

PETERBORO AREA MUSEUM
CELEBRATES JUNETEENTH and the SESQUICENTENNIAL

The Peterboro Area Museum is introducing *FOUR for FREEDOM*, a two-day exhibit of photographs, broadsides, and descriptive information for Juneteenth Weekend 2026 on Saturday, June 20 and Sunday June 21 from 1 to 4 pm. The exhibit will detail the experiences of four individuals coming for freedom in Peterboro NY. Harriet Powell, Harriet Russell (and family), John Tyler, and John *The Dominie* West represent the hundreds of freedom seekers who came via the Underground Railroad to the Gerrit Smith Estate in Peterboro. Two of these freedom seekers remained in Peterboro for their lifetime. One was in contact from Canada with the Smith family. Two are buried in the Peterboro Cemetery. A coach bus comes in August from a university in Michigan to the gravesite of one. Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote of her time in the attic with one of the freedom seekers. The daughter of one freedomseeker sipped coffee with Tubman on her visits.

Also, on exhibit is a model of the Gerrit and Ann Smith mansion created by Gary Tucker, former Smithfield Highway Superintendent. The Smith home was a beacon of freedom to hundreds of freedom seekers. Gerrit Smith Miller, grandson of Gerrit Smith, lived in the home when it burned in 1936. Tucker's creation provides a visual experience of the 1850s.

This Museum in Peterboro celebrates the 250th anniversary of our country by a display demonstrating a special project for the 200th anniversary! In 1976 the National Park Service reconstructed Fort Stanwix, a critical site in the fight for American independence. Four young men from Peterboro [James Dorrance, Tim Huller, Daryl (Spook) Spokowsky, and David Goff, Jr.] were trained in using broadaxes to hew logs for the fort reconstruction. This exhibit includes some of their tools.

The Peterboro Area Museum was established in 1975 in preparation for the 200th anniversary of America's independence in 1976. The Town of Smithfield agreed that the building that had been the school for the Madison County Home for Orphaned and Destitute Children would be the museum building.

The Peterboro Area Museum (PAM) is located at 4608 Peterboro Road in Peterboro at the eastern end of the hamlet green. The PAM is open on Saturdays and Sundays from 1 to 4 pm from June through September, and is closed this year on July 4 and 5, and September 5 and 6. For more information: www.PeterboroNY.org, bspokows@twcny.rr.com, and 315.684.9022



Peterboro Area Museum <https://www.peterboroareamuseum.com/>

The Peterboro Area Museum was established in 1975 in preparation for the 200th anniversary of America's independence in 1976. The Town of Smithfield agreed that the building that had been the school for the Madison County Children's Home would be the museum building.

The Peterboro Area Museum (PAM) is located at 4608 Peterboro Road, Peterboro NY 13408, at the eastern end of the hamlet green. The PAM is open on Saturdays and Sundays from 1 to 4 pm from June through September, and is closed this year on July 4 and 5, and September 5 and 6. For more information: www.PeterboroNY.org, bspokows@twcny.rr.com, and 315.684.9022



<https://www.wgpfoundation.org/historic-markers/childrens-home/>

Opened in 1871, the Madison County's Home for Orphaned and Destitute Children was funded by politician, philanthropist, and ardent abolitionist Gerrit Smith. The home was established for the purpose of caring for children in Madison County who were either orphans or living in severe poverty. This home operated for more than 50 years, but due to the rising cost of repairs and maintenance of the aging structure, it was closed in 1926 and later demolished in 1938.



(Postcard from Norman K. Dann PhD)

The Gerrit and Ann Smith home was a beacon of freedom to hundreds of freedom seekers on the Underground Railroad. Gerrit Smith Miller, grandson of Gerrit Smith, lived in the home when it burned in 1936. Gary Tucker's creation provides a visual experience of the 1850s.



Madison County Historian Matt Urtz Photo 11.5.2025

Four men from Peterboro [James Dorrance, Tim Huller, Daryl (Spook) Spokowsky, and David Goff, Jr.] were trained in using broadaxes to hew logs for the fort. The exhibit includes some of their tools.