



THE
UNDERGROUND RAILROAD
MUSEUM
OF PENNSYLVANIA

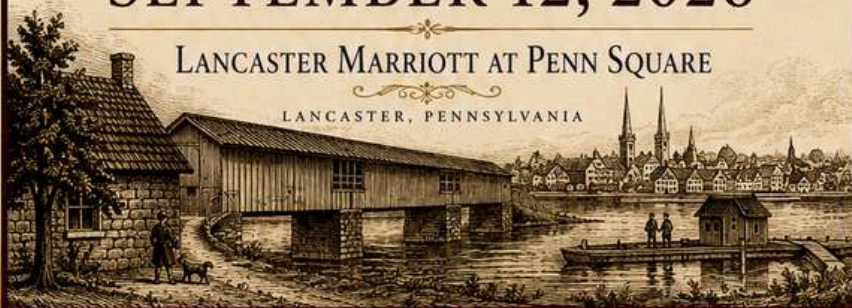
Quest for
FREEDOM

FUNDRAISING GALA

SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 12, 2026

LANCASTER MARRIOTT AT PENN SQUARE

LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA



Our sincere appreciation to the
Louise Steinman von Hess Foundation for its
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Quest for Freedom Fundraising Gala

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2026 • 1:00 PM

Holiday Inn Lancaster
Imperial Blue Ballroom



PROUD TO SUPPORT
THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD
MUSEUM OF PENNSYLVANIA
*and its mission to preserve and share
the stories of freedom.*

RESERVE YOUR SEAT • AAHSSCPA.ORG



Welcome to the Underground Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania “Quest for Freedom” Fundraising Gala



It is my great pleasure to welcome you this evening as we gather in support of a vision that will preserve, honor, and share one of Pennsylvania's most remarkable stories. Your presence here demonstrates a commitment not only to history, but to ensuring that the courage, resilience, and determination of those who sought freedom—and those who helped them along the way—will never be forgotten.

The Underground Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania represents more than a building. It represents a promise to future generations that these stories will be told with authenticity, dignity, and purpose. Located in Columbia, Pennsylvania—a community with deep roots in the Underground Railroad—the museum will serve as a place where history comes alive through engaging exhibits, innovative technology, educational programs, and meaningful dialogue.

This evening is an important milestone in making that vision a reality. Every sponsorship, every donation, every volunteer, and every guest brings us one step closer to opening the doors of a museum that will educate, inspire, and foster a deeper understanding of the enduring quest for freedom.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, thank you for believing in this mission and for standing with us as we build a lasting legacy. We hope you enjoy this evening of fellowship, reflection, and celebration, and that you leave inspired by the extraordinary stories that continue to shape our shared history.

Together, we are preserving the past, enriching the present, and inspiring the future.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Leroy T. Hopkins, Ph.D." in a cursive style.

Dr. Leroy Hopkins

President, Underground Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania

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*Cover image adapted from "View of Columbia, from Wrightsville," published in
History of Lancaster County by Israel Daniel Rupp, 1844.*

QUEST FOR FREEDOM

Fundraising Gala

ORDER OF EVENTS



Songs of Freedom

Cast of Living the Experience

Invocation

Reverend Dr. Patricia McAllister

Welcome

Dr. Leroy Hopkins, President

Event Opening

Michael Fuller

Essay Contest Award Presentation

Dr. Claire Storm

Dinner

Music performed by James Klippel

Museum Vision and Progress Update

Mark Stewart, Secretary

Guest Speaker

Zena Howard, FAIA, Perkins&Will

Featured Speaker

Eugene Robinson

Closing Remarks & Benediction

Reverend Dr. Nick Carter, Chair, Development Committee

Silent Auction Item Pickup and Checkout

EVENING FARE



Market Salad

*Spring Mix, Cucumber, Shredded Carrots, Tomato with
Ranch or Balsamic Dressing*

Lemon Caper Chicken and Short Rib with Garlic

Demi

Herb Roasted Baby Potatoes

Broccolini

Chocolate Cake

with Whipped Cream & Strawberries



YORK SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

This evening's reception features a quartet from the York Symphony Orchestra. The Symphony has enriched the cultural life of York and South Central Pennsylvania for generations through outstanding musical performances and community engagement. Dedicated to making orchestral music accessible and inspiring, the Symphony brings together talented musicians to educate, entertain, and connect audiences through the power of music.



JAMES KLIPPEL

Dinner music is provided by James Klippel, a Central Pennsylvania-based multi-instrumentalist, songwriter, producer, and music educator. His original music project, Winter Parks, blends elements of R&B, jazz, pop, and rock through both electronic and traditional instrumentation and has been featured by WITF Music.

