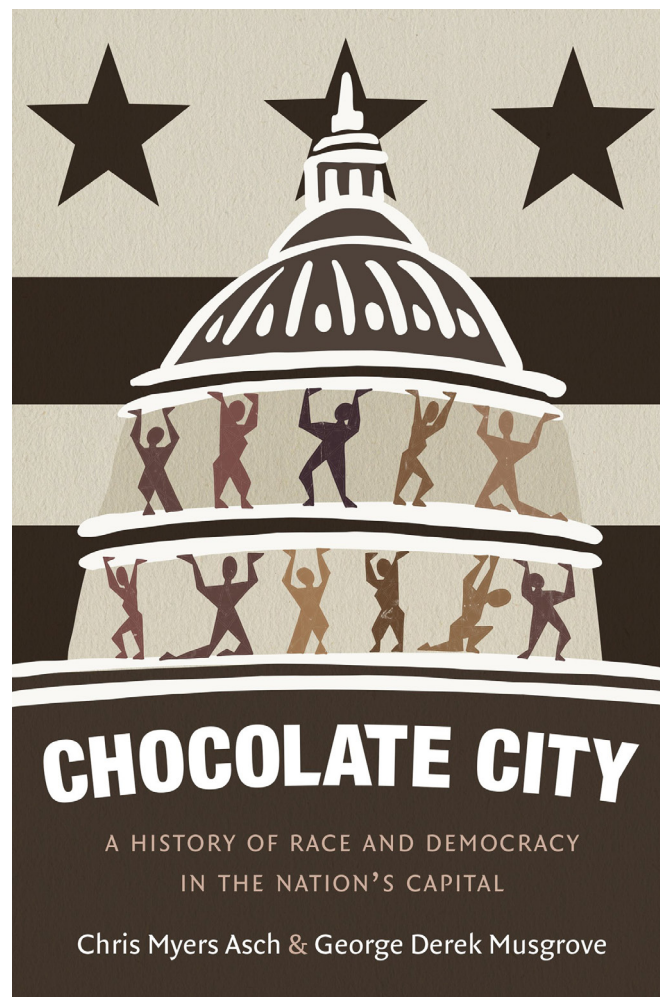


# Chocolate City: A History of Race and Democracy in the Nation's Capital

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## Reading and Discussion Guide

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## CHAPTERS 5-6

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**Additional Resources:** [Chocolate City Interactive Map](#)

### ***Chapter 5: Emancipate, Enfranchise, Educate: Freedom and the Hope of Interracial Democracy, 1862-1890***

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**Chapter Overview:** This chapter explores the myriad opportunities and challenges facing the District after DC Emancipation. With freedom from slavery won, black residents and new migrants fought for full citizenship, suffrage, and equality through political and social means. Many in the movement, white allies as well as some black leaders, began struggling with the sudden increase of black residents from different social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. Opponents of abolitionism pushed back against further rights in fear of losing white control of the District.

#### **Comprehend**

- With the significant increase in the District’s black population following DC Emancipation in 1862, how did groups within the District react? How did class, cultural, and racial differences affect efforts to assist, or hinder, the new arrivals? How were differences used to strengthen or weaken unity in the movement for equality?
- What means did black residents of DC use to gather, structure their lives, and fight for equality in post-Civil War DC?

#### **Respond**

- What does “full citizenship” mean, and what are the effects of denying a group its benefits and obligations? Must rights be given, or can they be claimed? Is citizenship and its rights a zero-sum proposition, as many opponents of black equality in this chapter propose?
- Considering the areas in which black residents immediately experienced inequalities, how do issues of access to public spaces and services, such as education and transportation, and service in public positions, like in the military and government office, continue to intersect with race today?
- Discuss how the events of this period lay the groundwork for the 1873 Supreme Court case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which validated “separate but equal” laws in the United States for the next 80 years.

