

STORY IDEAS

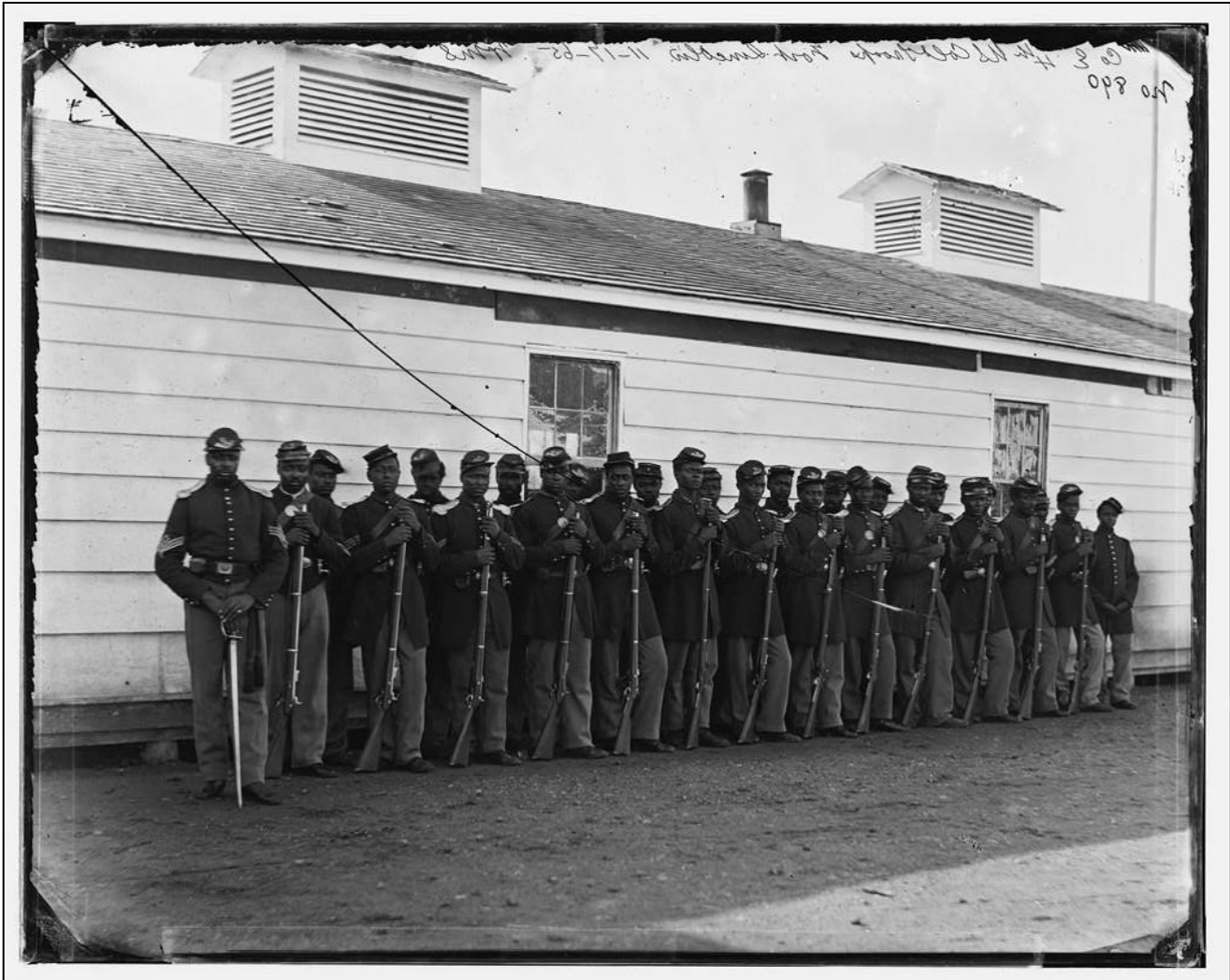
African American History in PA's Hershey & Harrisburg Region

Updated February 2018

The African American Oral History Project: Part One

The [National Civil War Museum](http://NationalCivilWarMuseum.org) in Harrisburg presents a one-hour online video entitled "[The African American Oral History Project: Part One](http://NationalCivilWarMuseum.org)" featuring the voices of African Americans from the American Civil War through Reconstruction, to modern times.

One of the personal stories is of Robert Smalls, a former slave who went on to serve as a United States Congressman from South Carolina. The film also spotlights the personal struggles and triumphs of many others in the African American community located in south central Pennsylvania.

