



## Stories



### Museum Hosts Archaeological Team



### Welcome to the Amherstburg Freedom Museum Team, Jude, Bilal, and Irene!



### Frankenmuth Bus Trip November 23rd!

## About Us

The Amherstburg Freedom Museum is a curated archive that preserves and shares Amherstburg's stories of the Underground Railroad, and the compassion and solidarity it took to make this network possible.

277 King Street,  
Amherstburg, ON N9V 2C7

Phone: 519-736-5433

Email:

[curator@amherstburgfreedom.org](mailto:curator@amherstburgfreedom.org)

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

November 2024



## Save the Date: Christmas the Museum, December 8th!

**Save The Date!**  
THE AMHERSTBURG FREEDOM MUSEUM PRESENTS

**Christmas at the Museum**

**December 8th, 3-5pm**

**NAZREY A.M.E. CHURCH**  
**277 KING STREET, AMHERSTBURG**  
**AMHERSTBURGFREEDOM.ORG**

SPONSORED BY  
**THE WRIGHT**

**Tickets \$30**

### The Talking Drum

The Talking Drum is published monthly by the Amherstburg Freedom Museum. Contributions, story ideas, suggestions and feedback are always welcome. Please contact Mary-Katherine Whelan at [curator@amherstburgfreedom.org](mailto:curator@amherstburgfreedom.org)

277 King Street,  
Amherstburg, ON N9V 2C7  
519-736-5433 or  
800-713-6336 toll free

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Monty Logan, President
- Barbara Porter,  
Vice- President
- Yolanda Holder, Secretary
- Philip H. Alexander,  
Director
- J. Trisha Bray, Director
- Dr. Gregg French, Director
- Dr. Barbara Hughes Smith,  
Director
- Dr. Brenda McCurdy,  
Director
- Cari-Lynn Ristic, Director

#### STAFF

- Dr. Lorene Bridgen-Lennie,  
Assistant Curator (on  
maternity leave)
- Irene Moore Davis,  
Assistant Curator  
(Temporary)
- Mary-Katherine Whelan,  
Curator/Manager of  
Collections and Research

#### PART-TIME

Aanand Arya

### Thank you, Charitable Gaming Windsor & Paradise Gaming Centre!

Charitable Gaming.



Community Good.

The Amherstburg Freedom Museum would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to both **Charitable Gaming Windsor** and **Paradise Gaming Centre** for their continued support. Through the years, they have helped us keep the Museum open and running, and allowed for us to continue to offer programming that shares the significant history of Freedom Seekers and Black settlers in this region. Thank you!

For more information about how Charitable Gaming supports non-profits and local communities across Ontario, please go to <https://charitablegaming.ca/>



## Museum Hosts Archaeological Team



Did you know? Refugee Home Society lands farmed by Black settlers once occupied a portion of the sixty-acre site at the corner of County Road 42 and the 9<sup>th</sup> Concession where a new state-of-the-art acute care hospital has been proposed for Windsor-Essex.

Archaeologists from TMHC Inc. were engaged by Infrastructure Ontario to complete archaeological assessments on four nineteenth and early twentieth century archaeological sites and have now completed their field work.

The archaeological team is using the second floor of the Amherstburg Freedom Museum to clean and catalog artifacts they have found.

One of the excavated sites is the former homestead and farm of Washington Smith, his wife Amanda (nee Stewart) and their nine children... one of numerous Black families who purchased land from the Refugee Home Society which was administered by Black abolitionists Henry and Mary Bibb.



While Washington Smith came to Canada in 1847, it is unknown whether the Smiths were formerly enslaved or free people of African descent. Smith purchased a 25-acre farm on Lot 17 in 1862 and lived there until his death in 1912. The Smith farm remained in the family until 1919. According to the 1871 Census, the Smith family's farm included one house, two barns or stables, four cars, wagons, or sleds, four ploughs or cultivators, a fanning mill, twelve acres of pasture, and an acre of orchard. The Smiths grew wheat, potatoes, beets, hay, hops, tobacco, apples, and other fruit, and raised horses, cattle, and swine. The farm produced goods including butter, wool, and flannel.

The TMHC team expects to remain in place at the museum until December.

*Group photo courtesy of Amanda Black; remaining photos by museum staff.*





## Historic Parker Homestead Destroyed by Fire

On October 28th, Windsor-Essex residents awakened to news of a catastrophic fire at the historic Parker Homestead, located at the corner of Mercer and Elliott Streets in Windsor's McDougall Street Corridor.

Known to area residents as Parker's Corner for decades, 840 Mercer housed generations of Parker family members from the 1840s until the early 2000s. It was the site of the popular Black-owned business Parker's Confectionary, a favourite among neighbourhood residents and students of the



Mercer Street School in particular, and the childhood home of Alton Parker, activist, leader, Windsor's first Black police officer, Canada's first Black detective, and member of the Order of Canada.

During the First World War, the Parker Homestead functioned as a recruitment office for the No. 2 Construction Battalion. With over 150 men of African descent enlisting, the Windsor recruiting station was one of the most successful in the nation.