#### **Reflect**

- As we see in this chapter, many efforts by aspiring white allies can result in paternalism, incrementalism, erasure, and the implicit or explicit promotion of white middle-class values. Where did these—and many contemporary efforts — fail, and how can people of good intent not repeat these errors in judgement and process?

## Key Terms, Names, and Definitions

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### ***Chapter 5: Emancipate, Enfranchise, Educate: Freedom and the Hope of Interracial Democracy, 1862-1890***

**Emancipation Day Celebration:** Organized by black leaders in DC starting in 1866, four years after DC's emancipation, Emancipation Day (April 16) would be marked with large public parades and speeches in proximity to the White House until the early 20th century.

**Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church:** Founded in 1841 as the First Colored Presbyterian Church by educator and pastor John F. Cook, Sr., the church has been a vital religious, educational, and social institution for DC's black community.

**Reconstruction:** The period (1865–77) that followed the Civil War when the US government attempted to redress the inequities of slavery and its political, social, and economic legacy and to solve the problems arising from the re-admission to the Union of the eleven seceding states.

**John Washington:** One of many enslaved black persons who fled Fredericksburg, Virginia during the Civil War. After working for the Union Army, Washington fled to Washington, DC where he and his wife Annie worked to form and grow a congregation that became Shiloh Baptist Church.

**Shiloh Baptist Church:** Founded in 1863 by 21 freed enslaved people who left Fredericksburg, VA with the Union Army. The church was an important institution for black migrants who came to DC in the wake of emancipation and defiance of fugitive slave laws still in effect across the Confederacy at the time.

**Weekly Anglo-African:** A newspaper printed out of New York by black abolitionist brothers Thomas and Robert Hamilton from 1859 to 1861, reporting on many of the era's most important abolitionist developments from Jamaica to Canada.

**Contraband Relief Association:** Founded by Elizabeth Keckly and members of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church in 1862, the organization gathered money and clothing for poor formerly enslaved people.

**National Freedman's Relief Association (NFRA):** A private organization founded in DC in 1862 by abolitionists, the NFRA was dedicated to first providing the basic physical needs—food, shelter, and clothing—of the newly arrived formerly enslaved people and later educational and moral (Christian) guidance.

**American Missionary Association (AMA):** A private organization, loosely connected with the NFRA, that worked to channel funds from churches into housing black migrants.

**Contraband Camps:** Intended to be safe, temporary camps for formerly enslaved people to receive food, shelter, and other forms of aid, the camps, financed by the Contraband Fund, became long-term residences prone to outbreaks of disease and violence.

**Danforth Nichols:** A white Methodist minister and leader of the AMA who became superintendent of the contraband camps in 1862. He built Camp Baker and later “Freedman’s Village” in an attempt to lessen overcrowding at existing camps. Under his leadership, residents of Camp Barker lived in squalid conditions in which over two dozen residents a week would die.

**Camp Barker:** Also called the “Washington Contraband Depot,” this contraband camp opened in July 1862 with four hundred residents one mile north of the White House (present-day U Street Corridor). At its height, four thousand residents lived there in ten-by-twelve foot cabins with over a dozen people each. Residents lacked basic needs, and conditions were so poor that diseases were rampant. Despite the government destroying the camp after “Freedman’s Village” was built, more than 500 former residents remained in the area.

**“Freedman’s Village”:** Built by Danforth Nichols in late 1863 on Robert E. Lee’s former Arlington estate (present-day Arlington National Cemetery), the community featured fifty-two family homes, a central pond, a hospital, a school, a chapel, and a home for the elderly. Its proponents hoped the community would foster middle-class, Christian values and self-sufficiency in its residents, but many residents of contraband camps refused to move there, calling it no better than a plantation.

**Contraband Fund:** A controversial initiative of the US Army to aid formerly enslaved people. The program was funded by a \$5 tax on black employees of the Army’s Quartermaster Department.