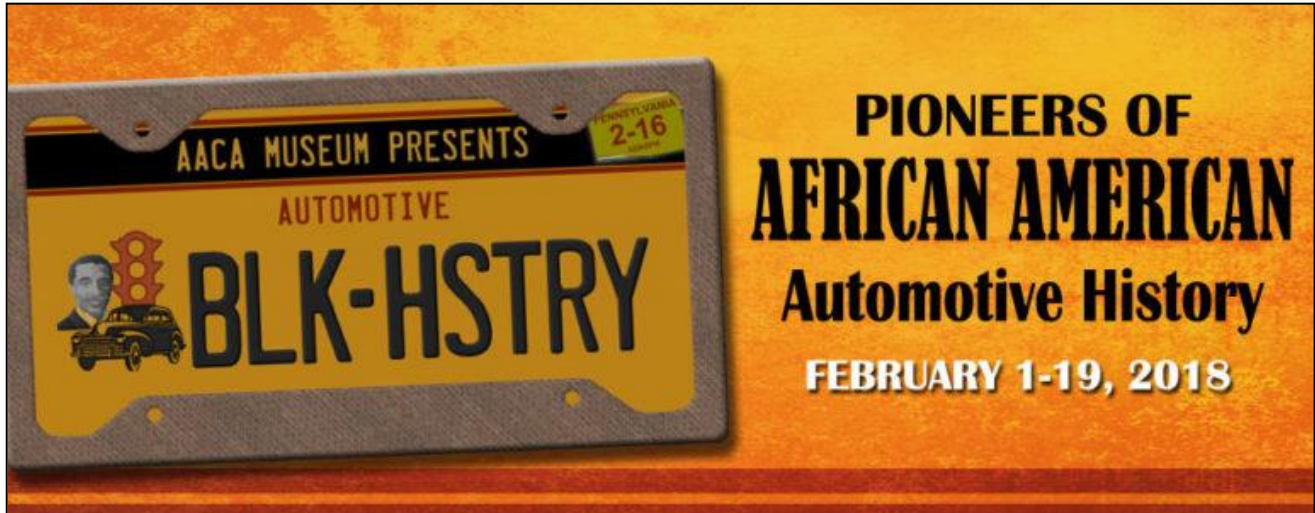


*Photo: 4th USCT at Camp Lincoln in Worcester, MA.
Image courtesy of NationalCivilWarMuseum.org*

Exhibit: Pioneers in African American Auto History

February 1 thru April 29, 2018
Antique Auto Museum in Hershey (AACA)
161 Museum Drive, Hershey, PA 17033

The [AACA Museum](#) in Hershey presents a history of the African American pioneers who have contributed to the advancement of the automobile industry.



These men and women laid the foundation for others to pursue careers in such fields as franchised car dealers, designers, custom car builders, race car drivers, and manufacturers.

[The Pioneers in African American Auto History](#) exhibit begins with the struggles of African-Americans following the end of slavery and their desire to have their ideas and inventions recognized as equals.

Visitors will learn about the only recorded African-American car manufacturer, C.R. Patterson of Ohio and W.H. Phelps, who patented an apparatus for washing over-sized vehicles, along with other esteemed names.

Visitors can also get hands-on and assemble their own traffic signal representing the one patented in 1923 by Garrett Morgan, an African American inventor and publisher.

