

Lesson Plan #4 for *Genius of Freedom: Comparing Depictions of African Americans at the Centennial Fair* by Amy Cohen

Grade Level: Middle or high school

Topics: Centennial Exhibition, Depictions of African Americans in art

Pennsylvania History Standards: 8.1.6 B, 8.1.9 B, 8.2.9 B, 8.3.9 B

Pennsylvania Core Standards: 8.5.6-8 A, 8.5.9-10 A, 8.5.11-12 A, 8.5. 6-8 B, 8.5.9-10 B, 8.5.11-12 B

***African American History*, Prentice Hall textbook:** N/A

Overview:

After closely examining an illustration of mostly African American Centennial visitors looking at the statue “The Freed Slave,” students will compare these relatively respectful images to other images of African Americans from the Centennial era. Students will participate in a real or virtual Gallery Walk of these varied images and will then view a PowerPoint that sheds light on the achievements and limitations of African Americans both as artists and as artistic subjects.

Materials:

Smartboard, projector, or document camera to show images

Individual student copies of *The Freed Slave*

Copies of the following images if doing the Gallery Walk option

- [Thomas Ball's Freedmen's Memorial to Abraham Lincoln](#)
- [Going to the Centennial: Statue of Emancipation](#)
- [The Centennial Visit of the Small Breed Family](#)
- [Bust of Richard Allen](#)
- [Photo of Edward Mitchell Bannister](#)
- [Edmonia Lewis Forever Free](#)
- [Image of Benjamin Tanner](#)
- [Negro Militia After Drill](#)
- Scene in St. Mary St., South Philadelphia

PowerPoint of images and laptop computers if doing the “virtual Gallery Walk” option

Image Comparison sheet

Follow-up PowerPoint

Procedures:

1. Begin the lesson by asking students to raise their hands if they have ever been to an amusement park. Then ask if they have ever been to an art museum or sculpture garden. Continue to have them raise hands if they have been to a science museum, an auto show, a street fair, a food court, a shopping mall, or Epcot Center in Disney World. Explain that from May to November of 1876,

Philadelphia hosted the Centennial Exposition—an event that can be thought of as a nineteenth-century combination of all of the types of places that you have just asked about. Indeed, more than one-fifth of the population of the United States visited the Centennial Exposition at least once.

2. Indicate that the Centennial took place during the late Reconstruction period, a time when slavery had ended and the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments had been passed. Today’s class will focus on looking at ways African Americans were depicted during the time of the Centennial in order to shed light on racial attitudes at the time.

3. Begin by projecting an image of a wood engraving from Frank Leslie’s newspaper of *The Freed Slave* in Memorial Hall. Ask students to look carefully at the statue and also at the depictions of the on-lookers. Make a list of their observations. The following points should be elicited:

Figure of Statue	Depiction of Onlookers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He has broken the chains (of slavery) and is holding a copy of the Emancipation Proclamation • He is muscular, standing erect, and looking straight ahead • Although he is unclothed, this is a pose similar to great Renaissance sculptures such as Michaelangelo’s <i>David</i> • He appears to be stepping off of the pedestal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the African Americans are extremely well dressed in the fashions of the Victorian era (note the parasol, fancy hats, boy in a suit) • The boy is holding a book • There are three older African Americans dressed more humbly • A white couple is shown off to the left wearing expressions that are not easily interpreted

4. Tell students that they will now do a Gallery Walk to compare this image to other images from the same time period. If your classroom is big enough, this can be done in the room, however, the images should be covered prior to the Gallery Walk. If you have a smaller classroom, this can be done in the hallway or as a “virtual Gallery Walk” by having students look at a PowerPoint of the images on a laptop or tablet. Either way, this can be done individually or in pairs. Distribute the Image Comparison sheets and individual student copies of *The Freed Slave*. Tell the students to circulate through the images, noting similarities and differences between *The Freed Slave* and the other depictions.

5. After students have completed the Gallery Walk, go through the images one-by-one using the Follow-up PowerPoint and have students share their responses. An answer key with important points to cover is provided. As you go through the images, share the following information about each and have

students record main ideas in the “Notes” column of the Image Comparison sheet:

A. Thomas Ball’s *Freedmen’s Memorial to Abraham Lincoln* was erected in a park in Washington, D.C. in 1876. The statue, which remains in place today, was paid for by small contributions made by freed slaves who started the collection of funds following Lincoln’s assassination. Frederick Douglass, who spoke at the dedication ceremony, said the statue, “showed the Negro on his knees when a more manly attitude would have been indicative of freedom.”

