WESTCHESTER COUNTY African American HERITAGE Trail

Featured Sites
1. First Rhode Island Regiment Monument
2. John Jay Homestead
3. Jack Palance Memorial
4. The Friend Meeting House
5. Philipburg Manor
6. Foster Memorial AME Zion Church
7. Story Hill Cemetery
8. Villa Lewaro
9. African Cemetery
10. Joy Heritage Center
11. Phillip Manor Hall
12. E.B. Fitzgerald Statue
13. Saint Paul's Church and Cemetery

Westchester County Office of Tourism

African American HERITAGE Trail

Sacrifice PERSEVERANCE achievement

Westchester County Executive
County Board of Legislators
These are some of the experiences of the African American community in Westchester County dating back to the 17th century.

To make it as easy as possible to explore this rich and compelling history, we have created the Westchester County African American Heritage Trail. This collection of historic sites preserves and interprets the contributions that people of African descent have made to the development of our unique American identity.

The Westchester County African American Heritage Trail (AAHT) is an ongoing initiative to identify sites, buildings, and locations that reflect both the actions and experiences of African Americans in the evolution of Westchester.

As you explore the AAHT, please know it is the desire of the African American Advisory Board and all others who worked towards its creation to engage people of all races and backgrounds to explore, honor, and celebrate Westchester’s African American community. We hope that our local schools in particular will see this trail as an educational opportunity.

We expect the trail to continue growing as new sites are added. To learn about any new additions, visit the county’s African American Advisory Board website at westchestergov.com/aaah.

The earliest reference to African Americans in Westchester appears in the town records, dated April 23, 1672. The entry records the sale of a “Negro woman” to Samuel Adams of Fairfield, Connecticut, by Moses Hutt. The church and taverns were the center of community life, and the cemetery was the final resting place upon death. Many of the 9,000 interred in the cemetery are persons of African descent. Most of them were buried there in the 19th and 20th centuries. The church records at St. Paul’s include the sexton’s book and burial records denoting the race of those entered into the graveyard.

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222 Mamaroneck Avenue•White Plains, NY 10605
Phone (914) 995-8500•Fax (914) 995-8505
website: www.westchestertourism.com e-mail: tourism@westchestergov.com

St. Paul’s Church National Historic Site is a unit of the National Park Service listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

St. Paul’s Church
National Historic Site
197 South Columbus Avenue, Mt. Vernon
(914) 667-4116 www.nps.gov/sapa

Regular hours for tours and programs are Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call for information about special weekend tours.

St. Paul’s Church, completed in 1787, was located on the colonial town green of Eastchester. Built along the old Boston Post Road, it rested in the midst of farmhouses andGuion’s, Fowler’s and Crawford’s taverns.

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Jay Heritage Center

Poth to be used as a variety of professionally carved and dressed grave stones, with 35 indicating that a war veteran is interred. African American veterans of the Civil War

The cemetery includes a variety of African American graves and monuments. African American veterans of the Civil War are buried here. One such soldier was World War I veteran Francis M. Husted, buried in 1947. A former laborer, he was a member of the 370th Colored Regiment, the only unit in the U.S. Army with a full complement of African American officers from colon to lieutenant. This unit was called the “Black Devils” by the Germans because of their courage and the “Partridges” by the French because of their proud bearing.

In 1863, the African Cemetery was listed as a Westchester County Tricentennial Historic Site, and in 2003 the cemetery was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The First Rhode Island Regiment was composed predominantly of enslaved African American soldiers who had enlisted in the American Continental Army to serve their country. During the American Revolution, these men fought courageously to defend American liberty against the aggressions of British tyranny.

In 1799, New York, Jay signed the Gradual Emancipation Act into law. The Rye farm remained a place of refuge for Jay throughout his public career. His son, Peter Augustus Jay, was profoundly anti-slavery and also served as president of the Manumission Society. As a delegate to the New York Constitutional Convention of 1821, he called for the extension of suffrage to African Americans in one of the most eloquent speeches of the era.

In 1838 Peter Augustus Jay built a Greek Revival house on the site of his father’s boyhood home. After his death in 1843, he left a lifetime stipend to Caesar Valentine, a man who had worked for the Jays as a slave after manumission.

The Jay Center, named a National Historic Landmark in 1993, offers a two-part school program, “Striving for Freedom: The Jay Family and Slavery.” The program allows students to witness a moving portrayal of the reunion of Mary with her sister Clarinda, who returns to the Rye farm where she was born.

Monument to First Rhode Island Regiment

Erected in 1982 as a result of the pioneering research and activism of Dr. John H. Harron, this monument is dedicated to the valiant and courageous soldiers of the First Rhode Island Regiment. The First Rhode Island Regiment was composed predominantly of enslaved African American soldiers who had enlisted in the American Continental Army to serve their country. During the American Revolution, these men fought courageously to defend American liberty against the aggressions of British tyranny.

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The vessel had sailed up the Hudson River to transport Major John André, adjutant general to the British army, to New York. One of these individuals, an enslaved man named Cuffee, was credited with being a ringleader in the 1741 New York City insurrection conspiracy.

