

Juneteenth & the Path to Freedom  
Through the Funn Collection

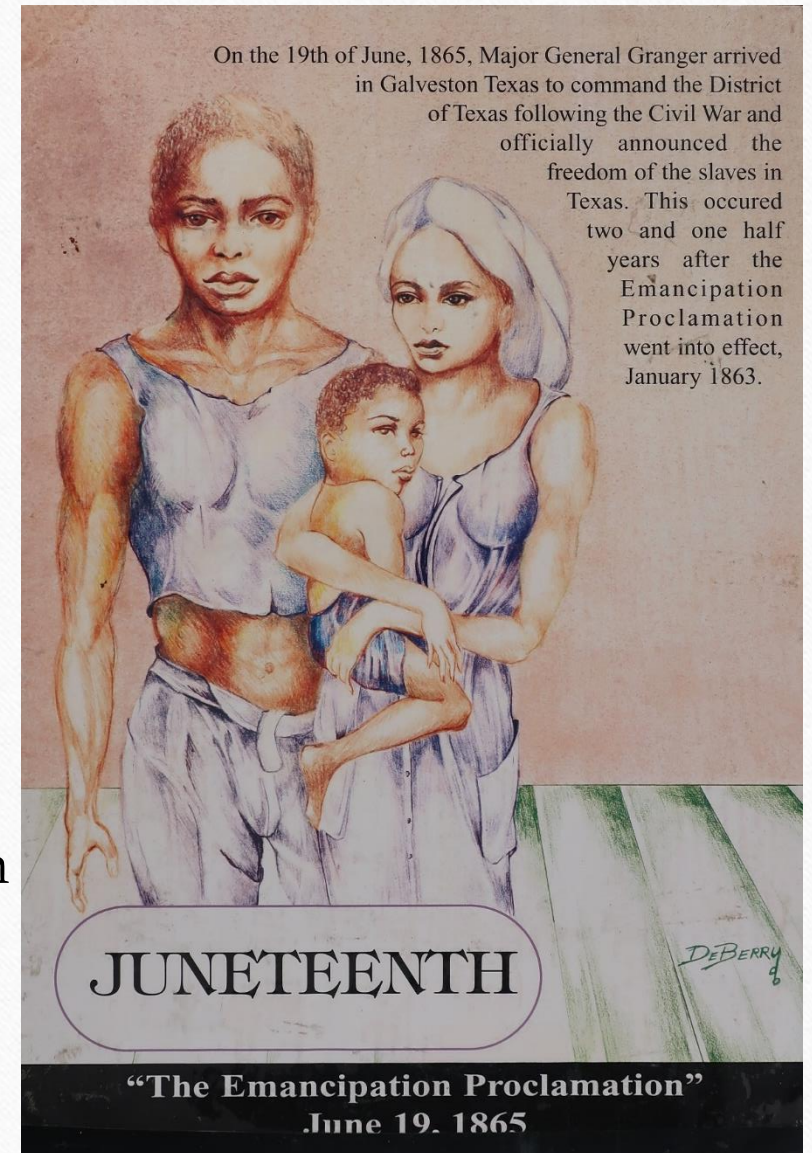
*Alexandria Black History Museum*



*“On the 19<sup>th</sup> of June, 1865, Major General Granger arrived in Galveston Texas to command the District of Texas following the Civil War and officially announced the freedom of the slaves in Texas. This occurred two and one half years after the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect, January 1863.*

***Juneteenth  
‘The Emancipation Proclamation’  
June 19, 1865”***

This poster was mounted onto cardboard by Carlton Funn to become a display board, one of nearly 1,500 that he made and exhibited, as the “*The National/International Cultural Exhibits (NICE)*”.