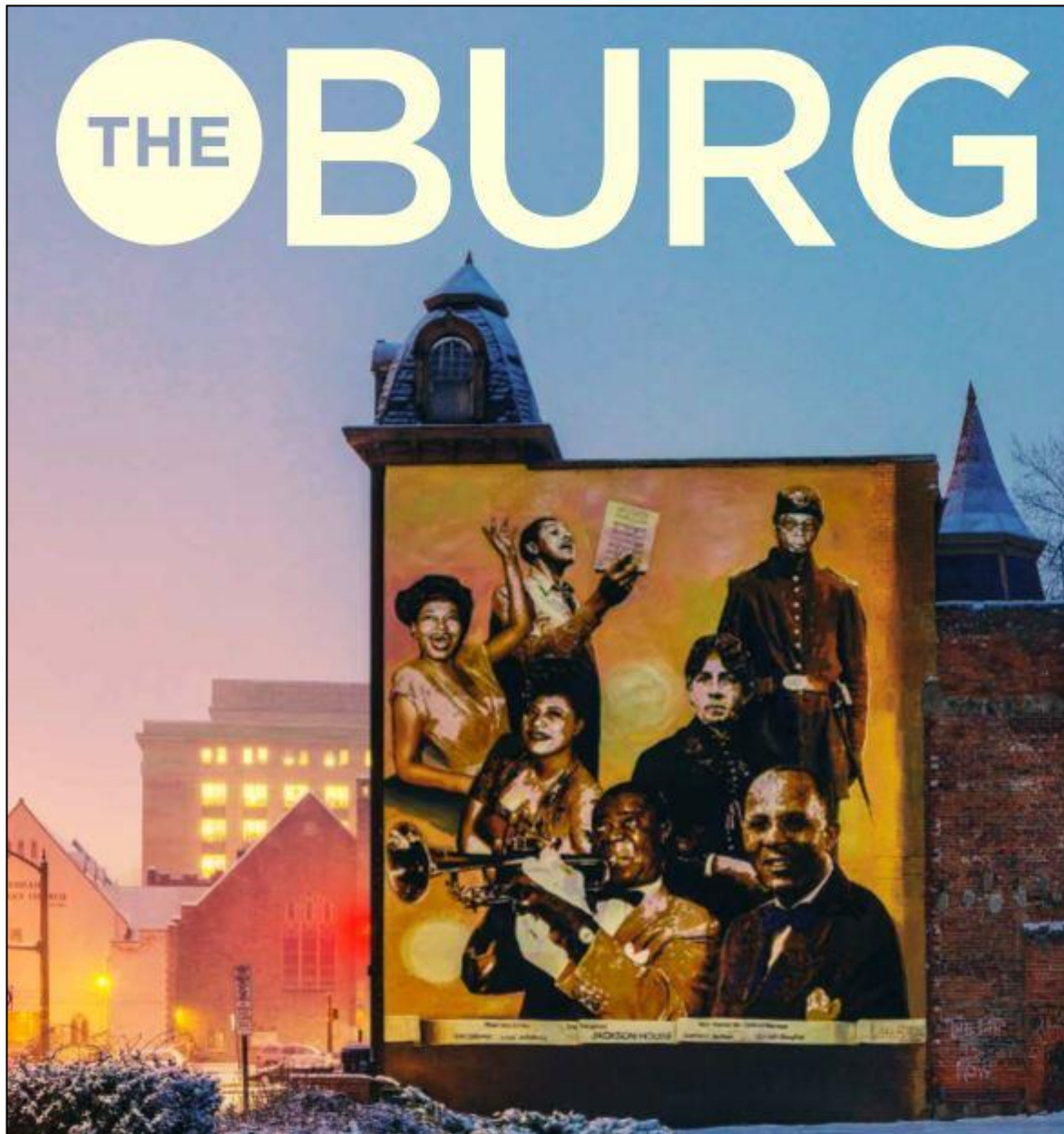
Morgan was the first black man in Cleveland to own a car, which led to him developing a friction drive clutch and his innovative traffic signal design which introduced a third light warning drivers in advance of the signal turning red. That original design for a 3-way traffic signal is the standard red, yellow, green used today.

The Burg: February Issue 2018

Read the [February 2018](#) issue of the award-winning community magazine *TheBurg* for a local perspective on the people, places, and the issues related to Black History Month.

Featured in this issue:

- [Litho Ware](#): Badges to Briskets/Boo Boo's Barbecue
- [Crystal Brown](#): A Social Champion
- [Bryant Jefferson](#): Small Business Entrepreneur/Ten Toes Men's Shoes Boutique
- [Julian Davenport](#): Poet
- [Sankofa](#): New African American Theatre Company
- [Preservation of Historic Black Cemeteries](#): The people behind the preservation.



Cover image features a new mural at The Jackson House Hotel celebrating the history of the former hotel property and Harrisburg's African American icons.

TheBurg was recognized in 2015 as *A Friend of Tourism* by the Visit Hershey & Harrisburg organization for exceptional coverage on the local travel & tourism industry. The magazine has also received numerous Keystone Press Awards for *Excellence In Journalism* and it earned the prestigious *Sweepstakes Award* from the PA NewsMedia Association in 2016 & 2017.

The Jackson House Hotel Mural

This new mural was unveiled in September 2017 during the inaugural [Harrisburg Mural Festival](#), produced by Sprocket Mural Works. The public art project, featuring iconic African Americans associated with The Jackson House Hotel throughout its history, was designed by muralist Cesar Viveros.



During the era of segregation, The Jackson House Hotel was one of only a few options in the area that provided lodging for African Americans. The small rooming house offered 5 or 6 rooms for rent and featured elaborate woodwork, gaslight fixtures, and glass pocket doors inlaid with red glass.