B. *Going to the Centennial* was published as a humorous guide to the Centennial; the image accompanied a story by the guide’s author that appears on the following slide.

C. *The Centennial Visit of the Small Breed Family* was printed in the 1876 edition of *Harper’s Weekly*, a widely circulated periodical, as part of a series of cartoons called “Blackville” that mocked African Americans.

D. The bust of Richard Allen, the founder of Mother Bethel Church and the African Methodist Episcopalian (A.M.E.) denomination, was the result of an organized fundraising campaign by African Americans who wanted positive representations of their race at the Centennial Exhibition. Richard Allen was born into slavery but became a pastor, political activist, and civil rights leader. This is the first statue of an African American paid for by the African American community in American history. Although it was thought to have been lost for many years, it was found in the collection of Wilberforce University, a historically black school in Ohio, in 2010. It is currently housed in the museum of Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church in Philadelphia—which sits on land that has been continuously owned by African Americans for longer than anywhere else in the United States.

E. This photo is of Edward Mitchell Bannister, a New England artist who won a first prize medal for a painting that was displayed at the Centennial Exhibition. Once the contest organizers realized that Bannister was black, however, they tried to change their decision. They relented when white artists threatened to revoke their works. The next slide shows a sample of Bannister’s work.

F. *Forever Free* is the work of sculptor Edmonia Lewis; it was completed in 1867. Like many African American artists in history, she chose to live in Europe in order to pursue her craft in a less racially oppressive environment. The next slide shows *Death of Cleopatra*, a Lee sculpture she created in Italy that was displayed at the Centennial Exhibition.

G. Benjamin Tucker Tanner, pictured here, was one of the organizers of black participation in the Centennial Exhibition. Working as an A.M.E. pastor and editor of *The Christian Recorder* in Philadelphia, Tanner took a lead role in the effort to collect funds for the bust of Richard Allen. His son, renowned artist Henry Ossawa Turner, also moved to Europe like Edmonia Lewis. The next

slides show a Tanner painting of the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, his adopted home, and *The Banjo Lesson*, a tender depiction of intergenerational connection.

H. *Negro Militia after Drill* is from a May 13, 1876 issue of the *London Daily News*. Although former members of the United States Colored Troops participated in parades on both the Centennial's opening day and July 4th, their participation was not mentioned in local newspapers.

I. *Scene in St. Mary St., South Philadelphia* is a woodcut illustration from Edward Strahan's *A Century After: Picturesque Glimpses of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania*. Although this 1875 publication generally described positive aspects of life in the Centennial city, a written description that accompanied this illustration is full of scathing descriptions of "darkeys." Excerpts of this appear in the slide that follows.

6. Ask students what generalizations they can make about depictions of African Americans during the Centennial era. If you haven't already done so, tell them that *The Freed Slave* was by an Austrian sculptor as that country's exhibit at the Centennial Exposition. They should understand that works by white Americans were often derisive and cartoonish, while works by African Americans and non-Americans depicted blacks in a much more dignified manner.

7. As a follow-up, have students revisit their individual copies of *The Freed Slave*. As either an "exit slip", a homework assignment, or an in-class journal the following day, have students choose one of the African American people depicted looking at the sculpture. What are their thoughts and emotions as they examine this statue? How does it compare to other depictions they have seen of fellow African Americans? What does it say to them about the past, present, and future of black people in the United States?

