A GATHERING AT THE CROSSROADS!

Commonwealth Monument Project

A COMMEMORATION PLANNER
TWO GREAT PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC BENCHMARKS

150 TH Anniversary
OF THE 15TH AMENDMENT

100 TH Anniversary
OF THE 19TH AMENDMENT

2019-2020 COMMONWEALTH MONUMENT PROJECT

Beginning January 2019, we will embark on a two year exploration of the value of the vote through installations, exhibitions, workshops, civic dialogue, arts immersion and public presentations. JOIN US along the pathway to progress!

Commonwealth Monument Project is an initiative of The Foundation for Enhancing Communities (fiscal agent). And it is an affiliated project of International Institute for Peace Through Tourism (I IPT).
Laying the Groundwork for the 15th Amendment.

15th Amendment
Do you believe the Declaration of Independence ... that men are created with equal rights...?

The Pennsylvania Quest for Freedom was constructed like a blueprint for a great cathedral.

Its foundation was built upon the sheer will power and self-determination of its agents of freedom.

It’s four walls were held up by its conductors through flight, vigilance, integration, and socialization.

Its roof line was anchored upon education achieved through its safe houses, and its bell tower rang through the achievement of its free towns.

Enterprise, its great spire, was achieved through citizenship and the franchise!

African American Freedmen and Freemen in Pennsylvania enjoyed the right to vote until 1838.

They lost that right in an avalanche of political events that have always reminded the community of how precious the right to vote is, how tentative the right can be, and how vigilant we all must be to preserve that right.

After incredible diligence and diplomacy, families like T. Morris Chester’s rejoiced the passage of the amendment that would at once restore their privilege and provide the new-found rights to the family of Jacob Compton.

Frances Harper was also filled with both jubilation and apprehension. She well remembered the inferno of the arson of Pennsylvania Hall, suggesting new trials really felt.

Amongst them were the Henry Highland Garnett Society and Harrisburg’s powerful House of Ruth.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, Black women played an active role in the struggle for universal suffrage. They participated in political meetings and organized societies across the Commonwealth where they planned strategies to gain the right to vote.

Amidst them were the Henry Highland Garnett Society and Harrisburg’s powerful House of Ruth.

In the late 1800s, increasing numbers of Black women like Frances Harper, Harriet Smith, and Charlotte Forten, took on leadership positions in churches, newspapers, secondary schools, and colleges which gave them a larger platform to promote their ideas.

But in spite of their hard work, many people didn’t listen to them. For example, the National American Woman Suffrage Association prevented Black women from attending their conventions. Black women had to march separately from White women in suffrage parades.

In addition, when Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony wrote the History of Woman Suffrage in the 1880s, they featured White suffragists while ignoring the contributions of African American suffragists.

Though Black women are less well remembered, they played incredibly significant roles in getting the Fifteenth and Nineteenth Amendments passed.

What is little known and was never anticipated was the breauch with the Suffrage movement over African Americans receiving the vote before White women.

This is a shocking truth about how some of our traditional heroes and heroines really felt.

Abolitionism, Temperance and Women’s Suffrage were social and political movements in the 1800s, often involving many of the same people. Both amalgamation and Abolitionism were controversial, and movements frequently clashed.

A New York newspaper, reporting on the arson of Pennsylvania Hall, suggested, “females gathered so forgot the province of their sex, as they perambulated about the country attending political meetings, that they should all be sent to insane asylums.”

The original language for the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution was introduced in January 1878. However, the proposal was rejected in a 16 to 34 vote in 1887. Unfortunately, many male abolitionists, Black and White, held similar views on the impropriety of women in the public sphere. Some like Frederick Douglass even feared that women pushing for the vote could hurt their cause.

For three decades there was little activity in the nation’s Capitol until Washington and California States allowed women to vote in 1910-11.

In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson called a special session of the Congress so the proposal would be brought before the House again. Again, Pennsylvania was amongst the first to ratify in 1919.

On June 4, 1919, the amendment passed the Senate with 56 ayes and 25 nays. On August 18, 1920, Tennessee provided the final ratification necessary to add the amendment to the Constitution.

The final ratification in 1919 established a new political reality for African American women.