**Contraband Department:** A federal department within the US Army created to provide assistance to the large influx of formerly enslaved people, the Contraband Department put freedmen to work building a ring of forts around DC to protect the city against Confederate invasion.

**The Old Capitol Prison:** Originally built as a temporary meeting place for Congress, this building was transformed into a prison for Confederate soldiers and holding pen for black migrants fleeing the war. The site is now occupied by the Supreme Court of the United States.

**Duff’s Green Row:** A row of five homes and boarding houses, including the home where then-Representative Abraham Lincoln lived while serving in Congress, that was requisitioned by the District’s military governor as housing for black migrants during the Civil War.

**Fort Reno:** Fort Reno was a major fortification of the Civil War Defenses of Washington, located in what is now the Tenleytown neighborhood of Washington, DC. The fort sat on the highest natural point in the city and played a part in the only Civil War battle to take place in the District of Columbia, the Battle of Fort Stevens. The areas around the fort became important black, working-class communities into the 20th century.

**Fort Dupont:** One of several, large earthwork forts built to protect DC during the Civil War. Like Fort Reno, the areas around the fort became important black, working-class communities into the 20th century.

**James S. Wadsworth:** A wealthy New York abolitionist and Union general who served as the District’s military governor in 1862, Wadsworth attempted to humanely handle the large number of formerly enslaved migrants to DC.

**William J. Wilson:** After escaping from slavery, William J. Wilson spent 20 years as a teacher and principal in Brooklyn before moving to DC to serve as a teacher at Camp Baker. He was the only black teacher employed by the American Ministry Association and was by account an excellent educator and activist.

**Thomas Hinton:** A black journalist and military recruiter, Hinton covered the most important stories of his era. He decried racial injustices such as segregation while also being critical of many formerly enslaved migrants to the District.

**Grand United Order of Odd Fellows (GUOOF):** A fraternal order originally from Europe, the GUOOF was popularized in the United States by Peter Ogden, a black ship steward. The society focused on mutual aid, social welfare, and personal responsibility. Early black members had to apply to British chapters due to discrimination in the US. In DC, members held meetings and parades in full regalia, an important display of black solidarity and excellence.

**Board of Trustees of Colored Schools:** A federal board created to administer black schools in the District. Funded by a controversial 10% tax on black workers, the board and its mission to provide for black education became a divisive issue in local politics.

**Richard Wallach:** DC's 19th mayor and its first Republican one, Wallach served from 1861-1868, overseeing the largest growth in the District's history and modernizing much of the city's infrastructure. He was a staunch opponent of emancipation and black education, though he later worked to integrate schools as a class issue.

**Emma V. Brown:** A mixed-race woman, Emma Brown was an educator and racial equity activist. In 1864, she became the head teacher at the first public school established in Washington, DC for the education of Black students.

**First United States Colored Troops:** An infantry unit under the command of white officers during the Civil War, the regiment was mainly comprised of formerly enslaved people who migrated to DC, along with a few volunteers from elite families. The unit served from May 1863 to September 1865 and was an important step in demonstrating the changing status of black citizens.

**Metropolitan Railway Company:** The District's second streetcar company, MRC and its predecessor, the Washington and Georgetown Railroad, discriminated against Black riders until protests and a Congressional act in 1864 forced them to offer equal service to Black and white riders.

**Constitutional Union:** Printed from 1863-1870, the newspaper was founded by and sought to advance the causes of white Unionists (citizens who opposed the Southern states' cessations) but who also opposed emancipation.

**Henry Highland Garnet:** A formerly enslaved Marylander, Garnet was a gifted orator and the pastor of the Fifteenth Street Baptist Church. In 1865, he became the first black person to speak in the US Capitol when he gave a sermon to mark the passage of the 13th Amendment to the US Congress.

**General O.O. Howard:** A deeply pious, white general in the Union Army, Howard led the Freedmen's Bureau starting in 1865. A promoter of education for black people, he helped found Howard University in 1867 and served as its third president and namesake.

