REMEMBERING
Slavery, Resistance, and Freedom Project

a partnership of the
College of William & Mary and the
Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission
• Remembering Slavery, Resistance, and Freedom Proposal accepted by the MLK Commission October 2010

• Preliminary ideas:

• Commemorate the Emancipation Proclamation by marking the unmarked landscapes of African and African American history in Virginia
  • sites of resistance
  • buildings built by enslaved laborers
  • cemeteries, marked and unmarked

• Community engagement, community-led commemorations

• Community Meetings to identify statewide and regional themes
Eight Community Meetings: November 2011 – July 2012

Coastal, Central, Northern, Valley, Southwest
## Community Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warren Heritage Society</td>
<td>Front Royal</td>
<td>Valley</td>
<td>November 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria Black History Museum</td>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>January 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsome House Museum</td>
<td>Newport News</td>
<td>Coastal</td>
<td>April 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valentine Richmond History Center</td>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>April 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elegba Folklore Society</td>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>April 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afro-American Historical Association of Fauquier County</td>
<td>The Plains</td>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>May 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josephine School Museum</td>
<td>Berryville</td>
<td>Valley</td>
<td>May 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appalachian African American Cultural Center</td>
<td>Pennington Gap</td>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>July 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Number of Participants in all Regional Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Attending</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>172</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Ethnic/Racial Breakdown of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>European Descent</th>
<th>African Descent</th>
<th>Multi-Ethnic</th>
<th>No Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>144 Responses</td>
<td>45 (31.25%)</td>
<td>87 (60.4%)</td>
<td>6 (4.2%)</td>
<td>6 (4.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Participants by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>No Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(33.3%)</td>
<td>(62.5%)</td>
<td>(4.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Participants by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>18-29 (4.9%)</th>
<th>30’s (3.5%)</th>
<th>40’s (13.2%)</th>
<th>50’s (20.8%)</th>
<th>60’s (38.9%)</th>
<th>70’s (13.2%)</th>
<th>No Answer (5.6%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>144</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Statewide Themes

• The history of Africans in the Americas begins in Africa ("not in 1619")

• African American liberation began long before the Emancipation Proclamation
  • acts of resistance
  • self liberation
  • still ongoing – didn’t end with the Emancipation Proclamation

• Go beyond the “pristine” story; tell the whole story, including the “ugliness”
Statewide Themes

• Desire to know the complicated history of the Emancipation Proclamation

• Lincoln’s motivation for issuing the Proclamation
Statewide Themes

• Storytelling is powerful
• in relation to cemeteries - emphasize that cemeteries honor the lives of those interred - show images, family photos, make the personal connection
Statewide Themes

• Families are living legacies of resistance
• family histories represent strength
• make the personal connection between past and present
• connects the personal to broader histories
• genealogy
Statewide Themes

• A need for youth-based programs and initiatives
• A need for multi-generational initiatives
Statewide Themes

• Transformational Learning Experiences
• powerful connections between history, historic sites, heritage, and identity.
• role that interpretation plays in the experience of visiting and learning about history and historic sites
Statewide Themes

• KEEP THE CONVERSATIONS GOING
Regionally Specific Themes

• There is a need for healing programs and conversations
• a space for African Americans and European Americans to talk openly about the legacies of racism
• Central, Northern, Southwest
Regionally Specific Themes

• Tell the stories of African American heroes
  • represent resistance as heroic
  • too often stories of resistance are absent or contextualized negatively
  • Coastal, Central, Southwest
Regionally Specific Themes

• African American sites are often not interpreted well
• Guides and docents often avoid difficult topics
• Valley, Central, Northern
Regionally Specific Themes

• History interpreters and docents need a forum to learn how to discuss the difficult topics related to the histories of slavery and racism

• Valley, Central, Northern
Regionally Specific Themes

• What is the quantified value of the labor and capital provided by enslaved Africans and African Americans?

• Emancipation Celebrations throughout the Diaspora

• Central
Regionally Specific Themes

- Desire to know more about local and family history
- Northern
• MLK Commission’s “slave cemetery project”
• honor those who did not live to see emancipation
• database
• MLK Commission - $15,000
  • travel reimbursement, printing costs, Facebook ads, transcription, and sites database work

• College of William & Mary - $12,275
  • part time staff during summer 2012
    • printing, travel, refreshments, Facebook ads, April 27 & May 4

• Student volunteers
  • Statewide meetings
    • Website and Facebook creation and maintenance
Introduction to the Project

Remembering Slavery, Resistance, and Freedom is a project that seeks to develop memorial events, exhibits and/or projects to recognize the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation through discussions and engagement with Virginia’s African-descended communities and other interested groups. These commemorations will honor the rich and complex lives, contributions, and sacrifices of enslaved and free Africans and African Americans throughout Virginia’s history.
Lecture & Discussion

- Dr. Newby-Alexander
- Dr. Lynn Rainville
- Dr. Edna Medford
- Dr. David Blight
- Dr. Whitney Battle-Baptiste
- Dr. Rex Ellis
- Dr. Dianne Swann-Wright

Genealogy Workshops

- Professor Paula Royster, CAAGRI

Facilitated Viewings

- 14 viewings of filmed sessions across Virginia
Improved appreciation of the significance of cemeteries?
No – 0
Maybe – 3.6%
Yes – 50%
Very Much – 46.4%

Enhanced appreciation of the humanity of the enslaved and the inhumanity of slavery?
No – 0
Maybe – 0
Yes – 61%
Very Much – 39%

Was the discussion an important part of this event?
No – 0
Maybe – 7.1%
Yes – 35.7%
Very Much – 57.1%

First RSRFP event – 62%
Learn new methods & strategies for genealogical research?
No – 0
Maybe – 0
Yes – 20%
Very Much – 80%

Did the workshop help you begin and/or improve your genealogical research?
No – 0
Maybe – 0
Yes – 0
Very Much – 100%

Was the workshop well organized?
No – 0
Maybe – 0
Yes – 75%
Very Much – 25%

First RSRFP event – 0
Resistance Conversations

• Gabriel’s Rebellion, Lucy Goode Brooks–Richmond, VA
• Stories of Resistance through the archives–Fauquier County
• Contraband Crossings – Fort Monroe
• Women and Resistance - Alexandria
• Nat Turner – Southampton County
• John Law and Josephine City – Clarke County
• Rachel Scott – Pennington Gap
Healing Conversations

- Fauquier County and Richmond
- Partnering with Coming to the Table
- family stories
Next Steps

• Submitted VFH grant proposal May 1, 2013 to pilot Resistance Conversations and Healing Conversations

• Notification by mid June