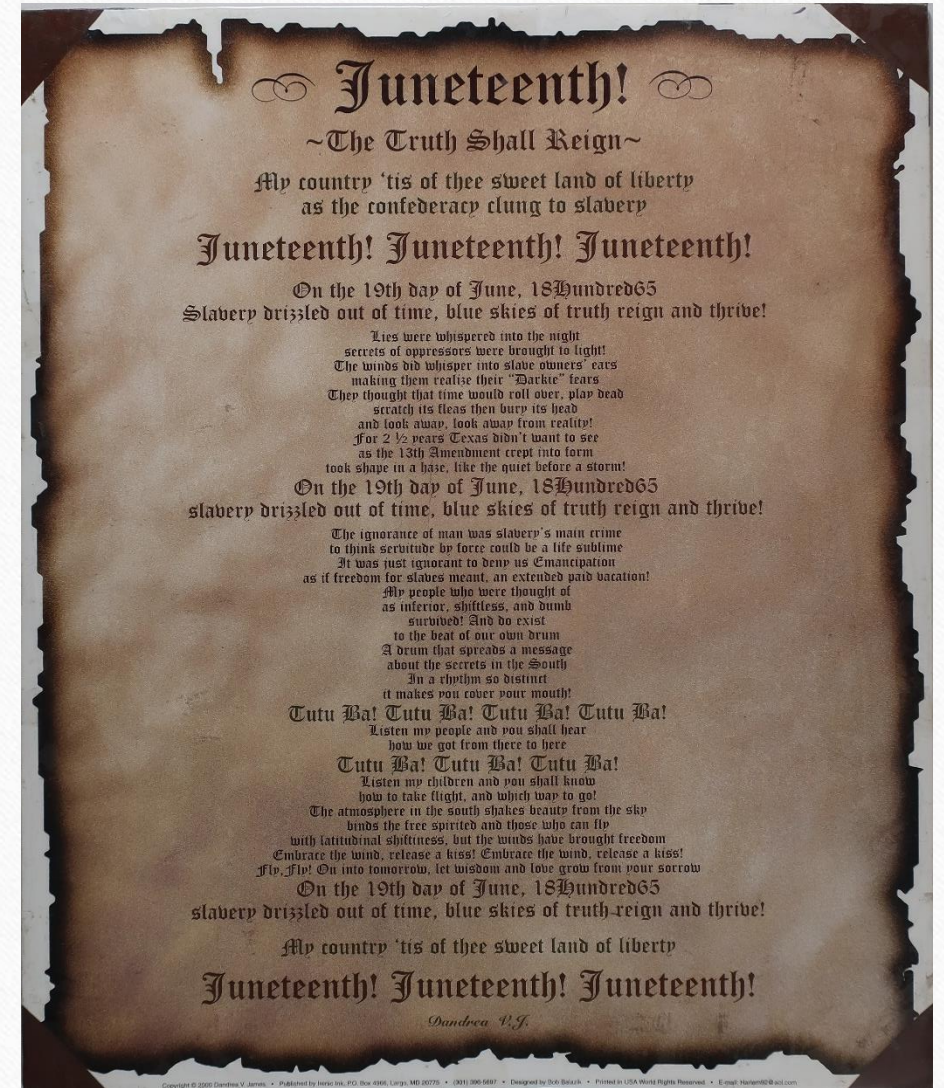




This board is mounted with a poster of a poem entitled, *Juneteenth!* It describes the process of emancipation and how the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment finally spread across the South to the State of Texas.

The poem is filled with evocative imagery and lyrical verse, including the repeated refrain:

