

The Freedom Seeker

Volume XVI, No. 3

Autumn – Winter 2019

Stephen Myers - the Story Continues Paul Stewart, Scholar-in-Residence, Russell Sage College

Deepening our knowledge of Stephen and Harriet Myers is a continual quest for our efforts at Underground Railroad History Project. Although we know a great deal about Stephen and his family, we still need to do a great deal of work in filling out the story.



At the recent International Archaeology Day Program held at the Stephen and Harriet Myers Residence on October 18th professional genealogist Lisa Dougherty pulled together the research by Paul Stewart, Mary Liz Stewart, AnnMarie Hess and Jennifer Yezzie to deliver a PowerPoint on the life of the Myers.

Jennifer Yezzie to deliver a PowerPoint on the life of the Myers.

While many facts are known about the Myers, Ms. Dougherty identified several newspaper clippings that told about additional moments in the Life of Stephen Myers and his family.

Stephen Myers was born about 1800 in Rensselaer county and grew up in Albany and its environs. He married Harriet Johnson in 1827, also from the area. The Rev. John Steel officiated the marriage in Troy, New York. They had five children: Elizabeth, Stephen, Jr., Abram, Catherine, and Harriet. The only child of Stephen and Harriet who is known to have had children was Stephen, Jr. who also had five children: William, Elizabeth, Abraham, Esther and Fredrick. While we do not yet know all the descendants, we do know that Elizabeth, daughter of Stephen Jr., married Stanislas Govern.

Among the news items that added to our knowledge of the Myers story was one about an 1845 Temperance convention in Hudson. Stephen Myers was reported, according to the *Troy Daily Whig* (July 1845) newspaper, as being one of the Marshalls for the Convention, along with Richard Thompson of Albany. Another clipping that was uncovered in the *Hudson, NY Daily Star* (July 1856) involved an Emancipation Day Convention in Hudson in 1856. Stephen Myers is one of the featured speakers for the convention. Stephen was an active and involved Capital Region resident throughout his adult life.

We are grateful for what Lisa Dougherty has added to the Myers family story. We are excited to continue identifying additional stories about Stephen Myers. It helps us fill out the story of his life and that of his family. We look forward to continued research! And as we look back we also look forward to learning more about Stephen and Harriet Myers from present day 5th generation descendants Susan and Sharon Govern. (See photo included with this article.) The story continues...



Paul and Mary Liz Stewart with Susan and Sharon Govern (L. to R.) who traveled from downstate New York specifically to visit the Myers Residence. They are grandchildren of Stanislas K. Govern who married in 1888 Elizabeth Myers, the granddaughter of Stephen Myers.

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Freedom Seeker Corner

The Hudson River, both on shore and in the water, was a common pathway for freedom seekers making their way north from New York City. The advantage of the river was that the ships using it might take a day if they were steam boats though sloops had been known to take as little as 17 hours to make it up river.



Type of Hudson River Sloop
First quarter nineteenth century
From a woodcut

The Freedom Seeker is a publication of Underground Railroad History Project of the Capital Region, Inc., a non-profit corporation dedicated to promoting knowledge of the 19th century Underground Railroad Movement and its legacy in the Capital Region, in NYS, in the United States, and relating that history with us today. This newsletter is published three times a year. Editorial inquiries can be sent to URHPCR, 194 Livingston Ave., Albany, NY 12210 or info@undergroundrailroadhistory.org.

This newsletter is printed by Modern Press

BENJAMIN WILSON passed through New York City on September 1st, 1856. Days later he arrived in Albany and made his way to one of the addresses he had been given, 198 Lumber Street, today's 194 Livingston Avenue, location of The Stephen and Harriet Myers Residence, where Stephen and Harriet Myers provided help and support.

THE PLACE to go for your gift needs - The Holiday Shoppe - at The Stephen and Harriet Myers Residence

The Holiday Shoppe at The Stephen and Harriet Myers Residence will be open for your business from November 29 - December 29 during regular business hours. The Shoppe will close 12/24 - 12/26 and 12/30-1/02/20. Gifts for children, youth, adults, teachers, neighbors, colleagues. Cards for Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. See you there!



Reading books, activity books, handmade jewelry, mugs, t-shirts, note and holiday cards, Clifford Oliver photographs, Harriet Myers dolls, puzzles, handmade doll clothing, writing tools, notepads, candy, carry bags, afro-centric wall hangings, decorations, and more.



Over the Past Months -



International Archeology Day 2019—Over 50 people joined in the adventures of International Archeology Day at The Myers Residence Campus. Over 1200 groups participated worldwide! Digging up artifacts in the cistern, reading and reflecting on the content of period documents, dressing up in period appropriate clothing for a photo shoot, learning about the results of the genealogical research into the

Myers family and learning a new interpretation of an old story filled the day. Lunch was a hearty meal of ziti and chili. We're all looking forward to International Archeology Day 2020 which is scheduled for October 17. Mark your calendars!