**Freedmen's Bureau:** Founded as part of the War Department in 1865 and officially called Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands until it closed in 1875, this government agency provided assistance to tens of thousands of formerly enslaved blacks and poor whites in Southern states and the District of Columbia.

**Howard University:** Founded in 1867 and named for General O.O. Howard who influenced Congress to appropriate funds for the school, Howard is a private university in Washington, DC. While open to students of all races, Howard was founded to provide advanced studies to black students and is considered one of the top Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the United States.

**George Hatton:** A formerly enslaved person, Hatton was active in many of the causes and movements fighting for black equality in DC. He protested and boycotted discriminatory businesses, was among the first to sign up and serve in the US Colored Troops, and at age 27 was elected as a Republican to DC's Common Council.

**Union League:** A political group founded in 1863 to advance the cause of black suffrage. While initially segregated, the group became interracial and served as an important test for black and white leaders to work together in the District.

**First Ward Civil Rights Association:** Another voting rights organization founded in the District by black professionals, the association also organized boycotts of discriminatory businesses. It served the heavily black area of Washington from the downtown canal to Rock Creek Park.

**Barry Farm:** A 375-acre tract of land, formerly the plantation of David and Julia Barry, it was purchased in 1867 by the Freedmen's Bureau to provide housing for black residents. The Bureau divided the land into roughly one-acre plots and sold them for between \$125-300, providing enough lumber for residents to build a home. By 1869, over 266 families moved to Barry Farm. It was officially renamed Hillside in 1874 and formed the nucleus of one of DC's largest black communities. In the early 1950s, the city built the Suitland Parkway, isolating the neighborhood between busy traffic arteries. Only a few old frame houses, mostly just at the edge of the thicket that separates Barry Farm from St. Elizabeth's Hospital, are the remnants of the original Freedman's community.

**House Resolution 1 (of December 1865):** A bill, proposed by Radical Republicans, which would have granted suffrage to black men in the Federal District. The bill drew sharp reprisals from moderate Republicans and Democrats alike and prompted a hasty referendum on the issue in Washington in which only 35% of residents supported the idea. The bill was passed by the Senate in 1866, which later overrode President Andrew Johnson's veto on January 8, 1867 making it law.

**Sayles J. Bowen:** A Radical Republican candidate and later 20th Mayor of Washington, DC, Bowen was elected by a cross-racial coalition of white and black voters following black men receiving suffrage in 1867. Bowen was initially refused access to the mayor's office. He later appointed black men to about 30% of his administration's positions, including within the fire department and as ward commissioners. Bowen rejected plans for integrated schools, ran up massive amounts of debt undertaking city improvement projects, and proved unable to manage the coalition which had elected him.

## **Chapter 6: Incapable of Self-Government: The Retreat from Democracy, 1869-1890**

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**Chapter Overview:** This chapter covers white backlash to the passage of black suffrage and the eventual loss of DC Home Rule due to the political maneuvering of the District's white business and political elites. In 1874, Congress created a three-man Commission appointed by Congress to replace Home Rule, which went on to control the city for nearly the next century despite vigorous opposition.

### **Comprehend**

- How did the actions of opponents to black suffrage—such as consolidation and commission rule — politically use black voters and their allies for their own anti-democratic ends?
- What were the disparate impacts of losing local rule on the city's white and black communities? What groups aligned against this disenfranchisement and what arguments did they put forth? What were the underlying motivations and arguments used to defend the commission-style government from white and black leaders?
- What was the importance of education and employment within the black community during this era, particularly in creating upward mobility in a time of social inequality?

### **Respond**

- How did issues of colorism (prejudice or discrimination against individuals with a dark skin tone) and classism appear within and outside of DC's black communities? How did white supremacists leverage colorism and classism to divide and disempower black communities?
- "Assimilation, not isolation, is our true policy and natural destiny," said Frederick Douglas. What is the relationship between integration and equality, historically and currently? In what ways did assimilation into white communities present significant risk or challenge to black residents?