In addition to performing and producing, James shares his passion for music through teaching, providing instruction in drums and piano through area music programs.



FEATURED SPEAKER

Eugene Robinson



Eugene Robinson is an award-winning journalist, a political analyst on MSNBC, and the author of four books. As a twice-weekly columnist for *The Washington Post*, he won the 2009 Pulitzer Prize in Commentary for his columns on the 2008 presidential race that resulted in the election of America's first African American president.

Robinson was born and raised in Orangeburg, SC. He remembers the culminating years of the Civil Rights Movement—the “Orangeburg Massacre,” a 1968 incident in which police fired on students protesting a segregated bowling alley and killed three unarmed young men, took place within sight of his house just a few hundred yards away. He was educated at Orangeburg High School, where he was one of a handful of Black students on the previously all-white campus, and the University of Michigan, where during his senior year he was the first Black student to be named co-editor-in-chief of the award-winning student newspaper, *The Michigan Daily*.

He began his journalism career at the *San Francisco Chronicle*, where he was one of two reporters assigned to cover the trial of kidnapped newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst. He joined *The Washington Post* in 1980 as city hall reporter, covering the first term of Washington's larger-than-life mayor, Marion Barry.

Robinson became an assistant city editor in 1981, and in 1984 was promoted to city editor, in charge of the paper's coverage of the District of Columbia. During the 1987–1988 academic year, on leave from *The Post*, Robinson was a Nieman Fellow in Journalism at Harvard University. On his return to the paper, he was named *The Post's* South America correspondent, based in Buenos Aires, Argentina, a post he held from 1988–1992. That assignment led him to write his first book, comparing racial issues in the United States and Brazil – *Coal to Cream: A Black Man's Journey Beyond Color to an Affirmation of Race*, published in 1999. In February 1994, Robinson returned to Washington to become *The Post's* foreign editor. That same year he was elected to the Council on Foreign Relations.

In January 1999, Robinson became an assistant managing editor of *The Post* in charge of the newspaper's Style section, which covers arts and culture. In 2004, he published his second book, an examination of contemporary Cuba: *Last Dance in Havana: The Final Days of Fidel and the Start of the New Cuban Revolution*. His appointment as associate editor and columnist took place January 1, 2005. After two decades as a columnist, he left *The Post* in April 2025.

In 2010, Robinson was elected to a nine-year term as a member of the Pulitzer Prize Board (serving as chairman in 2017–2018). Also in 2010, he published his third book, *Disintegration*, an examination of the increasing economic and cultural diversity of the African American community. He is a member of the National Association of Black Journalists and the NABJ Hall of Fame. In February 2026, Robinson published his fourth book, *Freedom Lost, Freedom Won: A Personal History of America*, which uses his own family's well-documented past to show how African American history is an essential strand of the larger American narrative, all the way from his great-great-grandfather's liberation from slavery through his own coming of age during the Civil Rights Movement and beyond—examining how very far we have come, and how very far we still have to go. Robinson was married for 45 years to the artist Avis Collins Robinson, who passed away in October 2023. They were blessed with two sons and two perfect grandchildren.



GUEST SPEAKER

Zena Howard, FAIA



Zena Howard, FAIA, is an acclaimed architect and principal at Perkins&Will whose career has been defined by visionary, complex, and culturally significant projects—like the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. and The Durham County Human Services Complex in Durham, NC. These projects navigate social issues of dignity, equity, and justice in cultural and civic places. She has been recognized as a citizen architect for shaping architecture through Remembrance Design, a design process that responds to inequity and injustice by restoring lost cultural connections and honoring collective memory and history.

Howard recognizes both the shared and individual sense of experience in the built environment—the emotional connection between people and spaces. This vision guides her role as her firm's cultural and civic practice leader in a body of work that unifies communities, strengthening public well-being and advancement.

Curiosity and compassion also drive Howard's approach with teams. She embraces cross-disciplinary collaboration with a broad range of specialists in urban design, art, history, anthropology, and public policy. As a founding member of Perkins&Will's Global Diversity and Inclusion Council and through advocacy and mentoring, she advances diversity within the architecture profession.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Michael Fuller



Michael Fuller co-anchors WGAL News at 4 and 7 p.m. and reports for the station's 10 and 11 p.m. newscasts. A Pennsylvania native, Michael is proud to be back in his home state, serving viewers throughout the Susquehanna Valley.

Fuller grew up in Cheltenham Township in Montgomery County, where his active involvement in his church community helped spark an early passion for broadcast journalism. He went on to attend Hofstra University, earning both bachelor's and master's degrees in journalism. While at Hofstra, Fuller gained extensive experience in radio and television, hosting the student-run morning show on WRHU-88.7 FM, co-anchoring *Hofstra Today*, and covering the 2016 presidential debate and Democratic National Convention.

