

00:06
hello
00:06
welcome to another virtual program with
00:09
maine historical society
00:10
it is july 22nd 2021
00:15
and this is 19th century black politics
00:18
in maine
00:19
historical research and legacies a
00:23
panel and joining us
00:26
uh for this program our panelists uh
00:29
pamela cummings the
00:31
president of the committee to restore
00:33
the abyssinian
00:34
meeting house mary freeman uh who joins
00:37
us from the university of maine
00:40
bob green a writer journalist a
00:43
historian
00:45
teacher independent scholar genealogist
00:48
and van gaas who joins us from franklin
00:52
and marshall university thank you so
00:54
much panelists for
00:56
being with us for this program thank you
00:59
thank you it's our uh pleasure
01:02
and i'm gonna at this point uh turn it

01:04
over to van to
01:06
officially start the panel and the
01:08
discussion for us
01:10
nice
01:13
shall i start okay yeah go right ahead
01:15
well i'm
01:16
i'm extremely honored to be here
01:19
with all of you mainers um the gossas
01:22
actually were
01:23
mainers for a long time but all of that
01:26
connection was lost somewhere the early
01:28
20th century when my grandmother left
01:30
maine never to return
01:31
but i actually do feel a connection
01:33
there
01:35
so i've written a book called the first
01:38
reconstruction
01:39
black politics in america from the
01:42
revolution to the civil war
01:44
and that book has an entire chapter on
01:46
maine especially portland
01:49
and the argument in my book is that
01:52
black men because politics and i'm

01:54
talking about traditional politics
01:56
parties
01:57
voting elections patronage all of that
02:00
um was with the exception of new jersey
02:04
for about 30 years women were excluded
02:06
from traditional politics
02:08
they did vote in new jersey for a
02:09
substantial period of time but that's
02:11
not what we're talking about today
02:12
in fact even black women voted new
02:14
jersey from 1776 to 1807 if they were
02:18
not enslaved and they were independent
02:20
but i want to talk about new england and
02:22
maine
02:24
the reason i wrote this book is that
02:27
without without really knowing what i
02:29
was doing i discovered
02:31
a much much larger history of black
02:34
men's participation
02:35
in the american political system than
02:37
anyone had ever written about
02:39
there were a few good books that i
02:41
relied on but mostly

02:43
the assumption had been even from
02:45
leading historians
02:46
that black men were effectively excluded
02:49
and so few of them could vote that it
02:51
wasn't worth studying
02:53
and to put it simply my book challenges
02:56
that completely
02:57
i say that there were enough of them
02:59
they did vote
03:00
they were politically influential and
03:03
people knew about this
03:04
uh it was widely discussed
03:07
in the slave states it was described as
03:10
an abomination
03:11
and a challenge to the very existence of
03:14
the
03:14
racial white supremacist order that the
03:17
slave states embodied
03:18
so they paid a great deal of attention
03:20
wait a minute let me just get right down
03:22
to it
03:23
when the national republican party in
03:26
1832

03:27
in portland the national republican
03:29
party was the predecessor to the whig
03:31
party
03:32
it was founded around john quincy adams
03:34
in his successful run for the presidency
03:37
as a new englander in 1828
03:42
he was the second northerner to be
03:43
elected president
03:46
his father had been president had been
03:47
deposed by a slaveholder thomas
03:49
jefferson
03:50
so john quincy adams formed the national
03:52
republican party
03:54
loosely very just to back his candidacy
03:56
in 1832
03:57
it came together and in portland
04:01
the leading main federalist general
04:04
samuel fessenden opened up the party and
04:08
dozens and dozens of black men walked
04:10
into their party convention
04:11
to cheers cheering black men
04:16
and so that gives you an idea now i said
04:18
that this was well known

04:20
southern newspapers covered that in
04:22
great detail
04:23
look at those yankees look at those
04:25
national republicans
04:26
they socialized with black men and it
04:29
went back and forth in the press with
04:30
general fessenton
04:32
defending and saying of course we do we
04:34
do not pay attention to a man's
04:35
complexion
04:36
if he's a good american he's welcome in
04:38
our party so this was just
04:40
this is an early indication of how
04:43
visible
04:43
and how significant black men's
04:45
participation in politics was in
04:47
portland and maine
04:48
in general let me back up and i'm not
04:51
going to tell you the whole story i'm
04:52
actually just going to tell a few
04:53
stories and then
04:54
and hand it over i will have made done
04:56
my part

04:57

um when maine was founded in 1819

05:02

the most senior figure at the main

05:03

constitutional convention was george

05:05

thatcher

05:06

he had represented maine in congress for

05:10

12 years and during those 12 years from

05:13

1789 to 1801

05:15

there was absolutely no question who was

05:18

the most

05:18

outspoken defender of black citizenship

05:22

of black people as human beings and

05:24

fellow americans than this conservative

05:26

federalist

05:27

from what town is he from i forget in

05:30

southern maine

05:31

he was he baited southerners over and

05:34

over

05:35

he tried to extend the northwest

05:36

ordinance into the southwest which would

05:38

have changed the future of this country

05:40

if the southwestern states had slavery

05:42

abandoned them so here was this man

05:45

so he's at the main constitutional

05:46
convention and one
05:48
minor figure a delegate from calais
05:51
tried to insert
05:52
white into the suffrage clause the main
05:55
the main constitution
05:57
and thatcher basically threw him you
06:01
know
06:01
made fun of him because thatcher had
06:03
enormous prestige
06:04
and later on someone actually said and
06:06
i'm going to quote something here mate
06:08
someone said
06:08
well actually this delegate over here
06:10
was elected he wasn't
06:12
he doesn't live in the town that elected
06:13
him as a delegate
06:15
can we allow him in and thatcher said
06:17
and remember this is the most senior
06:19
figure at the founding of may
06:21
he'd been a justice on the manhattan
06:23
massachusetts supreme court for decades
06:26
he said if if a town wants to send a man
06:29
it doesn't matter who they if they want

06:31
to send a black man they have every
06:32
right to send a black man
06:35
not that there was not a black man at
06:36
the convention as far as i know so maine
06:38
was founded
06:39
as an aggressively non-racial place
06:43
i'm not trying to say it was a paradise
06:45
that there was no racism i'm not
06:46
saying that at all but there was no
06:48
question that black men were going to
06:50
vote
06:50
and already in the 1820s they were
06:52
getting patronage positions in portland
06:54
city government
06:55
and you can look up these men james boaz
06:58
manuel christopher manuel
07:00
these were well-known men these were
07:01
businessmen everyone knew they were
07:03
founders of abyssinian baptist founders
07:06
of a lot of other things
07:07
so by the 1830s and i will wrap up on
07:09
this note
07:10
they were in politics and uh the thing

