



NORTHEAST PRESERVATION NEWS

A Monthly Newsletter from the National Trust's Northeast Office

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CT Trust for Historic Preservation,
Preservation DE, Preservation MA,
ME Preservation, NH Preservation
Alliance, Preservation NJ, Preservation
League of NY, Preservation PA,
Preserve RI, Preservation Trust of VT

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

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Rediscovering a Piece of American History

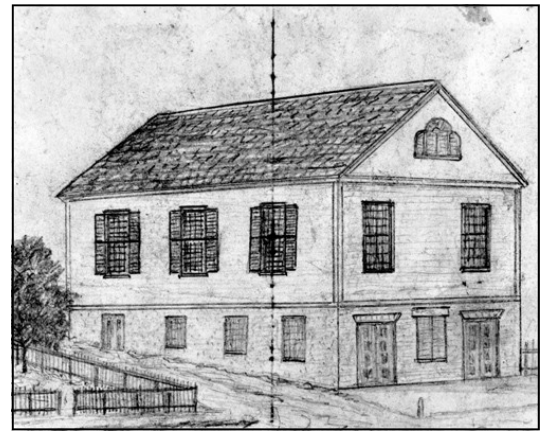
As the third oldest extant African meeting-house in the United States, the circa 1828 [Abyssinian Meeting House](#) was long the religious, educational and cultural center of Portland, Maine's black community. Various used as a place for worship and gathering, a segregated public school, a meeting space for the abolition movement, and a safe haven for Underground Railroad activity, its importance was almost lost to memory. By the late 20th century, the building, which had been divided into apartments, stood vacant.

Leonard Cummings, Sr., and his wife Mary, whose family has lived in Maine for six generations, knew of the significance of the unassuming building at 73-75 Newbury Street. Determined to not lose this notable piece of history, they purchased it from the city, which had acquired it after the former owner became delinquent on his taxes.

Together with their daughter, the Cummings formed the Committee to Restore the Abyssinian and have since worked actively to preserve the Meeting House and restore it to its original stature. The family is enthusiastic about the prospect of reintroducing this meaningful historic site to a new generation of Mainers. Strong partnerships with Greater Portland Landmarks, the City of Portland and Maine's Historic Preservation Commission have helped the group plot their road-map for success.

Since its inception, the Committee's Board has grown ever stronger and has expanded to 15 members. Early work included emergency intervention to stabilize the building, including building envelope repairs partially funded through the National Trust's Daniel K. Thorne Intervention Fund. The group worked to nominate the Abyssinian to the National Register of Historic Places, and it achieved designation last year.

As a Historic Structures Report nears completion, the Committee has recently completed an



Two views of the Abyssinian: as it looks today (top) and an 1890 pencil drawing by Charles Q. Goodhue (used with permission from the Collections of Maine Historical Society #6277). The Committee to Restore the Abyssinian plans to restore the building to its original appearance.

Underground Railroad Walking Tour as part of its broader mission to promote the cultural heritage of African-Americans in Maine, and they have applied for inclusion in the National Park Service's Network to Freedom program.

The Committee's story is a great example of the commitment, focus and support a group needs in organizing to save a great place. As Mr. Cummings eloquently states, "this is not a black or white project, but a community project."

African American Preservation Fund Grant Available

The National Trust for Historic Preservation's Northeast Office announces a special one-time grant for nonprofit organizations and public agencies involved with saving places of importance to African American history. The **Northeast Office African American Preservation Fund** grant is designed to provide money for a variety of preservation projects including planning, education and outreach. Awards will range between \$1,000 and \$5,000, with the average award being \$2,500; the deadline to submit an application is **June 1st**. For details, please contact Brent Leggs, Program Assistant, at 617-523-0885 or brent_leggs@nthp.org.

Dates, Deadlines and Announcements

February 8-10—The **Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network**, in partnership with other organizations, including the **National Trust**, hosts their annual meeting, “**What’s New in the Old Neighborhood?**” in Augusta, GA. Participants will attend educational and field sessions in two African American historic districts. For more, [click here](#).

February 14—Deadline for receipt of applications for **Preserve America Grants**, which provide funding to designated Preserve America Communities to support preservation efforts through heritage tourism, education and historic preservation planning. More details can be found by visiting www.preserveamerica.gov.

February 21—Deadline for applications to Round 13 of the **Massachusetts Historical Commission’s Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund** grant program, which supports the preservation of properties, landscapes and sites listed in the Massachusetts State Register of Historic Places. For more information, visit www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc.

March 1—Deadline for all **National Preservation Awards**, to be announced in October at the Twin Cities National Preservation Conference in St. Paul, MN. For more details and an application, available only online, visit www.nationaltrust.org.

March 7-10—The **Traditional Building Exhibition and Conference** comes to Boston, MA. This is the only national trade show and conference for historic home owners and those involved with historic restoration, renovation and traditionally-inspired new design and construction. More: www.traditionalbuildingshow.com.

March 8—Deadline for applications for the **Smart Growth Implementation Assistance** program, sponsored by the **Development, Community and Environment Division** of the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**. Through this program, a team of multidisciplinary experts will provide free technical assistance

to communities, regions or states that want to develop in ways that meet environmental and other local or regional goals: www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/sgia.htm.

March 24-25—The **New Hampshire Preservation Alliance** presents the **2007 New Hampshire Old House & Barn Expo** in Manchester. This year’s Expo pays special attention to “green” technology and good stewardship strategies that make your historic home more energy efficient and environmentally friendly. For more, visit www.nhpreservation.org.

March 25-28—The **National Trust Main Street Center** presents the **National Main Streets Conference** in Seattle, WA. This year’s theme, “**Building a Sustainable Future**,” focuses on the sustainability of both the revitalization organization and the community it serves. For more: <http://conference.mainstreet.org>.

March 27—Deadline for applications for **Digital Partnerships Grants**, a joint program of the **Institute of Museum and Library Services** and the **National Endowment for the Humanities**. The grants, which support innovative, collaborative humanities projects using the latest digital technologies for the benefit of the American public. More at www.neh.gov.

March 30—Deadline for applications to **Preservation Leadership Training 2007**, to be held in Owatonna, MN, from June 23-30. The **National Trust**, in partnership with the **Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism**, presents this intensive program that provides participatory learning experiences in leadership and organizational development. For more information, visit www.nationaltrust.org/plt.

Save Ellis Island presents “**Shadow and Memory: Ellis Island’s Unrestored Buildings. The Photographs of Christopher Barnes**” through February 26 in the 3rd Floor Gallery of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum. For more information, visit www.saveellisland.org.

Preservation Award Deadline Approaches

Each year the National Trust celebrates the best of preservation by presenting National Preservation Awards to individuals and organization whose contributions demonstrate outstanding excellence in historic preservation.

A select number of recipients are chosen for the National Preservation Honor Awards. One recipient is chosen for each of the other awards categories, which include the following: the Trustees’ Award for Organization Excellence; the John H. Chafee Trustees’ Award for Outstanding Achievement in Public Policy; the Trustee Emeritus Award for Excellence in the Stewardship of Historic Sites; the National Trust/HUD Secretary’s Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation; and the National Trust/ACHP Award for Federal Partnerships in Historic Preservation.

Details on the criteria used for selection can be found in the application, along with eligibility, general requirements and procedures for nomination.

The postmark deadline for all award categories this year is **March 1**. Please visit www.nationaltrust.org for more information, and to download a copy of the application, which is only available online.



90 West Street in New York, NY, was one of 21 recipients of a National Preservation Honor Award in 2006.

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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 to join our mailing list or to request membership information, or please visit www.nationaltrust.org.