Before joining WGAL, Fuller worked as a general assignment reporter at NBC Connecticut, where he covered major stories including the 2020 presidential election, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Sandy Hook defamation trial involving Alex Jones. He previously served as a multimedia journalist with WLTX-TV, the CBS affiliate in Columbia, SC.

Fuller's professional experience also includes internships with 6abc WPVI-TV, NBC's Today, and the NBC 4 New York Investigative Unit. He is a member of the National Association of Black Journalists and the Society of Professional Journalists.

Beyond the newsroom, Fuller enjoys traveling, discovering new restaurants, and spending time at the beach or in the mountains.

BETHEL AFRICAN HISTORICAL SERVICES PRESENTS

LIVING THE Experience

AN UNDERGROUND RAILROAD REENACTMENT & INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE



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2/7, 3/7, 5/2, 6/6, 8/1,
9/5, 10/3, 11/7, 12/5

**First Saturday
at 11:00 AM**



SONGS OF FREEDOM

Wade in the Water

One of the most enduring Black spirituals, "Wade in the Water" has inspired generations with its powerful message of faith, hope, and freedom. Rooted in biblical imagery, the song has long been associated with the Underground Railroad and is traditionally believed to have carried coded guidance for Freedom Seekers, encouraging them to travel through streams and rivers to evade those pursuing them. While historians continue to debate the extent of its use as a coded song, its enduring legacy as a symbol of courage, resilience, and the quest for liberty remains unquestioned.

Today, "Wade in the Water" stands as a moving tribute to the strength of those who risked everything in pursuit of freedom and to the communities that helped light their path.

Lift Every Voice and Sing



James Weldon Johnson

Written in 1900 by James Weldon Johnson, with music composed by his brother, J. Rosamond Johnson, the hymn was created to commemorate Abraham Lincoln's birthday. It was first performed by approximately 500 schoolchildren at the Stanton School in Jacksonville, FL, where Johnson served as principal.

Its message of hope, perseverance, and freedom resonated far beyond that first performance. As the hymn spread through Black communities across the United States, it became a powerful expression of African American aspiration and resilience in the generations following emancipation.

In 1919, the NAACP adopted the hymn as its official song, and it later became widely known as the "Negro National Anthem."

More than a century after it was first performed, "Lift Every Voice and Sing" remains an enduring symbol of African American heritage and pride. Its lyrics honor perseverance, faith, and the determination to continue moving forward despite hardship. The song has long been sung in churches, schools, civil rights gatherings, and community events as a powerful expression of unity and remembrance.

When voices rise together in this song, they carry forward a legacy of resilience, hope, and collective strength.

LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING



**Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea**

**Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun
Let us march on till victory is won**

Stony the road we trod
Bitter the chast'ning rod
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died
Yet with a steady beat
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?

We have come over a way that with tears has been watered
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered
Out from the gloomy past
Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast

**God of our weary years
God of our silent tears
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way
Thou who hast by Thy might
Led us into the light
Keep us forever in the path, we pray**

**Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee
Shadowed beneath Thy hand
May we forever stand
True to our God
True to our native land**

WITH GRATITUDE



We extend our sincere appreciation to the talented cast from Lancaster's Bethel AME Church - Living the Experience for helping bring the stories, voices, and spirit of the Underground Railroad to life this evening. Through their performances, they remind us that history is not only something we remember—it is something we experience, share, and carry forward.

LIVING THE EXPERIENCE RE-ENACTORS

Stephen Smith portrayed by Nelson Polite, Jr.
William Whipper portrayed by Marquise Brogdon
Thaddeus Stevens portrayed by Tony Dastra
Lydia Hamilton Smith portrayed by Yvette Diaz

LIVING THE EXPERIENCE SINGERS

Ondra Haywood • Barbara Peters • Dina Burch



We extend our sincere appreciation to LancasterHistory for generously providing access to the Thaddeus Stevens & Lydia Hamilton Smith Center for History and Democracy.

Their support enables our guests to experience this important historic site and helps make this evening's celebration of history, freedom, and legacy all the more meaningful.

WHAT A GREAT MUSEUM CAN DO

Bringing Pennsylvania's "Conspiracy of Good" to Life

What would I have done? The people of commitment and courage who engaged in the audacious Conspiracy of Good we know as the Underground Railroad never imagined asking themselves this question. The very idea of human bondage was so abhorrent that they were willing to risk everything to escape it or destroy it.

