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Launch of Native American – African – Dutch Heritage Tours in the Hudson Valley Corridor

Black Heritage Tours uncovers “hidden” stories of New York’s past

Albany, New York – New York State Division of Tourism, Albany County Convention & Visitors Bureau and Dutchess County Tourism in partnership with Black Heritage Tours, New York State announces new tours in the Hudson Valley Corridor that will highlight the significant history of the Dutch Settlers, Native Americans and African Americans. The goals are to bring awareness to the “hidden” stories of our past while showcasing the beauty and tourism opportunities of the region.

A press event took place today, August 5th from 10 am to 11 am at the Albany Heritage Area Visitors Center, 25 Quackenbush Square, Albany to talk about how these tours will spur heritage tourism and unveil a narrative that has not been told to a national and international audience.

Jennifer Tosch, Founder and CEO of Black Heritage Tours, founded the company to help interpret the history of the enslaved in the Netherlands. The New York State tours are an extension of that early research, and continue Tosch’s mission to add these hidden histories to the canon. In many ways, the mission is personal for Tosch. Born in Brooklyn to Surinamese parents, Tosch came of age in the midst of the Civil Rights movement.

“My vision is that through this tour and the tireless work being done by dedicated scholars and activists throughout the Netherlands and New York, we will move to pride when we will speak about ‘Black history’ with pride, and to claim the heritage that is rightfully shared,” Tosch says.

“The history of New Netherland is a powerful story, but telling the complete story makes it more powerful,” says Consul General Rob de Vos, Netherlands Embassy and Consulates. “That is why we support Black Heritage Tours – New York State.”

The press conference on August 5 brought together local elected officials, representatives from New York State Division of Tourism, New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation who helped Tosch create this tour, as well as regional partners and local heritage sites.

"New York State tourism continues to break records with \$102 billion in economic impact in 2015, nearly 894,000 tourism-related jobs statewide, and \$8 billion generated in state and local taxes. The tourism industry continues to grow every year, and we thank the hard-working individuals and organizations that support the world-class attractions found in New York's 11 vacation regions," says Empire State Development Executive Director of Tourism, I LOVE NEW YORK Gavin Landry. "Featured through the Governor's Path Through History initiative, the state's rich culture and history are an important part of the industry's continued success. I encourage everyone to experience the Empire State this year to learn all there is to love about New York's past and present."

"The history of the Empire State reflects the influence and presence of the Dutch. Historic Preservation lies at the heart of how we understand the contributions of the Dutch as well as the contributions of enslaved and free Africans and Native Americans in building New York and shaping our shared heritage and culture," says Ruth Pierpont, Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. "The legacy of the Dutch is written in our built heritage throughout the Hudson River Valley and this tour will allow more visitors to experience and learn about the intersections of cultures that took place here."

Two regional tourism promotion agencies have also helped Tosch shape the tour and make sure it is 'market-ready'—Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau and Dutchess County Tourism, Inc.

"Black Heritage Tours fills a gap in this market, creating an experience that doesn't currently exist in this region," says Michele Vennard, President and CEO of Albany County Convention & Visitors Bureau. "Through her scholarship and vision, Jennifer has succeeded in connecting the New York of today with the New York of our Dutch founders."

"We are pleased to be working with Jennifer Tosch, Founder of Black Heritage Tours. This is a theme that the Hudson Valley region has been working on for years. This program helps to bring us together as a region, and it attracts new audiences to these unique sites. This tour provides true insight into how we developed as a nation," says Mary Kay Vrba, President and CEO of Dutchess Tourism, Inc.

"Mapping Slavery,' based in the Netherlands, is a research project that maps the Dutch global colonial presence and its connection to slavery. The Mapping Slavery Project collaboration of researchers is proud to be a co-creator of the tour providing an academic foundation for the tour narrative," says Dienne Hondius, PhD, Initiator, MSP and Associate Professor, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

About the Tours

The influence of the Dutch, Native American and African cultures in New York is still evident today. It is clearly seen in the architecture, historical narratives, traditions, art, food, city and street names, and cultural celebrations. [Black Heritage Tours – New York State](#) creates cultural heritage immersion experiences that uncovers authentic research and stories of a controversial era and brings them to life through documents, interpretive guides, exhibits, and much more.

The tour connects not only the 'transnational history' between the Netherlands and New York State (formerly the Dutch colony, New Netherland), but specifically the Native American – African – Dutch Heritage from the 17th Century forward.

While visiting historic sites, museums, monuments and local attractions, Black Heritage Tours invites visitors from around the globe to explore and discover the 'hidden history' of the origins of New York

State and its inhabitants. Tours packages range from one day to four days and are scheduled on a regular basis [through the company's website](#). For more information about Black Heritage Tours – New York State or to book a trip, visit their website at www.blackheritagetours.com or call (518) 545-6644.

About the ACCVB

The Albany County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Inc. was established in 1976 to promote the civic and commercial progress of the community through increased development of conventions and tourism. ACCVB currently represents more than 300 member businesses and assists each year in hundreds of regional meetings. ACCVB also operates the Albany Heritage Area Visitors Center, Henry Hudson Planetarium, and the Albany International Airport Information Center. For more information, call 518-434-1217 or 800-258-3582 or visit www.albany.org.