

African American History Month programs among 13 special events at State of Delaware museums in February

(DOVER, Del.—Jan. 24, 2019)—During the month of February 2019, the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs will be offering 13 special events at the [museums of the State of Delaware](#). Ten of these events will be presented in commemoration of African American History Month, an annual observance celebrating the invaluable contributions that the black community has made to the culture and history of the United States. All programs listed are free and open to the public.



Dr. James Newton will speak at the New Castle Court House Museum on Feb. 23, 2019 as part of the opening of the display “The Path to Freedom: A History of the Underground Railroad in Delaware.”

Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs special events, February 2019

Saturday, Feb. 2, 2019

“African American Music and the Victor Talking Machine Company.” African American History Month guided tours explore the musical careers of some of the most famous black artists who worked for the Victor Talking Machine Company from 1901 to 1929, accompanied by 78-rpm recordings played

on authentic Victor Talking Machines. [First Saturday in the First State](#) program. [Johnson Victrola Museum](#), 375 S. New St., Dover. 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-739-3262.

Saturday, Feb. 2, 2019

“The African American Experience in Delaware.” Historic-site interpreter Dennis Fisher explores Delaware’s rich African American culture, history and legacy from the 18th to the 20th century. [First Saturday in the First State](#) program. [The Old State House](#), 25 The Green, Dover. Program at 1 p.m. Museum open 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-744-5054.

Friday, Feb. 8, 2019

[Concert by Steffi & Tim](#). □ Mix of original compositions, jazz and world music. Presented in partnership with the [Delaware Friends of Folk](#) and the [First State Heritage Park](#). [The Old State House](#), 25 The Green, Dover. 7:30 p.m. 302-744-5054.

Saturday, Feb. 9, 2019

“Old State House Stories of Courage and Freedom.” African American History Month interpretive tours focus on three compelling stories of courageous Delawareans whose fight for freedom and equality began at the Old State House. [The Old State House](#), 25 The Green, Dover. 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-744-5054.

Saturday, Feb. 9, 2019

“The Evolution of Black Recorded Music: Behind the Music Part I.” Opening segment of an African American History Month program by museum interpreters Chris Hall and Gavin Malone that explores companies from the early days of the record industry including Black Swan, Columbia, Gennett, Paramount and Victor that took chances on recording black artists, accompanied by early 78-rpm recordings of Ethel Waters, Louis Armstrong, Count Basie and Billie Holiday played on authentic Victor Talking Machines. [Johnson Victrola Museum](#), 375 S. New St., Dover. Program at 1 p.m. in

the museum's 2nd floor gallery (entry via staircase; no elevator). Museum open 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-739-3262.



Black Swan was a jazz and blues record label that recorded African American artists in the 1920s.

Saturday, Feb. 9, 2019

“Revolutionary Drinks on the Delaware.” Lecture by Marcos Salaverria, director of education for the Lewes Historical Society, who will explore the consumption of chocolate, tea and coffee in Delaware during the 18th century. Part of [“Across the Ages to the Edge of the Sea,”](#) a lecture series exploring the history of the Lewes area from the 17th to the 20th centuries. [Zwaanendael Museum](#), 102 Kings Highway, Lewes. Program at 2 p.m. on the museum's 2nd floor (entry via staircase; no elevator). Museum open 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Free admission but, due to space restrictions, reservations for the lecture are required by calling 302-645-1148 no later than Feb. 8, 2019.

Saturday, Feb. 16, 2019

“Community and Identity at First African Baptist Church Cemeteries.” African-American History Month lecture by John P. McCarthy, RPA, cultural preservation specialist for Delaware State Parks, explores burial practices as expressions of the integration of African beliefs and practices in the spiritual life of Philadelphia African Americans. [The Old State House](#), 25 The Green, Dover. Program at 11 a.m. Museum open 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-744-5054.

Saturday, Feb. 16, 2019

“The Evolution of Black Recorded Music: Behind the Music

Part II.” Final segment of an African American History Month program by museum interpreters Chris Hall and Gavin Malone that explores companies from the early days of the record industry including Black Swan, Columbia, Gennett, Paramount and Victor that took chances on recording African American artists, accompanied by early 78-rpm recordings of Ethel Waters, Louis Armstrong, Count Basie and Billie Holiday played on authentic Victor Talking Machines. [Johnson Victrola Museum](#), 375 S. New St., Dover. Program at 1 p.m. in the museum’s 2nd floor gallery (entry via staircase; no elevator). Museum open 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-739-3262.

Sunday, Feb. 17, 2019

“Civility Ascendant: Celebrating George Washington’s Rules for Civil Behavior and Their Legacy for American Politics.”