07:12

that most gets my attention a lot of

07:14

people mary freeman does really good

07:16

work on ruben ruby

07:17

i suspect maybe you folks have heard of

07:20

ruben ruby

07:21

maybe you've heard about him setting up

07:22

the first professional hack service in

07:24

portland

07:25

a major business maybe you've heard

07:27

about him taking william lloyd garrison

07:28

around

07:29

portland the first time garrison came up

07:31

to meet with general fessenden

07:33

to found the main anti-slavery society

07:36

general fessenden who had been a very

07:37

powerful federalist

07:39

what you don't know i suspect is that

07:42

the founding of the whig party in may

07:44

the founding of this party very the

07:46

major other major political party in

07:48

1834

07:49

the founding convention there are four

07:50

delegates from portland

07:52

general fessenden is a delegate and

07:54

reuben ruby is a delegate

07:56

so reuben ruby wasn't just an

07:57

abolitionist and a businessman

07:59

he was actually a serious party

08:01

politician and there's

08:02

there's a lot more there this continues

08:04

straight through so i'll leave you with

08:06

one less and i admit these are anecdotes

08:09

reuben ruby's life is quite

08:10

extraordinary the culmination of it

08:12

perhaps is 1860 i think it's 1868 or

08:15

1870.

08:16

he's at portland city hall as part of a

08:20

grand reception

08:21

he's been holding a very well paid 500

08:24

was a good patronage position the

08:25

republicans had given him

08:27

a customs house position this is how you

08:29

rewarded your friends

08:30

you the federal customs house these are

08:32

the good jobs he's an old man but he's

08:34

got a good job there

08:35
and plenty of other men were saying this
08:37
is not enough we'd like more than that
08:38
but reuben ruby's
08:40
he's earned this he's sitting at the uh
08:42
the mayor the mayor is the townhouse
08:44
whatever you call it in portland
08:46
and there's a reception to welcome his
08:48
son
08:49
who has come back from texas where his
08:51
son has been elected a state senator in
08:53
texas
08:54
that's the continuity of black politics
08:56
in maine and then there's
08:57
you know his other son is what the
08:59
portland police chief i believe if i've
09:01
got that right
09:02
so the um for me
09:05
black politics in portland and in maine
09:07
is a story in the 19th century
09:09
of strength of resilience and of
09:12
continuity
09:13
they are never pushed down never
09:16
disfranchised never defeated

09:18
they are a substantial political force
09:20
and indeed
09:21
general fessen and son william fessenden
09:23
the great maine senator
09:24
gets into congress in 1840 defeating a
09:27
democrat
09:27
and the democratic papers all around the
09:29
country say it's and i'm going to quote
09:31
them don't be offended i'm going to use
09:32
the language of the time
09:33
it's the abolitionist and the negroes
09:35
who defeated our democratic congressman
09:38
and that's in papers throughout the
09:40
country so to me
09:41
as a would-be mainer this is something
09:43
to be very proud of the continuity and
09:45
the force and the effectiveness
09:47
of black politics in maine before the
09:49
civil war
09:54
that's what i had to say
09:58
i'm selling my book
10:06
thanks so i think uh ham we had you up
10:09
next if you're ready to

10:11
to go ahead oh so um i am
10:14
the president of the uh committee to
10:17
restore the abbasidine meeting house we
10:19
are restoring the third oldest
10:21
african-american
10:22
um meetinghouse in the country
10:25
um and we're not i'm not sure that that
10:28
you know everybody here knows exactly
10:30
what the abyssinian meeting house is
10:33
but it is a building that was erected
10:36
because
10:38
uh five black men uh reuben uh ruby
10:41
went to church uh here right here in the
10:44
city of portland maine
10:46
and they went to church and they were
10:47
relegated they weren't allowed to
10:50
worship on the main floor and so
10:54
as you've just heard when we're talking
10:56
about the types of men
10:58
black men that um that were talking
11:01
about
11:01
they didn't sit back they were not
11:03
rolled all over these were

11:05
well educated um black men
11:09
that said we are no longer we don't need
11:12
to be treated this way we're not going
11:14
to be treated this way
11:16
and one of the big movements was in
11:19
um i believe it was 1827 uh
11:22
the the churches um in in philadelphia
11:25
they were they were all
11:27
starting to ask and say demanding
11:30
we have what it takes we can do this
11:34
we can we can establish our own
11:38
churches we can go to church and we can
11:41
sit where we want to sit
11:42
how we want to sit we don't need to have
11:45
them tell us that we can only sit
11:47
in the balcony and they went and they
11:50
began
11:50
they started this church the abyssinian
11:52
church which today
11:53
is known as the abyssinian meeting house
11:57
um it is it is in that church that they
12:00
mobilized if you will they um got
12:03
together

12:04
there were men and women congregants who
12:07
were
12:07
very instrumental in the underground
12:10
railroad because again you have these
12:14
people who are um globally
12:17
aware because a lot of they have
12:20
friendships
12:21
with people from around the country and
12:25
one of them even when it was in england
12:27
which made it
12:28
global they were aware of the global
12:32
issues at hand and so
12:35
yeah again you're hearing this over and
12:38
over again that these were
12:40
strong black men had
12:43
great paying jobs tax paying money they
12:46
um the interest of them and the reason
12:49
for the abyssinian
12:51
house they had a black school because
12:54
the goal was to educate um and i know
12:57
that
12:58
one of the ministers that came he
13:00
believed in education and

13:02
and his idea was going to be to educate
13:04
and then educate and go back to liberia
13:07
they
13:08
really weren't planning to be here but
13:10
to go back
13:11
um so we had this black school here that
13:13
was formed by these black men
13:16
and in the school it was one
13:19
or five there were only five a handful
13:22
of schools
13:23
that were being paid for by taxpayers
13:27
and that was one of them the abyssinian
13:31
school
13:31
it was located in the basement they took
13:34
the speed these black students
13:36
um who by the way white people had
13:38
thought often
13:39
were degenerates they didn't know how to
13:42
behave they weren't well dressed
13:44
they didn't couldn't learn couldn't do
13:46
anything
13:48
and these black ministers that came
13:52
to the abyssinian to they said

13:55
we can do this we can teach them who
13:58
they need to be and what they need to do
14:00
and so they began there with the school
14:03
they
14:04
took them out of the north school in
14:06
portland and brought them to school
14:07
there
14:08
again education was um crucial
14:12
for these men because they were educated
14:14
they were college educated
14:16
and when i say that i'm talking about
14:18
the ministers that were the leader
14:21
of that church um so
14:24
you had those uh the people acting in in
14:27
in those
14:28
fighting again fighting for their
14:30
freedom fighting for their rights
14:32
knowing full well what they were
14:34
able to do what they were able to have
14:37
what they had
14:38
access to but were being denied um
14:41
they they were as i said the members
14:44
we at the abyssinian we are right now on