The original owner and operator [German Jackson](#) was the son of a slave who would become one of the city's most prosperous black businessmen. Jackson is a predominant figure in the foreground of the mural along with famous entertainers [Louis Armstrong](#), [Ella Fitzgerald](#), and [Cab Calloway](#).

The mural also includes Harrisburg natives such as highly decorated U.S. Colored Troop Civil War Veteran [Ephraim Slaughter](#); and [Harriet "Ma" McClintock Marshall](#) who was instrumental in the efforts of the local Underground Railroad along with her husband Elisha Marshall who was a runaway slave.

Today, the building near the Capitol Complex along North Sixth Street no longer serves as a hotel, but it continues to serve as the place for the "[Best Burgers In Harrisburg](#)" according to locals.

Lincoln Cemetery & William Howard Day Cemetery

[The Lincoln Cemetery](#) was founded by the Wesley Union A.M.E. Zion Church in 1817 as an African-American burial ground in the Harrisburg area. The land was purchased a year after the congregation was established and it was officially named Lincoln Cemetery in 1827.

In the years leading up to the Civil War, the congregation at Wesley Union was active in the [Underground Railroad](#), which cut through the area.

Many Civil War veterans are buried in Lincoln Cemetery, including Harrisburg's last surviving veteran [Ephraim Slaughter](#) who died in 1943 after serving in both the 37th regiment of the U.S. Colored Troops and the 3rd N.C. Colored Infantry.

Lincoln Cemetery is also the burial ground for several notable members of the Harrisburg community including African-American war correspondent [T. Morris Chester](#); abolitionist, educator, and newspaper publisher [William Howard Day](#); and [Harriett "Ma" McClintock Marshall](#) who assisted with the care and education of the escaped slaves traveling on the Underground Railroad Stop located in the old Wesley Church, which was also a school for black children at the time.

Following William Howard Day's death on December 3, 1900, at the age of 75, the [William Howard Day Cemetery](#) was established in nearby Steelton as a burial place for all people, including people of color who were denied burial at the nearby Baldwin Cemetery. It remains a popular burial site for local African American families.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial

This memorial garden dedicated to Dr. King is located along the [Harrisburg Capital Area Greenbelt](#) bike path between 19th and 28th Streets.

The centerpiece of the garden is an 11-ft black granite obelisk and a kiosk (pictured right) featuring a copy of Dr. King's inspirational speech "[I Have a Dream](#)" which he delivered from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in Washington, DC on August 28, 1963.

Five years later, the American civil rights leader would be assassinated at the age of 39 on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis on April 4, 1968.



Historical Markers

C. Delores Tucker (1927—2005)

[C. Delores Tucker](#) was a civil rights leader and activist for women, and the first African American Secretary of State in the nation. Tucker championed the PA Equal Rights Amendment and policies on affirmative action, voter registration by mail, and lowering the voting age to 18.

Delores Tucker also spearheaded the creation of the Commission on the Status of Women and led a successful crusade critical of the music industry and lyrics demeaning to women, African Americans, and children.

The roadside historical marker dedicated in 2006 is located at North Street in Harrisburg between 3rd & Commonwealth.

William Howard Day

See more about this African-American abolitionist, educator, and newspaper publisher above. The historical marker dedicated in 1997 is located at Lincoln & Carlisle Streets in the town of Steelton, just outside of Harrisburg.

T. Morris Chester

See more about this African-American war correspondent above. The historical marker dedicated in 1986 is located at Market Street near 3rd Street in Harrisburg.

Wilt Chamberland's Scoring Record

[Wilt Chamberlain](#) set the single-game scoring record in the NBA (National Basketball Assoc.) by scoring 100 points for the Philadelphia Warriors in a 169–147 win over the New York Knicks on March 2, 1962, at Hershey Sports Arena in Hershey, Pennsylvania.

It is widely considered one of the greatest records in basketball. Chamberlain set five other league records that game including most free throws made, a notable achievement, as he was regarded as a poor free throw shooter. The teams broke the record for most combined points in a game (316).

The game was not televised, and no video footage of the game has been recovered; there are only audio recordings of the game's fourth quarter. The NBA was not yet a major sports league and struggled to compete against college basketball. The attendance at this game was around half of capacity, and no members of the New York press were at the game.

The historical marker dedicated in 2002 is located along the road at 100 Hersheypark Drive near the Hersheypark Arena in Hershey.