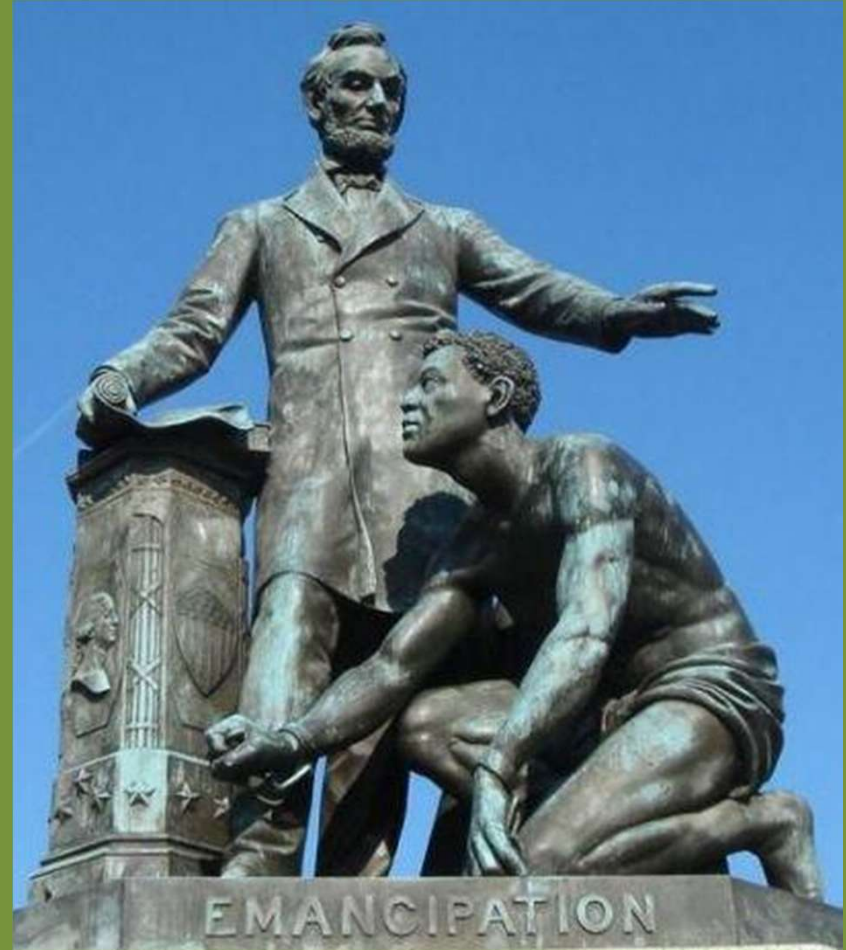
Image Credits

- Thomas Ball's statue "Freedmen's Memorial to Abraham Lincoln," 1876, Lincoln Park, Washington, D.C. "Another view of the 'Statue of Emancipation'" *Picturing U.S. History*. Accessed July 24, 2015. <http://picturinghistory.gc.cuny.edu/?p=1045>
- Thomas Worth, "Going to the Centennial: Statue of Emancipation." From "Another View of the 'Statue of Emancipation'" *Picturing U.S. History*. Accessed July 24, 2015. <http://picturinghistory.gc.cuny.edu/?p=1045>, http://www.joshbrownnyc.com/images/Statue_of_Emanicipation.jpg
- Sol Eytinge, "The Centennial-Visit of the 'Small Breed' family," *Harper's Weekly*, November 4, 1876. From "Picturing Fairs and Fairness" *Picturing U.S. History*. Accessed July 24, 2015. <http://picturinghistory.gc.cuny.edu/?p=564>, <http://picturinghistory.gc.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/smallville.jpg>
- Bust of Richard Allen. Photo by Nancy I. Sanders. Accessed July 24, 2015. <https://nancyisanders.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/ph-bethel-allen-bust-hpim8505.jpg>
- Photo of Edward Mitchell Bannister. Accessed July 24, 2015. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Edward_Mitchell_Bannister.jpg
- Edmonia Lewis. "Forever Free," marble, 1867. The Howard University Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. From "A New Birth of Freedom: Reconstruction During the Civil War," *America's Reconstruction: People and Politics after the Civil War*. University of Houston Digital History. Accessed July 24, 2015. http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/exhibits/reconstruction/section1/section1_03.html, http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/exhibits/reconstruction/reconstruction_images/17_forever_free.jpg
- Illustration of Benjamin Tanner from William J. Simmons. *Men of Mark: Eminent, Progressive and Rising*. Cleveland, Ohio: Geo. M. Rewell & Co., 1887. BlackPast. Accessed July 24, 2015. <http://www.blackpast.org/aah/tanner-benjamin-tucker-1835-1923>
- "The American Centennial Festival Exhibition: Scene in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia--Negro militia after Drill" Library of Congress. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2006677409/>, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/service/pnp/cph/3a50000/3a50000/3a50700/3a50760r.jpg>

Images of African Americans in the Centennial Era

A Virtual Gallery Walk

Freedmen's Memorial to Abraham Lincoln



Going to the Centennial: Statue of Emancipation

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GOING TO THE CENTENNIAL.



