldwin, *Chicago's New Negroes: Modernity, the Great Migration, and Black Urban Life* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

31. Dawson, "A Black Counterpublic?," 197.

32. For the full mission statement by Lonnie Bunch, the NMAAHC's director, see Lonnie Bunch, "A Vision for the National Museum of African American Museum of History and Culture," n.d., http://nmaahc.si.edu/section/about_us.

PROLOGUE

1. *Lincoln Institute: Centennial Exhibit 1876* (Jefferson City, Mo.: Lincoln Institute, 1876).

2. Ibid., 8. The description of the Lincoln Institute's curriculum was written by Surgeon C. Allen, Captain Henry R. Parsons, Captain Harrison Du Bois, First Lieutenant A. M. Adamson, and First Lieutenant R. B. Foster.

3. Along with the former infantrymen who made the initial donations to start the school, other benefactors in the establishment of the Lincoln Institute were white philanthropists, including Rev. Charles Avery, Josiah King, and Thomas Howe. Ibid.

4. An illustrator by training, Frank Leslie served as an American commissioner to the Paris Exposition of 1867.

5. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 357.

6. See Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1995), 193; and Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

7. Senate, ed., *Message from the President of the United States, Transmitting an Exhibit of the Result of the United States Centennial Exhibition and Celebration of 1876* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1879), 10. Also see Robert Rydell, *World of Fairs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 20–21.

8. "The Centennial Exhibition," *The Manufacturer and Building,* January 1876, 18, http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/moa/moa-cgi?notisid=ABS1821–0008–51.

9. The Peale's Museum, founded in 1786 and named after its founder-artist Charles Wilson Peale, became the first museum to accession artifacts belonging to the United States' most prominent figures and significant national events. Philadelphia's other important institutions include the Library Company (1731), the American Philosophical Society (1743), the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Science (1812), the Athenaeum (1814), and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (1824). See the excellent history of early museums in Philadelphia by Steven Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876–1926* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 34.

10. House of Representatives, Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, ed. *Government Exhibits at the Centennial* (House of Representatives, 1877).

11. Rydell also adds, "The Smithsonian's exhibits, moreover, were at least as important in laying the groundwork for favorable reception of evolutionary

ideas about race in the United States as was the centennial visit to America of Thomas H. Huxley, popularizer of Darwin's theory of evolution." See Rydell, *World of Fairs,* 27.

12. W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1996).

13. For an excellent history of black American efforts to gain access to the Centennial Exhibition, see Philip S. Foner, "Black Participation in the Centennial of 1876," *Phylon* 39, no. 4 (1978): 283–96.

14. For a probing study of the historiography and creation of Lewis's *The Death of Cleopatra,* see Kirsten Pai Buick, *Child of the Fire: Mary Edmonia Lewis and the Problem of Art history's Black and Indian Subject* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010).

15. Foner, "Black Participation in the Centennial of 1876," 283.

16. Ibid.

CHAPTER 1

1. For an extensive review of Penn's many activities prior to and following his involvement with the Atlanta Cotton States Exposition, see Joanne K. Harrison and Grant Harrison, *The Life and Times of Irvine Garland Penn* (Philadelphia: XLibris, 2000).

2. The Committee on the Colored Exhibit included former Republican governor Rufus Bullock, George W. Harrison, W. H. Venable, and J. G. Oglesby. See "Awakening of a Race," *Atlanta Constitution,* September 22, 1895, 24.

3. Kathleen Ann Clark, *Defining Moments: African American Commemoration and Political Culture in the South, 1863–1913* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 154–62.

4. The term *New Negro* has a history of usage long before its adoption by Alain Locke during the Harlem Renaissance. Scholar Henry Louis Gates notes that the *Cleveland Gazette* mentions the term regarding passage of the New York Civil Rights Law on June 29, 1895. See Henry Louis Gates, "The Face and the Voice of Blackness," in *Facing History: The Black Image in American Art, 1710–1940,* ed. Guy C. McElroy (San Francisco: Bedford Arts Publishers; Washington, D.C.: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1990), 36.

5. The Negro commissioners were chosen on September 11, 1894. Walter G. Cooper, *The Cotton States and International Exposition and South, Illustrated* (Atlanta: The Illustrator Company, 1896), 57. The initial roster of Negro commissioners in January 1895 were Booker T. Washington, Alabama; A. E. P. Albert, Louisiana; Jesse Lawson, District of Columbia; M. M. Lewey, Florida; G. V. Clark, Tennessee; W. H. Crogman, Georgia; R. J. Perkins, West Virginia; Isaiah T. Montgomery, Mississippi; W. A. Hawkins, Maryland; J. B. Middleton, South Carolina; W. H. Stewart, Kentucky; W. C. Coleman, North Carolina; N. W. Cuney, Texas; and W. O. Emery, Arkansas. From *The Official Catalogue of the Cotton States and International Exposition, Atlanta Georgia, U.S.A. September 18 to December 31, 1895,* (Atlanta: Clafin Mellichamp, Publishers, 1895), 134.

6. August Meier, *Negro Thought in America, 1880–1915* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988), 38.