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FIND OUT MORE AT THESE GREAT SITES:
https://digitalharrisburg.com/ and http://housedivided.dickinson.edu/

15th Amendment
Pennsylvania Ratification - March 1869
30 States ratification - February 1870
Becomes Federal Law - May, 1870

19th Amendment
Pennsylvania Ratification - 1919
States Ratification - 1920
Becomes Federal Law - 1920

TODAY’S STEWARDSHIP
THE GOVERNOR’S OFFICE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN AFFAIRS
Established by Executive Order 2015-07, the Governor’s Commission on African American Affairs (GACAAA) serves as the Commonwealth’s advocate agency for the African American community in Pennsylvania. Our mission is to ensure that state government is accessible and accountable by advising the governor on policies, procedures, legislation, and regulations. GACAAA also works to expand and enhance the civic, social, educational, cultural, and economic status of the African American Community. The commission is composed of twenty volunteer members appointed by the governor for a term of two years.

THE GOVERNOR’S COMMISSION ON WOMEN
The Pennsylvania Commission for Women, which was created by Executive Order and consists of volunteer members, is responsible for advising the Governor on policies and legislation that impact women; supporting economic and civic opportunities for women; encouraging mentoring programs for girls and young women; identifying programs and opportunities for the benefit and advancement of women; and serving as a resource center for Pennsylvania women. The Commission also acts as an advocate for policies and legislation it feels serves the best interest of women and girls in Pennsylvania.

OFFICE OF VOTER REGISTRATION
https://www.voteinpa.com/Pages/default.aspx
This site is a comprehensive voting resource for all eligible citizens in Pennsylvania. VotePA can help you find your polling place, check your registration status, register online to vote, apply for an absentee ballot, and more. See you at the polls!
ABOUT THE ORATORS

FRANCES HARPER
(September 24, 1825 - February 12, 1911) was an only child and orphaned at 3. She was raised by her maternal aunt and uncle, Henrietta and Rev. William Watkins who was the minister at the Sharp Street African Methodist Episcopal Church. He also taught at his Watkins Academy for Negro Youth, which she attended. She worked as a dressmaker and a teacher, a public speaker and a writer. As an abolitionist and a suffragette she found several national progressive associations including, in 1894, the National Association of Colored Woman. Harper was one of the first published African-American writers beginning her writing career publishing in antislavery journals in 1839. In addition to non-fiction articles she wrote novels, short stories and poetry. She died nine years before women gained the right to vote.

THOMAS COMPTON
(Nov 11, 1843 - September, 30, 1932) Mr. Chester was born in Harrisburg, PA. He was the son of , former slave Jane, and George Chester. Abolitionist, they operated a popular restaurant. Educated at Avery Academy and in Monrovia, Liberia, he graduated from Temple College. During Civil War, Mr. Compton, being coachman to S.S. Cameron, secretly drove President-elect Abraham Lincoln, from the Jones House on Market Square, to an obscure train boarding that enabled Lincoln to travel, by way of Philadelphia, to Washington, D.C., avoiding a stop in Baltimore, Md. Lincoln, thus evaded a planned assassination attempt in Baltimore. During the Civil War, Mr. Compton served as a Sgt of Company D, Twenty-fourth Infantry, U.S.C.T. T. Mr. Compton, was a charter member, and later Director, of the Excelsior Hotel Club, which commemorates the legacy of the historic Old 8th Ward.

JACOB COMPTON
(August 3, 1838 - September 6, 1905) Born free, in Williamsport, Md. Mr. Compton’s parents died of cholera in 1854. Being charged with assisting two slaves to escape, he fled from Williamsport, Md in 1855 and came to Harrisburg, PA. In February, 1861, Mr. Compton, being coachman to Mrs. Cameron, from the Jones House on Market Square, to an obscure train boarding that enabled Lincoln to travel, by way of Philadelphia, to Washington, D.C., avoiding a stop in Baltimore, Md. Lincoln, thus evaded a planned assassination attempt in Baltimore. During the Civil War, Mr. Compton served as a Sgt of Company D, Twenty-fourth Infantry, U.S.C.T. T. Mr. Compton, was a charter member, and later Director, of the Excelsior Hotel Club, which commemorates the legacy of the historic Old 8th Ward.