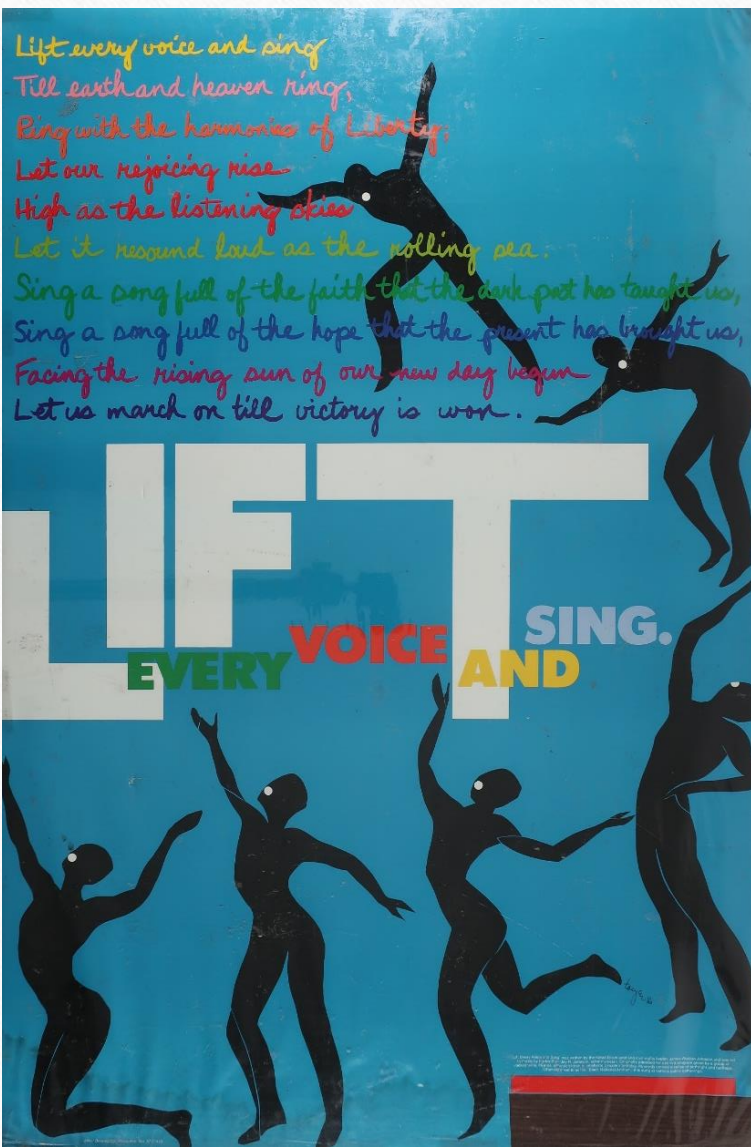
*“On the 19<sup>th</sup> day of June, 18hundred65  
Slavery drizzled out of time, blue skies of truth  
reign and thrive!”*







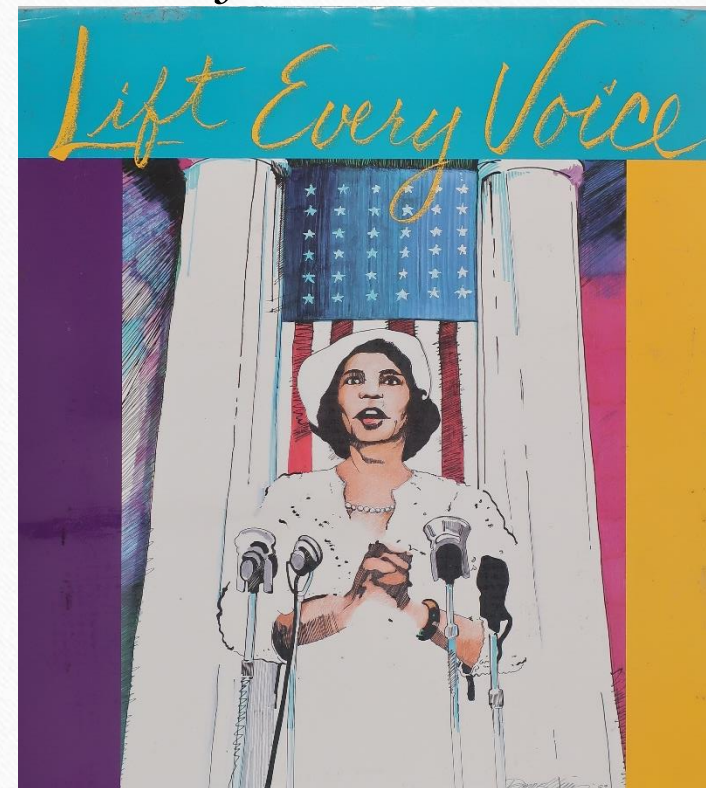




In the years that followed, June 19<sup>th</sup> was commemorated, with some previously enslaved people, and their descendants, travelling to Galveston to mark the date.