The Underground Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania will transport visitors into the intensely personal experiences of these individuals, including the Freedom Seekers, the network of abolition-minded Pennsylvanians assisting them, and even those tasked with tracking "fugitives" and re-enslaving them. Utilizing jaw-dropping next-generation technology and exhibit design, visitors will interact with famous figures of the Underground Railroad, as well as everyday people whose roles in the resistance helped to define America's national character.



Find your hometown on a sprawling, interactive touchscreen and watch as incredible stories burst into a dynamic multimedia presentation. Interact with life-sized holograms of William Still, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Hannah and Daniel Gibbons, Martin Delany and others. Explore the secret compartments in the railroad cars of Stephen Smith and William Whipper, and the wooden crate William "Box" Brown used to mail himself to freedom. It's an eye-opening education for adults and a life-changing journey of discovery for kids.

What would I have done? will no longer be an abstract idea. It becomes a question of deep self-reflection. *That* is what a great museum can do.

30 MILLION+ | 30,000–40,000 | 66 COUNTIES

WITHIN A
HALF-DAY'S DRIVE

ANNUAL
VISITORS

REVIVING A
HISTORIC NETWORK



Underground Railroad tourism is one of the most talked-about trends in the industry. With more than 30 million people living within a half-day's drive of Columbia, our museum will be a powerful draw along with the Stevens & Smith Center for History and Democracy, the Mifflin House & Farm in Wrightsville, and other important sites in the region. An estimated 30,000 to 40,000 annual visitors will transform historic Columbia and generate an unprecedented number of overnight stays in Lancaster and York counties...and serve as a tourism gateway for thousands more.

The border between Pennsylvania and the slave-holding states stretched more than 250 miles—the longest of any state in the Union. But Underground Railroad activity was hardly confined to those border corridors. Our research has identified people aiding Freedom Seekers in all but one of today's 67 counties. The museum will lead a statewide effort to promote these stories and celebrate Pennsylvania's historic Conspiracy of Good.

What will *YOU* do?

Pledge your support for the museum • Fund an artifact
Become a technology partner • Include the museum in your
planned giving • Volunteer for a committee • Host a lecture or
“friend-raising” event!

We invite you to join us on a transformative journey!
More information available in the envelope on your table.

FACES OF FREEDOM

Pennsylvania's Underground Railroad was not the work of a single person, community, or route. Across the Commonwealth, Black and white abolitionists, entrepreneurs, ministers, activists, and ordinary citizens created networks of resistance and assistance. The individuals featured in these pages represent only a few of the many people whose courage and commitment helped shape Pennsylvania's story of freedom.



(1797–1873)

REVEREND STEPHEN SMITH

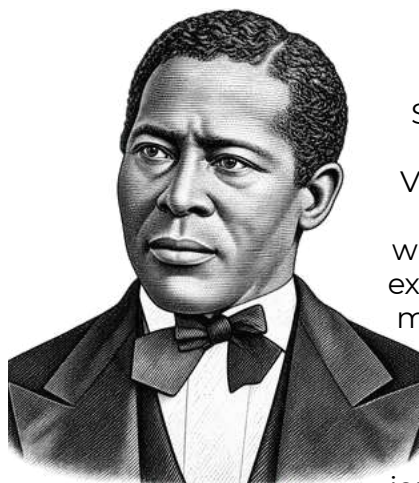
A prominent businessman, abolitionist, minister, and Underground Railroad conductor, Stephen Smith partnered with William Whipper to build a prosperous lumber business and used his resources to aid Freedom Seekers. Throughout his life, Smith devoted his wealth and influence to advancing freedom, education, and opportunity in his community.

WILLIAM WHIPPER

Working alongside Stephen Smith, William Whipper became a successful businessman, abolitionist, and Underground Railroad conductor. Their lumber enterprise provided resources and transportation networks that were used to assist Freedom Seekers and support the abolitionist cause. A respected advocate for education, moral reform, and equal rights, Whipper devoted much of his life to expanding freedom and opportunity.



(1804–1876)



(1821–1902)

WILLIAM STILL

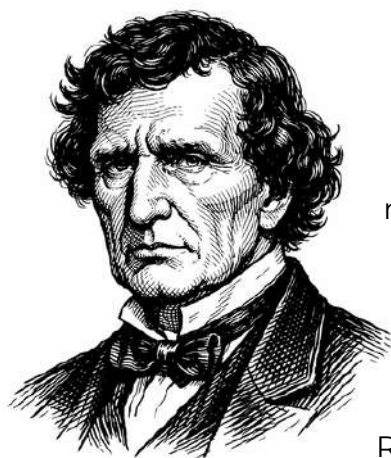
Often called the “Father of the Underground Railroad,” William Still was a prominent abolitionist and leader of Philadelphia’s Vigilance Committee. He assisted hundreds of Freedom Seekers while carefully documenting their experiences, preserving one of the most important firsthand records of the Underground Railroad. Through his work, Still helped reunite families separated by slavery and ensured that their journeys to freedom would not be forgotten.

