

Overcoming



# HATEFUL THINGS

STORIES FROM THE  
JIM CROW MUSEUM OF  
RACIST IMAGERY

VISITOR'S GUIDE

**JIM CROW MUSEUM**

*witness, understand, heal*

# Exhibit Overview

**The Jim Crow Museum's** new traveling exhibit, *Overcoming Hateful Things: Stories from the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Imagery*, explores the Jim Crow system, the African American experience through the Jim Crow era, and the legacies of this system in modern society. *Overcoming Hateful Things* will cultivate understanding and empathy for victims of racial intolerance throughout history to the modern day and allow visitors to bear witness to the need to guard against the dehumanizing characterizations of others, so they do not become further culturally entrenched.

The traveling exhibition contains over 150 items of material culture from the late 19th century to the present, embodying the terrible effects of the Jim Crow legacy. In addition to items from popular and commercial culture, the traveling exhibit contains images of violence against African Americans as well as Civil Rights activists struggling for racial equality. Signage for each primary source places it in its proper cultural or historical context. The disturbing objects have been lifted from their original purposes to now serve as powerful reminders of America's racist past—and as teaching tools. But more importantly, *Overcoming Hateful Things* acquaints viewers with African American pushback, through activism, achievement, and living with dignity in their daily lives.

## Content Warning from the Jim Crow Museum

Some of the artifacts and media pieces in the *Overcoming Hateful Things* exhibit contain explicit images of violence, offensive language, and other graphic and explicit historical content. Some viewers will find the subject matter offensive or disturbing. Because of this, the exhibit is strongly recommended only for those 12 years of age and older. Jim Crow Museum staff encourage all school-aged children to be accompanied by a guardian or adult.

**The exhibit has the following thematic sections:**

- Who & What is Jim Crow?
- Jim Crow Laws
- Caricatures
- Jim Crow Violence and Terrorism
- Teaching Racism & Internalizing Bias
- Jim Crow... in Public Spaces, at Home, for Sale
- We are not Jim Crow: *Demanding Civil Rights, Braving Terror, Building Communities, Raising Families, Expressing Creativity, Taking Pride*
- *Jim Crow Will End When...*



Image from The Jim Crow Museum Collection

## Enduring Understandings

- During the period of Jim Crow, 1877-1965, racist imagery of Black people permeated American society, as evidenced by the proliferation of anti-Black everyday items.
- Jim Crow laws had a lasting impact on the social, cultural, and economic opportunities for African Americans.
- Racial caricatures and stereotypes were used as propaganda to support anti-Black prejudice and segregation.
- Fear, violence, and intimidation were used to uphold anti-Black legislation and social customs.
- There are many powerful examples of Black people pushing back against racist stereotypes, segregation and violence by demanding civil rights, promoting nonviolence, building communities, and expressing creativity.
- Jim Crow-like images are still being created and distributed.
- True dialogue and a confrontation of difficult histories, even when painful, is a necessary prerequisite for addressing racial problems.

# JIM CROW MUSEUM of Racist Imagery

Using Objects of Intolerance to Teach Tolerance and Promote Social Justice

*Overcoming Hateful Things* is a traveling exhibit created by The Jim Crow Museum of Racist Imagery.

## The Jim Crow Museum of Racist Imagery

We are an anti-racism institution and a testimony to African American resiliency.

This is a collection of objects and attitudes that both shaped and reflected the past—history that belongs to all Americans as inheritors of Jim Crow’s legacy. We collect, study, and use these objects to create dialogue about race.

Our mission is to teach tolerance using objects of deeply rooted intolerance. We combat ignorance with truth and replace fear with understanding. Through our exhibits, programs, and resources, the Jim Crow Museum promotes personal and community awareness, social justice, and racial healing.

The Jim Crow Museum is located on the campus of Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Michigan.

Visit <https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/> to learn more.

Visitor guide created by the Grand Rapids Public Museum.



Contact Jim Crow Museum  
1010 Campus Drive  
Big Rapids, MI 49307  
[JimCrowMuseum@Ferris.edu](mailto:JimCrowMuseum@Ferris.edu)  
(231) 591-5873

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