The commemoration became known as *Juneteenth* and is now celebrated across the country with family reunions, community events and in song.

These boards from the Funn Collection are mounted with the song, “*Lift Every Voice and Sing*” and an image of Marian Anderson, as she lifted her voice and sang.





The song, “Lift Every Voice and Sing” was written by the brothers, J. Rosamond Johnson and James Weldon Johnson. James, one of the co-founders of the NAACP, wrote the lyrics and his brother, a music teacher, wrote the melody.

Originally the song was written in honor of Lincoln’s birthday, but it has since evolved into what has become known as the *Black National Anthem*. It is sung in schools, churches and at times of celebration, such as during Juneteenth events.

**LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING**

Music: J. Rosamond Johnson  
Lyrics: James Weldon Johnson

In 1900, two brothers wrote "Lift Every Voice and Sing" for a hometown celebration of Abraham Lincoln's birthday. James Weldon Johnson, co-founder of the NAACP, wrote the words and his brother J. Rosamond Johnson, a music teacher, wrote the melody. Through the years, the song has become known as the Negro National Anthem and is sung in schools, in churches, and at special events.

Lift ev - ry voice and sing, Till earth and heav - en ring, Ring with the  
har - mo - nies of Lib - er - ty, Let our re - joic - ing  
rise High as the list - ning skies, Let it re - sound loud as the roll - ing sea. —  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us; Sing a song full of the  
hope that the pre - sent has brought us; Fac - ing the ris - ing sun of our new  
day be - gun, Let us march on till vic - to - ry is won.

Stony the road we trod,  
Bitter the chast'ning rod  
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;  
Yet, with a steady beat,  
Have not our weary feet  
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?  
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered  
We have come, treading our path thro' the blood of the slaughtered,  
Out from the gloomy past,  
Till now we stand at last  
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