Presentation by Dr. Sam Hoff of Delaware State University on the 110 rules of behavior that George Washington used as a pattern for his life. [The Old State House](#), 25 The Green, Dover. Program at 2 p.m. Museum open 1:30–4:30 p.m. Free admission but, due to space restrictions, reservations are suggested by calling 302-744-5054.

Monday, Feb. 18, 2019

Presidents Day. The following museums of the State of Delaware will be open: The [Johnson Victrola Museum](#) and [The Old State House](#), open 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. The following museums will be closed: The [John Dickinson Plantation](#), the [New Castle Court House Museum](#) and the [Zwaanendael Museum](#). 302-744-5054.

Friday, Feb. 22, 2019

Washington’s Birthday. All museums of the State of Delaware will be open: The [Johnson Victrola Museum](#) and [The Old State House](#), open 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; the [John Dickinson Plantation](#), [New Castle Court House Museum](#) and the [Zwaanendael Museum](#), open 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-744-5054.

Saturday, Feb. 23, 2019

“African American Music and the Victor Talking Machine Company.” African American History Month guided tours explore the musical careers of some of the most famous black artists who worked for the Victor Talking Machine Company from 1901 to 1929, accompanied by 78-rpm recordings played on authentic Victor Talking Machines. [Johnson Victrola Museum](#), 375 S. New St., Dover. 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-739-3262.

Saturday, Feb. 23, 2019

“The Not So Great War: African Americans and World War I.” In the 50 years after the end of slavery not much had changed for black Americans, but with their service in World War I, black soldiers saw that things could be different. In this African American History Month program, historic-site interpreter Gavin Malone will look at how black Americans were treated both at home and abroad during the war and how, despite great expectations, little improvement happened in the following decades. [The Old State House](#), 25 The Green, Dover. Program at 1 p.m. Museum open 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-744-5054.



Members of the Harlem Hellfighters who served during World War I. The experience of African American soldiers during and after the war will be explored at The Old State House on Feb. 23, 2019.

Saturday, Feb. 23, 2019

“The Path to Freedom: A History of the Underground Railroad in Delaware.” Opening of a new display that explores Delaware’s role in the clandestine network that transported American slaves to freedom, the black experience in Delaware after the Civil War, and African American trailblazers from Delaware who helped break racial and gender barriers.

Activities include “Delaware Black History: Past and Present, “ a lecture at 11 a.m. by Dr. James Newton, professor emeritus of Black American Studies at the University of Delaware; a 1 p.m. re-enactment of the 1848 trial of Thomas Garrett who was found guilty in aiding in the escape of the enslaved Hawkins family; and “Songs of a Faithful People” performed by Valerie Boyer at 2 p.m. [New Castle Court House Museum](#), 211 Delaware St., New Castle. Museum open 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-323-4453.

Sunday, Feb. 24, 2019

“Whispers of Angels: A Story of the Underground Railroad.”

Screening of the award-winning film that examines the firsthand efforts of Thomas Garrett, William Still and Harriet Tubman in helping to free American slaves. Starring Ed Asner and Blair Underwood, and filmed in New Castle and other Delaware sites. Presented in conjunction with the display “The Path to Freedom: A History of the Underground Railroad in Delaware.” [New Castle Court House Museum](#), 211 Delaware St., New Castle. Program at 2 p.m. Museum open 1:30 p.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-323-4453.

Exhibits and displays, February 2019

In addition to special programming, the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs is sponsoring the following exhibits and displays. Admission is free and open to the public:

Opening Feb. 23, 2019

“The Path to Freedom: A History of the Underground Railroad in Delaware.” Display explores Delaware’s role in the clandestine network that transported American slaves to freedom including the true journey of the Hawkins family from bondage in Maryland, through Delaware, to freedom in Pennsylvania. Part II of the display explores some of the challenges faced by black Delawareans after the Civil War, and showcases Delaware trailblazers who helped break racial and gender barriers. [New Castle Court House Museum](#), 211 Delaware St., New Castle. Tue.–Sat., 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Sun.,

1:30 p.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-323-4453.

Ongoing

[“Delaware Railroads: Elegant Travel and Timely Transport.”](#)

Exhibit explores the history of rail travel and transport in the First State emphasizing the New Castle and Frenchtown Railroad (1832), the Delaware Railroad (1852), the Junction and Breakwater Railroad (1857) and the Queen Anne’s Railroad (1896). [Zwaanendael Museum](#), 102 Kings Highway, Lewes. Nov. 1–March 31: Wed.–Sat., 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. April 1–Oct. 31: Tue.–Sat., 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Sun., 1:30–4:30 p.m. 302-645-1148.



Postcard depicting the Lewes, Del. railroad station from the exhibit “Delaware Railroads: Elegant Travel and Timely Transport.”

