

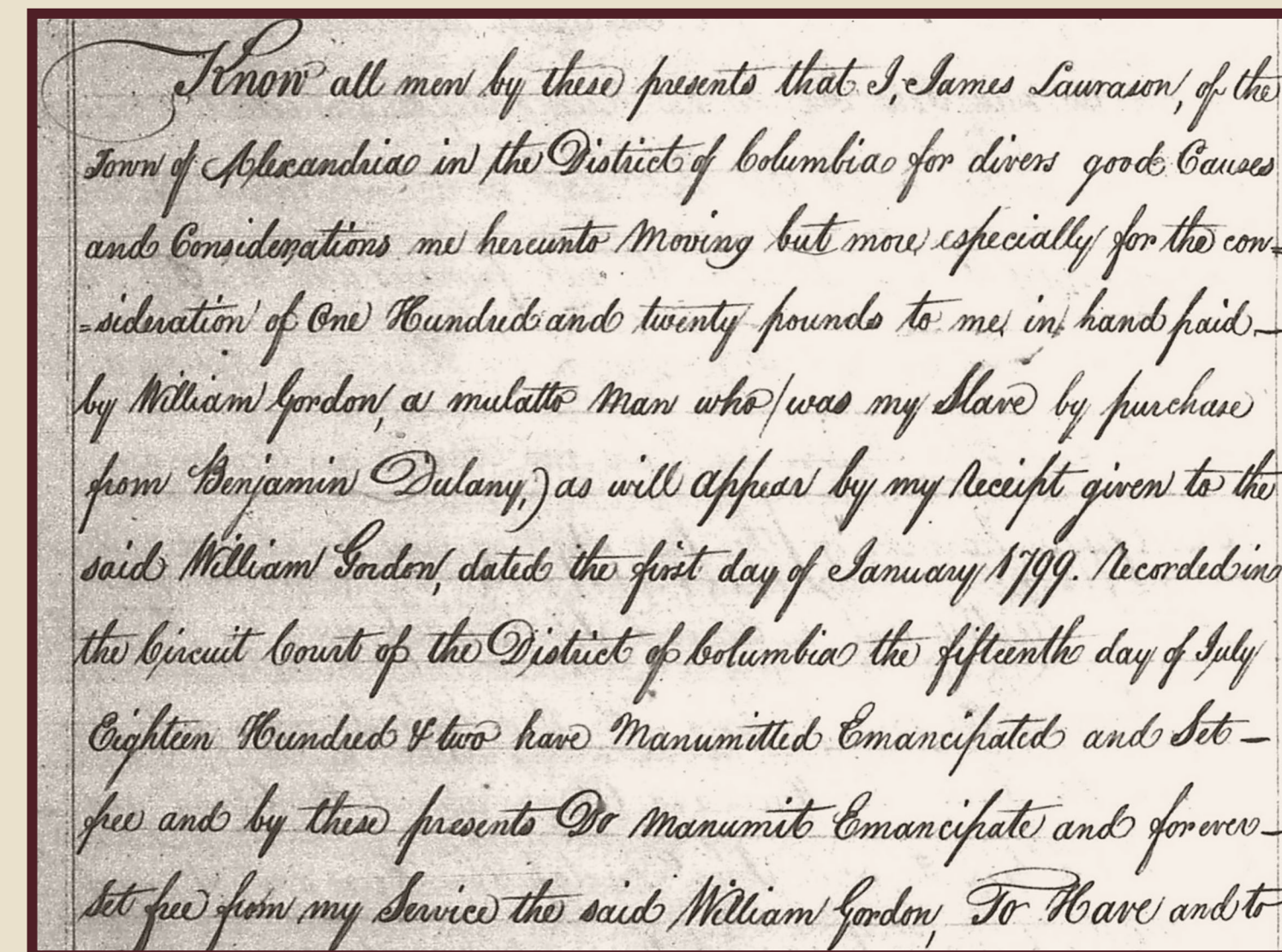
# Freedom

The state of having personal, political, and economic rights



Despite the ideal of freedom being at the heart of American democracy, it has always been an elusive and precarious state for Black Americans. Free Blacks before the Civil War lived on the edge of society with limited liberty and persistent fear of enslavement. Many individuals who were enslaved craved the freedom inherently given to others. Enslaved people risked their lives to escape to freedom on their own and with the help of friends, families, organizations, and networks.

Even after obtaining freedom provided by the 13th Amendment in 1865, Black Americans faced limited rights and discrimination, and violence remained a constant threat. Through their efforts to achieve equal status with white Americans, Black Americans have expanded the meaning of freedom to include civil, political, and economic equality.



1799 Deed of Manumission for William Goddard (Goddard was recorded as Gordon in some documents) (City of Alexandria Deed Book L:510)

## William Goddard

Born into slavery, William Goddard was bound to the wealthy merchant Benjamin Dulaney, a 19th century owner of Shuter's Hill in Alexandria. In 1796, a Quaker, James Lawrason, purchased Goddard from Dulaney. Unlike most enslaved men, he was given the opportunity to buy his own freedom, which he did for £120 sterling. Though he was not officially emancipated until 1799, he bought property in the early free Black neighborhood, The Bottoms, in 1798. His lot was on the same block as Alfred Street Baptist Church, which was established in 1818.

As a free man, Goddard also bought a larger garden parcel, and he earned a living as a gardener. As he became financially successful, he was instrumental in acquiring freedom for 22 people. This included members of his own family, several other enslaved laborers on Shuter's Hill, and at least one person, Hannah Jackson, who would go on to emancipate others as well.

## Freeman H. M. Murray

Freeman Henry Morris Murray was an activist, teacher, community leader, art historian, and public servant. In 1905, he was among the founders of the Niagara Movement of New York. The organization laid the groundwork for the modern civil rights movement and was a precursor to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Murray worked with eminent Civil Rights activists like Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, Lafayette M. Hershaw, William Monroe Trotter, James M. Waldron, and Ida B. Wells. In addition to his civil rights work, Murray was an early Black art historian critiquing the depictions of Black people in art.

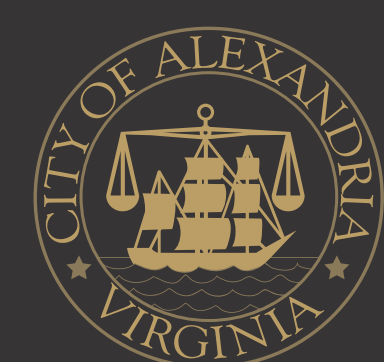
Less known are his efforts to protect Black Americans in Alexandria, Virginia, and beyond. Alarmed by the violence faced by so many innocent Black residents, Murray took action. According to family oral history, he used his home at 813 Princess St. to harbor individuals facing racial terror and hate crimes. He may have used his newspaper, *The Home News*, to convey secret messages to those seeking help.



F.H.M. Murray (right) in 1906 photo of members of the Niagara Movement, including J.R. Clifford, Lafayette M. Hershaw, and W.E.B. Du Bois. (Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries)



The Home News and some employees including Murray's sons Raymond H., F. Morris, and Norman D., as well as Miss Susie B. Bukner in 1903. (Alexandria Black History Museum)



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA EST. 1749

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The Office of Historic Alexandria