



NATIONAL
BLACK
HERSTORY
TASK FORCE

The Herstorian Newsletter

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Sharon Jordan, Editor

Letter from the President

We're Back! This edition marks the return of *The Herstorian*, the quarterly newsletter produced for the members and supporters of the National Black Herstory Task Force, Inc. (NBHTF). The NBHTF is a non-profit cultural and educational organization providing vehicles to chronicle and celebrate the lives and legacies of women of African descent world-wide.

Returning as an online newsletter available via the official website (www.blackherstory.org) and distributed via email once per quarter per request, this new version of *The Herstorian* will allow members and supporters across the globe to stay up-to date on our activities as we move into the second phase of our development. Phase one was outstanding and award winning. The second phases with guidance and leadership of our new team and the continued support of our members and friends, promises the outcomes that would make our ancestors proud.

Peace and Blessings,

Mozella

Mozella Galloway, President & Co-Founder
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NBHTF, Inc. Board Member's Research Earns National Historic Landmark Recognition from President Obama



In December 2008, the site of New Philadelphia, Illinois, a town founded in 1836 by African American, Free Frank McWorter (1777-1854), was approved as a National Historic Landmark.

According to the Department of Interior, "National Historic Landmarks are nationally significant historic places designated by the Secretary of the Interior because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States. Today, fewer than 2,500 historic places bear this national distinction."

The historic significance of Free Frank's New Philadelphia is documented by University of Texas at Austin Professor Juliet E. K. Walker in her book, *Free Frank: A Black Pioneer on the Antebellum Frontier* (1983, 1995). It remains the only scholarly historical study that reconstructs Free Frank's life from birth to death, including Walker's systematic documentation on Free Frank's activities in promoting the development of New Philadelphia as a pioneer town on the Illinois frontier from its founding in 1836 to its demise in 1870.

Acknowledging Professor Walker's singular and seminal research Senator Barack Obama notes in his October 27, 2008 letter to the Department of Interior that: "I am writing in support of the nomination of the New Philadelphia Town Site for recognition as a National Historic Landmark. New Philadelphia is a site of national importance as the first town known to be founded and platted by an African American. Platted in 1836 by Free Frank McWorter, a former slave, New Philadelphia thrived as a bi-racial community during a period of extreme racial tension." — Continued on Page 2

Historian's Research Earns National Historic Landmark Recognition from President Obama Continued

Walker, the great-great-granddaughter of Free Frank, began research with her University of Chicago doctoral dissertation, "Free Frank and New Philadelphia: Slave and Freedman, Frontiersman and Town Founder." The topic, Walker emphasizes, was inspired by her mother, Thelma McWorter Kirkpatrick, and encouraged as a dissertation by her advisor, the eminent scholar and historian Dr. John Hope Franklin.

In 1988, Walker had Free Frank's grave site entered in the National Register of Historic Places. Only three grave sites in Illinois are listed in the National Register: the other two are Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglass. In 1990, then Congressman Richard Durbin in a tribute to Dr. Walker said in a speech published in the *Congressional Record*:

"Mr. Speaker, on Saturday I will attend a ceremony honoring Free Frank McWorter whose pioneering spirit and entrepreneurship led to freedom from slavery for himself, his family, and many others he helped escape through the underground railroad. His great-great-granddaughter, Prof. Juliet E. K. Walker, has worked long and hard to secure Free Frank's place in history. Her efforts have made many people more aware of an aspect of African-American history and business that is little known to most Americans."

Significantly, Free Frank's New Philadelphia town site is one of only a few National Historic Landmarks that recognizes black business activities before the Civil War, particularly, too, the historic contributions of a slave-born antebellum black who never learned to read or write.

Free Frank was an antebellum black entrepreneur. With profits earned from various business beginning in 1812, first as a slave, and then as a free black, Free Frank purchased 16 family members from slavery beginning with his wife Lucy (1771-1870) in 1817 and then his own in 1819. As town proprietor, the founding of New Philadelphia and the sale of town lots was one of Free Frank business ventures. Also, unlike the all-black towns founded after the Civil War, whites purchased New Philadelphia town lots from Free Frank, compared to some black towns where blacks purchased town lots from whites.