Harrisburg Giants Baseball Club

The [Harrisburg Giants](#) were a U.S. professional [Negro league baseball](#) team based in Harrisburg. They joined the [Eastern Colored League](#) (ECL) for the 1924 season with notable players as Hall of Fame center fielder [Oscar Charleston](#) as playing manager, outfielder/first baseman [Heavy Johnson](#) who won the batting triple crown the previous year while playing with the [Kansas City Monarchs](#), and the speedy outfielder [Fats Jenkins](#) who was also a well-known professional basketball player and member of the [New York Rens](#).

The roadway historical marker dedicated in 2005 is located between Walnut Street Bridge and the Senators Baseball Park on City Island.

Lincoln Cemetery

See more about this cemetery above. The historical marker dedicated in 1994 is located at 30th Street & Booser Avenue in Penbrook.

U.S. Colored Troops Grand Review 1865

More than 180,000 African Americans served in the Union Army during the American Civil War, including 11 regiments from Pennsylvania.

In November 1865, the city of Harrisburg hosted a Grand Review parade for the regiments of the United States Colored Troops (USCT) who were not invited earlier that year to march in the Grand Review for Union armies along Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. for President Andrew Johnson.

Thomas Morris Chester, Harrisburg's most distinguished African American at the time, served as grand marshal for the parade which formed at State and Filbert Streets, now Soldier's Grove.

The procession traveled through Harrisburg to the home of U.S. Senator and President Lincoln's former secretary of war **Simon Cameron**. Cameron officially reviewed the troops from his front porch (pictured below) and thanked them for their service to the nation.



The John Harris - Simon Cameron Mansion is open for [public tours](#).

Others who spoke at this event included **Octavius V. Catto**, an African American educator and USCT recruiter from Philadelphia; **William Howard Day**, abolitionist and clergyman; and Brevet Major General **Joseph B. Kiddoo**, former commander of the 22nd Regiment USCT.

This event marks Pennsylvania as the only state to officially honor black soldiers for their service immediately following the Civil War. The historical marker dedicated in 2006 is located at Soldier's Grove behind the PA Capitol Complex on Walnut Street and 7th Street across from the State Street Bridge.

Underground Railroad

Harrisburg's prominent role in the advance of the Union cause leading to the Civil War was particularly evident by its sympathy in harboring former slaves who had escaped servitude from the South.

As early as 1836, the **Harrisburg Anti-Slavery Society** was founded and in 1847 the group brought noted reformers **William Lloyd Garrison** and **Frederick Douglas** to hold a rally at the Dauphin County Courthouse.

During this period, Harrisburg became a key station in the "Underground Railroad" which stretched from Maryland northward to Canada.

While many secretly opened their doors to provide haven to escapees who under federal law could be reclaimed by their "owners," sections of the old **Eighth Ward neighborhood**, which once stood behind the PA Capitol Building, and homes on **Tanners Avenue** in particular, became later known as a nucleus of this activity.

Located at the corner of Tanners Avenue and South Street, near the present southern entrance to the South Office building stood the church of Harrisburg's oldest African American congregation, the **Wesley Union A.M.E. Zion Church**.

Founded in 1829 from an earlier organization dating to 1817, the congregation first met in a log building at S. Third and Mulberry Streets. Its presence at Tanners Avenue and South Street was first established in 1838 when a one-story brick building was constructed. This was replaced by a larger building in 1862 that was remodeled in 1886.

The final church at this location was built in 1894, although demolished in 1915 for the expansion of Capitol Park. After two additional moves, Wesley Church survives today at Fifth and Camp Streets in Uptown Harrisburg and continues its tradition of community outreach and service.

The historical marker dedicated in 2000 is in Capitol Park on Walnut Street near Commonwealth Avenue in Harrisburg.

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MEDIA INTERVIEWS

Mary Smith, President & CEO of Visit Hershey & Harrisburg is available for media interviews regarding the contents of this news release. Please try to make interview requests at least 12-hours in advance.

The bureau will make every effort to accommodate all interview requests.

Contact Rick@HersheyHarrisburg.org or cell 717.884.3328.

ABOUT VISIT HERSHEY & HARRISBURG

Visit Hershey & Harrisburg is the official non-profit partnership-based Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) leading economic growth through destination sales, consumer marketing, public relations, and tourism development in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania. The organization, accredited by Destination Marketing Association International ([DMAI](http://DMAI.org)) since 2010, is committed to actively marketing the tourism assets in the Hershey & Harrisburg Region to business and leisure travelers both domestic & international. The bureau also leads regional sales efforts to attract meeting & event organizers, sporting event producers, and group tour leaders. For more information go to VisitHersheyHarrisburg.org or call 877-727-8573.