

AAHMSNJ NEWSLETTER

AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY

You're Invited: Reception Saturday, February 12th from 1 to 3 P.M.

Ralph Hunter's Pictures of Africa: A Dream Fulfilled

Ralph Hunter, Sr., (right) is the President and founder of the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey where he oversees the collection of memorabilia that can be seen at the Martin Luther King Center in Newtonville. It had been his dream to travel to the shores of the great River Nile in Africa and the dream was fulfilled when he and a small group toured the continent in 1995. He will share photographs of his cultural adventure and discuss some of the highlights at a reception on Saturday, February 12th from 1 - 3 PM.



Rod Robinson's Images of Africa

Stunning natural scenery is featured in Rod Robinson's photographs of East and South African landscapes and wildlife. Robinson hunts his graceful prey with a digital camera. The viewer is transported to the plains of Africa with the a blink of his lens. His pictures describe the dusty heat and the fragility of its natural inhabitants and vegetation and combine to share the thrill of a rare moment in time. The former attorney and son of a Tuskegee Airman enjoys sharing his passion for the beauty of God's creation.



Cheetahs by the Termite Mound, Rod Robinson

Jacqueline Hall-Smith Displays African Artifacts and African-Inspired Fashions

Jacqueline Hall-Smith resides in Mays Landing but her curiosity about human nature has taken her all over the world. Seeking knowledge about her African roots, her extensive travels have helped her to learn more about people of color everywhere and therefore about herself. The African American Heritage Museum is pleased to display artifacts she collected on trips to Senegal, Ghana and Ethiopia. Her exhibit will become a family affair as she also presents a fashion show during the reception featuring the African-inspired clothing designed and marketed by her sister, Angeline Hall-Watts, for Damali Creations. The garments are made by Ghanaian craftspeople of African cloth. A portion of the profits supports the economic development of workers in

JOIN US FOR A FASHION SHOW AT 1 PM



www.damalocreations.com

Museum Hours: Tuesday - Friday 10:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Saturdays by appointment
609-704-5495 FREE ADMISSION-DONATIONS WELCOME www.aahmsnj.org

AAHMSNJ | Martin Luther King Center | 661 Jackson Road | Newtonville NJ 08346

History Notes on Slavery in New Jersey

Our nation of many cultures is often compared to a patchwork quilt comprised of many colors and textures. As Black History Month approaches, we take a closer look at some of the African American pieces in the patchwork.



New Brunswick broadside, 1795

Africans were first recorded in New Jersey's population in the early 1600s when the Dutch brought them here to perform the heavy labor needed to build towns and cities. They were made to abandon their language, were separated from their culture and traditions, and were derided as an inferior culture in anti-black propaganda designed to make them seem of lesser intelligence, morality and beauty than their enslavers. Many were treated like livestock and given foreign names that would further blur their sense of identity. The measures used to erase the memory their culture were so effective that it is difficult to find African Americans today who can name the country from which their ancestors came.

Quaker influences in southern New Jersey kept the number of slaves at a much lower level than in northern New Jersey which relied more heavily on slave labor for its industrial economy. In the early 1800s, two thirds of all slaves in all northern states were located in New Jersey. A system of gradual emancipation allowed female children born after 1804 to be freed at the age of 21 and males at 25, but they were restricted socially and politically by stringent laws that

regulated their movement and activities.

Unfortunately, most former slaves took the cruel memories of this period with them to their graves, and the facts of slavery were largely left out of the masters' accounts as well. Few of their offspring dared to set the record straight, however records that survived made it clear that slaves in New Jersey endured the same restrictions and punishments as those in the deep South. They had to obey a master and were subject to an arbitrary system of justice. To keep them controlled they could be publicly whipped without benefit of a trial for crimes real or perceived; they were castrated for miscegenation; and in some cases, they were burned at the stake or hands were lopped off as a warning to other slaves.

In 1846 New Jersey abolished slavery by statute but many blacks remained virtual slaves or "apprentices for life" until slavery was finally abolished by the 13th Amendment to the Constitution in 1865. Our state was the *last* northern state to ratify the amendment in 1866. Conversely, on January 7, 2008 the New Jersey State Legislature passed Resolution 270, 29-2 and became the *first* northern state to apologize for slavery.

The effects of slavery's stain on the American quilt have proven difficult to wash away. So much history has been lost through ignorance and design that the importance of that which remains is greatly magnified. During Black History Month we honor those who walked the long road to freedom, we celebrate those who bravely spoke truth to power, and are thankful to those who lifted the heavy veil of shame and ignorance to reveal a proud, enduring culture.



Paul Robeson, born in slavery in NJ

Contributed by Anne Taylor Glapion

Learning more about our past will help us to fulfill the hopes and dreams our ancestors had for our future. You are invited to visit the African American Heritage Museum in Newtonville throughout the year to learn more about the history of African Americans.

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