14:47
the network to freedom
14:48
which is one of only um two sites
14:52
in the state of maine recognized by
14:54
national park service
14:56
as an underground railroad site um
14:58
official
14:59
underground railroad site you have to go
15:01
through a lot
15:03
through a lot of red tape to get uh that
15:05
title and we wear it very proudly
15:07
we do feel that the the abyssinian is a
15:10
crown jewel
15:11
of black history here in in maine bricks
15:13
and mortar if you will
15:15
so we we love um the history
15:18
we stand strong i don't want to take up
15:20
everybody's time i could go on and on
15:22
and tell you a lot about
15:24
um the black men and women so we don't
15:27
stop at just the black men
15:29
these were uh black men supported by
15:31
very strong
15:32
women period and they also helped

15:36
they were all part of the anti-slavery
15:38
society
15:39
garrison did come in and he did was he
15:41
did speak at the abyssinian meeting
15:43
house
15:44
reuben ruby introduced him um to that
15:47
and so they were again they became
15:51
involved in
15:52
in these greater issues at hand um and
15:55
they got involved
15:56
the anti-slavery society being one of
16:00
them so
16:01
i i don't want to take up any more time
16:03
except for to tell you that
16:05
they were absolutely political men
16:08
involved in
16:09
the politics of portland maine there's
16:11
so much
16:13
that's been left out of history books um
16:15
and
16:16
ten minutes isn't enough to to explain
16:18
it all or to
16:19
to go through it so i'll let somebody

16:22
else speak and then
16:23
come back to that
16:28
reuben ruby was my
16:31
four-time great uncle his sister was my
16:35
great great great
16:36
grandmother and the wife of christopher
16:39
christian manuel
16:40
who a barber here in portland who
16:45
is kind of overlooked a lot when we
16:48
start talking about
16:50
the political history of black folks in
16:53
in maine
16:56
reuben ruby if you really want to check
17:00
his credentials as far as
17:06
where he where he felt he was in this
17:10
world
17:10
at the time is just take a look at his
17:13
children
17:15
he named his children after
17:18
abolitionists
17:20
english abolitionists so there's william
17:23
wilberforce
17:24
ruby who by the way was a fireman

17:27
very high up in the fire department
17:32
and anne had by the way the number one
17:34
badge
17:35
which is in the fire museum here
17:39
there was george thompson ruby the state
17:42
senator in texas
17:44
again george thompson was a british
17:46
abolitionist
17:47
and there was an american uh
17:51
man actually there was a two brothers in
17:54
in new york city that were very
17:56
instrumental
17:58
in abolitionist society
18:01
and reuben named one of his sons after
18:03
him arthur tappin
18:05
ruby so
18:08
he knew reuben knew and reuben traveled
18:11
he
18:12
he was frequently in new york and boston
18:15
and
18:16
philadelphia where he participated
18:19
in the national uh
18:22
abolitionist theme

18:26
in portland we have
18:30
uh lovely records at the maine
18:32
historical society
18:34
of voting records that uh from
18:38
1990 to about 1910
18:42
and i was down at the library brown
18:46
library yesterday
18:48
looking at these and it's very
18:50
interesting because
18:52
they're men no women are listed but one
18:55
of the things
18:56
that i found interesting on that was
18:58
that
18:59
one of the things that they put down for
19:02
every
19:03
voter was whether or not they were
19:06
married
19:06
and where their wife lived
19:10
which seems kind of strange for somebody
19:14
if they're not allowing women to vote
19:18
the black folks kind of stand out
19:20
because
19:21
in a column under remarks they did list

19:24
whether they were colored or not
19:28
so it made it quite easy for example
19:32
uh and this is how it went down
19:36
edward vincent 30 who lived at 37
19:40
newberry
19:40
was a cook on the steamer tremont
19:45
he was born in maine on november 1st
19:48
1850 and he had lived in portland for
19:52
17 years he had voted before
19:56
this election so apparently this may
19:58
have been the first time that
20:00
the voting records were actually put
20:03
down as far as registering to vote
20:05
because
20:06
almost most of them are listed as having
20:09
voted before
20:10
this particular time he was married
20:14
and he was colored
20:17
i found it very interesting because one
20:19
of the people
20:20
the only person has not listed is
20:22
colored
20:24
was corbin smith a barber

20:28

he was born in virginia in 1850

20:32

it spent the last 25 years in

20:35

portland and this is 18 1891 that he

20:39

registered

20:41

and what they listen they don't listen

20:43

to this color what they list them as

20:45

is gentlemen of color

20:49

which i found quite interesting

20:54

i am positive that ruben ruby knowing

20:58

his political

20:59

acumen and the way that he he moved in

21:02

this

21:04

in society was one of the ones he

21:07

probably voted

21:08

remain becoming a state which i would

21:12

not be surprised at all

21:14

and it was this whole period of time

21:19

that he christopher manuel

21:22

and other blacks uh not only started the

21:26

abyssinian

21:27

which was a congregational church

21:32

the fourth congregational church

21:35

in the city and

21:39
but they were very
21:42
active in politics left and right
21:46
by the way of horatio ruby who is
21:49
rubin's
21:50
youngest son spoke
21:53
twice at the state
21:57
meeting of the green party where he
22:00
backed
22:01
back the uh nomination he gave the
22:04
second nomination for the uh
22:08
the man that became governor
22:12
thank you thanks so much
22:16
to the fellow panelists for your remarks
22:19
i'm
22:19
learning so much from this conversation
22:21
already and
22:22
um i also thank you to maine historical
22:25
society and
22:26
to the mcgillicuddy humanities center at
22:29
umaine for
22:31
allowing this conversation to happen
22:34
so i came to this topic of 19th century
22:38
black politics in maine originally

22:41
through
22:42
my research into letter writing in the
22:45
anti-slavery movement
22:47
so i was looking at how correspondence
22:50
shaped the organization
22:51
social networks and ideas that were
22:55
driving
22:55
antebellum abolitionism and that kind of
22:58
gives some context to how in the course
23:01
of my research
23:02
the first time i came across reuben ruby
23:05
who we've heard a little bit about
23:06
tonight already
23:08
was a letter that he wrote in 1836
23:12
to a boston abolitionist amos phelps
23:15
i actually have a picture of the letter
23:17
which i will show you
23:22
you should be able to see i have a
23:24
transcript here in a second but i want
23:26
you to encounter it just as i first
23:29
saw it when i first pulled it out of the
23:31
folder
23:32
at the boston public library so in this

