

Amplifying the Voices

A Symposium on
Interpreting Complex
Histories

October 22 - 24, 2026

At Handsell Historic Site
4837 IndianTown Road
Vienna, Maryland 21869



A FREE event for historic and cultural organizations, professionals staff and volunteers on Thursday and Friday. Friday and Saturday open to the public.

Presentations by trained interpreters with workshops for engaging audiences.

Creating an Enslaved Database.

Enslaved and Indigenous Descendant Testimonials.

Friday Evening Campfire and Reflection.

Living History and Interpretation.

Featuring Joseph McGill from the Slave Dwelling Project and the Inalienable Rights Interpreters.

Dontavius Williams, Discussion Leader and
The Chronicles of Adam.

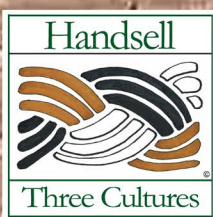
Chesapeake Heartland: An African American Humanities Project

Advance registration required.

Full brochure available for download at
restorehandsell.org



Presented by



Amplifying the Voices

A 3-Day Symposium - Communicating Cultural History and Engaging Audiences Through Interpretation

Thursday–Saturday | October 22-24, 2026

Host: Nanticoke Historic Preservation Alliance (NHPA) at the Three Cultures Center at Handsell Historic Site, 4837 Indiantown Rd. Vienna, MD 21869

Admission: **FREE**, Advance Registration Required by October 18, 2026 at <https://restorehandsell.org> (registration limited to 80 participants on Thursday and Friday. Saturday is open to the public).

Interpretive Partners: The Slave Dwelling Project (SDP), The Chronicles of Adam

Sponsored by the Maryland Center for History and Culture

Featuring Artist Yolanda Acree -- Why Collage? Collage art is more than just cutting and pasting; it's a powerful medium to explore identity, culture, and history. Discover the art of layering, symbolism, and storytelling through Yolanda's unique perspective.

DAY 1 — THURSDAY ***From Database to Interpretation***

Audience: Open to all historic and cultural organizations, historic sites, non-profit staff volunteers, and educators.
Purpose: Capacity building + preparation + interpretive training

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| 9:15 | Coffee and Registration |
| 9:45 a.m. | Welcome and Introductions - George Barnett and Midge Ingersoll
Three Cultures Mission, Nanticokes, and Shirley's legacy: "Know their names." |
| 10:00 a.m. | Understanding the Archive
Ethical obligations when interpreting enslaved lives - Dontavius Williams, Chronicles of Adam
How language, perspective, and interpretive choices influence the stories presented to the public. |
| 12 Noon | Working Box Lunch (pre-ordered when registering)
"Who Gets to Tell the Story" Discussion |
| 1 - 3:00 p.m. | Descendant-Centered Interpretation Training - Joe McGill, Slave Dwelling Project
Language, tone, and presence.
Living Archives Interpretation Lab - Joe McGill & Dontavius Williams
Development of reusable interpretive tools that can be deployed long-term. |
| 3:00 p.m. | Interpreting Difficult History in Maryland - Angela Crenshaw, Maryland State Park Director |
| 3:45 p.m. | Closing Remarks & Outline for Friday |
| 4:30-6 p.m. | Optional - Tour of Harriet Tubman Museum and Educational Center,
424 Race Street, Cambridge MD 21613. Featuring murals by Michael Rosato. |

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DAY 2 — FRIDAY

Testimonials, Campfire, and Reflection

Audience: Open to all historic and cultural institutions, plus descendant families and interested public.

Purpose: Deep engagement and experiential learning

9:30 a.m. Coffee and Registration

10-11:30 a.m. Chesapeake Heartlands Project -

Curating 400 Years of African American Histories on Maryland's Eastern Shore --
with Carolyn Brooks, Airlee Ringgold Johnson, Melissa Kemp, Darius Johnson
and Jaelon T. Moaney.

11:30 a.m. Divided Loyalty - Joseph McGill

Discussion on the Native and Black population during the Revolutionary period.

12 - 12:45 a.m. Box Lunch (Pre-ordered for anyone registered for a full day program).

1 :00 p.m. Introduction to Native Story - Dontavius Williams

Indigenous Interpretation - Drew Shuptar-Rayvis, Pocomoke Indian Nation Ambassador

2:15 p.m. Reflections of Descendants Panel - Elaine McGill, Dion Banks, Kisha Petticolas

From the records of the past to the stories we carry forward.