LUCRETIA MOTT

A Quaker abolitionist, women’s rights advocate, and social reformer, Lucretia Mott worked tirelessly to end slavery and advance equality. She supported the Underground Railroad by opening her home to Freedom Seekers and assisting those seeking liberty. Throughout her life, Mott remained a steadfast advocate for freedom, equality, and justice for all.



(1793–1880)



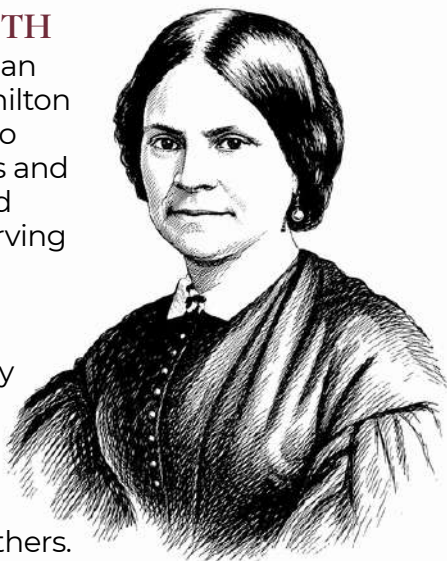
(1792–1868)

THADDEUS STEVENS

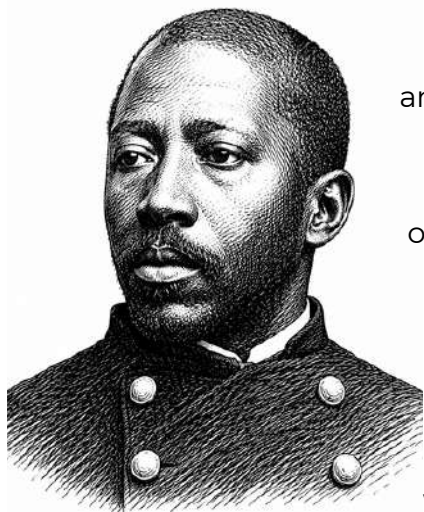
A Pennsylvania congressman, attorney, and outspoken abolitionist, Thaddeus Stevens became a powerful advocate for racial equality. He played a major role in securing passage of the 13th and 14th Amendments and championed equal rights during Reconstruction. In Lancaster, his home and law office were associated with Underground Railroad activity, connecting his national fight for equality to Pennsylvania's story of freedom.

LYDIA HAMILTON SMITH

A successful businesswoman and abolitionist, Lydia Hamilton Smith spent more than two decades managing homes and properties in Lancaster and Washington, D.C., while serving as a trusted confidante to Thaddeus Stevens. She supported the cause of abolition and racial equality and, after the death of Stevens, became a successful entrepreneur who continued her commitment to helping others.



(1815–1884)



(1812–1885)

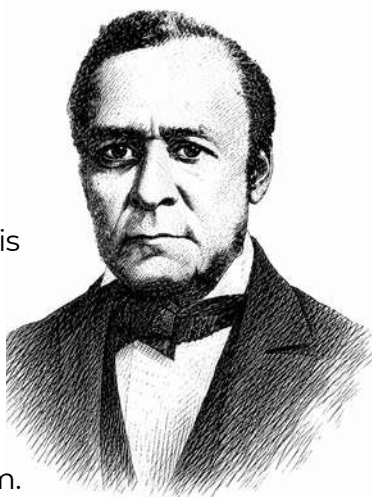
MARTIN R. DELANY

A physician, abolitionist, writer, and influential advocate for Black self-determination, Martin R.

Delany devoted his life to advancing freedom and opportunity for people of African descent. He worked alongside Frederick Douglass on the abolitionist newspaper *The North Star* and became one of the first Black men commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Army during the Civil War. Throughout his life, Delany championed education, equality, and Black advancement.

WILLIAM C. GOODRIDGE

A successful businessman and abolitionist, William C. Goodridge became a prominent figure in York's Black community. Drawing upon extensive business and transportation networks, he and his family assisted Freedom Seekers traveling through the region on the Underground Railroad. Today, his York home stands as a testament to the Goodridge family's courage, enterprise, and enduring commitment to freedom.