### **Reflect**

- The political and economic white elite of the District often used racial tension or the plight of DC's poor, black community as a tool to manipulate decisions (on funding, construction, and other policies) in their favor. In what ways is race used today to manipulate or terrorize communities into supporting policies, practices, or perspectives which protect those with power? How have you experienced the use of, or participated in the propagation of, this technique?

# Key Terms, Names, and Definitions

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## ***Chapter 6: Incapable of Self-Government: The Retreat from Democracy, 1869-1890***

**Island Hall:** A former three-story brick building and surrounding neighborhood in Southwest DC that served as a meeting hall for diverse political organizations, often opposing each other, churches, and other civic groups. The building took its name from the surrounding neighborhood, cut off from the city by the canal to the north and east and the Potomac to the south and west (present day Southwest Federal Center). It was home to large working class Irish, German Jewish, and black populations.

**Seventh Ward Republicans:** A local group of Republicans who regularly challenged party authority and engaged in intra-party fights. Shortly before the 1869 elections they chose to ignore racial quotas set by the DC Republican party and nominate representatives for the Republican Nominating Convention based on merit alone, ultimately choosing a diverse and interracial slate.

**The Fifteenth Amendment:** Passed by Congress on February 26, 1869, and ratified on March 30, 1870, this amendment guaranteed all men the right to vote regardless of “race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”

**Alexander Shepherd:** A DC-native businessman and conservative political activist. Born to a wealthy, slave-owning lumber and coal merchant who died when Shepherd was only ten, Shepherd remade his family’s fortune in construction. Pro-Union but a staunch racist, he was the principal architect of DC losing its voting rights and ability to self-govern in order to maintain white, elite control of the District. Shepherd served as the District’s Governor from 1873 to 1874. His massive public works projects bankrupted the city, and Shepherd left DC with his political career ended.

**Consolidation:** A movement in the late 1860s to combine the governments of and erase the boundaries between Washington City, Georgetown, and Washington County, the separate entities within the District. Proponents argued it would increase efficiency in government and business, but they were also motivated by their fear of black suffrage. The movement succeeded when Congress passed the Organic Act of 1871, creating a single territory under one government.

**Washington Board of Trade:** A nonpartisan organization consisting of Democrats and wealthy Republicans, the Board opposed black suffrage and advocated for consolidation and commission rule. They promoted economic growth above all else, including democracy.

**Independent Reform Republicans:** An interracial group of Mayor Bowen’s critics, including breakaway Republicans. United many activists with otherwise divergent beliefs.



**Sayles J. Bowen:** A Radical Republican candidate and later 20th Mayor of Washington, DC, Bowen was elected by a cross-racial coalition of white and black voters following black men receiving suffrage in 1867. Bowen was initially refused access to the mayor's office. He later appointed black men to about 30% of his administration's positions, including within the fire department and as ward commissioners. Bowen rejected plans for integrated schools, ran up massive amounts of debt undertaking city improvement projects, and proved unable to manage the coalition which had elected him.

**Territorial Government:** In 1871, Congress created a territorial government in DC consisting of a governor, an 11-member council appointed by the President, and a popularly elected 22-member House of Delegates, as well as an appointed Board of Public Works charged with modernizing the city. DC was also allotted a non-voting delegate to the US House of Representatives. This form of government was abolished just three years later and Congress replaced it with a 3-member civilian commission, which remained DC's form of government for the next almost 100 years. Congress additionally pledged to cover 50% of the District budget. This decision, made permanent in 1878, permanently ended residents' right to vote and curtailed dreams of home rule for nearly a century.

**Board of Commissioners:** Established by Congress in 1874 as the format for governing the District, the three-man board included two members appointed by the President and a third selected from the Army Corps of Engineers. This anti-democratic form of rule stayed in place until 1967.