Parker descendant and former Amherstburg Freedom Museum director David Van Dyke recalls stories about the home. For example, he remembers being told about one great-great-great grandmother who "never finished a meal. There were always people in the back—poor or recent



arrivals from slavery—who needed the food more than she did."

840 Mercer was added to the City of Windsor's Heritage Properties Inventory in 2000, and since 2023 it has been a popular stop on the McDougall Street Corridor walking tour ([mcdougallcorridor.ca](http://mcdougallcorridor.ca))

*Undated photo of the Parker Homestead courtesy of Cherie Steele Sexton. Photo of the home following the fire, October 28th, by museum staff.*



## Day Trip to Frankenmuth!



Bronner's Christmas Store, Frankenmuth Bavarian Inn, Great Lakes Shopping Outlet, & Meijer

This day will be filled with:

- Exploring Bronner's
- Lunch at the Bavarian Inn
- Exploring Frankenmuth
- Shopping at the Great Lakes Shopping Outlet
- Shopping at Meijer



To register call Paula Rigg from Southland Travel at 519-890-9513

**Tour includes transportation by bus AND LUNCH**

Pickup Locations at Amherstburg Walmart by the Little Caesars for 7:00 am, Essex Car Pool Lot Arner and Number 3 at 7:30 am and Devonshire Mall in their overflow parking lot for 8:00 am

*A valid passport is required!*



## Museum Welcomes New Temporary Assistant Curator

---



With longtime Assistant Curator Dr. Lorene Bridgen-Lennie beginning her maternity leave, Irene Moore Davis has stepped into the role.

Irene is no stranger to the Museum, having spent much of her childhood on the premises. Her mother, founding board member E. Andrea Moore, was recognized with the Legacy Hero Award in 2024; her grandfather Abram Shreve and her husband Rodney Davis also served on the board. Irene takes pride in having cut the ribbon on the opening day of the Museum's newly constructed facility, September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1981.

Irene is an educator, community historian, writer, podcaster, documentary producer, and community advocate who speaks and writes frequently about equity, diversity, inclusion, and Black Canadian history. A retired college administrator, she is a graduate of the University of

Windsor, Western University, and Queen's University, and teaches at St. Clair College and Huron University. Irene's published work has included poetry, history, and journalism. Her documentary producer credits have included *The North Was Our Canaan* and *Across the River to Freedom*. She was recently featured in the Discovery Channel mini-series *Secrets of the Underground Railroad* and on the CBC series *Black Life: A Canadian History*. Irene fulfills community roles including but not limited to President of the Essex County Black Historical Research Society and co-host of the All Write in Sin City podcast. She is looking forward to sharing her gifts as a team member at the Museum she has loved nearly all her life.

---

## Say hello to Jude and Bilal!



Please welcome the Museum's newest team members, Jude and Bilal. They will soon be offering tours on weekends.

Jude is an instructor with Black Boys Code, where he tutors youth in math, chess, and coding concepts and supervises coding projects aimed at improving problem-solving and critical thinking skills. Jude is currently completing his Master of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Windsor.

Bilal is a Youth Program Facilitator for the *Be Original* program at the Sandwich Teen Action Group. The program focuses on health and wellness for youth ages 12-19. Bilal is currently completing his BSc in Computer Science at the University of Windsor.



## Upcoming Events!



AMHERSTBURG  
FREEDOM MUSEUM

BLACK HISTORY  
universal inspiration.

# AMHERSTBURG FREEDOM MUSEUM UPCOMING EVENTS

2024-2025

277 KING STREET, AMHERSTBURG, ONT  
COUNTDOWN TO CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

DEC  
8

### Christmas At The Museum

3-5pm, Nazrey A.M.E. Church

FEB  
'25

### Black History Month Programming

Black History Programming in partnership with the River Bookshop

FEB  
28

### ACT Presents - The Price Of Freedom

February 28 - March 2, The Capitol Theatre

SPRING  
'25

### Freedom Achievers

Date TBA. Mentorship & Speaker Series

JUNE  
14

### Ribs & Ragtime

4pm, Grounds of the Amherstburg Freedom Museum

AUG  
9

### Walter Perry Emancipation Golf Classic

8am, Coachwood Golf & Country Club

SEPT  
20

### 50th Anniversary Celebration

Join us as we Celebrate 50 Years of Black History Education

AMHERSTBURGFREEDOM.ORG | 519-736-5433 | 1 800-713-6336



Become a Subscriber and/or Bingo Volunteer!



*Become a  
Subscriber*

◆ Senior - \$20 ◆ Student- \$25 ◆ Adult - \$35 ◆ Family - \$120  
<https://amherstburgfreedom.org/subscribe/>

AMHERSTBURG FREEDOM MUSEUM  
*Black History, Universal Inspiration*



*Become a Bingo  
Volunteer*

For More Information and To  
Volunteer, Please go to

<https://amherstburgfreedom.org/volunteering/>





# Subscribe Today!



AMHERSTBURG  
FREEDOM MUSEUM  
*Black History - universal inspiration*

## Give a Gift, and Preserve History!

Donate to help us to preserve, protect, and display historic treasures. Every gift is tax-deductible in Canada or the United States.