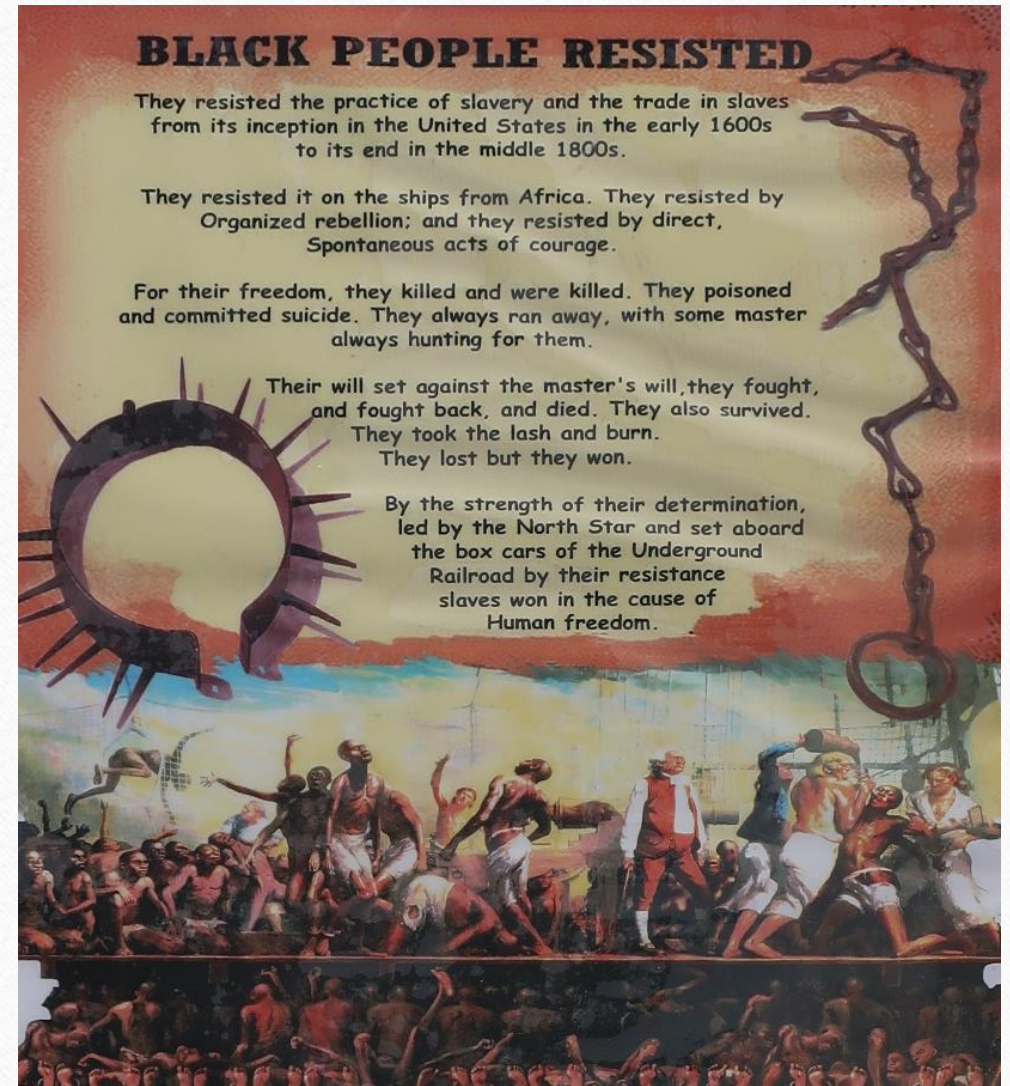
God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou who hast by Thy might,  
Led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray,  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,  
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,  
May we forever stand,  
True to our God, True to our native land.



These display boards are from the Carlton Funn, Sr. Collection at the Alexandria Black History Museum.

They began, when a young African American seventh grade history teacher, in Alexandria's public school system in the 1950s, was dismayed at the lack of positive African American representation and the distorted version of history within the school's textbooks.

This prompted Funn to purchase posters, books, pamphlets, artifacts and more, to broaden the narrative he could teach.





The material he amassed grew into his first exhibit, "*The Afro-American Experience*," and took his collection beyond his classroom.

In this 1972 photograph, Funn is talking to students at the National Education Association five-day display of his exhibition. He also presented a series of talks and films related to improving race relations.