STATUE OF EMANCIPATION.

The Centennial Visit of the Small Breed Family



Bust of Richard Allen



Edward Mitchell Bannister



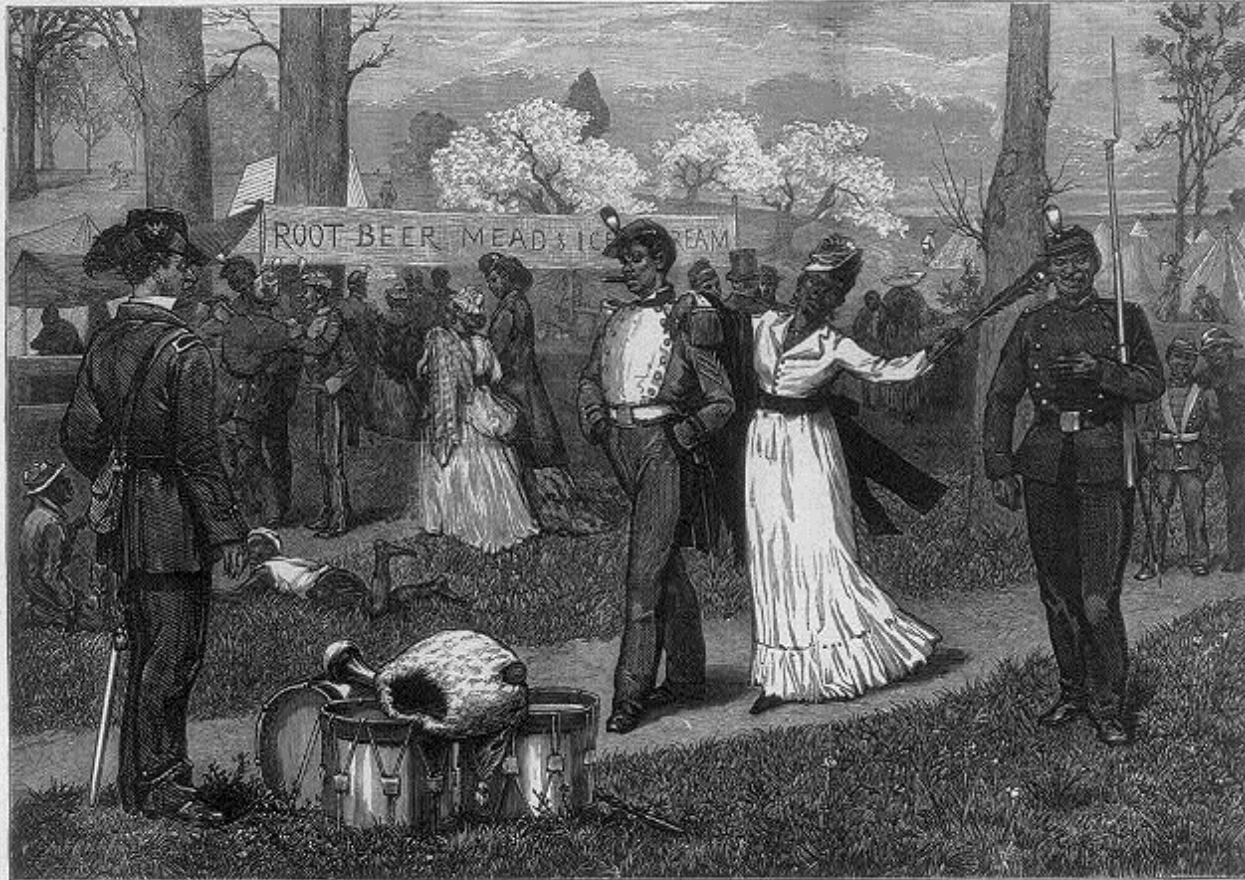
Forever Free



Benjamin Tucker Tanner



Negro Militia After Drill



THE AMERICAN CENTENNIAL FESTIVAL EXHIBITS; BOISE IS FAIRGROUNTS PARK, PHILADELPHIA—NEGRO MILITIA AFTER DRILL.

Scene in St. Mary's St., South Philadelphia



SCENE IN ST. MARY STREET.

