

AAHM Sojourner

Newsletter of the
SPRINGFIELD AND CENTRAL ILLINOIS AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MUSEUM

VOLUME 1, NO. 1

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INSIDE LOOK



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A Message from AAHM President Doug King



On behalf of the Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum board and volunteers, welcome to the first edition of our newsletter, the **AAHM Sojourner**. With every edition, you'll discover what's happened, is happening now, and will be happening at the Museum in the weeks and months to come. We'd like your feedback!

Since this is the very first edition, let's do some catching up. Frankly, 2016 was an amazing year! After a major renovation to our new home at 1440 Monument Ave, we opened our doors with a rousing Grand Opening on March 3. The event, including remarks by Governor Bruce Rauner and Springfield Mayor Jim Langfelder, underscored the support and need for a museum that tells the story of the life experiences and contributions of African Americans in Central Illinois. The event also introduced many new exhibits.

The following nine months were unbelievable! We played host to visitors from across the world and offered programs focusing on **National Women's History Month**, African History and Cultures including **Fighting for Their Freedom: The Story of the US Colored Troops**, and our first ever history-through-art summer camp. Our major exhibit was **Rise Above: The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen**, an educational experience for young and old alike! At our annual fundraising Gala in October, we honored African Americans who have greatly contributed to their communities: Mary Alexander of Champaign, Betty Hood of Decatur and Springfield residents Judith Johnson, Edna Shanklin, and Archie Lawrence.

*In January 2017, we marked the 30th anniversary of the change in Springfield's form of government from Mayor/Council to Mayor/Aldermanic and opened our newest exhibit on **The Founding of New Philadelphia, Illinois** by Free Frank and Free Lucy McWorter, enslaved persons who bought their freedom and were the first African Americans to found and register a town in the United States. Their story continued in February with a presentation by fifth generation Sandra McWorter. We also celebrated national **Black History Month**. The Museum is filled almost daily with walk-ins and tour groups of all ages, and we are taking our exhibits and programs to schools, state agencies and Illinois correctional centers. What can you look forward to in the weeks and months ahead?*

Come to the Museum to find out and checkout our new website at www.spiaahm.org or visit our awesome Facebook page and read about us in media outlets all over Central Illinois! Thank you for your continued support of our mission: to tell the life experiences and contributions of African Americans in Central Illinois and to educate all of our communities and visitors of the history that for so many years has been untold. Call us anytime at 217-391-6323. We hope to see and hear from you soon!



OUR MISSION

- * We tell authentic stories about African-American life in Central Illinois, past and present, celebrating and sharing our history and culture and planning for the future.
- * We will do this through scholarship, oral histories, exhibits, partnerships, our board, our supporters and our friends.
- * We are and will be community builders.
- * We recognize that our stories are at once unique but connected to those of other communities and we will support those interconnections.
- * We will be integral to the cultural life of our area. We will partner with like-minded organizations.
- * We will be proactive in our community.
- * We will study and apply best-practices in business, scholarship and communication.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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AAHM website: spiaahm.org
Address: 1440 Monument Ave., Springfield, IL 62702
Telephone: 217-391-6323
Toll free: 877-757-2247

Museum Standing Committees Key to Operational Success

Standing Committees at the Museum are the working mechanisms of the Museum. Each committee has essential responsibilities. Committees typically meet once a month to plan and prepare for the tasks ahead. Anyone interested in a particular subject is encouraged to contact the committee chair about becoming involved.

The **Education and Exhibits Committee** (Jerrie Blakely, Chair) identifies areas of interest and subjects and develops Museum exhibits, special programs, and outreach materials.

The **Finance Committee** (Minnie Gillespie, Chair) manages Museum finances and develops strategies for Museum operations.

The **Gala Committee** (Ocheng Jany, Chair) plans and executes this premier event of the year which includes a banquet, entertainment, silent auction, and recognition of honorees.

The **Marketing and Public Relations** (Douglas King, Chair) develops approaches to marketing of the Museum and provides outreach to community partners and friends.

The **Membership Committee** (Sue Massie, Chair) works to expand membership and provide timely information about the Museum to members and friends.

The **Program Committee** (Nell Clay, Chair) develops and coordinates special programs at the Museum that include an array of subjects appealing to various interests.

The **Volunteer Committee** (Elizabeth Alexander, Chair) recruits and trains Museum volunteers as well as schedules their time and activities.

