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National Museum of African American History and Culture Launches Two New Apps

Even though the Smithsonian's newest museum, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, is currently under construction, its building and content can be explored in the palm of a hand. The museum has unveiled two free mobile apps, "View NMAAHC" and "Changing America: To Be Free," that allow the public to virtually experience the museum before its opening in 2015.

To show what the museum will look like when construction is completed, the "View NMAAHC" augmented-reality app will give the public a peek into the future. Users who are visiting Washington, D.C., can view a three-dimensional architectural model of the building at the museum's construction site. Other immersive experiences, available to all users regardless of their location, include a 360-degree view of the museum's site and an architectural fly through of the museum's interiors.

For those curious about how individuals across the nation reacted to the Emancipation Proclamation, the "Changing America: To Be Free" app commemorates the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation by providing personal accounts of those who were affected by President Abraham Lincoln's executive order. Offering an opportunity to go beyond well-known stories of Emancipation, users can search, sort and read personal stories from across the North, South and border states from men and women of all ages. The app is a digital component of the museum's current exhibition, "Changing America: The Emancipation Proclamation, 1863 and The March on Washington, 1963," on view at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History until Sept. 7, 2014.

"View NMAAHC" is currently available for iPhone, iPad and Android. "Changing America: To Be Free" is available for the iPad and will soon be available for iPhone and Android.

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The National Museum of African American History and Culture was established by an Act of Congress in 2003 making it the 19th museum of the Smithsonian Institution. Scheduled for completion in 2015, it is under construction on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., on a five-acre tract adjacent to the Washington Monument. Currently, the museum is hosting public programs, assembling collections and presenting exhibitions at other museums across the country and at its own gallery at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. More information can be found on the museum's website nmaahc.si.edu.

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