(1806–1873)

STUDENT ESSAY COMPETITION



Earlier this year, students were invited to participate in the Underground Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania's inaugural Essay Competition, exploring the people and places that played a role in the Underground Railroad. Students were asked to identify a person from Columbia who participated in the Underground Railroad and describe what they found inspiring about their actions, or submit an essay about a specific Underground Railroad site in Columbia. Twenty-one essays were submitted.

We are proud to recognize the three winning students from Columbia, presented on the following pages. Winning essays are presented in the students' own words, preserving their individual voices.



MIRIAM BESHARA

Our Lady of the Angels School, Grade 8

Underground Railroad Essay



William Whipper was a free black abolitionist man who had great power and influence in the Underground Railroad in Columbia, Pennsylvania. With his close partner, Stephen Smith, he used his business to help slaves escape. Whipper freed many slaves in secret compartments of his private shipments on trains. During that time, freeing slaves was extremely dangerous. You could get imprisoned or fined for it and, if slaves were caught, they would be returned back to their owner. Whipper was brave to take a stand on this. He strongly believed that slavery was a very inhumane practice. His hard effort gave hope to slaves by weakening the idea of slavery. Every family he helped escaped opened the future for generations to come, not just that family, so his impact was very important in the Underground Railroad.

William Whipper played an important role in the history of Columbia because his leadership helped shape the Underground Railroad in the area. Using the trains and resources from his

lumber company, he guided many enslaved people toward freedom. His commitment never wavered, even though helping fugitives escape could lead to heavy fines or imprisonment. Despite these risks, Whipper continued his work because he believed deeply in justice and humanity. His courage made him one of the most influential figures in the fight against slavery. Because of him, many of these slaves had a new hope, a chance to rebuild new lives, a new chance at life without the injustices in the nation that was happening at the time.

Whipper inspires me a lot to stand strongly in my beliefs and to do what is right even when other people disagree. His courage shows me that doing the right thing is not always easy, but it is still important. I admire how determined he was to help others, even when it put him in danger, and that is a quality I want to have in my own life. His actions make me think about how I can stand up for people who need support, even if others might judge me for it. Whipper teaches me that helping others is more important than fitting in or staying comfortable. When I think about his bravery, it encourages me to be more confident, more kind, and more willing to take action when something is unfair.

William Whipper left a strong impact on Columbia by helping enslaved people escape and inspiring others to join the fight for freedom. He is still remembered today because his actions show how one person's choices can create a powerful and lasting difference, even when it doesn't seem possible at the time. He continuously reminds us to stand up for what is right and stay strong in those beliefs even if it seems like you are the only one standing for that belief. Whipper made an impact not just in the past, but today in the future, reminding us to stand up against injustices of the present, not just those of the past.

LILLIAN HAMAKER

Our Lady of the Angels School, Grade 6

The Underground Railroad in Columbia



Imagine living in a time when helping a person reach freedom was against the law. In the mid-1800's, two brave men named William Whipper and Stephen Smith did exactly that. They were part of the Underground Railroad in Columbia, Pennsylvania. Their story is amazing because they used their own successful business to help hundreds of people escape from slavery. William Whipper was a very smart mixed-race man. He was wealthy and teamed up with Stephen Smith. Stephen Smith was born into slavery, but he worked incredibly hard to buy his own freedom. Eventually, he became one of the wealthiest black men in America.

Together, they had a successful business that sold lumber and coal to ship out to places in the North and South. They were so successful that they even owned their own railroad cars, 22 of them. Then they had a great idea to get freedom seekers to safety. They built a railroad car with a secret room and hid the slaves in there. It looked like a normal train car holding lumber and coal to be sent up to Canada and down to Philadelphia. But they would hide people in that little compartment that they had built to get them to freedom and a new home. William Whipper and Stephen Smith were both very smart and intelligent people.

In most history books, the Underground Railroad is described as a series of secret basements and hidden tunnels—not a real railroad with locomotives, cars, and rails. While that is true for some places, Stephen Smith and William Whipper did something different. They used a real, above-ground railroad. Since they owned their own train cars, they could hide freedom seekers inside of them. They built secret walls and a hidden compartment inside the cars. While the train looked like it was just a normal car carrying lumber or coal, it was actually carrying people toward freedom.

Their town, Columbia, was right between the North and South. This made their work very hard and dangerous. Slave catchers were always lurking nearby, looking for people who escaped. Stephen Smith and William Whipper had to be incredibly smart and careful. They spent a lot of their own money, thousands of dollars, to give people food, clothes, and a safe place to stay before sending them on the train to Philadelphia or all the way to Canada. Stephen Smith and William Whipper showed us that there are many ways to be a hero. They used their brains, their business, and their money to fight for what was right.