The **Summer Day Camp** (Pam King, Chair) provides children with educational and fun-filled activities. The program combines history including the African-American experience and the arts, and includes special activities provided by partners from around the city.

Be an AAHM Museum Volunteer!

You are welcome and needed at the Museum. Our volunteers are engaged in many activities: greeting visitors at the door, providing Museum tours, researching new subjects, developing exhibits, and hosting social events. For those who love children, volunteers are needed to assist with Summer Day Camp. Whatever your interests or skills, there is sure to be a place for you at the Museum.



is the quarterly newsletter of the Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum, 1440 Monument Avenue, Springfield, Illinois.

Editor, Sue Massie; Design and Production, Vicky Whitaker.

Meet Olu Jimi Adeniyi, AAHM Museum Artist-in-Residence

Painter, sculptor and illustrator Olu Jimi Adeniyi is the Museum's artist in residence. Born and educated in Lagos, Nigeria, he studied in London and completed his art education at SIU Edwardsville. His paintings are vivid with color, texture and movement, many depicting scenes from diverse cultures.

Adeniyi's work has been exhibited in locations around the world and he is represented by Haddads Publishers. Original pieces are on display at the Museum and canvas reproductions, both framed and unframed, are available for purchase.

Springfield Mayor Jim Langfelder chats with the artist Olu Jimi Adeniyi at the Museum's exhibit of his work.



AAHM Museum Goes on the Road, Bringing Exhibits, Programs to Schools, Institutions

The Museum is often asked to provide presentations or exhibits at locations outside the Museum.

This provides an opportunity to talk to groups that would not ordinarily visit the Museum or who, after hearing our presentation, may become active members.

Already this year our Board and other volunteers have provided materials and/or made presentations at the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Illinois Correctional Facility



in Taylorville, the University of Illinois at Springfield, Lincoln Land Community College, and Jefferson Middle School.

The Museum is developing additional materials and programs that can be used for outreach.

If an organization you know is interested in a special program, please contact the Museum. A presentation could be arranged at either the Museum itself or another location.

AAHM Partners Provide Us Invaluable Support

The Museum is blessed with partners from Springfield, Central Illinois, and beyond. Many museums, organizations, and businesses have taken part in exhibits and programs since the Museum's founding. Support has come in many forms: artifacts and materials, research and production, donations and contributions, and participation and enthusiasm. We thank all our partners.

- | | |
|---|---|
| American Assn. of Retired Persons | Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site |
| Abraham Lincoln Assn. | LRS |
| Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum | Marine Bank |
| Butler Funeral Homes | Mary Michelle Winery & Vineyard |
| Calvary Baptist Church | Memorial Health System |
| City of Springfield | Oak Ridge Cemetery Foundation |
| Community Care Systems | Pere Marquette Lodge |
| Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Inc. | PJP Auto Enterprises, Inc. |
| Dominican Sisters of Springfield, IL | PNC Bank |
| Elijah Iles House Foundation | Sangamon County Historical Society |
| Faith Coalition for the Common Good | Security Bank |
| First Bankers Trust Co. | Springfield Area Arts Council |
| Fox Channel 55 | Springfield Art Assn. |
| George Alarm | Springfield Electric Co. |
| GM Services, LLC | Springfield Housing Authority |
| Green Nissan | Springfield Tracy Fund |
| HSBS St. John's Hospital | Springfield Urban League |
| Hanson Professional Services | State Farm Insurance |
| The Horace Mann Companies | State Journal Register |
| The Illinois Times | Union Baptist Church |
| IL Assn. of Community Action | United Way of Central IL |
| IL Executive Mansion Foundation | U.S. Bank |
| IL Historic Preservation Agency | WICS Channel 20 |
| IL Petroleum Marketers Assn. | |
| IL State Museum | |
| Isringhausen Imports | |
| Lincoln Home National Historic Site | |
| Lincoln Monument Assn. | |

And the numerous individuals who have helped in countless ways.

Exhibits

THE NEW PHILADELPHIA EXHIBIT

The New Philadelphia Exhibit tells the story of “Free Frank” McWhorter. Free Frank was once a slave in Kentucky who as able to buy his freedom and that of 13 or more family members. He established a business and established New Philadelphia, an integrated town in Pike County, Illinois. This incredible story has great historic interest. Several institutions have done extensive research as well as archaeological excavations at the site. New Philadelphia is being considered for designation as a National Historic Site.



