

LAUNCHING THE ABOLITION ROAD

On October 21st 1835 six hundred black and white abolitionists met in Utica NY to form an antislavery society. Twice the six hundred delegates were confronted by an angry mob and thrown out of the Bleeker Street Church. Witnessing the thwarting of the First Amendment, Gerrit Smith invited the delegates to meet the next day in the safety of Peterboro NY. Through the cold and rainy night three hundred men made their way to Peterboro up over the hill through Vernon Center. One hundred four delegates rented an empty lumber barge in Utica and took the Erie Canal to Canastota. From Canastota they walked up the steep elevation to Peterboro. The People of Peterboro fed the abolitionists and at 11:00 am on October 22, 1835 the inaugural meeting of the New York State Antislavery Society was held in the building that is the Town of Smithfield municipal building and the home of the National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum.

On Sunday, October 23, 2022 at 8:30 am the National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum will commemorate that historic event with a brief reenactment and a sign unveiling of the arrival in Canastota of the abolitionists and with a 9:00 am initiation of the Abolitionists Freedom Walk by Felisha Leggett-Jack, the newly named Syracuse University Basketball Head Coach. Registered walkers will trace a portion of the 9 mile trail from Canastota to Peterboro by taking a short 2.4 mile walk from Canal Town Museum to Clockville for another reenactment and sign unveiling, and then return to Canastota. "This inaugural five mile walk can be accomplished by most people in two hours" said Terry Greene, volunteer walk organizer. "We will maintain a comfortable pace walking along a beautiful stretch of road in Central New York." Registration to walk and ride is online at www.AbolitionRoad.org.

At 1 pm, in Peterboro, a reenactment, a sign unveiling, and a reception, will celebrate the arrival of the 1835 abolitionists to the inaugural meeting of the New York State Antislavery Society.

The logo for the event was designed by Chinedu Okigbo, the owner of Arielle Signs in Syracuse. "I hope this logo encourages hundreds of residents and college students of all races to join arms, walk and celebrate this area's proud abolitionist past," stated Okigbo of his donation.

"The goal," explained Marilyn Higgins, event creator, "is to celebrate unity in Central New York and shine a light on a largely unrecognized, pivotal moment in the history of the abolitionist movement. We seek broad participation to make this dramatic local history a source of pride and inspiration for freedom loving people everywhere."

The Abolitionist Freedom Walk is one component of the National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum Induction Weekend (October 21 – 23) at which time Robert Everett, Calvin Fairbank, and Stephen Myers will be inducted to the Hall of Fame.

This project is supported by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor through the Erie Canalway IMPACT! Grant Program. Bob Radcliffe, Executive Director of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, expressed, "The Erie Canal spread, not only goods and people, but ideas and inspiration. We are pleased to support the National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum in telling the story of the Freedom Walk and inspiring people to take actions that will continue to build a more perfect union."

Information and registration at www.AbolitionRoad.org. Registered walkers receive a long-sleeved tee shirt with the Okigbo event logo. Limited coach rides are available. Pre-registration on line is \$35. Student registration is \$25. Onsite registration is at 7:30 am Sunday, October 23, 2022.

For more information:

Canal Town Museum 122 Canal Street Canastota NY 13032 315-697-5002

National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum PO 55, 5255 Pleasant Valley Peterboro NY.

Nahofm1835@gmail.com

www.nationalabolitionhalloffameandmuseum.org

315-684-3262



Gerrit Smith (Burdick) On October 21st 1835 six hundred black and white abolitionists met in Utica NY to form an antislavery society. Twice the six hundred delegates were confronted by an angry mob and thrown out of the Bleeker Street Church. Witnessing the thwarting of the First Amendment, Gerrit Smith invited the delegates to meet the next day in the safety of Peterboro NY.



Smithfield Community Center, Heitzman 2021

One hundred four delegates rented an empty lumber barge in Utica and took the Erie Canal to Canastota. From Canastota they walked up the steep elevation to Peterboro. The People of Peterboro fed the abolitionists and at 11:00 am on October 22, 1835 the inaugural meeting of the New York State Antislavery Society was held in the building that is the Town of Smithfield municipal building and the home of the National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum.



**The Abolitionist
FREEDOM WALK**

The logo for the Abolitionist Freedom Walk on October 23rd was designed by Chinedu Okigbo, the owner of Arielle Signs in Syracuse. “I hope this logo encourages hundreds of residents and college students of all races to join arms, walk and celebrate this area’s proud abolitionist past,” stated Okigbo of his donation.



1835 Steering Committee Ryan 8-30-22

Members of the Steering Committee for the Abolitionist Freedom Walk launch a five mile walk to commemorate a portion of the nine miles that 104 abolitionists walked from Canastota to Peterboro in in 1835 to form the New York State Antislavery Society. The commemorative walk with reenactments and interpretive sign unveilings begins at 8:30 Sunday October 23, 2022
Front: Left to right: Dorothy Willsey, Terry Green, Marilyn Higgins, Roseann Warner
Back: Matthew Urtz, Jan DeAmicis, Pete Heitzman, Ronald O. Jennings, David Sadler