



About the Museum

The Jim Crow Museum houses over nine thousand artifacts; the majority of the objects were created between the 1870s and the 1960s. The largest portion of the museum's holdings is anti-black memorabilia, for example, mammy candles, Nellie fishing lures, picaninny ashtrays, sambo masks, and lawn jockeys. These objects both shaped and reflected attitudes toward African Americans during the Jim Crow era. The museum also displays Jim Crow memorabilia—books, signs, tickets, brochures, and photographs—that promoted racial segregation.

The museum demonstrates how racist ideas and anti-black images were pervasive within American culture. It also shows how these images and ideas have resurfaced in recent years. Stories about African American achievements during the Jim Crow era, along with artifacts of the Civil Rights Movement, are also found within the museum.

Jim Crow Museum

1010 Campus Drive

Big Rapids, MI 49307

(231) 591-5873

www.ferris.edu/jimcrow

jimcrowmuseum@ferris.edu

Connect with us:



Hours of Operation:

Monday – Friday

12p.m. – 5 p.m.

and group tours by appointment

Admission is FREE

Suggested age, 12+

Child Visitors to the Jim Crow Museum

Many of the artifacts and media pieces within the Jim Crow Museum contain explicit images of violence, nudity, offensive language, and other mature themes. Because of this, the museum is recommended for those 12 years of age and older.

Although we strongly suggest that all children under 18 years of age be accompanied by an adult, children younger than 12 years of age **must** be accompanied by an adult.



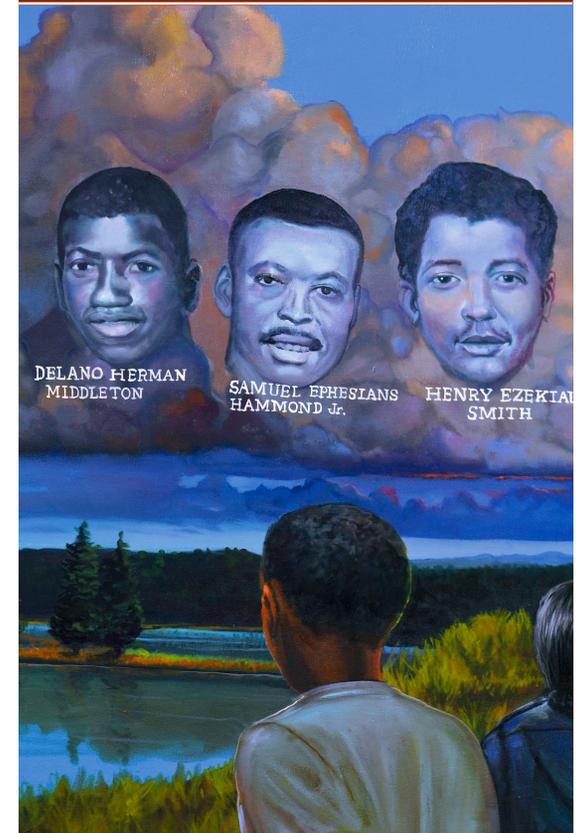
Jim Crow Museum

of RACIST MEMORABILIA

Using Objects of Intolerance to Teach Tolerance and Promote Social Justice

The Jim Crow Museum is located on the lower level of Ferris State University's FLITE Building

1010 Campus Drive
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Major Lessons

The museum teaches different and varied lessons including, but not limited to, the following.

- 1) The Jim Crow racial system was more than “Whites Only” signs; it was a way of life impacting every major societal institution.
- 2) The Jim Crow racial system was supported by violence and by millions of everyday objects that caricature African Americans.
- 3) Despite Jim Crow, African Americans made significant contributions to this country.
- 4) Jim Crow era imagery is still being reproduced and new images are being created, such as those depicting President Obama in caricatured ways and as a target for violence and hatred.
- 5) Meaningful dialogue, even when painful, is a necessary prerequisite for addressing racial problems.



“This is one of the most important contributions to the study of American history that I have ever experienced.”

-HENRY LOUIS GATES

Why is this museum important?

Many of today’s students have only a vague understanding of the dreadful impact of Jim Crow laws and customs. More specifically, they lack a fundamental knowledge of restrictive covenants, literacy tests, poll taxes, and other oppressive features of the Jim Crow racial hierarchy. The Jim Crow Museum is a powerful teaching tool, offering students an opportunity to learn about this important period in the history of the United States.

Most of the objects displayed in the museum were created with the intent of belittling and humiliating African Americans. These objects are difficult to view. Nevertheless, the museum’s staff believes that these objects can be used to fuel intelligent discussions about race, race relations, and racism.

Promoting Social Justice

Woodbridge N. Ferris, the founder of Ferris Institute (now Ferris State University), challenged faculty, staff, and students to “make the world a better place.” The Jim Crow Museum is one attempt by the university to improve the world. This is seen in the museum's mission to “use objects of intolerance to teach tolerance and promote social justice.” The university and the museum are committed to creating a society that values human rights and recognizes the dignity of every person.

Jim Crow Museum

of Racist Memorabilia

at FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