UNITED STATES MARSHALS

The elite cadre of US Marshals was once the domain of white men only. In 1875 Bass Reeves was the first black man appointed a US Marshal and in 1877 President Lincoln appointed Fredrick Douglass a US Marshal. It was 85 years until the next African-American received an appointment. Robert Moore was appointed by President Bill Clinton on October 17, 1994 and served until his retirement on June 29, 2002. This exhibit is curated by US Marshall Robert Moore and contains many items from his personal collection.



PRESTON JACKSON

This dazzling exhibit of object-enhanced oil paintings are dynamic and thought provoking. Artist Preston Jackson is more often recog-



nized for his monumental outdoor sculpture such as the “Acts of Intolerance” located in Springfield’s Union Square Park or “From the Cottonfield to the Battlefield” in Decatur. These paintings depict social interaction, and encourage us to contemplate our own means of communicating.

JOURNEY TO FREEDOM

The Journey to Freedom traces slavery in North America starting in 1600s, escalating to eventually encompass almost 4 million slaves in the United States alone prior to their emancipation. The exhibit describes how African American served the Union cause during the Civil War. The enlistees were assigned to segregated “Colored Troops.” The contributions of many African American Abolitionists including Fredrick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, and Harriet Tubman are described. This exhibit was developed by Robert Davis who also portrays Fredrick Douglass.



“DOC” HELM PHOTOS

This exhibit of stunning black and white photographs by Eddie Winfred Helm (1911-1994), fondly known as “Doc” Helm, covers a broad range of people and places. During 50 years as the Secretary of State’s photographer, Helm captured on film momentous events and occasions. During that time, he also photographed a multitude of everyday events, people and places. In this collection are political and sports figures, doctor’s offices, lunch counters, night clubs, farm scenes and more. We challenge you to identify some of the individuals pictured. Helm’s daughter, Beverly Jean Renfro, is generously loaning these photographs to the Museum.



Ahead in 2017

Unless noted otherwise, these programs are free and open to the community. Donations are always appreciated and we encourage membership in the Museum.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY: ETHICAL PRACTICE IN MENTAL HEALTH

Saturday, March 25, 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Elise Bell, MD - Psychiatrist, Professor, Author. Dr. Bell will lead a discussion on Cultural Competency which involves understanding of values, norms and traditions that affect how an individual of a particular group perceives, thinks, interacts, behaves, and makes judgments about their world. The discussion is designed to bring awareness of cross-cultural issues in mental health, understanding the characteristics of Cultural Competence, the capacity to design areas necessary for Cultural Competence and the ability to ethically and effectively practice across cultures.



SECOND CHANCE CHRISTMAS

Saturday, April 8, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

For those who didn't spend Christmas traveling the world to enjoy ethnic cuisines, this is your opportunity! Six continents of the world will be represented with visual and gastronomic delights. Costumed hosts will offer an array of ethnic foods for sampling. Visitors may vote on their favorite food, table decorations, and costumes. Please come and bring your friends and family members, and share the food, fun and excitement.



ESCAPE INTO A BOOK WITH ILLINOIS AUTHORS

Saturday, April 22, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Books have the wonderful power to take you to another world. This event will provide you an opportunity to talk with Illinois authors and purchase their books. Hear their personal stories and discover things they have learned. Fourteen or more authors will participate, having written personal stories, poetry, history, children's books, biographies and more. They will make you laugh, cry, learn and contemplate the meaning of their words.



POETRY SLAM

Friday, June 23, 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Focused on students in grades 9 through 12, the Poetry Slam culminates a series of three workshops offering students information and assistance in creating poetry. Watch for announcements of workshop times and places. Awards will be given.

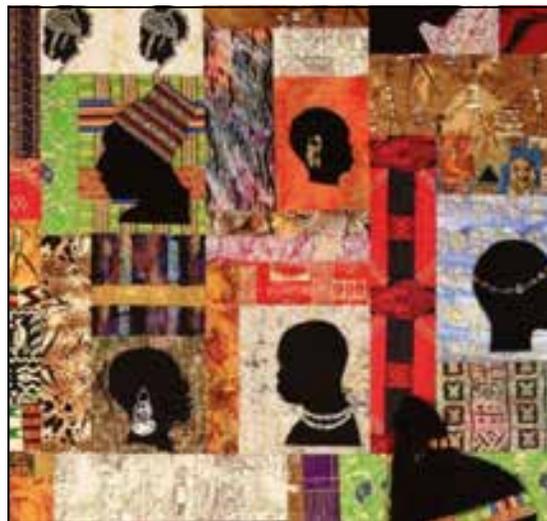


Coming Attractions

We're working on lots of new programs and projects as well as preparing for some of our regular events. Here's an update on some of the special events and activities we'll be telling you more about in future issues of *AAHM Sojourner*:

THE STORIES OF QUILTS

Join us for a look into the past and future of what we know as quilts. From an early time in Illinois when quilts were entirely made by hand to today's machine methods. Explore traditional quilt making using traditional designs and techniques. See some of the earliest Illinois quilts made entirely by hand. Learn about today's quilt-making techniques, including decorative compositions and machine embellishments.