Image Credits

- Thomas Ball's statue "Freedmen's Memorial to Abraham Lincoln," 1876, Lincoln Park, Washington, D.C. "Another view of the 'Statue of Emancipation'" *Picturing U.S. History*. Accessed July 24, 2015. <http://picturinghistory.gc.cuny.edu/?p=1045>
- Thomas Worth, "Going to the Centennial: Statue of Emancipation." From "Another View of the 'Statue of Emancipation'" *Picturing U.S. History*. Accessed July 24, 2015. <http://picturinghistory.gc.cuny.edu/?p=1045>, http://www.joshbrownnyc.com/images/Statue_of_Emanicipation.jpg
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- Edmonia Lewis. "Forever Free," marble, 1867. The Howard University Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. From "A New Birth of Freedom: Reconstruction During the Civil War," *America's Reconstruction: People and Politics after the Civil War*. University of Houston Digital History. Accessed July 24, 2015. http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/exhibits/reconstruction/section1/section1_03.html, http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/exhibits/reconstruction/reconstruction_images/17_forever_free.jpg
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- "The American Centennial Festival Exhibition: Scene in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia--Negro militia after Drill" Library of Congress. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2006677409/>, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/service/pnp/cph/3a50000/3a50000/3a50700/3a50760r.jpg>
- "Scene in St. Mary's St., South Philadelphia." Woodcut from Edward Strahan, ed. *A Century After: Picturesque Glimpses of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania*. Philadelphia, 1875.

Image Comparison: Indicate how “The Freed Slave” drawing is similar to and different from the works listed below. You can compare the works to the statue itself and/or to the depiction of the on-lookers. Leave “notes” section blank for now.

1. Freedmen’s Memorial to Abraham Lincoln

Similarities	Differences	Notes

2. Going to the Centennial: Statue of Emancipation

Similarities	Differences	Notes

3. The Centennial Visit of the Small Breed Family

Similarities	Differences	Notes

4. Bust of Richard Allen

Similarities	Differences	Notes

Image Comparison: Indicate how “The Freed Slave” drawing is similar to and different from the works listed below. You can compare the works to the statue itself and/or to the depiction of the on-lookers. Leave “notes” section blank for now.

5. Photo of Edward Mitchell Bannister

Similarities	Differences	Notes

6. Forever Free

Similarities	Differences	Notes

7. Image of Benjamin Tucker Tanner

Similarities	Differences	Notes

8. Negro Militia After Drill

Similarities	Differences	Notes

9. Scene on St. Mary's St., South Philadelphia

Similarities	Differences	Notes

Image Comparison: Indicate how the works you see are similar to and different from *The Freed Slave*. You can compare the works to the **statue itself and/or to the depiction of the on-lookers**. Leave “notes” section blank for now.

1. Freedmen’s Memorial to Abraham Lincoln

Similarities	Differences	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depicts emancipation • Shows a broken chain to symbolize emancipation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President Lincoln is standing over the crouched figure of the former slave • The children in the photograph are much smaller than the raised statue 	

2. Going to the Centennial: Statue of Emancipation

Similarities	Differences	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depicts a barely dressed black man with broken chains on wrists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The man appears to be dancing • Like the two other people in the drawing, the man has exaggerated lips and is portrayed as a buffoon • The clothing on the two black people looking at the statue are also exaggerated and clown-like 	

3. The Centennial Visit of the Small Breed Family

Similarities	Differences	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depicts a mixed-age group of well-dressed African Americans at the Centennial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The features and the fancy clothing are drawn in an exaggerated style that makes the people appear foolish 	

4. Bust of Richard Allen

Similarities	Differences	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a statue of a distinguished, proud looking black man 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Allen is fully clothed—more like the people than the statue in “The Freed Slave” 	

Image Comparison: Indicate how the works you see are similar to and different from *The Freed Slave*. You can compare the works to the **statue itself and/or to the depiction of the on-lookers**. Leave “notes” section blank for now.