23:35

letter

23:36

uh reuben ruby wrote to amos phelps who

23:39

at that time was a colleague of william

23:42

white garrisons

23:43

and had visited maine as an anti-slavery

23:47

lecturer

23:47

at least twice before and that's where

23:50

he met

23:51

ruby originally um so when i first saw

23:55

the letter

23:56

first of all reuben ruby's name stood

23:58

out to me i just like that's such a

23:59

great name

24:01

to begin with and i also noticed

24:04

portland

24:04

at the top here which stood out to me

24:07

because i grew up in maine not too far

24:09

from portland so i was immediately

24:11

curious to find out more

24:13

about this document and then the

24:15

physical appearance of the letter is

24:17

also

24:18

intriguing because the ink is kind of

24:20
smudged
24:21
you can see some words are smudged and
24:24
crossed out
24:25
and it seemed like maybe the letter had
24:28
to be written
24:29
hastily that there wasn't a lot of time
24:32
for ruby to write a clean draft before
24:35
he sent it out
24:38
so here i'm going to read you the
24:39
transcript of the letter which i have on
24:41
the next
24:43
image here so ruby uh wrote to phelps
24:47
dear sir
24:48
i take the liberty to write to you to
24:50
request you to go
24:51
or send to the jail and see a man by the
24:54
name of jeremiah rogers that is put in
24:57
on pretense of mutiny on board their
25:00
break and see what can be done for him
25:02
if you please
25:03
i should not have trouble you if i had
25:05
known anyone that i could depend on
25:07
and if it won't be too much trouble you

25:09
would oblige him very much
25:11
i send ten dollars and you will give it
25:13
to him if you please
25:14
and i will be good to the amount of
25:16
fifty dollars if wanted
25:18
please to write as soon as possible if
25:19
you please yours
25:21
reuben ruby and then in a note at the
25:23
bottom
25:24
uh ruby added please continue my paper
25:27
crossing out another
25:29
redundant if you please so he was saying
25:31
to phelps who was the
25:33
editor of an anti-slavery newspaper like
25:35
keep my script subscription going
25:37
and then finally at the very bottom
25:39
which you can probably barely see
25:41
on here there's a pencil note that ruby
25:44
added probably right before he mailed
25:46
out the letter
25:48
court last monday in october
25:51
so from this letter i've been able to
25:54
piece together a lot of different things

25:57
since i first saw it
25:58
originally i'm going to stop sharing the
26:00
image here now
26:03
including some of the basics of reuben
26:05
ruby's life
26:06
and his activist work which we've heard
26:08
a little bit about already including
26:10
the founding of the abyssinian church
26:13
and the construction of the meeting
26:14
house
26:16
and i've also kind of looked into how
26:18
ruby's life story helps to illuminate
26:21
the experiences
26:22
of black mainers in the 19th century and
26:25
demonstrates
26:26
that black activists were really
26:27
essential to bringing the cause of
26:29
abolitionism
26:30
to the state another theme we've heard a
26:33
little bit about already
26:35
so his contact with men like phelps also
26:37
suggests
26:38
some of the connections of this local

26:40
story to the national picture
26:43
of anti-slavery activism and as we've
26:46
heard
26:46
from van about his new book there's also
26:49
this important
26:50
dimension to understanding reuben ruby
26:53
as
26:54
part of this local and regional network
26:56
of black
26:57
partisan politics in the antebellum era
27:02
so all this kind of long story short is
27:05
that as i've gotten deeper and deeper
27:07
into researching ruby's life i've found
27:09
him to be
27:10
just a remarkable person he was an
27:12
entrepreneur
27:13
an activist a community leader a family
27:16
man
27:18
and i'm also just astounded with how his
27:20
life has intersected with so many of the
27:22
major events and figures of his time
27:25
ranging from abolition and the civil war
27:28
to maine statehood the missouri crisis

27:32
whigs and democrats competing in maine
27:35
um even the california gold rush in 1849
27:39
which is more than just a little
27:41
footnote on his life story
27:43
so it's really exciting to see van's new
27:46
book
27:46
and my fellow panelists also exposing
27:49
new layers
27:50
to maine history and national history by
27:53
adding this
27:54
context of how we see maine's
27:57
anti-slavery politics
27:59
abolitionist activism in maine and
28:01
beyond
28:02
and their legacies after the civil war
28:05
era
28:06
as well so i'm just going to add here
28:09
a couple of little pieces
28:12
to you know i guess taking what i see
28:16
as future directions jumping off from
28:19
the places where van's wonderful new
28:22
book has
28:23
left us as well as the work that bob

28:26
and pam have been doing here in maine
28:30
so you know we've seen van has really
28:33
illuminated
28:34
this incredible story of the details of
28:37
black
28:38
partisan politics in maine and portland
28:41
specifically
28:42
which is unexpected in its routine
28:46
nature where there's this stable
28:48
consistent pattern
28:50
of black men able to claim citizenship
28:54
and suffrage rights in maine from
28:56
statehood in 1820
28:58
up through the turmoil of the civil war
29:01
era so vans providing this
29:04
important perspective that maine's black
29:06
population
29:07
though numerically small had this degree
29:10
of concentration as
29:12
well as advantages in maine's kind of
29:16
port town economy seaside you know kind
29:20
of maritime
29:21
employment that provided the members of

29:24
that black community with a degree
29:26
of political leverage
29:29
so that significance is clear when you
29:32
look
29:32
at not only you know the fact that black
29:36
men were voting
29:37
and participating in politics but able
29:40
to exert their
29:41
influence to put anti-slavery issues
29:44
onto the table
29:45
and mainstream politics in maine in a
29:47
way that just was not
29:49
possible or was very rare in many other
29:52
states at the time
29:54
and on an individual level you see this
29:56
legacy
29:57
with someone like ruby where as has been
30:00
mentioned already where he himself
30:02
had significant standing throughout his
30:04
life
30:05
but also his sons went on to carry on
30:08
that legacy
30:09
including his son william who

30:12
went on to become a state senator in
30:15
texas during reconstruction
30:18
so turning just took some of the threads
30:19
that i myself hope to kind of
30:22
develop in my own research from this
30:24
extremely strong basis
30:26
that my panelists have already
30:28
established
30:30
for one thing i've learned a lot about
30:32
reuben ruby but going back to that
30:34
letter
30:34
i showed you i've learned absolutely
30:37
nothing
30:38
about jeremiah rogers who's that man who
30:40
was jailed
30:42
under pretense of mutiny that ruby was
30:45
seeking to help
30:46
with that letter and i think this is
30:48
interesting because perhaps rogers was
30:51
another
30:51
local black man in portland perhaps he
30:54
was the sailor
30:55
passing through uh perhaps in the most

30:58
you know kind of wildest possibility he
31:02
could have even been
31:03
a fugitive slave who was stowing away
31:06
illegally on a northbound ship
31:08
that ruby was then trying to intervene
31:11
to provide assistance so far i don't
31:13
have an answer i can't
31:14
claim to know anything concrete but i
31:18
think this letter
31:19
to me is really fascinating because it
31:21
shows how ruby was using his connections
31:24
to tap into
31:26
this larger abolitionist network to help
31:28
a friend
31:29
in danger so it kind of shows you how
31:32
even though
31:33
ruby had this really strong
31:36
political network in portland there were
31:38
some limits to that network
31:40
in that um a year before this letter
31:44
before ruby wrote this letter in 1835
31:46
there was an anti-abolitionist
31:48
meeting in portland that galvanized