**DC Board of Public Works:** Created by the Organic Act of 1871, the Board of Public Works was responsible for the distribution of contracts and patronage in the District.

**The Panic of 1873:** The Panic of 1873 was a financial crisis that triggered an economic depression in Europe and North America that lasted from 1873-1877. Both the crisis and ensuing economic depression had several underlying causes. American inflation, rampant speculative investments (overwhelmingly in railroads), the demonetization of silver in Germany and the US, ripples from economic dislocation in Europe resulting from the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), and major property losses in the Great Chicago Fire (1871) and the Great Boston Fire (1872) helped to place massive strain on bank reserves, which, in New York City, plummeted from \$50 million to \$17 million between September and October 1873.

The Panic of 1873 is largely identified as the cause of the failure for the District's Territorial Government, and severely impacted many financial institutions in DC, especially those which were black-owned.

**George W. Riggs:** Prominent DC financier and opponent of both the Territorial Government and Board of Public Works. Riggs would later head a delegation on behalf of the Citizens Association of the District of Columbia that would call on Congress to investigate Alexander Shepherd and the Board of Public Works. Riggs was also rabidly racist, insisting that the majority of black voters were "incapable of self-government."

**W.W. Corcoran:** A Southern sympathizer and known racist who spent the Civil War in self-imposed exile in Europe, Corcoran was a leading businessman who jointly owned Riggs Bank with George W. Riggs. Although he supported consolidation, he strongly opposed the Territorial Government appointed by President Grant because it consisted mostly of Republicans. He later came out against efforts by Alexander Shepherd and the Board of Public Works to beautify the city because it ran up public debt.

**George Vashon:** A black DC resident and official with the Freedmen's Bureau, Vashon was also Howard University's first professor and a staunch opponent of efforts toward consolidation out of fear it would cause black disenfranchisement.

**Pacific Circle (now Dupont Circle):** A formerly "rural" part of the District that experienced rapid development during Alexander Shepherd's leadership of the Board of Public Works.

**Citizens Association of the District of Columbia:** A group organized against the Territorial Government for its out-of-control spending on public works. The association accused Alexander Shepherd, then the chair of the Board of Public Works, with bribing and manipulating black voters. They financed the anti-Shepherd paper Daily Patriot.

**Freedman's Savings Bank:** Founded in Washington in 1865 by abolitionist financiers, the bank encouraged formerly enslaved people to save money, accumulate wealth, and establish themselves. It grew to all 37 states with millions of dollars in deposits by 1873, when it collapsed due to white political officials' corrupt lending practices. Its loss was a blow to the District's black community, who not only lost their money but much of their faith in financial institutions and the country itself.

**Compromise of 1877:** An informal deal which ended a dispute between Congressional Republicans and Democrats over the 1876 presidential elections. Democrats allowed Republican Rutherford B. Hayes to assume the presidency in exchange for the removal of federal troops from the South. The act essentially ended Reconstruction and allowed the South to reassert white supremacy as the law of the land.

**Orindatus Simon Boliver (O.B.S.) Wall:** A formerly enslaved person, Wall was a mixed-race attorney and politician who served as the District's first black justice of the peace, appointed by President Grant, and later was twice elected to represent a white-majority district in Washington's legislative assembly. A graduate of Oberlin and Harvard, Wall and his wife Amanda were among Washington's black elite.

**Howard Hill Aid Society:** A mutual aid society founded by O.B.S. Wall that helped poor residents of the Howard Hill neighborhood.

**Mary Ann Shadd Cary:** Born free in Delaware in 1823, Shadd Cary was an outspoken black activist, writer, and educator. Involved in the Underground Railroad, Shadd Cary moved to Canada after Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850. There she became the first woman in North America to found and edit a newspaper. She moved to DC in 1869 and became an educator. At age sixty, she began practicing law after graduation from Howard Law School, the second black woman in the country to earn a law degree. She also promoted women's suffrage and founded the Colored Women's Progressive Franchise Association.