5. Photo of Edward Mitchell Bannister

Similarities	Differences	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The photograph is of a distinguished, proud looking black man 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A photograph of a single person rather than a drawing of people and a statue Bannister is fully clothed—more like the people than the statue in “The Freed Slave” 	

6. Forever Free

Similarities	Differences	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A statue of a nearly undressed black man with broken chains at the wrist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a woman kneeling next to the man 	

7. Image of Benjamin Tucker Tanner

Similarities	Differences	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depicts a distinguished and respectable looking black man 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This man is fully clothed 	

8. Negro Militia After Drill

Similarities	Differences	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depicts a well-dressed group of black people at the Centennial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The men are dressed in soldier uniforms The woman appears to possibly be drunk, tickling the ear of a soldier with a feather while resting her hand on another 	

9. Scene on St. Mary’s St., South Philadelphia

Similarities	Differences	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depicts a mixed age group of both blacks and whites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children are playing in the street near animals There is physical contact between a black man and a white woman The people are not nicely dressed 	

Images of African Americans in the Centennial Era

Follow Up

Edward Ball, *Freedmen's Memorial to Abraham Lincoln*



Going to the Centennial: Statue of Emancipation

34

GOING TO THE CENTENNIAL.



STATUE OF EMANCIPATION.

In one of the halls stands the bronze statue of Emancipation, representing a negro dancing, and holding aloft the Emancipation Proclamation. It is a rare work of art, and must be seen to be appreciated.

But I could not help laughing as a pair of colored visitors came along and viewed it. They evidently did not know what it represented, and seeing its bronze nudity they were shocked, or at least she was, and my artist friend sketched them at the moment.

“Who dat, Charles?” she asked, glancing at it and then turning away.

“Dat? Dat am some great colored man; Fred Douglass, I guess,” replied her escort.

“Pshaw! who ever hearn tell ob Fred Douglass cuttin’ up dat way wid no clothes on?” and she pulled him away to something less allegorical.

Description of “Statue of Emancipation” in Thomas Worth, *Going to the Centennial*. New York, 1876.