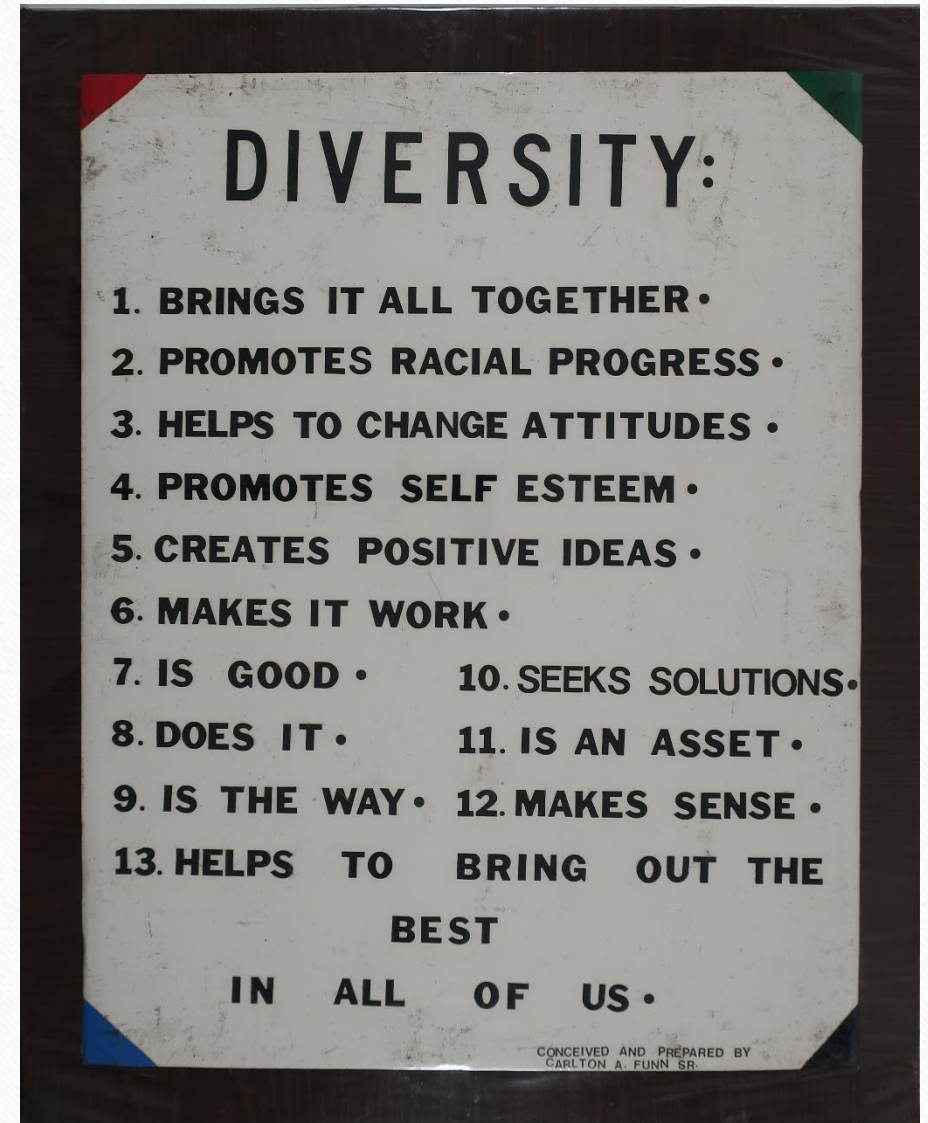




Funn continued to collect material and create new display boards throughout his life. He broadened his scope from the African American experience to include the history, culture and contribution of all people.

His final exhibition was entitled, “*The National/International Cultural Exhibits (NICE)*”.

Funn stated that the purpose of the exhibition was to “promote awareness, human dignity and cultural understanding”. For him, it is not enough to learn our own history, we need also to learn and appreciate the history and cultural contribution of all people and embrace and celebrate our diversity.







Born in Alexandria, Virginia on January 29, 1932, Carlton A. Funn, Sr. was a Parker-Gray High School alumnus.

He received a B.A. from Storer College and an M.A. in Education from Virginia State University, before returning to his native Alexandria to teach in the public school system.

