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**“A Bundle of Silences: Reimagining Interpretive Approaches to the Past”
FAQ and Additional Resources**

Interpretive Theme: Political Participation

Webinar Title: The Puzzle of Citizenship: Black Americans and the Birthright Principle

Scholar: Dr. Martha Jones, John Hopkins University, Department of History and SNF Agora Institute

FAQ:

1. Where can I look more closely at some of your primary sources?

I recommend starting with the materials collected by the Colored Conventions Project (coloredconventions.org). Their site includes the minutes for scores of conventions along with interpretive essays. The New Jersey state conventions are included here.

The website “Paul Cuffe: An African-American and Native-American Heritage Trail” has published the primary materials related to Cuffe’s story at paulcuffe.org.

2. What can I read to take a deeper dive into the history of Black Americans and citizenship?

I’ll recommend my own book, *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America* (Cambridge University Press, 2018.) Also very useful are Christopher James Bonner’s *Remaking the Black Republic: Black Politics and the Creation of American Citizenship* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020) and Andrew Diemer’s *The Politics of Black Citizenship: Free African Americans in the Mid-Atlantic Borderland, 1817-1863*. A great general reference on the topic of citizenship is Rogers Smith’s *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (Yale University Press, 199).

3. What if I want to read more about these issues in New Jersey?

I’d start with *The Ragged Road to Abolition: Slavery and Freedom in New Jersey, 1775-1865* from James J. Gigantino II (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014) and *Root and Branch: African Americans in New York and East Jersey, 1613-1863* from Graham Russell Gao Hodges (University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

You might also find these books interesting: From Lolita Buckner Inniss, *The Princeton Fugitive Slave: The Trials of James Collins Johnson* (Fordham University Press, 2021), *The Trouble with Minna: A Case of Slavery & Emancipation in the Antebellum North* (University of North Carolina Press, 2020) by Hendrik Hartog, and *Scarlet and Black, Volumes One and Two* Rutgers University Press 2020).

4. Where does the debate over birthright citizenship stand today?

Birthright citizenship remains a thorny legal question, even as the current White House administration has not expressed plans to compromise or change this aspects of the 14th Amendment.

In vitro fertilization has presented new questions about who is a birthright citizen as Sarah Zhang explained to readers of the Atlantic: <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2021/06/ivf-us-birthright-citizenship/619155/>

Citizens of American Samoa are continuing a long battle to be recognized as birthright citizens of the US as Jacob Knutson explained over at Axios: <https://www.axios.com/american-samoa-birthright-citizenship-ruling-4a438f31-5e68-4169-bddc-211128e97f26.html>

Additional Resources:

Leslie M. Alexander, *African or American? Black Identity and Political Activism in New York City, 1784–1861* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

Daniel R. Biddle and Murray Dubin, *Tasting Freedom: Octavius Catto and the Battle for Equality in Civil War America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010.)

Michael J. Birkner, *Samuel L. Southard: Jeffersonian Whig* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984).

William A. Blair, “Vagabond Voters and Racial Suffrage in Jacksonian-Era Pennsylvania,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 9, no. 4 (January 2019): 569–587.

Christopher James Bonner, *Remaking the Republic: Black Politics and the Creation of American Citizenship* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020).

Erica Armstrong Dunbar, *A Fragile Freedom: African American Women and Emancipation in the Antebellum City* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008).

Garrett Epps, *Democracy Reborn: The 14th Amendment and the Fight for Civil Rights in Post-Civil War America* (New York: Holt, 2006).

Eric Foner, *The Second Founding: How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution* (New York: Norton, 2019).

P. Gabrielle Foreman, Jim Casey, and Sarah Lynn Patterson, *The Colored Conventions Movement: Black Organizing in the Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021).

James J. Gigantino II, *The Ragged Road to Abolition: Slavery and Freedom in New Jersey, 1775-1865* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press,

Nicholas Guyatt, “‘The Outskirts of Our Happiness’: Race and the Lure of Colonization in the Early Republic,” *Journal of American History* 95, no. 4 (March 2009): 986–1011.

Martha S. Jones, *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

Alex Lovit, “‘The Bounds of Habitation’: The Geography of the American Colonization Society, 1816–1860” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2011).

Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia’s Black Community, 1720–1840* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988).

“Opinions of the Judges of the Supreme Court of the United States in the Cases of ‘Smith v. Turner’ and ‘Norris v. the City of Boston,’” *Southern Quarterly Review* 16, no. 32 (January 1850): 444–502.

H. Jefferson Powell, “Attorney General Taney and the South Carolina Police Bill.” *Green Bag* (2001): 75–100.

Manisha Sinha, *The Slave’s Cause: A History of Abolition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 65–98.

Lamont D. Thomas, *Rise to Be a People: A Biography of Paul Cuffe* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 1986).

Julie Winch, *A Gentleman of Color: The Life of James Forten* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Nicholas P. Wood, “A ‘Class of Citizens’: The Earliest Black Petitioners to Congress and Their Quaker Allies,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 1 (January 2017): 109–44.

Nicholas Wood, “‘Sacrifice on the Altar of Slavery’: Doughface Politics and Black Disenfranchisement in Pennsylvania, 1837-1838,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 31, no. 1 (January 2011): 75–106.