### General subscriber benefits include:

Unlimited 1 year free admissions, Invitation to preview exhibition openings, 10% off all items in museum store and name listed in monthly newsletter (with permission), introduction to genealogy research library.

**\$20 Seniors (age 65+)**

**\$25 Students (age 5-22)**

**\$35 Adults (age 23-64)**

**\$120 Family (family of 5)**

### **\$100 to \$499 SUPPORTER**

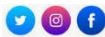
All the above plus a beautiful Certificate of subscription, suitable for framing, that recognizes your participation as a Member.

### **\$500 to \$999 CONTRIBUTOR**

All the above plus an invitation to one special event, one exhibition opening or subscriber-only event.

### **\$10,000+ Legacy**

All the above plus recognition on Museum's Donor Wall. Plus two tickets to all events and recognition on our social media pages.



***A registered charitable organization in Canada and the United States.***

**It all starts with a subscription...**

**Become a subscriber today!**

### Primary member name:

Mr. Ms. Miss. Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday \_\_\_\_\_

### Second member name:

Mr. Ms. Miss. Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday \_\_\_\_\_

### Mailing address:

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province/State \_\_\_\_\_

Postal code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell/business phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

### Payment information

Total subscriber dues \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Fund donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Check date \_\_\_\_\_

### Payable to Amherstburg Freedom Museum



Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_ Security code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your support!**



## Our Supporters

Gerard Aching  
Nancy Allen  
Gayle Allinotte  
Kit Andres  
Joanne Baylis  
Patrick Baylis  
Elsie Bishop  
Charlie Bray  
Joan (Trisha) Bray  
Zainia Brockett  
Janisse Browning-Miller  
Shantelle Browning Morgan  
Janet Burch  
Terryll Chase  
Marlene Crepp  
Debi Croucher  
Irene Moore-Davis  
Lloyd Dean  
Kim D. Elliott  
Elana Freeman  
Helen Geddes  
Leroy Gray  
Locketa Gray  
Mary Habib  
Janice Harris  
Edith Helm  
Ute Hertel  
Hallee Hurst  
Judy Jackson  
Ivy Johnson  
Milo Johnson  
Sheila Johnson  
Thomas Karle  
Hunter Kersey  
Carol Laforet  
Dileana Larkin  
Lois Larkin  
Brian Lennie  
Richard B. Leveque  
Florence Logan  
Linda Logan  
Wayne Logan  
Hazel MacDonald  
Connie Mathieson  
Tim McAllister  
Violet McAllister  
Reuben Munday  
Colleen Peddie  
Richard Peddie  
Shirley Pulley  
Colleen Reid  
Jennifer Ristic  
Joyce Robbins  
Carolyn Robinson-Dungy

Carolyn Rourke  
Donna Scott  
Claudia Shreve Craig  
Frank Simone  
Allen Simpson  
Edsel Leon Smith  
Jessie Dianne Smith  
Patricia Smith  
Colleen Sterling  
Norma Sutherland

Marilyn Sutton  
Mable Thomas  
Harlis Thompson  
Sharon Thompson Anderson  
Anastasia Timakis  
Karen Tinsley  
Rebecca Underwood  
Janet Willoughby  
Debora Wynn

### **Group Subscriptions:**

Hour-A-Day Study Club  
James H. Sutton Funeral Home  
Detroit Memorial Park Association Inc.

### **Family Subscriptions:**

Bridgen, Ruth and Sam  
Dipasquale Family  
Hurst, Raquel, Prynce Hurst and Hallee Kejick  
Gbadamosi Family:  
Babatunde, Mojisola, Oiuwadamilola,  
Goldin Family:  
Harold, Shirley, Ephraim, Malique, Phyllis Oppen  
Hurst Family:  
Maynard, Marva and Monique Hurst  
Taylor Family:  
Ronald Taylor, Judith Taylor, Andrea Taylor-Butts, Tim Taylor,  
Ristic Family:  
Cari-Lynn, Goran, Isabella, and Matteo  
White Family:  
Gary, Leticia, Karen, Janet, Christopher, Steffanie  
Beverly Pegues-Tucker & Dr. James Tucker

### **Contributor Subscription**

Wanda Juricic

### **Supporter Subscription**

Paul McAllister & Mayrai Rosapo Leachman  
Chris & Terry Porter  
Dr. Christina Simmons & Dr. Bruce Tucker

### **In Memoriam**

In Memory of Freemont Nelson — Jo-Anne & Remo Mancini

**To renew your subscription or to make a donation, please call the Museum at 519-736-5433. Subscription dues and donations support exhibitions and the daily expenses of operating the Museum. Whether you visit once a month or a few times over the year, you enjoy the benefits of subscription and your support helps to ensure that this incredible Museum will remain a vital source of history, culture and inspiration for generations to come.**