

1827. Manumission Day Parade

Dr. James McCune Smith, an African American physician who studied medicine in Glasgow, describes a manumission day procession in New York that he attended as a youth. Source: Graham Russell Hodges, *Root & Branch: African Americans in New York & East Jersey 1613-1863*, P. 223.

A splendid looking black man (Samuel Hardenburgh), mounted on a milk-white steed, then his aids on horseback, dashing up and down the line; then the orator of the day, also mounted, with a handsome scroll, appearing like a baton in his right hand, then in due order, splendidly dressed in scarfs of silk with gold-edgings, and with colored bands of music and their banners appropriately lettered and painted, followed, the New York African Society for Mutual Relief, the Wilberforce Benevolent Society, and the Clarkson Benevolent Society; then the people five or six abreast from grown men to small boys. The sidewalks were crowded with wives, daughters, sisters, and mothers of the celebrants, representing every state in the Union, and not a few with gay bandanna handkerchiefs, betraying their West Indian birth. Nor was Africa underrepresented. Hundreds who survived the middle passage and a youth in slavery joined in the joyful procession.