Many thanks to Derek Healey, AnnMarie Hess, Jennifer Yezzie, Michael Lucas and Clifford Oliver for making the day a resounding success!

Underground Railroad Bicycle Tour

- As part of the 19th annual Hudson River Ramble, Underground Railroad History Project teamed up with the Albany Bicycle Coalition on 9/22 to host the first



UGRR Bicycle Tour! Twenty hearty bicyclists traversed 20 miles round trip on city roads and trails across four hours to visit various UGRR sites in and between Albany and Troy, NY. Following their strenuous ride they convened at The Myers Residence for a refreshing lunch and conversation. "What a great experience! Looking forward to more such bike tours. I learned a lot of new information about the Underground Railroad that I didn't even know I didn't know!" (Louise)

Many thanks to John Vendetti and Ed Brennan and Mark Maniak for organizing this memorable experience!

News and Notes

Mission Statement of URHPCR:

Underground Railroad History Project researches and preserves the local and national history of the Underground Railroad movement, its international connections, and its legacy to later struggles, engaging in public education and dialogue about this movement and its relevance to modern society.

I Heard it Said at The Myers Residence -

"My wife and I made a visit to the Stephen and Harriet Myers home a must see during our trip to Albany for the holiday weekend. We enjoy learning about the local African American history wherever we travel. The home is a time capsule full of rich architectural detail and is very impressive when you remember the time period. During the tour all I could think about are the conversations that took place within the walls to help escaped slaves and fight for basic human rights. As gentrification continues we are losing valuable monuments that celebrate the lesser known freedom fighters and the work and sacrifice they made at the risk of losing everything including their lives. If you visit Albany, NY stop by to take in the history of the Myers Residence. (Tony, Nov. 2019)

In this SEASON OF GIVING, please remember Underground Railroad History Project. We NEED YOUR SUPPORT if we are to continue empowering others to walk in the footsteps of our 19th century abolitionists and be agents of change working for a more equitable and just society for all. DONATE TODAY!

Stevie Wants You



Thank you to our donors: Yolanda Caldwell, Natalie Criscione, Brenda Twiggs, Inspire Me Fit LLC, David Connors, Eastwyck Village Associates, Perry Road Project, David Hochfelder, Susan DuBois, Bethlehem Public Library, Anne King, Glenwyck Development LLC, Kinderhook Memorial Library, Stephen P. O'Connor, Sharon Calhoun, Jean Libby, Christina Cummings, The Judith Fund, Seymour Fox Memorial Foundation, The Review Foundation, Stewart's Holiday Match, Price Chopper's Golub Foundation, Pioneer Bank, M&T Charitable Foundation, Touhey Family Foundation, Cohoes Savings Foundation, Summit Saratoga, Barbara DoTommaso

Welcome and thank you to new and renewing members: Sharon Cassell, Susan Govern, Connor McManus

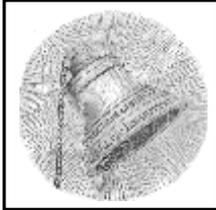
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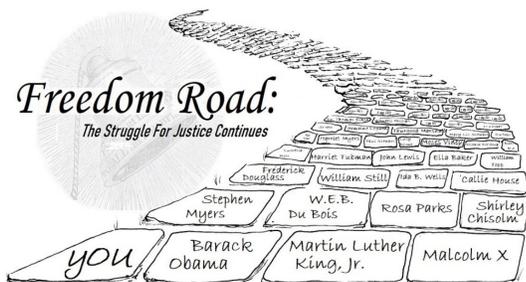
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LibertyCon 2020 - Freedom Road: the Struggle for Justice Continues

**Underground Railroad History Project
presents
LibertyCon 2020**



SAVE THE DATE
June 6, 2020

At Hudson Valley Community College
Sponsored by
Marvin Library Learning Commons

All under one roof
Parking for hundreds—Fully accessible

The 19th annual Underground Railroad History Project conference is coming!

As the **first civil rights movement** in the United States, the Underground Railroad movement provides a foundation upon which we can stand today as we work to ensure equity and justice for all.

The Underground Railroad movement provides a living model for continuing the road to freedom which it began — building community, partnering with others to educate, explore, and create as we travel the path of justice for all.

Expanding the scope of LibertyCon 2020 and building upon our past, URHP aims to bring together social justice organizations, broadly defined, from throughout the Capital Region and beyond — gaining strength through partnerships; sharing knowledge, strategies, and agendas; and bringing more people to a bigger table to create a better tomorrow.

Join with Underground Railroad History Project as we work together making a positive difference in our world today that will contribute to a more equitable and just tomorrow.

Questions? Concerns? Contributions? Interested in volunteering? Contact us at (518) 432-4432 or at UndergroundRailroadHistory.org