Ongoing

[“Drawing America to Victory: The Persuasive Power of the Arts in World War I.”](#) Online exhibit revolves around 27 World War I posters from the collections of the State of Delaware.

Ongoing

[“Five Stories.”](#) Display explores the varied lives of people who lived on the plantation including Dickinson family members, tenant farmers, tradesmen, free blacks, indentured servants and enslaved individuals. [John Dickinson Plantation Welcome Center](#), 340 Kitts Hummock Road, Dover. Oct. 1–March 31: Tue.–Sat., 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. April 1–Sept. 30: Tue.–Sat., 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Sun., 1:30–4:30 p.m. 302-739-3277.



Panel from the “Five Stories” display

Ongoing

“[Letters From a Farmer in Pennsylvania.](#)” Online exhibit explores the life of Founding Father John Dickinson on the 250th anniversary of the publication of his essays that described Colonial American grievances with the British government.

Ongoing

“[New Castle: Three Forts, One Community.](#)” Exhibit examines the 17th-century struggle for control of New Castle by the Dutch, Swedes and English, and the strongholds that they built to maintain their power. [New Castle Court House Museum](#), 211 Delaware St., New Castle. Tue.–Sat., 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Sun., 1:30 p.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-323-4453.

Ongoing

“[The Old State House: A True Restoration 1976-2016.](#)” Display explores preservation work that has been conducted since Delaware’s first permanent capitol building in Dover was restored to its original appearance in 1976. From the collections of the State of Delaware. [The Old State House](#), 25 The Green, Dover. Mon.–Sat., 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Sun., 1:30–4:30 p.m. 302-744-5054.

Ongoing

[Sculpture by Charles Parks.](#) Display of works by the noted Wilmington artist featuring historical and political figures including a Minute Man, and presidents Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and George W. Bush. [New Castle Court House Museum](#), 211 Delaware St., New Castle. Tue.–Sat., 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Sun., 1:30 p.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-323-4453.

Ongoing

“[A Seaborne Citizenry: The DeBraak and Its Atlantic World.](#)” Exhibit utilizes artifacts recovered from His Majesty’s

Sloop of War DeBraak, a British warship that sank off the Delaware coast on May 25, 1798, to tell the story of the vessel, its crew and the historical context within which it operated in the Atlantic World of the late 18th century. [Zwaanendael Museum](#), 102 Kings Highway, Lewes. April 1–Oct. 31: Tue.–Sat., 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Sun., 1:30–4:30 p.m. Nov. 1–March 31: Wed.–Sat., 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-645-1148.

Ongoing

“[Simple Machines](#).” Exhibit demonstrating the six “simple machines”—incline ramp, screw, wedge, pulley, lever and wheel—that constitute the elementary building blocks of which many more-complicated machines are composed. [John Dickinson Plantation](#), 340 Kitts Hummock Road, Dover. Oct. 1–March 31: Tue.–Sat., 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. April 1–Sept. 30: Tue.–Sat., 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Sun., 1:30–4:30 p.m. 302-739-3277.

Ongoing

“[When Janie Comes Marching Home: Women’s Fight to Serve](#).” Display explores the participation of women in America’s armed conflicts from the Revolutionary War to the present, and their fight to be allowed to serve their country during wartime. [Legislative Hall](#), 411 Legislative Ave., Dover. Limited visitation hours; call 302-739-9194 before planning a visit.



Administered by the [Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs](#), the five museums of the State of Delaware—the John Dickinson Plantation, the Johnson Victrola Museum, the New Castle Court House Museum, The Old State House and the Zwaanendael Museum—tell the story of the First State’s contributions to the history and culture of the United States. Through tours, exhibits, school programs and hands-on activities, the museums shine a spotlight on Delaware’s unique history and the diverse people who came to live there. The

museums are [accredited by the American Alliance of Museums](#). The New Castle Court House Museum and the John Dickinson Plantation are partner sites of the [First State National Historical Park](#). The Old State House is located on the Dover Green, another partner site of the park. Go to the following for a [comprehensive, long-term calendar of division-sponsored events](#).

The Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs is an agency of the State of Delaware. The division enhances Delaware's quality of life by preserving the state's unique historical heritage, fostering community stability and economic vitality and providing educational programs and assistance to the general public on Delaware history and heritage. The division's diverse array of services includes operation of five museums which are accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, administration of the State Historic Preservation Office, conservation of the state's archaeological and historic-objects collections, operation of a conference center and management of historic properties across the state. Primary funding for division programs and services is provided by annual appropriations from the Delaware General Assembly and grants from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, a federal agency. However, the contents and opinions expressed in the division's programs and services do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Department of the Interior.



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