

The Varying Meanings of Freedom for the African-American Community in Lexington and Rockbridge County from the American Revolution to World War I

Freedom is one of the most important words in the American lexicon. Though most African Americans living in Lexington and Rockbridge County prior to the Civil War were enslaved, there were many who were not. After 1865, all African Americans were "free." But what exactly did freedom mean to local African Americans from the time of the American Revolution to World War I? How much *freedom* was actually possible? What strategies were developed by African Americans to overcome the limits placed upon their *freedom* during this period.

These questions and others will be considered in a four-part lecture series to be sponsored by the Rockbridge Historical Society during the month of November. Each of the sessions will begin at 7:30 P.M. in the auditorium of the Nichols Engineering Building at the Virginia Military Institute. (Nichols is the building located along the parade ground between Preston Library and Jackson Memorial Hall.) The public is invited to attend and participate in this free lecture series.

Tuesday, 2 November

John Chavis, African-American Student at Liberty Hall Academy
Ted Delaney, *Washington & Lee University*.

Tuesday, 9 November

Life Stories of Free Blacks in Antebellum Lexington & Rockbridge County
Ellen Eslinger, *DePaul University* or Megan

Monday, 15 November

The Struggle for Freedom during Reconstruction
David Coffey, *Virginia Military Institute*

Tuesday, 23 November

Lexington's African-American Community
in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries
A panel of local residents.

Me

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This building, once located on Randolph Street, served as Lexington's African-American school from 1865 to 1927. (Photo from the Jackson Davis Collection [MSS 3072], Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library.)