31:51
white
31:51
residents on both sides of the political
31:54
spectrum
31:55
whigs and democrats to come out in vocal
31:58
opposition
32:00
to abolition so it's kind of speculating
32:03
i can see
32:03
ruby witnessing these kinds of political
32:07
events
32:07
in portland and knowing that he has a
32:10
fairly
32:10
secure political position within the
32:13
kind of established channels there
32:16
but also knowing that he can tap into
32:19
a more radical abolitionist network in
32:22
boston
32:23
uh to provide assistance in this
32:26
somewhat
32:26
urgent and perhaps volatile situation
32:30
so basically i see ruby as someone who's
32:32
definitely part of this
32:33
political establishment but also you
32:36
know branching out

32:37
when he needs to to take advantage of
32:41
other means of political activism
32:44
or leverage that are outside of this
32:48
world
32:49
of formal politics and elections and
32:51
voting
32:52
that van is really focusing on in his
32:55
book
32:56
then one more thread that i wanted to
32:58
pull a little bit
32:59
is actually building on what pam was
33:01
saying about
33:03
black women in the abyssinian
33:07
network and also bob's work
33:10
with sort of family history and
33:12
genealogy
33:13
i think the idea of family
33:17
community networks of activism
33:19
especially when it comes to maine's
33:21
black women in this time period is
33:23
something that
33:24
i love to develop further through my own
33:27
research and

33:28
in you know seeing other what other
33:30
people are doing
33:32
so when amos phelps the man that ruby
33:36
addressed that letter
33:37
too when he actually visited portland a
33:40
couple years before that letter
33:42
he wrote this letter himself to his wife
33:45
where he commented on
33:47
a tea party that he attended at reuben
33:50
ruby's house where there were
33:52
around 20 different people there and
33:54
actually william lloyd garrison who
33:56
visited portland also described a really
33:58
similar scene
34:00
of these tea parties happening at ruben
34:02
ruby's house
34:03
where members of the abyssinian meeting
34:06
house congregation we're kind of getting
34:08
together
34:09
other prominent black men and women
34:13
in the portland community and i was just
34:15
struck by
34:16
how the tea party was what stuck

34:19
out to both of these really prominent
34:21
abolitionists
34:23
and that made me think about how this
34:25
largely male
34:26
world of partisan politics and even
34:29
public activism
34:30
was intertwined with other forms of
34:33
activism
34:34
whether that be reuben ruby's letter or
34:37
he's seeking
34:38
aid from an abolitionist colleague or
34:41
kind of the daily actions that are often
34:43
more obscure
34:44
in the archives of black women who are
34:47
organizing
34:48
meetings and serving tea to crowds of
34:51
hungry
34:52
anti-slavery sympathizers
34:55
so i will end there and i look forward
34:57
to having some time
34:58
for discussion from the audience and
35:02
thank you very much again to the
35:04
panelists and to everybody for coming

35:05
out on this beautiful evening
35:08
thank you thank you all and i would just
35:11
really like to echo what mary said
35:13
just how great and interesting it is to
35:15
have you all here to really shed some
35:18
light
35:18
on the many different layers of portland
35:21
history
35:22
and this topic uh and it's really
35:24
interesting to just hear
35:25
the work that you're all doing and the
35:28
things that you're discovering
35:30
i want to give you a chance if you have
35:32
questions that you'd like to ask of each
35:34
other
35:35
please feel free and if you're ready
35:37
we're getting questions from the
35:38
audience as well
35:42
all right so i'll start with an audience
35:45
question
35:45
someone's asking um about the the
35:48
know-nothings and the kkk um
35:52
how were they able to gain

35:56
power in a in a place like in a place
35:58
like portland a place like
36:00
maine how did they gain a foothold or
36:02
such traction
36:03
in a place where there was uh such a
36:06
a strong black political presence
36:13
well uh so i i'm just gonna jump in and
36:16
shed some and and and that would be
36:19
number one
36:20
um it doesn't take much to penetrate
36:24
um that hate into any system
36:28
so though maine
36:31
or portland had a strong political base
36:34
and these men were very actively
36:36
involved in
36:37
the politics of racism and
36:41
anti-slavery
36:45
where there's hate there's a way
36:48
it would take much to uh to to go into
36:51
that and
36:52
and we do we already know um there were
36:54
people
36:55
um in the churches um especially like

36:58
the abyssinian uh where the
37:00
the men went to church um and
37:04
so what you what you saw there is these
37:06
people
37:07
were very divided and and when i say
37:10
that i mean individual within themselves
37:12
they were very divided they knew that
37:14
slavery was wrong and they wanted to see
37:16
it
37:16
ended but um did they really want to
37:21
see um they were willing to see them
37:23
free but
37:24
were white people really willing to um
37:28
see black people in power black men
37:32
as lawyers black men as
37:35
politicians black men at city hall were
37:38
they really
37:38
so so were they really ready for that
37:41
and that caused
37:43
self conflict and they were very divided
37:46
and the church as well itself
37:48
the the members of the church were very
37:50
divided

37:52

um with that very issue

37:56

go ahead van

38:02

you're still on mute

38:05

two words in the period we're talking

38:07

before the civil war

38:08

the democratic party the democratic

38:10

party is often dominant in maine

38:13

the democratic party is a party of

38:15

slavery and of northern

38:17

northern men with southern principles

38:19

like martin van buren

38:20

and i mean the anti-slavery

38:24

sometimes anti-racist vote is over there

38:27

with the whigs

38:27

and then the republicans but they're

38:29

always under you know

38:31

very strongly attacked so let me just

38:34

boil it down

38:34

think of today do i need to talk about

38:38

paul lepage i hope i'm pronouncing his

38:39

name right

38:40

do i need to talk about how closely

38:42

fought maine was

38:43
was the second congressional district
38:45
gonna go the way it did
38:47
you know as well as i do you know better
38:48
than i do how divided maine is today
38:51
right so it's the same then um
38:54
now what's interesting is at certain
38:56
points even democrats
38:58
are worrying so there's a maine
39:01
democratic governor
39:02
in about i think it's 1838 his
39:04
predecessor the whig
39:06
had this was a classic political
39:08
struggle had refused to return
39:10
extradite to the south some
39:14
men who had aided fugitives he said no
39:17
we don't do that i don't accept the
39:19
i won't accept the extradition a
39:21
democrat replaces him
39:23
and to make sure he doesn't lose his
39:24
office maintains that position
39:27
and everyone notices oh that main
39:29
democrat he's doing the right thing
39:31
so that tells you how politically loaded

