

THE NATIONAL CIVIL WAR MUSEUM

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

For Immediate Release

Monday, February 1, 2016

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NATIONAL CIVIL WAR MUSEUM PRESENTS LOCAL AND NATIONAL EXHIBITS COMMEMORATING AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH, COMMUNITY FREE DAY FEBRUARY 13th

(Harrisburg) — Nowhere does the celebration of the African American experience resonate more profoundly than in the history of the American Civil War, the Abolition of Slavery, and the origins of the modern American Civil Rights Movement rising out of the Reconstruction Era.

The National Civil War Museum (NCWM) celebrates February with a Community Free Day sponsored by United Concordia Dental, featuring a series of events, insightful exhibits, and fascinating lectures that explore the African American experience, locally and nationally, during and after the American Civil War.

“Museum staff has assembled several fascinating exhibits which offer a variety of perspectives into the African American experience before, during, and following the American Civil War and the abolition of slavery,” Burt Snyder, NCWM board chairman, said today.

NCWM Community Free Day is Saturday, February 13, a day after President Abraham Lincoln's February 12, 1809 birthday. The museum is open to the public and community with no admission charge.

From the perspective of local history, the museum features a display and life-size statue of [Ephraim Slaughter](#) (1846-1943), a Harrisburg resident who was born into North Carolina slavery in 1846 from which he escaped at the age of 17 in 1863.

A year later Ephraim joined Company B of the 3rd North Carolina Infantry, which became the 37th United States Colored Troop. Following the war, Slaughter and his brother moved to the City of Harrisburg, which celebrates his memory to this day.

On the national African American History scene, NCWM presents, **"The Life and Times of Congressman Robert Smalls"**, an excellent traveling exhibition which includes displays, three-dimensional artifacts, pictures and memorabilia of Robert Smalls (1839-1916), a Civil War naval hero and former slave who was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from South Carolina's 5th Congressional District in 1875. Smalls was the longest serving African American member of Congress up to 1955.

For a change of pace, visitors interested in rare historic weapons and Civil War era fashion, visit, **"Guns & Lace: Weapons & Gowns from the Civil War"** on display during **Community Free Day**.

"Vice & Virtue in the Civil War," a surprising new exhibit illustrates through stories, images and artifacts, the moral challenges war and combat created for tens of thousands of soldiers during the American Civil War.

In addition to these and many other exhibits available to the public on NCWM Community Free Day, two public lectures featuring noted African American historians will be presented.

"Remembering Harrisburg's Chaplain: Rev. David R. Stevens" (1803-1883), Chaplain with the 36th United States Colored Troops, a lecture by well-known local African American historian Calobe Jackson is available free to the public at 1:00-2:00 PM in the museum.

For over fifty years Rev. David R. Stevens was an itinerant minister for the Wesley A.M. E. Zion Connection and Church of Harrisburg, Pa. He held motivational rallies to encourage enlistment of Black men for the 54th Mass Regiment. He was appointed Chaplain of the 36th USCT in July, 1863, one of

only fourteen African American ministers to serve as Chaplains in the Civil War. In 1885 the Harrisburg David R. Stevens, GAR Post 520, was named for Rev. Stevens and, as history would have it, Ephraim Slaughter was the last surviving member of GAR Post 520.

The 2016 theme for African American History Month is "Hallowed Ground: Sites of African American Memories", and noted African American historian and NCWM board member Hari Jones will lecture at the museum on Free Day from 2:00 to 3:00 PM on the subject, "**From the Underground Railroad to Public Office**", covering the Reconstruction era from 1866 to 1877, when the nation emerged from the Civil War with "a new birth of freedom" and a continental presence from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico.

Across this American landscape are inspiring narratives, tragic stories, love stories, adventure stories, dramas and comedies, and all are part of our greater American story. Hari Jones will share stories of great consequence historically but rarely shared in our textbooks and classrooms. He will narrate stories of Underground Railroad leaders who become political and community leaders during this period and beyond. Tracking "the Loyal League" beyond the Civil War, he will shine a light on the covert and overt activities and accomplishments of men and women that continue to influence American society.

Not to be missed, Hari Jones creatively connects America's past with America's present and helps everyone appreciate the *African American memories* that make certain national and local Central Pennsylvania sites *hallowed ground* to all Americans.

Community Free Day also features a special visit from [President Abraham Lincoln](#), to discuss Slavery in his presentation. Expect some lively authentic civil war era music performed by special guests, [The Long Hill String Band](#). Members of the Third United States Colored Troops (U.S.C.T.) will present a soldiers program and have a portable exhibition.

So plan a visit to the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg PA, bring the family, enjoy the festivities and spend some quiet time exploring America's rich national, regional, and local history with thousands of historic artifacts on display for the museum's Community Free Day, Saturday, February 13, 2016, a community celebration of African American History Month.

For a [floor plan](#) of exhibits, galleries free to the public and additional information, please visit, www.nationalcivilwarmuseum.org or call, (717) 260-1861.

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About The National Civil War Museum: *Opened in February 2001, The National Civil War Museum, a member of the Smithsonian Institution Affiliations Program, is a non-profit private educational institution dedicated solely to the American Civil War. It is one of the largest museums in the world which interprets the entire American Civil War from a military and civilian perspective. The Museum preserves and exhibits some of the nation's treasures, including General Robert E. Lee's personal Bible, and more than 24,000 artifacts, documents and photos. Admission to the Museum is \$11.00 for adults, \$10.00 for seniors, and \$9.00 for students with reduced rates for children and families. The Museum offers complimentary ample parking. For more information, please call 717.260.1861, or visit the Museum's website at www.nationalcivilwarmuseum.org. **Connect with us!** [Facebook.com/TheNationalCivilWarMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/TheNationalCivilWarMuseum); [Twitter.com/NCWM](https://twitter.com/NCWM); and [FourSquare.com/NationalCivilWarMuseum](https://www.foursquare.com/NationalCivilWarMuseum)*