4-5:15 p.m. Dinner Break (Milley's Roadhouse recommended for those returning for the evening campfire).

— FRIDAY EVENING

Gathering for Campfire Conversations

Audience: Open to pre-registered guests (limited to 40 guests)

Purpose:

5:30 p.m. Welcome by NHPA, SDP Contextual Framing

Why overnight, immersive experiences matter; Ground Rules: respect, reflection, listening

6-8 p.m. Campfire Conversation - Facilitated by Slave Dwelling Project

Daily life under enslavement, survival and resistance

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● DAY 3 — SATURDAY

Inalienable Rights - Living History Experience

Audience: General public, families, educators, students

Purpose: Public access & demonstration of sustainable interpretation

Hooked on Seafood Food Truck 11-3 p.m.

10:00 a.m. Opening Ceremony with Reading of the Names – In Recognition and Remembrance of the Enslaved Community in the Three Cultures Center

10:00- 4 p.m. Continuous Hands-On Labor Demonstrations

- **Indigenous Life in the Chicone Village** - Drew Shuptar Rayvis, Pocomoke & Herman Jackson, Nanticoke
- **Skilled Labor by Enslaved People** - Includes interpretation tied to plantation economies and named individuals
- **Enslaved Foodways** - Cooking Demonstration (Handsell kitchen)
- **Storytelling & Interpretation Stations** - Short, facilitated narratives drawn directly from Handsell's enslaved database entries

10:30 Francis Watkins Harper - Interpreting a free woman of color, 19th century writer (Handsell parlor)

11 a.m. Chronicles of Adam – (Three Cultures Center)

12 noon Code Songs - Performed by Linda Harris & David Cole

12:45 Ned Hector - Interpreting a Revolutionary Black soldier (Three Cultures Center)

1:30 p.m. Chronicles of Adam - (Three Cultures Center)

2:30 p.m. Ned Hector - (Three Cultures Center)

3:15 Francis Watkins Harper - (Handsell parlor)

4 p.m. Closing of the Symposium



AMPLIFYING THE VOICES



Joseph McGill, Jr., is the founder of the Slave Dwelling Project. By arranging for people to sleep in extant slave dwellings, the Slave Dwelling Project has brought much needed attention to these often-neglected structures that are vitally important to the American built environment. Since 2016,, McGill expanded the Slave Dwelling Project to offer a program of living history called “Inalienable Rights: Living History Through the Eyes of the Enslaved.” McGill was a field officer for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and is a Civil War Reenactor who participates in living history presentations, and lectures. McGill is coauthor of the book: *Sleeping with the Ancestors: How I Followed the Footprints of Slavery*.

Dontavius Williams, an alumnus of Clinton College in Rock Hill, SC, is the founder of The Chronicles of Adam. He is a public historian, living history interpreter, storyteller, and consultant with over 20 years of experience interpreting African American history. Williams travels the country presenting at historic sites, museums, schools, churches, and community events, while also consulting with historic sites on developing meaningful and engaging approaches to interpreting their history. His first-person interpretation of an enslaved man named Adam combines historical research, documented accounts, and storytelling to bring the experiences of enslaved people to life. Through The Chronicles of Adam, Williams seeks to inspire audiences to connect with the past, explore their heritage, and preserve these important stories for future generations.



Terry James is a passionate historical reenactor, living historian, and community leader committed to preserving and promoting African American heritage. He is a living historian with The Slave Dwelling Project—where he represents the organization as a cook, Civil War soldier, and historian—offering immersive, educational experiences that honor the lives of enslaved African Americans. Residing in South Carolina. James holds a degree in Photographic Technology from Randolph Community College in Asheboro, NC. James has earned recognition for his dedication to historical awareness. He also contributes to shaping state education as a member of the Cyclical Review of South Carolina’s Social Studies Academic Standards.

Cheyney McKnight is the founder and owner of Not Your Momma’s History. She acts as an interpreter advocate for interpreters of color at historical sites up and down the East Coast, providing them with much-needed, on-call support. McKnight has taken her “Let’s Talk About Slavery” presentation to over 30 parks, historical sites, and public events across America to provide a safe place for people to learn and talk about the history of slavery. McKnight graduated from Simmons University with a bachelor’s degree in Political Science.