Significantly, Free Frank's great-great-granddaughter, an award-winning historian, is also a pioneer in her own right with her research and publications including *The History of Black Business in America: Capitalism, Race, Entrepreneurship* (1998). Her book is circulated in 1,322 libraries worldwide and is the first and only comprehensive scholarly book on the topic. She is also editor of *The Encyclopedia of African American Business History* (1999). Walker has authored over 90 articles on black business, including, as a Senior Fulbright Scholar in South Africa, research on a comparative study of black business in the United States and South Africa.

In her seminal research, Walker is recognized as having established Black Business History as a subfield in African American history. She is also the founder/director of the Center of Black Business History, Entrepreneurship and Technology (CBBH) at the University of Texas, the first and only research center established to encourage the study of black business history.

Walker's family provides contrasting histories. Due to Free Frank's entrepreneurship, her mother's family in Illinois secured freedom from slavery, but her father's family in Texas, the Kirkpatricks, remained slaves until Juneteenth Day, June 19, 1865.

She hopes that the National Historic Landmark recognition given her great, great grandfather Free Frank and New Philadelphia will encourage greater interest in the history of black business.

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Family Inspires Movement by Solely Patronizing Black-Owned Business For One Year



Chicago African American couple John C., and Maggie Anderson are undertaking an experiment that they hope will change their lives, as well as the lives of countless others. On January 1st of this year, the Andersons successfully launched “The Empowerment Experiment,” a year-long campaign to stimulate significant economic growth within the Black community. For one calendar year, the Andersons have pledged to patronize Black-owned businesses and professionals—only, in an effort to motivate other Black consumers to do the same while raising awareness about the need for all Americans to start supporting Black business and talent. With a concerted national push, the Anderson family hopes to negate the stereotypes that may Black consumers and investors from support their own, and demonstrate the connection between supporting Black business and solving the urban crises which disproportionately impact Black people. Over this year, they plan to raise awareness about the lack of Black-owned businesses - especially in predominantly Black neighborhoods and providing products and services that Blacks buy - and how that condition limits economic growth and positive role models for Black youth. Their movement has been covered in major media outlets including CNN, CBS News, MSNBC, Fox News, BET and countless national magazines, newspaper and radio outlets. The Empowerment Experiment will conclude in March 2010.

We are pleased to announce that Maggie Anderson will conduct a conference session on The Empowerment Experiment at the Thirteenth Annual National Black Herstory Conference and Awards Banquet which will also be held in March 2010. Additional information will be featured on upcoming editions of The Herstorian.

NBHTF Conference 2009 Recap

The 12th Annual National Black Herstory Conference and Awards Banquet was held March 26-29, 2009 on the campus of Emory University. Once again, we came together to celebrate the lives of women of African descent and their alliances world-wide. “Women of Color in Action: Leaders, Activists, and Heroines, “ was the theme of the 2009 conference. which included plenary sessions, the annual awards banquet, interactive workshops, networking and concluded with a joint religious service at Emory’s Cannon Chapel.

It has become a tradition to start the conference out with a special dedication in honor of our ancestors and comrades who risk their lives so that we could have the opportunity to learn and pass on the great lessons they left behind. This year’s conference was dedicated in memory of Millard Fuller, Lawyer, Builder and Activist, Odetta Holmes, Singer, Actress and Activist, Eartha Kitt, Actress and Activist, Miriam Makeba “Mama Africa”, Singer and Activist, Carol Mitchell-Leon, Actress, Educator, Director and Writer, Kate Puzey, Volunteer and Activist, Stephanie Tubbs Jones, Congresswoman and Activist.

