



**NATIONAL TRUST**  
for HISTORIC PRESERVATION™

# NORTHEAST PRESERVATION NEWS

A Monthly Newsletter from the National Trust's Northeast Office

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[www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org)

June 2005

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## Statewide Partners

Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation,  
Preservation Delaware, PreservatiON MASS, Maine  
Preservation, New Hampshire Preservation Alliance,  
Preservation New Jersey, Preservation League of New  
York State, Preservation Pennsylvania, Preserve  
Rhode Island, Preservation Trust of Vermont.

## Statewide Main Street Programs

CT: Connecticut Main Street Center  
DE: Delaware Main Street Program  
MA (Boston): Boston Main Streets  
ME: Maine Downtown Center  
NH: New Hampshire Main Street Center  
NJ: Main Street New Jersey  
PA: Office of Community Development;  
Pennsylvania Downtown Center  
VT: Vermont Downtown Program

[www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org)

## Northeast Office's African American Retreat

In late April, the Northeast Office organized a retreat for people who are active in the preservation of African American sites in the region. Twenty people joined National Trust staff members in Newport, RI for a weekend of discussion, net-

working

and learning

from one

another.

The

gathering

provided

each partici-

participant an

opportunity

to share in-

formation

about their

organiza-

tion and

projects.

The atten-

dees highly

valued this

experience

and learned

a great deal

by hearing

about

one another's

struggles

and successes.

Facilitated

discussions

were held

on topics

which are

common to

all of these

organiza-

tions, includ-

ing marketing

and fundrais-

ing.

These

discussions

provided

a forum

for partici-

pants to

exchange

ideas and

to pass

along use-

ful informa-

tion to their

peers.

National

Trust staff

from out-

side the

region

joined the

group to

share their

work

with Afri-

can Ameri-

can sites.

Jeffrey Har-

ris, the Na-

tional

Trust's new

Director for

Diversity,

came from

Washing-

ton, DC to

discuss the

Trust's in-

ventory of

historic

African

American

sites. He

also spoke

about the

Trust's hopes

for the future

of the Afri-

can American

Initiative.

Joseph

McGill, Pro-

gram Officer

at the Trust's

Southern

Office in

Charleston,

shared

*Continued on page 2.*



*Conference attendees learn about the history of "God's Little Acre": (l. to r.) Jane Williamson (bending over), Hope Gaines, Jack Sumberg, Joe McGill, Jeffrey Harris, and Keith Stokes.*

ing. These discussions provided a forum for participants to exchange ideas and to pass along useful information to their peers.

National Trust staff from outside the region joined the group to share their work with African American sites. Jeffrey Harris, the National Trust's new Director for Diversity, came from Washington, DC to discuss the Trust's inventory of historic African American sites. He also spoke

about the Trust's hopes for the future of the African American Initiative. Joseph McGill, Program Officer at the Trust's Southern Office in Charleston, shared

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## 18th-Century House Built by Free Black Weaver

At a recent press conference, Beverly Morgan-Welch, Executive Director of the [Museum of Afro-American History](http://www.afroammuseum.org), a National Trust Historic Site in Boston and Nantucket, MA, announced the Florence Higginbotham House, on the island of Nantucket, is of previously unknown major historical and architectural significance.

Recently developed and corroborated evidence reveals the house was built sometime after the property was purchased by Seneca Boston, a weaver and formerly enslaved man, in 1774, a decade before slavery was abolished in Massachusetts. Except for a period of less than one year, the property was owned by African Americans for the next two centuries.

"This new research reveals a story of the incredible legacy of the Boston family," Morgan-Welch said. "What we have

found validates the strength, resolution and agency of the black community during the early formation of this nation."

This stunning information is just the beginning of the research underway by the museum. From Seneca Boston to Florence Higginbotham, this home is a symbol of the sophistication of the black community. The family was not simply reacting to and surviving in this new republic, but was consciously putting down roots. The stability of the Boston family exemplifies the larger black Nantucket community that began forming as early as 1710, and tells us that they were invested in their futures, which defies the traditional perception of African Americans before the Revolution.

For more on this remarkable discovery, call Tracy Gibbs at 617-725-0022, x 21, or e-mail her at [tgibbs@afroammuseum.org](mailto:tgibbs@afroammuseum.org).

## Dates, Deadlines and Announcements

**June 20-24** — **NeighborWorks** brings its **NeighborWorks Training Institute** to Boston, MA. This week-long source of community development training offers a comprehensive range of courses and unequaled opportunity to learn from experts and peers in the field of community development. For more, visit [www.nw.org](http://www.nw.org).

**June 24** — Deadline for applications for Round 12 grants from the **Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund** of the **Massachusetts Historical Commission**. These 50% reimbursable matching grants are available to non-profit organizations and municipalities to help support the preservation of State Register-listed properties. For more: [www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc).