The Centennial Visit of the Small Breed Family



Bust of Richard Allen



Mother Bethel Church; 6th & Lombard Streets in Philadelphia



Edward Mitchell Bannister



Woman Standing Near a Pond



Edmonia Lewis, Forever Free



Edmonia Lewis, *The Death of Cleopatra*



Benjamin Tucker Tanner



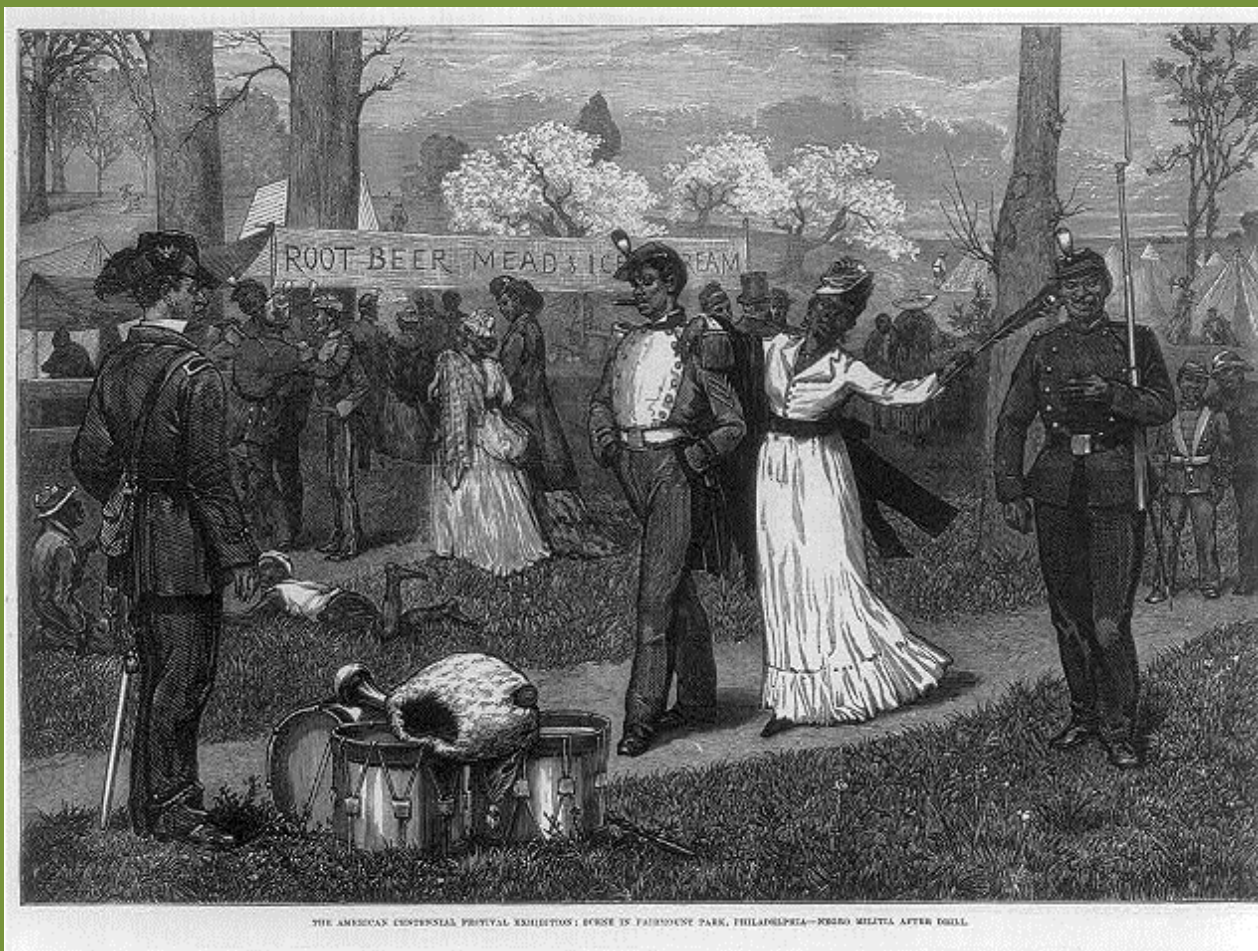
Henry Ossawa Tanner, *The Arch*



Henry Ossawa Tanner, *The Banjo Lesson*



Negro Militia After Drill, *Illustrated* *London News*



*Scene in St. Mary's St., South
Philadelphia*



Edward Strahan, *A Century After: Picturesque Glimpses of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1875)

“Old darkey women in the cellar-ways, young darkey children in everybody’s way, crawling on the narrow sidewalks, sitting and lying on curbstone, standing in the streets...”

“...bad young darkeys chucking bad young white girls under the chin (white girls having pitchers of beer); darkeys in the door, on the cellar-door, on the coal-box, under the lamp-post, around the corner, laughing, whooping, cursing, blaspheming; darkeys, darkeys everywhere.”



THE STATUE OF "THE FREED SLAVE" IN MEMORIAL HALL.

Image Credits

- Thomas Ball. *Freedmen's Memorial to Abraham Lincoln, 1876*, Lincoln Park, Washington, D.C. "Another view of the 'Statue of Emancipation'" *Picturing U.S. History*. Accessed July 24, 2015. <http://picturinghistory.gc.cuny.edu/?p=1045>
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- Mother Bethel AME Church, Philadelphia. Photo courtesy of Philadelphia Methodist History Walking Tour. Accessed July 24, 2015. <http://philawalk.org/index/#/bethel/>
- Photo of Edward Mitchell Bannister. Accessed July 24, 2015. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Edward_Mitchell_Bannister.jpg
- Edward Mitchell Bannister. *Woman Standing Near a Pond*, oil on canvas, 1880. St. Louis Museum of Art. Accessed July 24, 2015. <http://www.slam.org:8080/emuseum/view/objects/asitem/search@/0?t:state:flow=9787a717-8004-4da8-ad6b-349772464bc2>
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- Edmonia Lewis, "Death of Cleopatra," marble, 1876. Smithsonian American Museum of Art. <http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=33878>

Image Credits cont.

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- Henry Ossawa Tanner, *The Arch*, oil on canvas, 1919. Brooklyn Museum of Art. https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/397/The_Arch
- Henry Ossawa Tanner, *The Banjo Lesson*, 1893, oil on canvas. Hampton University Museum. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Henry_Ossawa_Tanner_-_The_Banjo_Lesson.jpg
- “The American Centennial Festival Exhibition: Scene in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia--Negro Militia after Drill.” Illustration in *The Illustrated London News*, May 13, 1876. Library of Congress Accessed July 24, 2015. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2006677409/>, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/service/pnp/cph/3a50000/3a50000/3a50700/3a50760r.jpg>
- “Scene in St. Mary’s St., South Philadelphia.” Woodcut from Edward Strahan, ed. *A Century After: Picturesque Glimpses of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania*. Philadelphia, 1875.
- “The Statue of ‘The Freed Slave’ in Memorial Hall” by Fernando Miranda in *Illustrated Historical Register of the Centennial Exhibition, Philadelphia, 1876* by Frank Henry Norton. New York: American News Co., 1879.