Two days of thought provoking conference sessions led way to a high spirited awards banquet in honor of the legacies of Kathleen Cleaver, Esq., Human Rights Activist; Lt. Cheryl Elliott, Emory Police Department; Ms. Ashley Holmes, Japanese Translator; Dr. Cora Presley, Professor of African/African American History; Queen Quet, Chieftess and Head of the Gullah/Geechee Nation, Ms. Audri Scott Williams, Founder of the Trail of Dreams World Peace Walk, and Ms. Donna Wong, Assistant Dean for Campus Life and Director of the Office of Multicultural Programs and Services. Additional information about this year’s event can be found on the National Black Herstory Task Force website (www.blackherstory.org).

Words of Wisdom

A Seasoned Christian

Matthew 5:13a

Ye are the salt of the earth:

Salt is a mineral that has a variety of uses. It preserves, cleanse, it draws and most of all it seasons. We all know what a few ‘*ham hocks*’, *smoked neck bones*, *smoked turkey wings* or ‘*salt pork*’ will do to some collard greens or black eyed peas. It would make you bite your tongue! So a disciple who shows a genuine commitment to the work of the kingdom is commissioned to be salt. We are to **AFFECT** (act) and have an **EFFECT** (result) on the world so others will see the Truth in us and be drawn to Him. So go ahead with your ‘*Salty self*’, don’t be afraid to witness, trust God that the Holy Spirit will preserve you from the snares of Satan and allow you to add flavor to your surroundings so others would want to come and taste and see that the Lord is good!

Rev. Claudia Smalls

Associate Minister, Sylvester Baptist Church

Smack in the Middle

by Twanda Black

My mother and I were visiting our hometown of Tampa, Florida recently and as we were riding by a shopping center, my mother says to me, "That's where the old Woolworth used to be, it was my first job with them." As I began to ask her questions about that time and place, I discovered that my mother was smack in the middle of history in the making!

The first Woolworth sit-in happened in 1960 at the Greensboro, North Carolina Store, where a group of students would go to the segregated lunch counter and asked to be served. If they were served, they'd move to the next lunch counter and if they were not served they would not move until they had been. If they were arrested, a new group of students would simply take their place.

The climate was still volatile, yet hopeful as some of the Woolworth lunch counters had begun to desegregate slowly but surely and in 1964 in Tampa, Florida, the sit-ins came to the Hillsborough St. store. At 21 years old, Mildred Gilyard was the first and only African American employee to work at that store as a cashier and clerk. "Although I encountered a lot of prejudice from the customers not wanting me to wait on them, the people I worked with were so kind to me, they would even invite me to their homes for dinner".

"When the students came into the store and sat down at the lunch counter in their nice suits, ties and dresses reading their books, the manager immediately shuttled me to the back store room to protect me from the whites that were protesting as well as the Blacks at the counter. Gradually things began to change and eventually the lunch counter began to serve everyone." The Civil Rights Act of 1964 declared segregation at lunch counters unlawful.

"I worked there for three and a half years and then moved to Atlanta to work at the Woolworth Store downtown. There was a regional manager named Mr. Henderson, who helped me get the job and eventually move to a position in the Southeast regional office as a merchandise assistant, where I worked for 20 years until it closed down in 1992".

Twanda Black is Public Affairs Director for Kiss 104.1 FM. She is a mother (2 teen boys), wife, foster mother (4 boys), an ordained minister, a writer, an avid reader, amateur photographer and member of the NBHTF.

The National Black Herstory Task Force

The National Black Herstory Task Force, Inc. is a non-profit educational and cultural organization founded to provide vehicles to collect, research, authenticate, document, archive and celebrate the legacy and lives of women of African descent and their alliances.

Respectfully, we note that in order to accurately tell our stories, we must include the relationships shared with our brothers and allies. We will seek to honor those comrades who risked their positions in society, and often their lives, to assist us. We will also provide factual documentation of our trials and tribulations. Together, with the support of educators, professionals and grassroots members of the community, we shall teach the world community that there cannot be an accurate recording of world history that does not include herstory.

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