SUMMER CAMP FOR CHILDREN

Summer day camps are being planned. In a hands-on environment, children will participate in activities designed to instill knowledge and appreciation of history and the arts. Each day will be filled with stimulating educational and recreational activities. The Museum will again be hosting this camp opportunity along with partners of the Lincoln Home National Historic Site, Oak Ridge Cemetery Foundation, Lincoln Monument Association, Lincoln's New Salem Historic Site, and others. Tuition is required although some waivers based on economic need will be provided.

AAHM campers last year were visited by Civil War re-enactors from the Lincoln Home National Historic Site.

GALA 2017

Plans for *The Gala 2017* are underway. This annual event and fundraiser is scheduled for October 26 at the Wyndham Springfield City Centre. This year's theme is *Early African American Pioneers of Central Illinois*. It's sure to be a stupendous evening with live music, entertainment, gourmet dining, and award presentations. An interesting collection of items will be offered in a silent auction. Please mark your calendars for this enjoyable and entertaining evening.



Calendar of Events

MUSEUM SUMMER HOURS: TUESDAY THROUGH SATURDAY, 10 A.M. TO 5 P.M., STARTING APRIL 1

Now Through July 30: "The Story of New Philadelphia." The Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum exhibit showcases the first town in the United States platted and registered by an African American in 1836, former slave Free Frank McWhorter. McWhorter purchased his freedom and that of his wife and 13 family members, leaving



Kentucky for Pike County, Illinois in 1830 where six years later he founded New Philadelphia which he thought would benefit from the commerce along the planned Illinois and Michigan

Canal (which was never built). The town was integrated. Before the Civil War, New Philadelphia had become one of the stations along the Underground Railroad for shepherding escaped slaves to Canada. With emancipation, more settlers arrived in New Philadelphia. Its population peaked at close to 160 shortly after 1865. Bypassed in the construction of the Hannibal and Naples Railroad in 1869, the population drifted away and the town dissolved in 1885. The subject of extensive archeological research that began in 2004. The New Philadelphia site was added to the National Historic Register of Historic Places in 2005 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 2009. Artifacts excavated from New Philadelphia, provided by the Illinois State Museum, are among the items in the new exhibit. Museum hours are Noon to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays and after April 1, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Saturday, April 8, 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Second Chance Christmas A festival of culture and cuisine from around the world. Six continents will be featured with costumes, decorations and local foods to sample. Come and vote for your favorites.



Saturday, April 22, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Escape into a Book with Illinois Authors. Fourteen local authors will be on-hand to discuss and sign their recent books.



Saturday, May 20, 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Quilting Exhibit and Demonstration. A timeless look at Midwestern quilts, their purpose and evolution. Early Sangamon County quilts made entirely by hand will be displayed side-by-side with today's machine techniques.



Thursday, October 26, 6 p.m. 2017 Gala, Wyndham Springfield City Centre, 701 East Adams Street, Springfield. **Watch for ticket information and details in the next issue.**

Springfield and Central Illinois
African American History Museum
P.O. Box 301
Springfield, IL 62705-0301

Non-profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit 500
Springfield, Illinois



MEMBERSHIP

Members receive membership cards, certificates of membership, and museum communications. Members at the Sustaining level and above also receive invitations to previews, grand openings and special VIP events.

Membership Categories

- | | | | |
|--|-------|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$ 25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting | \$100-\$199 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$ 50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining | \$200-\$499 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth/student | \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Advancing | \$500-\$999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior | \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member | \$1,000 <i>includes free lifetime admission.</i> |

Business Member \$500-\$999 (includes business listing at museum events)

I would like to pay now for three years of membership . AMOUNT enclosed)\$ _____

Please contact me about volunteer opportunities.

Name _____

Street address _____

City, state, zip _____

Telephone number _____

Email address _____

Your check should be made payable to the **Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum (SCIAAHM)** , P.O. Box 301, Springfield, IL 62705-0301