**June 24-25**—The **American Association for State and Local History**, in conjunction with the **National Trust for Historic Preservation**, presents “The Conservation of Buildings and Landscapes,” an advanced training workshop for historic site managers, in Washington, D.C., which will feature in-depth sessions on building and landscape conservation as well as the preservation of archaeological resources at historic sites. For more information, visit [www.aaslh.org/workshop](http://www.aaslh.org/workshop).

**July 29** - Deadline for **Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission State Preservation Grants**, which support renovation projects for museums, cultural arts centers and public historic sites; this last category is new and includes historic structures that are open to the general public, used principally for events and community activities and that are representative of the community’s heritage, like town and city halls, and libraries. Grants range from \$5,000 to \$100,000. For more: [www.preservation.ri.gov](http://www.preservation.ri.gov).

**August 15**—Deadline for applications to the **Boston Grants Initiative** of the **New England Grassroots Environment Fund** (NEGEF), which are intended to increase engagement and citizen participation in environmental health, environmental justice and greenspace issues in greater Boston. Applicants must be working at the grassroots level in Boston, Cambridge, Chelsea or Somerville, and should demonstrate a significant element of volunteer involvement in their programs. Organizations should contact NEGEF be-

fore submitting a proposal. For more, visit [www.grassrootsfund.org](http://www.grassrootsfund.org).

**September 5**—Deadline for applications for the **James Marston Fitch Charitable Foundation** research grant, intended to support projects of innovative original research or creative design that advance the practice of historic preservation in the U.S. A grant of up to \$25,000 will be awarded to a mid-career professional who has an advanced or professional degree and at least 10 years’ experience in historic preservation or related fields. Other smaller grants, up to \$10,000, are made at the discretion of the Trustees. For more information visit [www.fitchfoundation.org](http://www.fitchfoundation.org).

**September 11**—The second Sunday in September each year is celebrated as **National Neighborhood Day**. Join people in neighborhoods all over America as they gather to foster caring and concern for each other and promote stronger, more effective communities. To learn more, and to find out ways to get involved, visit [www.neighborhoodday.org](http://www.neighborhoodday.org).

**September 16-17**—The **Young Preservationists Association of Pittsburgh, Sustainable Pittsburgh and 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania** host “**Places and Spaces: The Regeneration of Preservation**” in Pittsburgh, PA. This conference features workshops, tours and networking sessions to engage young people in historic preservation. For more information, visit [www.youngpreservationists.org](http://www.youngpreservationists.org).

The preliminary program and on-line registration is now available for the **2005 National Preservation Conference**, to be held from September 27 to October 2 in Portland, OR. Portland is a dynamic, livable city combining a people-oriented downtown with a wealth of historic neighborhoods — the perfect location to explore the conference’s theme, **Sustain America: Vision, Economics and Preservation**. Early-bird registration ends July 31. For more: [www.nthpconference.org](http://www.nthpconference.org).

## An Updated Classic

Since the 1994 publication of Donovan Rypkema’s *The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader’s Guide*, the book has become an essential reference for convincing government officials, developers, property owners or business and community leaders that preservation strategies make good economic sense.

In this update, Rypkema, a real estate consultant and nationally known speaker and writer, makes his case with 100 “arguments,” each backed up by research data, anecdotal evidence, or quotes from a publication, speech, or other source.

Rypkema is entertaining, provocative, and convincing as he describes and demonstrates how strategies that include preservation help communities make cost-effective use of resources, create jobs, provide affordable housing, revive downtowns, build tourism, attract new businesses and workers, and more.

For more information or to purchase a copy, visit [www.preservationbooks.org](http://www.preservationbooks.org).

## Retreat, continued

news and progress from the Southeast African American Regional Preservation Alliance.

The story of Newport’s African American history was shared by Keith Stokes, a former Advisor to the National Trust and the Executive Director of the Newport County Chamber of Commerce. A representative from the Touro Synagogue Foundation also joined the group and shared that organization’s experiences in forming partnerships to help communicate the history of their site to a wider audience. Sunday afternoon the group took a walking tour led by the Newport Historical Society and wrapped up with a visit to “God’s Little Acre,” Newport’s historic African American burial ground.

Attendees enjoyed the opportunity to meet their peers from throughout the Northeast who are undertaking similar work and were motivated and encouraged by one another’s efforts. Participants took home a renewed sense of preserving a history beyond that of their individual site.

## Join the National Trust and Keep Up with News of the Northeast

To learn about the latest developments in preservation and how you can become a member of the National Trust, send an e-mail to [nero@nthp.org](mailto:nero@nthp.org) to join our mailing list or to request membership information, or please visit the National Trust’s Web site, [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org).