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The September Feature-of-the Month exhibit at the Chicago Historical Society highlights one of Chicago's most influential black leaders of the 1800s. John Jones, born of free parentage in North Carolina around 1816, came to Chicago in 1845 and set up a tailoring business in the "Loop." A pioneer black merchant, he distinguished himself

as a builder, politician, and philanthropist.

On exhibit is the Aaron Darling portrait of John Jones, his certificate of freedom filed in the Circuit Court of Madison County during his residence in Alton, and a copy of his address delivered in Chicago on November 4, 1864 stating his

reasons why the Black Laws of Illinois should be repealed.

Jones devoted much of his lifetime to fighting for the rights and dignity of the black race. His efforts on their behalf were instrumental in bringing about the repeal of the Black Laws from the statutes of Illinois in 1865.