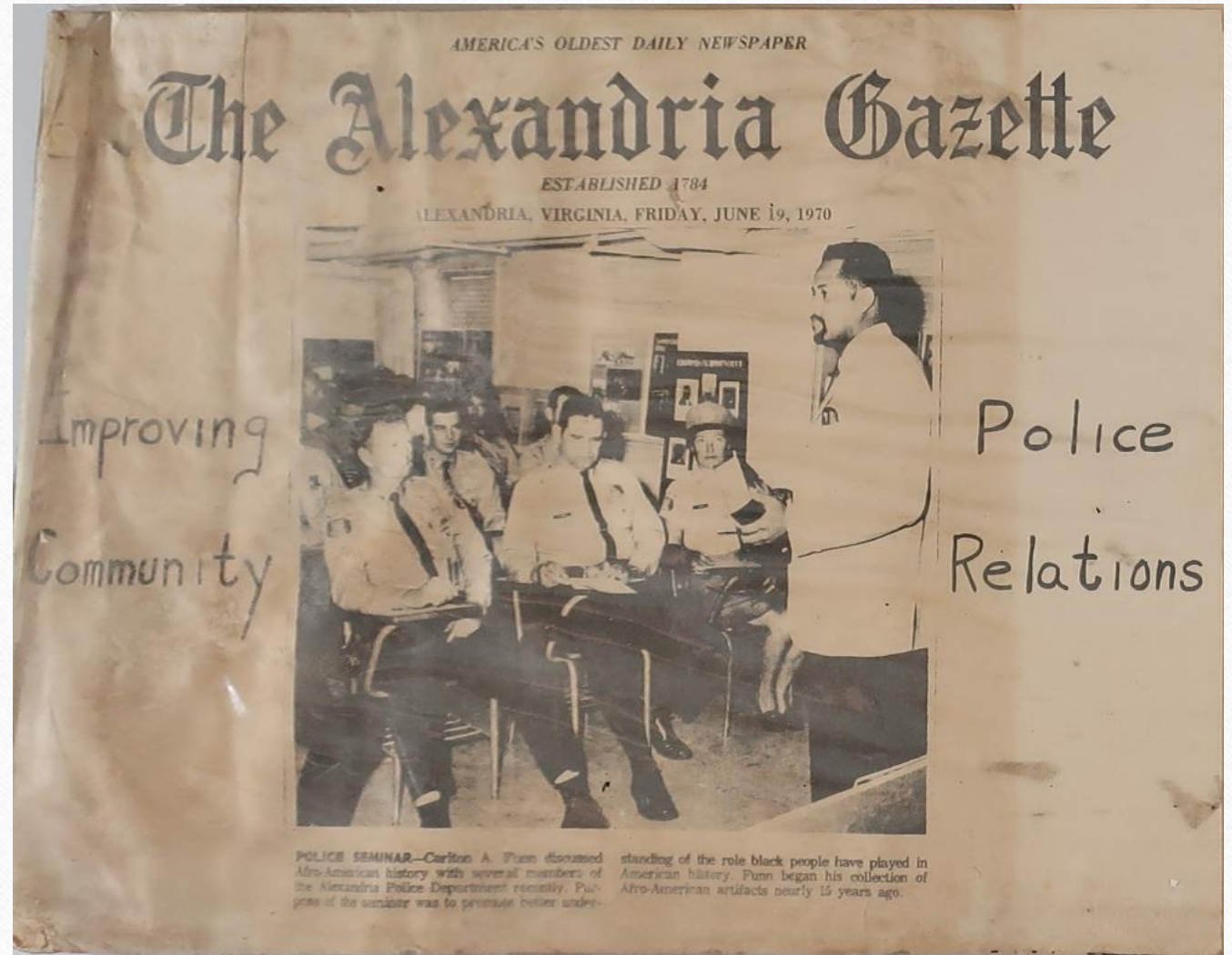
Funn taught in the Alexandria, Fairfax County and the District of Columbia public school systems for 38 years.

Although his exhibition took him across the country, Funn was a dedicated member of the Alexandria community.



Juneteenth 1970: This *Alexandria Gazette* article from June 19, 1970 shows Funn bringing his collection and his teaching to the Alexandria Police Department.

He had offered his services to improve police and community relations just weeks after the city had erupted in riots following the death of 19-year old Robin Gibson, an African American, who was shot and killed by a white employee at a 7-Eleven in Alexandria.





Funn's dedication to community work continued throughout his life.

He was a trustee at Alfred St. Baptist Church, and on the Freedman's Cemetery Commission and the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast Committee.

He was also the N.A.A.C.P. Membership Chair and a Past President of the Alexandria Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage. This society, together with the Parker-Gray Alumni, were responsible for the creation of the Alexandria Black History Resource Center, now the Alexandria Black History Museum.

