

President's Report for the 2024 Annual Meeting

Summary of the Year's Activities:

Members and the public are welcomed to our Board meetings which occur the 2nd Tuesday of each month except December due to the holidays. We meet on the second floor of the Plattsburgh Library at 6:00 pm.

The North Star Underground Railroad Museum opened this year on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from Memorial weekend through Indigenous/Columbia Day. We had 2,379 visitors and 595 under 18 this open season.

Special tours this season included teachers from the North Country Teacher Resource Center, classes from SUNY Plattsburgh, Paul Smith College, SUNY Potsdam, Frederick Douglass Academy in New York City, Clinton Community College, and St. Lawrence University. We had several public school tours, also. I participated with Clinton County Historical Association and lead a tour of blacks in Riverside Cemetery.

Our museum will need volunteers for the 2025 open season, as docents. Since the pandemic, we've tried to have at least 2 volunteers as docents. It's to protect our visitors and docents. If you're interested especially in history, I would encourage you to sign up by emailing us at ugr@frontier.com. Training is provided as a group session in the spring and one on one with a docent during your time at the museum. We are not expecting anyone to be able to know a lot about our history. We have material docents can use and the exhibits give clues to information to provide

I'm continuing as a community member on the Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Advisory Committee which is an initiative of SUNY Plattsburgh's joint Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Work. I'm an Advisory board member for AARCH and PBS and a member of MLK committee, as well as the Women's Rights Alliance of New York State.

We've received a grant from Essex for the Colors of Freedom Juneteenth program in the amount of \$850. This year I received the second Colors of Freedom Award as part of the Juneteenth program. This award recognizes businesses, individuals, or organizations that contribute to promoting the importance of blacks in the community.

The following programs were produced this year; Colors of Freedom in the North Country for Juneteenth holiday and Women's Equal Rights Program. The Colors of Freedom was a collaboration with Essex County Arts Council, John Brown Lives, John Brown Farm, New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Elizabethtown and Adirondack Museum, Paul Smith's College. Women's Equality Day was a collaboration with Clinton County Historical Association.

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I presented at SUNY Plattsburgh National Day of Racial Healing, Dr. Wendy Gordon's class, Black Solidarity Day at SUNY Plattsburgh, Black History Month at SUNY Plattsburgh for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion program, Slave Dwelling Conference in Philadelphia, Retro Live as part of Juneteenth, the Saratoga Quaker Meeting House, John Brown Farm, the Clinton Community College, Dr. Eric Holmlund's class from Paul Smith's College. I did a re-enactment of Jacqueline Archer for Delta Kappa Gamma's tea and participated in World Water Day. I attended the Appreciation Tea at the Stephen and Harriet Myers Museum in Albany, NY, City of Plattsburgh Mayor's Reception for the Battle of Plattsburgh celebration and Dr. Alice Green reparation's discussion.

The Association received the following historical items; a dress worn by Jane Smith (Stephen Keese Smith's first wife) a second dress that had been altered for a reenactment, engraved pillowcases, that we're trying to determine who may have owned them, a portrait of Wendell Lansing when he was 33 years old, a photo of the Ausable Chasm hotel that shows the start of the fire that destroyed it, and numerous articles from the Peru historian's office, as I volunteer there.

The brook near the former home of John Thomas will be a new exhibit in the John Thomas room. The exhibit should be available for the opening of the museum in 2025.

This semester, we have 1 intern, Teagan, SUNY Plattsburgh. Teagan set up our Archives collection in PastPerfect and she created a booklet on how to archive items. As part of her internship, she was responsible for researching some questionable items in the collection and networking with experts in the field of archiving.

The museum was featured this year at SUNY Plattsburgh Arts Museum and in a film produced by Robin Lasser. The film focus is on the use of water in Lake Champlain and I provided information on the lake being used as a route to freedom by formerly enslaved individuals. Lasser is a professor in California and a producer.