Mr. Randall Harris visited our school , Our Lady of the Angels, on April 20, 2026. Most of the information I learned about William Whipper and Stephen Smith came from his presentation. He showed us that William Whipper and Stephen Smith proved that when people work together and use their resources, they can change the world. Today, we remember them not just as rich businessmen but as two of the most important conductors on the track to freedom.

CHLOE BOYLES

Park Elementary, Grade 4

Stephen Smith & How He Inspires Me



Stephen Smith was an African American businessman, philanthropist, preacher, real estate developer, and abolitionist. He lived in Pennsylvania

in the 19th century and contributed large amounts of his wealth to abolish slavery. Smith had been an Underground Railroad agent in Philadelphia. He co-founded "Smith, Whipper and Co." a lumber business in Columbia, Pennsylvania. Later he founded the "Stephen Smith home of the Aged." This was an assisted living facility in Philadelphia.

Stephen Smith was born in 1797 in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania to an enslaved African American woman named Nancy Smith. At the age of 5, he became an indentured servant to the Pennsylvanian politician, Thomas Boude. At the age of 21, Smith had accumulated enough money to purchase his freedom. In 1818, Smith bought his freedom for \$50. The same amount of money in 2025 would be \$1,052.

Business Career After purchasing his freedom, Smith opened his own lumber business in Columbia, Pennsylvania. Smith became very successful in the lumber business, leading him to search for business partners to enlarge his business. In the 1830s, Smith formed a partnership with William Whipper. Smith and Whipper had great success in the lumber, coal, real estate, railroad car industries as well as in the stock market. Smith made a fortune and subsequently used the money he earned in the fight against slavery. Smith was one of the wealthiest 19th-century African American Philadelphians. He held this title alongside Frederick Douglass, James Forten, Robert Purvis, Rev. Richard Allen, Rev. Peter Williams Jr, Absalom Jones, William Whipper, and Joseph Cassey.

Abolitionist and Philanthropist In 1830, Smith was the chairman of the African American Abolitionist Organization in the town of Columbia, Pennsylvania. Smith attended national African American conventions of the free African American people held in New York State in 1834 and in Philadelphia in 1835. In 1835, a group of unknown people vandalized the office of Smith and destroyed all his papers and records. This incident provoked Smith to work even harder to abolish slavery. Smith would procure a small meeting hall in an area where African Americans could freely hold meetings. Smith would also help with the local Underground Railroad that ran through Maryland. The Underground Railroad provided help to runaway slaves who would travel all the way to Canada. After the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, Whipper and Smith convinced 15,000 African Americans to make their way to a new start in Canada. In 1864, Smith worked with the Quakers to establish the House for Aged and Infirm Colored Persons, which was later renamed the Stephen Smith Home for the Aged. Smith died in 1873 of unknown causes.

Stephen Smith inspires me because of how helpful he was during slavery. Smith would guide slaves who were passengers on the Underground Railroad that ran through the town of Columbia, Pennsylvania. He was often recognized for being courageous for risking his life to help others. Stephen Smith put himself in danger to help others. If he had been caught, he would become a slave again. If I were him, I probably wouldn't be as courageous as him. I might be able to escape but I don't think I would have had the courage to help others escape too.

From Freedom Seekers to Citizens

A Changing Nation, 1780–1870

Ninety years of legislation and constitutional change reshaped the legal meaning of freedom and citizenship in America.

Pennsylvania Gradual Abolition Act

1780

Pennsylvania became the first state to adopt a law providing for the gradual abolition of slavery. The act did not immediately free everyone who was enslaved. People already enslaved remained so, while children born to enslaved mothers after March 1, 1780, were required to serve until age 28. This laid the groundwork for ending slavery in the Commonwealth.

The Emancipation Proclamation

1863

Issued by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation declared enslaved people in Confederate states still in rebellion against the United States to be free. Although it did not immediately end slavery throughout the nation, it marked a turning point in the Civil War and the nation's commitment to liberty for all.

The 13th Amendment

1865

Ratified on December 6, 1865, the amendment abolished slavery and involuntary servitude throughout the nation, except as punishment for a crime. It was a foundational step in establishing freedom as a right protected by the Constitution.

1866

The Civil Rights Act of 1866

This landmark law declared that all persons born in the United States were citizens, and guaranteed the same rights as white citizens to make and enforce contracts, sue, give evidence, and own property. It was one of the first federal laws to protect the rights of formerly enslaved people.

1868

The 14th Amendment

Ratified on July 9, 1868, the amendment granted citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the United States, including formerly enslaved people. It guaranteed equal protection under the law and due process, establishing a constitutional foundation for the continuing struggle for civil rights and equality in America.