39:33
this is but it goes back and forth
39:35
and once you get to the 1850s i mean
39:38
there's this whole period in the 1850s
39:40
when maine's politics become
39:42
completely about temperance that's the
39:44
know-nothing party of the
39:46
temperance temperance the main law
39:48
everyone in the country knows what the
39:49
maine law is
39:50
it was the first attempt to completely
39:51
ban alcohol that
39:53
covers over all the debates before about
39:55
slavery right
39:56
right up to the verge of the civil war
39:59
which shows you
40:00
how much people like to be distracted
40:02
from something that is going to be
40:03
really difficult
40:04
but once the republican party really
40:06
gets going in the late 1850s
40:08
the democrats they've got one word in
40:10
their mouths
40:11
it's a six-letter word that begins with

40:13

n

40:15

they use it all the time that

40:18

ruby those republicans sometimes they

40:21

say black republicans that's the polite

40:23

version

40:24

so anyway that's that's you know there's

40:26

a there's always but i think that pam

40:28

made this point all you need to do it's

40:30

very easy to insert racism into politics

40:32

and whip some people up especially when

40:34

they see someone like ruben ruby getting

40:37

a nice patronage position

40:38

oh look what look what the republicans

40:40

are going to do they're going to

40:42

they're going to take votes they're

40:43

going to take jobs away from white men

40:45

yeah

40:47

you know what i'm saying yeah yeah

40:51

except you know the party names have

40:53

changed the politics hasn't

40:56

and i just add that um you know one

40:59

thing that

41:00

is so great i was just reading sections

41:03
of vance book
41:04
to prepare for this panel but so
41:06
everybody should go out and
41:08
buy a copy but you know one thing that i
41:11
think
41:12
you paint a really optimistic picture of
41:15
of black politics
41:16
in maine in the antebellum era but at
41:19
the same time
41:20
there's also this undertone of uh
41:23
the people like ruby who are occupying
41:25
these positions they were well aware
41:27
that there were limits
41:28
to the power that they had those limits
41:32
became even more apparent
41:34
you know ruby's son who goes on to
41:36
become a reconstruction
41:38
politician in texas you know he's the
41:41
target of violence
41:42
when he's uh in the south during
41:44
reconstruction
41:46
and you know he's sort of you know in a
41:49
totally different geographic

41:50

place but has a similar ruby and his son

41:54

i think both have this

41:55

experience of um seeing how far their

41:58

gains can get them within the system as

42:00

it exists

42:02

and the limits to that as well and

42:04

here's a small anecdote i just want to

42:06

say this because

42:07

i don't want anyone to think that any of

42:09

us on this panel are promoting some kind

42:11

of

42:11

happy fairy story everything was so good

42:14

what the hell happened senator ruby

42:17

senator

42:18

ruby when he stopped in new york with

42:21

his new bride

42:22

he was jim crow in the new york hotels

42:24

he couldn't get a hotel

42:25

he may have been a senator a st state

42:27

senator from a very major state

42:29

new york hotels well we don't care we're

42:31

not going to give you a room

42:32

so that i mean this is what it was very

42:35
very contested
42:37
i just want to i mean i stopped in 1860
42:39
except for you know talking about
42:40
senator ruby a little bit
42:42
there's so much more and bob was
42:44
beginning to talk about this i was
42:45
completely fascinated
42:47
what happens after i want to know about
42:49
bishop healey
42:51
i'm fascinated yeah bishop healey here
42:54
and fire chief ruby over there and you
42:57
know i mean that's
42:58
that's interesting there's but so it's
43:01
it's just it maine definitely stands out
43:05
but i don't
43:06
i don't fully understand it and i what
43:07
i'm interested in i'm telling you what i
43:09
hope other historians will do mary will
43:11
do bob will do
43:12
is i want to know the the family
43:16
social history i want to know the
43:18
business history
43:19
because my suspicion is that people like

43:21
manuel and the other businessmen there
43:23
that they were all tied into trading
43:25
networks up and down the east coast
43:27
that might be why author arthur tappan
43:30
the great abolitionist was also a very
43:32
major businessman
43:33
so a lot of the black men in new england
43:35
port towns
43:36
were very successful merchants
43:40
they were import export merchants often
43:42
they were caterers they were
43:43
restauranteurs
43:45
and i i know a little bit about this but
43:48
nowhere near
43:49
and that's where a lot of the women
43:50
would come in and pam you know pam
43:52
i believe you mentioning i mean the
43:55
women are not invisible
43:56
if i were going to if i had a phd
43:58
student i would say get the newspapers
44:00
get the portland advertiser
44:01
and start looking at the ads in the
44:03
teens and 20s and 30s and 40s

44:06
of the 19th century because i think
44:07
you're going to see ads for
44:09
um black women running running
44:11
businesses but
44:12
that's a guess on my part but i think
44:14
there's a huge piece of history to be
44:16
done there about family social and
44:17
women's history
44:18
that i haven't done at all so so what i
44:22
would i would just like to interject uh
44:24
right here is that
44:26
um so black men
44:29
held the power because they had the
44:32
money
44:32
but make no mistake about it the black
44:34
women were powerful
44:36
they just didn't hold the power it was
44:38
the black men that
44:39
held the power because they had the
44:42
money
44:43
and they had the jobs that
44:46
created that that money
44:50
one of the things that you find that i

44:52

find very interesting during this period

44:54

that we're talking

44:56

is that a lot of the black men

45:01

had several jobs

45:05

that they could do uh

45:08

waiters was a great job you could

45:12

you were a waiter on land and you could

45:14

go to the

45:15

go to see aboard a ship and be a stewie

45:18

same job same thing was true with all

45:21

cook

45:23

even christopher christian manuel had a

45:26

catering business

45:27

although he was a barber that was that's

45:30

the big thing he's known for

45:32

but every so often you'll see them with

45:35

cook

45:36

william wilberforce ruby uh

45:40

was a cook and

45:45

actually he was a baker more than a cook

45:49

but george thompson ruby was a

45:51

confectioner

45:53

that was his first job that you fight

45:55

him in 1860 in bangor

45:57

as a confectioner so they they

46:02

they knew how to how to live how to make

46:05

sure that

46:07

they they made it through tomorrow and

46:09

next week and

46:14

and i and i would also like to speak to

46:16

um

46:17

just just the ministers that

46:20

came into the abyssinian meeting house

46:23

who

46:24

um you know many may or may not know

46:27

were all educated

46:30

at the oneida institute um they they

46:33

were

46:34

um trained strong writers

46:38

um they had who as i said and their

46:41

their

46:42

group their circle of friends were all

46:45

from around the country so we're not

46:46

just talking about

46:49

um you know

46:53

we're we're we're more specifically

46:55
we're talking about
46:56
people that were um really
46:59
not just people may have thought that oh
47:03
all that they can do is run a
47:06
run runner you know be in it be honest
47:09
be in the ships or be
47:10
working the ship industry in the
47:12
shipping industry or
47:14
they could do this or they could these
47:15
were globally minded
47:18
highly educated not necessarily educated
47:21
highly
47:22
intellectual people so they succeeded
47:26
in many areas of their life
47:30
and and that's what really a lot of
47:32
people don't know
47:34
so and what makes their power base so
47:36
great
47:37
is that at the abyssinian for example
47:39
they had a network
47:41
and they would send freeman here uh to
47:44
be the
47:44
minister of the abyssinian church and