**The Colored Women's Progressive Franchise Association:** An organization advocating for equal rights of black women organized by Mary Ann Shadd Cary in 1880. Also referred to as the Colored Women's Progressive Association, it paved the path for a movement of black women's organizations and institutions that articulated feminist concerns and agendas, which followed the end of Reconstruction. Significantly, the Colored Women's Progressive Franchise Association preceded the women's club movement in Washington, DC, by more than a decade.

**Francis Cardozo:** The first black person to hold statewide office in the US, Cardozo was a clergyman, politician, and educator who was elected Secretary of State in South Carolina in 1868. Appointed to the US Treasury Department in 1878, Cardozo moved and remained in DC for the rest of his life, including twelve years as a principal at Colored Preparatory (M Street) High School.

**Colored Preparatory (M Street) High School:** Established in 1870, M Street High School was America's first black public high school and offered a college preparatory curriculum. Under the leadership of Francis Cardozo, it developed into one of the nation's leading public high schools.

**Alexander Crummell:** Crummell was a prominent black intellectual, former colonization proponent, and rector of DC's first all-black Episcopal church, St. Luke's Episcopal Church. St. Luke's became one of the most important black Episcopal churches in the nation under Crummell's pulpit. St. Luke's remains an active Episcopal congregation in Northwest DC today.

**Colorism:** Many of DC's black leaders were mixed-race individuals as a result of slavery. Having white ancestry and/or lighter skin became an important social signifier, source of pride, and identity, as well as source of white-supremacist fueled division within the black community. Colorism was prejudice or discrimination by people of color against individuals with darker skin tones.

**The "400":** Curated by the popular black-owned publication The Washington Bee, "The 400" was a list of the wealthiest, most accomplished black residents in the District.

**Unlimited Suffrage:** An interracial movement among DC residents to earn back the right to vote. Prominent supporters included O.S.B. Wall, John F. Cook, Sayles J Bowen, and others. Arguments against universal suffrage were often driven by race, with a complex assortment of Democrats and Republicans leveraging white fear of black control in city government to rally opposition to the measure.

**Labor Movement:** Led by organizations such as the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor, the District's labor movement threw its full support behind universal suffrage as a means for working class white and black people to hold city officials accountable and secure economic opportunities. They financed the aggressive labor paper, the Washington Times and unsuccessfully lobbied Congress on suffrage bills.

**Alley Communities:** Communities of one-and two-room shacks that grew in the District's alleys after the Civil War due to housing shortages, primarily for working class people. By 1880, 231 named alleys existed, housing over 10,000 people, 87% of whom were black. Alley communities were over-crowded, lacked sanitation structures, and were often full of crime. By 1897, their population nearly doubled, with 93% of households being black. Alley communities persisted well into the 20th century until they saw demolition starting in 1954.

**Perry Carson:** A prominent black political leader, Carson was also known as "Colonel" due to his work organizing a regiment to defend black residents from local Irish workers. He was a champion of the District's working class residents. One of the city's foremost Republicans, he served as the District's delegate to the Republican National Convention from 1880-1900. He also served as the grand marshal for many Emancipation Day celebrations.

**Calvin Chase:** Educated at Howard University, Chase was a prominent black lawyer and journalist. He founded and became editor of the Washington Bee in 1882, one of the District's foremost black newspapers. A lifelong Republican, Chase sought a political appointment for much of his life, eventually becoming the Recorder of Deeds and later a clerk in Frederick Douglass's office. Chase clashed with Perry Carson over issues of race and class. Chase thought Carson and his working-class supporters reinforced stereotypes. Because of this, Chase fought for qualified suffrage and argued for more "genteel" Emancipation Day celebrations.

**Alice Parke Shadd:** A teacher in Washington's public school system and married to a doctor at the Freedman's Hospital, Parke Shadd typified the light-skinned black person who rejected their mixed-race identity for the privileges and safety of passing white.