### **Community Service Involvements: Carlton A. Funn Sr.**

1. Teacher 38 yrs.
2. Parent
3. N.A.A.C.P. Membership Chair
4. Urban League
5. Freedman's Cemetery Com.
6. Democratic Com.
7. P.T.A.
8. Alfred St. Baptist Church Trustee
9. Omega Psi Phi Frat.
10. Mayor's Prayer Breakfast Com.
11. Grand Fathers Group
12. Entrepreneur-Exhibitor-NICE Inc. (50 yrs+)
13. Hopkins House Inc.
14. The Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage Inc.
15. Black History Museum – Alex. VA.
16. N.E.A.
17. Drug Awareness Program – D.C.
18. Mayor's Teenage Pregnancy Program
19. Human Rights Com. – Alex. VA.
20. Taney Ave Civic Assoc.
21. U.S. Army Veteran 53-55
22. Storer College Alumni – 53
23. VA. State University Graduate – 72
24. Gov. Appt. Board of Visitors Mount Vernon 2007-09
25. Edmonson Plaza Steering Com. – 2007
26. Alexandria VA Bicentennial Com.
27. Fairfax Ed. Assoc.
28. Boys & Girls Club – Board Mem. Alex. VA.
29. American Legion Member

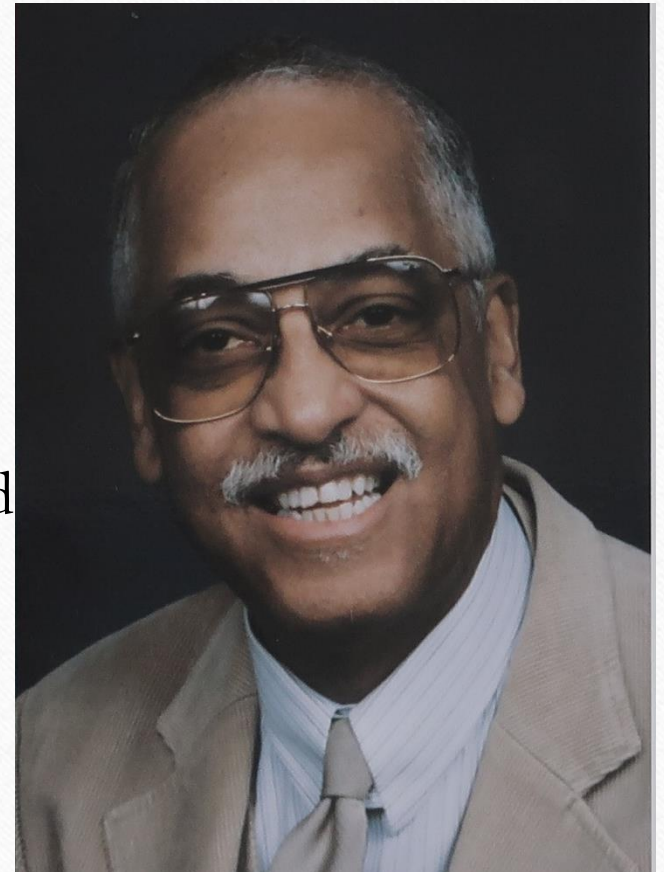


Funn passed away in 2012, but due to the generous donation of his children, nearly 1,500 display boards from Funn's exhibitions are now in the collection of the Alexandria Black History Museum and his legacy of teaching cultural understanding, respect, human dignity and love can continue.

Over the last year, the entire Funn collection has been catalogued and photographed and we are delighted to announce that it is now available to view on our online database. Search using **keywords**, by the **subject** or **people** headings, or just simply **browse images** to start your journey.

<https://historicalalexandria.pastperfectonline.com/>

To learn more about Funn see the online exhibition <https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/blackhistory/FunnExhibitTheImportanceofBeingNice.pdf>



*Please note that the Carlton Funn Collection consists of educational materials created from the 1950s to the 2010s and some of the information and language used may be outdated or incorrect. Please be aware of this when choosing materials to use with students. Also note that some content, such as graphic images of the Holocaust, may be upsetting to viewers.*