WILLIAM HOWARD DAY
(October 16, 1825 - December 3, 1908) Day was born in New York City and attended the famous African Free School. After graduating from Oberlin College in 1847, he dedicated his life to the rights of African Americans. Trained as a printer he published John Brown’s Constitution and several newspapers. Day moved to Harrisburg in 1872 and worked for the state Auditor General. He was elected six times to the Harrisburg School Board., serving as its president 1891-1893, becoming the first African American to do so. Day was Secretary General of the Conference of the A.M.E. Zion church for five terms. Day was also a founding member of the Pennsylvania School Board’s Association.

“EVERY PEOPLE MUST BE ORIGINATORS OF THEIR OWN DESTINY”!

Marie Belamy

“A Gathering at the Crossroads” is a benchmark public installation commissioned for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by a coalition of over 40 organizations and 200 individuals.

The Commonwealth Monument Project is in negotiation with PA Department of General Services to place the new work on the Commonwealth Capitol lawn south of the Irvis Building at 4th and Walnut.

In the months ahead, we will seek the endorsement and approval of the Pennsylvania Legislature. The installation will connect the Capitol and Strawbery Square.

Designed to be interactive; people can physically enter the monument.

Great civic speakers were well known to present spirited addresses before citizens in the center of public squares, houses of worship. They assembled in halls throughout the Old 8th Ward.

The orators' pedestal became the symbol of the advocacy for abolition and equal rights.

The proposed monument includes the figures of four great orationists: Ms. Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, William Howard Day, Jacob Compton, and Thomas Morris Chester.

The four figures of the monument exemplify the impact of the period’s great orators upon the change makers amongst Harrisburg’s African American community.

Their allegorical gathering commemorates a point in time documented by the comparison of historic reports in the Harrisburg Newspapers.

In May 1870, residents of the Old 8th Ward poured out into the streets in spontaneous jubilation when they learned that the 15th Amendment had become federal law. They had secured the vote for African-Americans.

Neighborhood residents gathered for a public reading followed by prayers and praises.

Thus, the four dynamic civic leaders exemplified by the monument gather around the Orators pedestal which commemorates the legacy of the historic Old 8th Ward.

Upon its sides are the inscribed names of 100 legendary leaders of the Old 8th Ward, the names of current pathfinders, change agents and history makers and the emblems of sponsors of the project.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

“A Gathering at the Crossroads” is a benchmark work for the Commonwealth created by A.R.T. Research Enterprises, Inc. of Lancaster, Pa. Their most recent project was for the MGM Hotel and Casino National Inner Harbor in Washington, D.C.

ART Inc. has designed, fabricated and installed monuments for the Smithsonian, the National Air and Space Museum, the National History Museum, Professional Sports, Urban Retail properties. They have provided castings for artists Frederick Hart, the sculptor of the Vietnam Memorial in DC, Tom Otterness, an internationally known artist, Santiago Calzava, a world-renowned architect, Audrey, photo realistic artist sculptor and many more.

Today they are nationally recognized as a premier art foundry service. A.R.T. operates a thirty thousand square foot facility that houses fabrication equipment and melting furnaces. In any given year they employ 16-30 artisans and technicians.

Peggy Grove, a business owner in Harrisburg for the past 37 years, has invested her time, talents, energy and resources in many community projects. From her service on Harrisburg City Council to her dedication to the many children’s programs, she has left her mark on this City, it’s families and especially it’s children.

Ms. Grove has served on many foundations and community organizations, giving service through Harrisburg NAACP, Harrisburg Rotary, Historic Harrisburg, Assn, Parks and Recreation projects, numerous scholarship trusts and committees; Jewish Community Foundation and the Tzedakah Society. She also is involved in Local, State and National politics and serves as South Central Caucus Chair of the PDP.

Her contributions to the Peace Promenade Project have helped support many aspects of the multi year long program.

PEGGY GROVE - EXEMPLARS' GROVE
PEGGY GROVE - WOMEN'S MONUMENT
PEGGY GROVE - 4TH AND WALNUT

The partners and constituents of the 2019-2020 COMMONWEALTH MONUMENT PROJECT join The International Institute of Peace Through Tourism in saluting Ms. Peggy Grove for her outstanding generosity and public service as we galvanize our efforts to accomplish this benchmark endeavor.
A CALL FOR THE DESCENDANTS OF THE OLD 8TH WARD

Every day in your history books, you will read about the African American community in Philadelphia. But what about the Old 8th Ward? This once great neighborhood in the heart of the City, a site of the 1919 race riot, the Pillow Fight, and the birthplace of the African American flag, is now just a name in your history class. The architecture and facades of the historic Old 8th Ward have completely disappeared. Not a door frame, lamp post, cornice or cornerstone remains on the landscape to remind us of its importance and its impact.