During the colonial period, women, and children lived and worked at Philipsburg Manor in 1750, forming a community that survived in spite of the fact that many of its residents were literate and left records of their worldview in the form of letters and poems to family members.

Twenty-three enslaved men, women, and children lived and worked at Philipsburg Manor in 1750, forming a community that survived in spite of the fact that many of its residents were literate and left records of their worldview in the form of letters and poems to family members. The Quakers were committed to property rights and justice for all, and they imposed sanctions on Philipsburg Manor in 1789 for slavery.

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The Friends Meeting House
280 Post Road, Chappaqua
(914) 238-3170
Open Sun, 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. by appointment

The Chappaqua Friends Meeting House, circa 1775, is the oldest Quaker meeting house standing in Westchester County. In the early 1770s, prominent of the Society of Friends, or Quakers, began to challenge the morality of slavery in colonial New York. In 1767 the Purchase community of Friends decreed that it was for their own benefit to own slaves, stating that "it is not consistent with Christianity to own or sell our fellow men for slaves." The Society of Friends resolved that all of its members should refuse their slaves and seek to provide them with the means to support themselves and their families. The Quaker opposition to slavery served as a primary catalyst in its abolition in post-revolutionary New York. The Quakers were committed to the property of the estate for all, and they imposed sanctions on those who continued to own slaves. By 1799 the last slave owned by a Quaker in Westchester County was freed, well before slavery ended in New York in 1827. The Quakers were the first to offer reparations for their freed African Americans. They purchased bonds and sold land to African American families. The Chappaqua Friends Meeting House is a property of Historic Hudson Valley, a nationally significant late 18th- and early 19th-century milling and trading complex that was part of a vast 50,000-acre estate owned by the Angle-Dutch Philipse family. Enslaved laborers and free African Americans lived and worked at Philipsburg Manor in 1750, forming a community that survived in spite of tremendous odds. At Philipsburg Manor, enslaved men and women lived and worked at Philipsburg Manor in 1750, forming a community that survived in spite of tremendous odds. At Philipsburg Manor, enslaved men and women lived and worked at Philipsburg Manor. The interpreters offered regular performances of vignettes dramatizing important aspects of African slavery. In addition, the site offers popular school programs and a lively calendar of special events. Visitor experience handson, including a milling complex, barn, kitchen, and slave garden. The visitor center includes a shop and cafe.

During the Civil War, members of Foster AME Zion Church helped to provide food and shelter to fugitive slaves who came to settle in the village of Tarrytown. After the Civil War, Rev. Jacob Thomas would go to the village of Mount Vernon to help start the AME Zion movement there. Like most AME Zion churches, Foster AME Zion was and still is a religious and social crossroad for the African American community, providing a meeting place for worship and a place for public interaction and service. In 1892 this Church was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It was recognized as a Westchester County Tricentennial Historic Site in 1985.

The vessel had sailed up the Hudson River to transport Major John André, adjutant general to the British Army, to New York. On reaching Tarrytown, André, having been censured for negligence, planned to sell the British vital information about the American fortress at West Point. Without warning, the vessel was forced to raise anchor and return to New York City. Major André was left behind enemy lines and forced to travel overland through Westchester to get back to New York City. He was eventually captured in Tarrytown.

The plaque commemorates the brave stand taken by one of the first free African Americans, Foster AME Zion Church, in response to the need to provide food and shelter to fugitive slaves who came to settle the village of Tarrytown. The plaque honors the brave stand taken by one of the first free African Americans, Foster AME Zion Church, in response to the need to provide food and shelter to fugitive slaves who came to settle in the village of Tarrytown. The plaque honors the brave stand taken by one of the first free African Americans, Foster AME Zion Church, in response to the need to provide food and shelter to fugitive slaves who came to settle in the village of Tarrytown.
Madam C.J. Walker, born Sarah Breedlove, was the daughter of enslaved parents. Madam Walker invented, patented, and brilliantly marketed hair and cosmetic products for women of color. Madam Walker’s business success made her America’s first black millionairess.

In 1916 Madam Walker commissioned the design and construction of Villa Lewaro, a mansion overlooking the Hudson River in Irvington. The mansion is an astounding testi- mony to the genius of Verner W. Tandy, New York’s first certified black architect. The 32-room mansion includes exquisite stained-glass windows, vaulted ceilings, marble staircases, and intricate ceiling moldings. Madam Walker was a model for the early feminists who would receive the right to vote shortly after her untimely death in 1919. Her race consciousness, charity, and sense of responsibili- ty to her people made her an admirable role model for generations of African American entrepreneu- rial women. Madam Walker’s daugh- ter, A'Lila, who resided in Harlem, occasionally used the mansion to entertain the great and the good of the Harlem Renaissance including Langston Hughes, W. E. B. DuBois and photog- rapher James VanDerZee. When A’Lila Walker died in 1981, Villa Lewaro was bequeathed to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The NAACP sold the mansion to Annie F. Peth to be used as a home for elderly women. Villa Lewaro was placed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1976. In the 1990s, the mansion was to be demolished to rebuild the property. However, lobbying by preserva- tionists saved the mansion from the wrecking ball. An African American entrepreneur would later purchase the mansion and restore it to its former splendor.

