

Johns Hopkins University's Dr. Martha S. Jones to discuss 2018 publication, *"Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America"*

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LancasterHistory April virtual lecture to examine how African American activists transformed citizenship for all Americans

Johns Hopkins University's Dr. Martha S. Jones to discuss 2018 publication, "Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America"

Lancaster, PA (March 29, 2021) – On Thursday, April 15, 2021, Dr. Martha S. Jones will join LancasterHistory virtually to tell the fascinating story of how African American activists radically transformed the terms of citizenship for all Americans.

Before the Civil War, colonization schemes and black laws threatened to deport former slaves born in the United States. Martha S. Jones' recent book *Birthright Citizens* recovers the story of how African American activists remade national belonging through battles in legislatures, conventions, and courthouses. They faced formidable opposition, most notoriously from the US Supreme Court decision in Dred Scott. Still, no single case defined their status. Former slaves studied law, secured allies, and conducted themselves like citizens, establishing their status through local, everyday claims. All along they argued that birth guaranteed their rights.

With fresh archival sources and an ambitious reframing of constitutional law-making before the Civil War, Jones will show how the Fourteenth Amendment constitutionalized the birthright

principle, fulfilling the long-held aspirations of African Americans.

Martha S. Jones, Ph.D. is the Society of Black Alumni Presidential Professor and Professor of History at Johns Hopkins University, and Co-President of the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians. She is the author of *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America* (2018) and *All Bound Up Together: The Woman Question in African American Public Culture* (2007), and an editor of *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women* (2015.) Her latest book, *Vanguard: How Black Women Broke Barriers, Won the Vote, and Insisted on Equality for All*, was published in September 2020.

EVENT DETAILS & HOW TO REGISTER

This event will take place **online via Zoom** on Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 7pm Eastern. **This is NOT an in-person event.**

The program is free and open to the public but requires advance registration. Registration is available online at <https://bit.ly/rhc21apr15>. **The link to the Zoom event will be emailed to you automatically upon successful registration.**

To view all of LancasterHistory's upcoming Spring 2021 Virtual Lectures, visit lancasterhistory.org/virtualrhc.

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