47:48
he would leave here and they would send
47:51
another from say connecticut
47:53
another one of these educated
47:56
men from this oneida institute which
48:00
that's a great place to look because
48:01
they they trained
48:03
a lot of these black men there so again
48:06
these
48:06
these are globally minded
48:10
people who are well aware of situations
48:13
and
48:14
and they they're successful on many
48:16
different levels
48:18
many different levels
48:21
there are a couple people in the
48:22
audience that are asking about
48:25
centers of black political power in
48:28
maine
48:29
outside of portland like perhaps other
48:31
cities like bangor um
48:34
where did those social networks
48:38
extend into northern and eastern maine
48:41
can any of you speak to

48:42
this topic outside of
48:47
uh i'll start off a little bit uh you
48:49
know i'm
48:50
here in orono at the university of
48:52
maine's and i live in bangor so i'm
48:55
really interested in um developing
48:58
this story and there's a wonderful book
49:01
by
49:02
maureen eldersman lee that's her name
49:05
black bangor that talks more about the
49:08
20th century
49:09
in uh bangor but you know has includes
49:12
some discussion of the 19th century
49:14
not to interrupt you mary but i'll put a
49:16
link to that we have that book is
49:18
available through maine historical
49:19
society so i'll put a link to that in
49:21
the chat probably on my shelf
49:23
back here somewhere but i don't know if
49:24
i can dig it out right now
49:26
um but i personally i that's really a
49:29
thread that i'm
49:30
interested in pulling since i'm you know

49:32
located up here and there is still this
49:35
you know to even through today there's
49:37
the sort of two mains divide between
49:39
you know southern maine located around
49:42
portland and
49:44
up here although bangor you know talk to
49:46
somebody up in arista county and i don't
49:48
think that they would say bangor is
49:49
particularly far
49:50
north um but i mean that
49:54
i think there is a story to be unfolded
49:57
there and it just
49:58
hasn't been told yet to that
50:01
extent that i would love to see it told
50:03
and that's something
50:04
i hope to see happen in the future
50:07
although there are
50:08
family histories and individuals whose
50:11
lives have been talked about a little
50:13
bit i'll mention one person who i've
50:15
been interested in
50:16
abraham hanson who there's a wonderful
50:20
oil portrait of him by jeremiah pearson

50:23
hardy
50:24
who probably is a familiar name to at
50:27
least some of you out there
50:29
and it's one of the few 19th century oil
50:32
portraits of
50:33
an african-american person man
50:37
uh that is you know that is named you
50:40
know the name of the individual
50:42
subject and um so i've done a little bit
50:45
of research about him he was a barber
50:48
in bangor and as probably my fellow
50:50
panelists
50:51
know if someone's a barber that's kind
50:53
of a red flag for
50:55
being involved in politics and i have
50:58
found references to him talking
51:00
about greek independence in the 19th
51:04
century i haven't found anything about
51:05
abolition
51:06
but that suggests to me of course that
51:08
he's politically engaged
51:10
and uh like pam was saying is tacked
51:12
into this much broader

51:14
cosmopolitan uh world so
51:18
that's just to say you know there are
51:20
threads that i think
51:22
researchers can pull to find out more
51:25
portland i think you know population
51:27
wise much like today
51:28
is has a large concentration just of
51:31
people
51:32
but that doesn't mean that there's not
51:34
more to be discovered out there
51:37
there's one clear prominent leader from
51:39
uh
51:40
i'm almost certain it's bangor john t
51:42
carter
51:43
that's the person who uh when
51:47
ruby and general fessenton um
51:50
this you know federalist wig and top
51:53
abolitionist
51:54
all at the same time they try to swing
51:57
the portland black
51:58
well maine but portland black electorate
52:00
over to the liberty party in 1841
52:02
and the black wigs basically you know

52:05
they may admire general fascinating
52:06
ruben ruby may have been their leader
52:08
they just won't do it they're going to
52:09
stick with the wig party
52:10
which wigs all over the northeast used
52:12
as an example of why real anti-slavery
52:14
men remain wigs
52:15
what the black wigs of portland did and
52:17
it's abram nils who had inherited
52:19
ruby's position
52:20
as the wake loot black wig leader the
52:22
tithing man job
52:24
city government the committee man and
52:26
his ward and all that
52:27
and john t carter of and i'm i'm
52:30
embarrassed to say i i believe
52:32
it's bangor i'd have to check it's
52:33
either bangor or augusta
52:35
so he's a he's he is actually a notable
52:37
leader
52:38
um there are two prominent hal i believe
52:41
one is hallowell
52:42
that are not political leaders but i

52:43
mentioned in my book just because
52:44
they're
52:45
an indication of the respect one is a
52:48
seventh-day adventist theologian named
52:50
memory serves
52:51
foy and like widely published there is a
52:54
certain tradition
52:56
in upper new england of black men as
52:57
respected theologians
52:59
lemuel haynes from vermont is
53:01
internationally famous actually
53:03
as an orthodox congregationalist but
53:05
that's vermont but he's he's a
53:07
major figure um so foy is a really i
53:10
mean
53:10
i think i gather i'm not a seventh-day
53:12
adventist if i if you were
53:14
he's still red today and then there's an
53:16
inventor
53:17
um robert lewis who is again celebrated
53:21
you know sort of
53:22
look at he invents um he uses oakum
53:26
this the cast off from rope and i think

53:28
he invents a hair oil but he gets
53:29
several patents
53:30
and these are prominent black mainers
53:32
not from portland but they're not
53:34
politically active
53:35
the point that the other point to make
53:36
though and from my perspective is that
53:39
all of upper new england in the small
53:41
towns
53:42
this is what is so completely at least
53:45
to me foreign okay
53:47
the small towns across upper new england
53:50
almost all of them have at least a few
53:52
black men
53:53
from prominent mainly revolutionary war
53:56
veterans who had gotten
53:57
their bounty their land bounty so and
54:00
this is true in pennsylvania where i
54:02
grew up
54:03
there were probably far more you were
54:05
probably much more likely to find
54:07
a black man a black family a couple of
54:08
black families in small