**African Cemetery**

Located through Caswellview Union Cemetery, North Street, Rye Open to the public.

*The African Cemetery* was established in Rye when its site was deeded to the town on June 27, 1860, by Underhill and Elizabeth Halsted “to be forever after kept and used for the purposes of a cemetery or burial place for the col- orized inhabitants of the said Town of Rye and its vicinity free and clear of all charge there-fore.” In the latter part of his life, Underhill Halsted became a fervent follower of the Methodist movement, which was profound- ly opposed to slavery. However, being a slave owner did not mean one was not prejudiced. Such being the case, the African American community to separate from the Methodist church and form their own Methodist organization, African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AME Zion). The presence of two AME Zion churches in nearby Mamaroneck and Port Chester could have also motivated Halsted to gift this cemetery to local free persons of color.

The cemetery is home to 2,000 Interred with pride, the land was purchased by the landowners. African American veterans of the Civil War through World War II are buried here. One such soldier was World War I veteran Francis M. Husted, buried in 1947. A for- mer laborer, he was a member of the 370th Colored Regiment, the only unit in the U.S. Army with a full complement of African American officers from colon to lieutenant. This unit was called the “Black Devils” by the Germans because of their courage and the “Partidries” by the French because of their proud bearing.

In 1983, the African Cemetery was listed as a Westchester County Tricentennial Historical Site, and in 2003 the cemetery was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

**Villa Lewaro**

Route 9, Irvington

Private residence

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Sacrifice, Struggle, Challenge...Perseverance, Achievement, Recognition...

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Phone (914) 995-8500•Fax (914) 995-8505
website: www.westchestertourism.com•e-mail: tourism@westchestergov.com

Philipse Manor Hall
360 East Main Street, Yonkers
(914) 965-4027
www.mynnps.org
Tues. – Fri.: 10am – 5pm
Sat. – Sun.: 11am – 5pm

St. Paul’s Church
National Historic Site
331 North Avenue, Yonkers
(914) 687-4116
www.nps.gov/sapa

Ella Fitzgerald Statue
At Yonkers Metro North Railroad Station Plaza, Yonkers
Open to the public

Mt. Vernon
National Historic Site
897 South Columbus Avenue, Mt. Vernon
(914) 687-4116
www.nps.gov/sapa

Regular hours for tours and programs are Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call for information about special weekend hours.

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13

Ella Fitzgerald Statue

Birthplace of Ella Fitzgerald
In the center of the “Golden Circuit,” better known as the TransAtlantic and Indian Ocean slave trade to the West Indies, America and Europe.

Ella Fitzgerald was the most popular female jazz singer in the United States for more than half a century. As an African American woman, she experienced not only the adul- tion of this country, but also some of its most hideous and persistent moral defects. Ella lived and worked at a time when, for her, entrances to most white-owned clubs were through the back door. She literally con- quered the biggest, the insensi- tive, and the racist with love through song while serving as an ambassador for both music and our country.

Ella Fitzgerald Statue

Born in Newport News, Virginia, on April 25, 1917, Ella grew up in Yonkers and attended local schools. Fitzgerald began her profession- al career at the age of 16. She could sing sultry ballads and sweet jazz, plus imitate every instrument in an orchestra. She worked with all the jazz greats, from Duke Ellington, Count Basie and Nat King Cole, to Frank Sinatra, Dinah Washington, Dizzy Gillespie and Benny Goodman. Ella achieved legendary success in a career that spanned six decades, her albums selling more than 40 million copies.

She earned countless awards, including a Kennedy Center Award for her contributions to the performing arts, honorary doctorates degrees from Dartmouth and Yale, and 13 Grammy awards. Despite poor health, she remained an active performer until 1992. Ella Fitzgerald died on June 15, 1996, at the age of 79 due to complications associated with diabetes.

As a commemoration of this great talent and her contribution to the city of Yonkers, African American artist Vinnie Bagwell created this bronze statue enti- tled “The First Lady of Jazz Ella Fitzgerald” in her honor in 1996.

The earliest reference to African Americans in Eastchester appears in the town records, dated April 23, 1672. The entry records the sale of a “Negro woman” to Samuel Adams of Fairfield, Connecticut, by Moses Hoitte.

Until the Revolutionary War, several generations of the Philipse family were leading merchants in New York’s commercial life. The records of their business and lives indicate that enslaved Africans were vital to their success and the development of Westchester County. The Philipse’s commercial activities place Westchester at the center of the “Golden Circuit,” better known as the TransAtlantic and Indian Ocean slave trade to the West Indies, America and Europe.

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The church and taverns
Built along the old Boston Post Road, it rested in the midst of farmhouses and Guion’s, Fowler’s and Crawford’s taverns.

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