It’s businesses and enterprises have disbursed, disbanded, or been transformed. Indeed, it’s residents and their children and their children’s children have scattered throughout Central PA, the Commonwealth, the United States, and the world. Their primary documents are in plain sight in well-worn family Bibles. In tattered envelopes, or hidden beds, in the back of closet shelves, buried in old suitcases beneath trunks, basement boxes and bundled stacks.

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Where are the descendants of the Old 8th Ward now? What has been their contribution to civic engagement and social progress along the Diaspora from that special ward? What do they know about their treasured legacy? Their histories create the template for Reimagining the Old 8th Ward. What is their currency in today’s civic dialogue?

We are in search of their stories. Indeed, it’s residents and their families have scattering throughout Central PA, the Commonwealth, the United States, and the world. The architecture and facades of the historic Old 8th Ward have completely disappeared. Not a door frame, lamp post, cornice or cornerstone remains on the landscape to remind us of its importance and its impact.

Meet us at our free monthly gatherings at Gamut Theater (4th and Aberdeen Streets,) or McCormick Public Library (Front and Walnut) in the Capitol City of Harrisburg.

Round up your family, congregation and constituency and bring along your artifacts and memorabilia. Our scholars, humanists, archivists, curators, and educators will provide context to your documents. Our “History Detectives” will be on hand to help you identify how your treasures fit into the jigsaw puzzle of history. We will share ways to preserve and protect your treasures.

And our Legendary Pennsylvania Past Players will love you to join their story circles. For more information about these free programs, see below or visit gammt.com OR dlcls.org

**“Live and Learn” - Civic Dialogue and Cultural Literacy Series -**

**“Pathways to Progress”**

The popular story circle, reading group and living history series originally created for Pennsylvania Civil War 150 and the USCT Grand Review of 2013 and 2015 is restructured. We’re excited as we approach the benchmark commemorations of the 15th and 19th Amendments. As we stand at the crossroads of two important red-letter days, we are in search of their stories.

It’s the perfect time for descendants of the Old 8th Ward to come forward and claim their lineage. To help rebuild the pathway to progress, we post this special “WANTED!” list seeking the descendants of 100 families of Harrisburg’s African American community 1850-1920.

Their primary documents are in plain sight in well-worn family Bibles. In tattered envelopes, or hidden in plain sight in well-worn family Bibles.

The series is free to the public and hosted at Gamut Theater’s new second stage from noon - 2p in January 12, Cooper Wingert introduces “THE CAPTIVE’S QUEST FOR FREEDOM” by R.J. M. Blackett

March 9, Dr. Tonya Thomas Taylor introduces “DISABUSED LEGACIES” by Melba Joyce Boyd

May 25, Dr. Todd Mealy introduces his two volume “AUDACIOUS FREEDOM”

Pathways to Progress

Combining the approaches of “Antique Road Show” and “History Detectives”, the series provides an exploration of the artifacts, historical documents, and photographs available for the Old 8th Ward in a variety of public collections and archives.

Workshop participants can bring their own family artifacts for dialogue and review or help search for 100 stories of residents, businesses and services during the period 1850-1920.

The six-part series is presented at the McCormick Public Library, Front and Walnut Streets in collaboration with Dauphin County Public Libraries. It’s free to the public on Saturdays from noon – 2p

February 16, Dr. Michael Barton introduces his “HARRISBURG OLD 8TH WARD”

April 20, NPS-NTF, introduces “THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD IN PENNSYLVANIA”

June 15, Dr. LeRoy Hopkins introduces “THE WAR BEFORE THE WAR” by Andrew Delbanco

August 17, Mr. Randy Harris introduces “RECONSTRUCTION: A CONSCIOUS HISTORY” by Allen C. Guelzo

October 19, Mr. Calobe Jackson introduces “AFRICAN AMERICANS OF HARRISBURG” by John Scott And E. Lidell

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