

Underground Railroad exhibit to open at the New Castle Court House Museum on Feb. 23, 2019

-Exhibit-opening events to include a lecture, historical re-enactment and music-

(DOVER, Del.—Feb. 12, 2019)—The exhibit, “The Path to Freedom: A History of the Underground Railroad in Delaware,” will open with a series of special programs on Saturday, Feb. 23, 2019 at the [New Castle Court House Museum](#) located at 211 Delaware St. in New Castle, Del. Admission is free and open to the public.



Image from “The Path to Freedom: A History of the Underground Railroad in Delaware”

The exhibit 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 exhibit explores some of the challenges faced by Black Delawareans after the Civil War, and showcases Delaware trailblazers—including Jane Mitchell, “Judy” Johnson, Louis Redding and Lisa Blunt Rochester, among many others—who helped break racial and gender barriers.

Between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Feb. 23, the museum will celebrate the exhibit opening with a series of activities including “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.



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

In addition, on Sunday, Feb. 24, the museum will present a 2 p.m. screening of “Whispers of Angels: A Story of the Underground Railroad,” an award-winning film that examines the firsthand efforts of Thomas Garrett, William Still and Harriet Tubman in helping to free American slaves. The film stars Ed Asner and Blair Underwood, and was filmed in New Castle and other Delaware sites. Admission is free. **Note: A Jan. 24, 2019 press release distributed by the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs incorrectly indicated that “Whispers of Angels” would be screened on Saturday, Feb. 24, 2019 at 2 p.m. The correct date is Sunday, Feb. 24, 2019 at 2 p.m.**

“The Path to Freedom: A History of the Underground Railroad in Delaware” was created by the staff of the New Castle Court House Museum working together with the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs’ [Collections, Affiliates, Research and Exhibits \(CARE\) Team](#). The exhibit will be on display for an undetermined period of time. Museum operating-hours are Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; and Sundays, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Admission is free and open to the public. For additional information, call 302-323-4453.

Constructed in 1732, the New Castle Court House is one of the

oldest active court buildings in the United States and was Delaware's first state capitol. Here, the Colonial Assembly passed the 1776 Separation Resolution creating the Delaware State. During its nearly 300 years of history, this landmark has played many pivotal roles in the political, social and commercial life of both New Castle and Delaware. The museum is a partner site in the First State National Historical Park.



New Castle Court House
Museum

The New Castle Court House Museum is administered by the [Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs](#), 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. 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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