AMPLIFYING THE VOICES



Angela Crenshaw, a veteran Maryland State Park ranger, was named the director of the Maryland Park Service in 2023, becoming the first Black woman to hold the esteemed role. She has worked at the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center, co-managed by the National Park Service and Maryland Park Service, since 2016. Crenshaw's passion for the natural world extends to American abolitionist and social activist Harriet Tubman. The 19th-century heroine relied on nature – the stars above, plants below, and sounds of wildlife echoing to and fro – as well as her faith in God to navigate inhospitable terrain on her perilous journey to freedom. Angela will discuss the Park Service's efforts interpreting difficult histories across the state and at our parks.

Jaelon T. Moaney is Deputy Director of the Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience at Washington College—the first college chartered in the sovereign United States. His lineage on the Delmarva Peninsula traces back over three centuries, including ancestors who helped found the free Black kinship communities of Unionville, Copperville and the Hill in Easton. Appointed in 2023 by Governor Wes Moore as the youngest member of the Maryland Commission on African American History & Culture and unanimously re-elected for a second consecutive term as Vice Chair of the State agency, Moaney has provided thought leadership on cultural stewardship in the U.S. Congress and across the country. His advocacy has contributed to multiple federal designations including the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area, Brown v. Board of Education National Historical Park expansion, and the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Isaac Mason Escape Site. Both graduates of Williams College, he and his wife enjoy Chesapeake living along on the Choptank River.



Elaine McGill is an independent researcher and genealogist who transcribed foundational records on African American heritage, specifically Manumission Records 1806-1864 Dorchester County, Maryland. Her transcriptions—detailing local certificates of freedom, manumissions, and slave statistics—are hosted as vital primary resources by the Maryland State Archives and Salisbury University's Edward H. Nabb Research Center. McGill's compiled texts are widely cited by historians and researchers—including Kate Clifford Larson in *Bound for the Promised Land*—to trace the lineage of enslaved and free Black communities connected to Harriet Tubman's homeland and regional historic sites. McGill is a co-researcher of the Handsell Enslaved Database and a descendant of the enslaved once held at Handsell.

AMPLIFYING THE VOICES WHO WE ARE

The Nanticoke Historic Preservation Alliance was founded in 2005 to save a derelict brick house in the middle of a 1400-acre farm. Believing it to have historic significance, a small group began to research it and discovered a virtually unknown story about three cultures who had lived and worked on this site for centuries. Starting with the Native village of Chicacoan, through English colonial settlements and a large enslaved population, the story began to unravel and ended with the 20th century history of sharecroppers in Dorchester County, Maryland. While the house was important and was eventually preserved, it was the history of these cultures which captivated the organization to adopt their logo of:

“Handsell—Three Cultures, One Story”



Every event and program for the last 20 years has incorporated all aspects of those who lived on this site, as none ever existed in a vacuum, but were interdependent on each other—three cultures who merged to create our uniquely American experience.

Interpretation is hard, often so hard that historic organizations and even communities avoid talking about difficult parts of history. We don't. And we invite you to join us in this special opportunity to learn the words, the stories, the actions needed to better interpret history for the betterment of the heritage tourist and general public. The Maryland Center for History and Culture agrees with us and is supporting this three-day event through the Miller Fund so that it is free to all organizations and the public to learn and grow.

REGISTER TODAY



Advance Registration is **REQUIRED** as space is limited on October 22 and 23 to 80 persons. Thursday is for historic and cultural organizations **ONLY**. Organizations attending may register up to two persons. Thursday and Friday registration includes a box lunch. Public guests are invited to register on Friday, but organizations will take priority. Friday evening campfire discussion is a separate registration and limited to 40.

Saturday events and programs are open to all, with free admission.

A full program is available at restorehandsell.org and on the registration form.

AMPLIFYING THE VOICES THE ART OF YOLANDA ACREE



Yolanda Acree is a multi-talented creative living on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. In this current chapter, she balances the roles of mom, artist, historian, and doula. At the crux of her personal and professional lives are values of culture, community, and creativity. Her collage work explores the lived experiences of Black femmes and folk focusing on identity, culture, and history. Her first solo exhibit, *Black Rebirth: Portals of Transformation and Connection Through Collage* opened at The Foundry Gallery in Denton, MD in February 2024. She proudly serves on the boards of the Caroline County Council of Arts and the Maryland State Arts Council to advance arts initiatives locally and regionally. As a community historian, she works with the Kennard African American Cultural Heritage Center, serves on the boards of the Lockerman Schools Association and Stories of the Chesapeake, and chairs the Juneteenth in Caroline committee.