1870

The 15th Amendment

Ratified on February 3, 1870, the amendment prohibited the denial of a citizen's right to vote based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude. It was a critical step toward ensuring Black men could participate in democracy, although discriminatory laws and practices would continue to restrict voting rights for generations.

Although these laws and amendments were transformational, the struggle to make their fundamental promises a reality in everyday life would continue for generations to come.

WITH GRATITUDE



We extend our sincere appreciation to our generous sponsors whose support has made this evening possible. Your commitment to the Underground Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania helps preserve powerful stories of courage and freedom, advance research and education, and ensure that this important history continues to inspire generations to come.



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We extend our sincere appreciation to the individuals, businesses, and organizations that generously contributed goods, services, and other donations in support of this evening's event. Their generosity reflects the power of community partnership in bringing the vision of the Underground Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania to life.



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We extend our sincere appreciation to the dedicated volunteers whose time, energy, and enthusiasm helped make this evening possible. Thank you for sharing your time in support of the Underground Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania.

Olimpia Cappas
Joan Herr
Eileen Swartz
Elise Weaver



We extend our sincere appreciation to Cisco Soto of The Curb Media Group for generously documenting this evening's celebration and helping preserve the memories of the Quest for Freedom Fundraising Gala.



We extend our sincere appreciation to our supporting partners for their letters of endorsement of the Underground Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania. Their confidence in our mission strengthens our efforts to preserve and share this important history.

African American Historical Society of South Central Pennsylvania
Columbia Economic Development Corporation
Columbia Historic Preservation Society
Columbia Public Library
Congressman Lloyd Smucker
Discover Lancaster • Lancaster Chamber
Lancaster County Office of the Commissioners
LancasterHistory
Merchants Association of Columbia
Mount Bethel Cemetery
National Park Service PA Humanities
Sadsbury Monthly Meeting
Senator John Heinz History Center
State Senator Scott F. Martin
Susquehanna National Heritage Area
The African Methodist Episcopal Church



“My house used to be a station on the Underground Railroad...”

No one would argue with the assertion that Pennsylvania has hundreds of sites associated with the network of safe houses, shelters and hiding places that made up the Underground Railroad.

Proving it is another matter. The authentication process may begin with local legends and family lore, but from there it requires means and methods that are not typically within the grasp of private owners or volunteer-led historical societies.

In 2026–27, thanks to the support of the Walters/Unitarian Church Trust* and other generous donors, the Underground Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania will convene a symposium in Columbia that brings together more than a dozen nationally recognized scholars with the goal of creating a pilot program to identify, retain, conserve and repurpose physical sites, neighborhoods and landscapes where vast numbers of people and places were associated with the Underground Railroad.

This work will involve drafting rigorous-but-reachable standards and guidelines for site documentation and interpretation that will provide a blueprint for individuals, organizations and local governments to understand the steps involved in building their own unique educational resources and thematically-related heritage tourism infrastructure... opening the door to wider recognition and the funding opportunities that come with it. The program will be among the first of its kind in the United States.

*The endowment from Art and Selma Walters to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Lancaster supports the causes and events that affirm and enhance the worth and dignity of all humans and promotes one universal humanity.

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BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 5

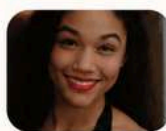


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Saturday, October 24, 2026
at 7:30 PM

ADÉ WILLIAMS, Violin

JESSIE MONTGOMERY Starburst
PHILIP GLASS Suite from Dracula
BEETHOVEN Concerto for Violin & Orchestra



BEETHOVEN'S HEROES

Saturday, February 20, 2027
at 7:30 PM

REBECCA KRYNSKI COX, Soprano
ALEX BOYER, Tenor
YORK SYMPHONY CHORUS
CARLOS CASILLA-NOVA, Chorusmaster

BEETHOVEN Egmont
BEETHOVEN Excerpts from Fidelio



BEETHOVEN & BIG DREAMS

Saturday, March 13, 2027
at 7:30 PM

QUINN MASON She Dreams of Flying
LAWRENCE GOLAN Joseph, the Dream Reader
PETER BOYER Ellis Island; The Dream of America

BEETHOVEN King Stephen Overture



BEETHOVEN'S TRIPLE CONCERTO

Saturday, April 24, 2027
at 7:30 PM

LAWRENCE GOLAN, Violin
SARA MALE, Cello
NARAE LEE, Piano

ARVO PÄRT Fratres
LOUISE FARRENC Symphony No. 3
BEETHOVEN Concerto for Violin, Cello & Piano



BEETHOVEN'S NINTH A LEGACY OF JOY

Saturday, May 15, 2027
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Friday, October 23rd
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