54:10
town rural maine 200 years ago than you
54:12
would now
54:15
upstate new york and maine vermont and
54:16
new hampshire because
54:18
they spread out and they
54:21
in some cases i don't know i don't know
54:24
what words to use they assimilate they
54:26
they black men marry white women they
54:28
have children they get elected to school
54:30
committees
54:31
eventually you know i haven't you'd have
54:33
to go into the later 19th and 20th
54:35
century
54:36
then the question is why are there so
54:38
you know at a certain point why
54:40
why aren't they there anymore and that
54:41
may be the history of the klan in the
54:43
1920s i'm guessing i don't know
54:45
or it's that they're better jobs they
54:47
take industrial jobs
54:48
um and go somewhere else but that's a
54:51
whole other history
54:52
but it is worth noting that and this

54:54
isn't i'm not the one that's done this
54:56
history
54:56
the that um
55:00
i'm blanking on the name but the great
55:02
compendium volume of black
55:04
black main history that i used showed
55:06
that there were black men as the census
55:07
shows
55:08
even on some of the small islands i was
55:11
just in north haven a few weeks ago
55:13
in north haven and i was looking at
55:15
pictures from
55:16
the middle of the 19th century or maybe
55:18
late 19th century
55:20
of sailing men with lobster men and i
55:22
was like wait a minute
55:24
that's a pretty clear picture that's a
55:26
man of color right in there
55:28
among the other lobstermen what's he
55:29
doing there so there's a huge there's a
55:31
history
55:32
anyway that's why i just wanted to throw
55:34
that in well

55:35
well black men that that it was one of
55:38
the one of the premier jobs that they
55:39
were allowed to do
55:40
would be the mariner in industry so
55:44
you would definitely find black men
55:46
doing that as a matter of fact that's
55:47
how
55:48
they were able to smuggle slaves and get
55:51
them
55:51
up and down the coast by working in the
55:53
boats they they
55:54
knew you know where to hide them on the
55:57
boat stole them away so that they could
55:59
bring them
56:00
to freedom which ultimately their goal
56:02
was canada
56:03
so you you would definitely see black
56:05
men um
56:07
doing and and they were around then so
56:10
you know that's not uncommon they were
56:12
that's one of the areas they were
56:14
allowed
56:15
and flourished and in that capacity

56:19
financially
56:22
we're coming almost to the the end of
56:25
our
56:26
our time for the panel but this is i
56:28
mean this has really been such an
56:30
interesting and informative discussion
56:32
um and the audience is
56:34
is asking a lot of great questions um
56:36
and unfortunately
56:37
we're not going to get to them all live
56:40
i'm going to put
56:41
my email address into the chat
56:45
box um so if you have like a burning
56:48
question or maybe a question that was
56:50
just a little
56:50
a little too long for us to to address
56:53
in a live program please don't hesitate
56:56
to email me
56:57
at k newman at mainehistory.org
57:01
and i'm happy to forward your question
57:03
onto our
57:04
panelists so that maybe we can continue
57:07
the discussion

57:08
uh even beyond this evening if you're
57:11
interested
57:13
in purchasing a copy of van's book
57:16
the first reconstruction as well as a
57:18
lot of other
57:20
great resources on maine history
57:23
visit our online store
57:26
mainehistorystore.com
57:28
you can also visit our store and our
57:31
museum
57:32
and our research library in person at
57:34
our congress street location 489
57:37
congress street
57:38
in portland visit our website
57:42
mainehistory.org
57:43
to learn more about our hours if you
57:46
want to visit the museum if you would
57:47
like to see our
57:48
new exhibit begin again reckoning with
57:51
intolerance in maine
57:53
to learn more about a lot of the history
57:55
and themes that were discussed this
57:56
evening

57:57

you can learn more about our hours and

57:59

how to purchase tickets

58:01

on our website you can also see virtual

58:04

versions of that exhibit

58:06

on our website as well and learn more

58:08

about other

58:09

virtual uh programs in our begin again

58:13

series i want to uh thank our

58:16

panelists again so much for sharing your

58:19

time and all of your great expertise

58:20

with us this evening

58:22

and i also want to give each of our

58:23

panelists a chance if there's anything

58:25

else

58:25

that you'd like to say or add before we

58:28

close uh please go right ahead

58:32

uh i'll just i saw one question that

58:34

relates to the previous question

58:36

i'll mention that somebody mentioned

58:38

addisville

58:39

near machias and there's also a

58:42

wonderful book about that by

58:44

marcus labrizzy who's a professor at

58:46
umaine
58:47
machias and so that's another another
58:51
uh you know kind of thread of talking
58:54
about
58:54
uh black people and black politics
58:57
outside of portland that if you're
58:59
interested is great and i
59:00
also wanted to mention we're also
59:03
national minded but uh
59:05
right down the road is new brunswick and
59:08
um of course a really major community
59:11
of black loyalists who
59:15
ended up you know after the revolution
59:16
settled in
59:18
new brunswick so that's another kind of
59:20
international border connection that i
59:22
think
59:22
shapes maine's history in a way that we
59:24
don't have time to go into
59:26
tonight but for those who are interested
59:29
is another
59:30
you know something that i think makes
59:31
maine a little bit look a little

59:33
different than
59:34
some of the other states even in new
59:36
england
59:38
and otherwise just thanks to everybody
59:40
for such a great discussion
59:42
thank you and i would also um
59:46
a couple of things i what i really want
59:48
to be able to do is is
59:50
publicly thank um so many people in this
59:53
community
59:54
that um have have made it known
59:57
that they support the work that the
59:59
abyssinian is doing
60:01
um i thank god for for you know touching
60:04
the hearts of so many people to
60:06
open up and finally understand this is
60:09
an incredible piece of maine's history
60:11
through this
60:13
project through this building there will
60:15
be a lot of
60:17
questions that are answered a lot of
60:20
history that's been left out
60:22
of the book that need to be put into

60:24
books so that we can all
60:25
understand who we are and where we're
60:28
coming from and
60:28
and on here i've seen you know you've
60:30
talked about carter and there was one
60:32
other name
60:33
and you had people who chimed in and
60:35
said oh those are relatives of mine
60:37
you saw a lot of once you once you find
60:40
out once we start
60:41
delving into some of this history you
60:43
know a lot comes out of it
60:45
so first and foremost i really wanted to
60:48
thank everybody for understanding that
60:51
when we do say black lives matter the
60:53
abyssinian really is
60:54
the beginning of that because those
60:56
black people's lives do matter in the
60:59
history
60:59
of the state of maine well thank you
61:02
everybody who is supporting us
61:04
in the work that we are doing um and
61:07
i i thank you the maine historic society

61:10

for

61:11

bringing these these conversations

61:15

to light into public and to help us to

61:17

understand

61:18

better and to help us live and make

61:21

maine a better state

61:22

thank you so much and thank you for

61:24

having me as well