

HCA 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

VIEW FROM THE FRONT DOOR OF THE MANSION
AT THE JOHN DICKINSON PLANTATION



HCA

**DELAWARE HISTORICAL
& CULTURAL AFFAIRS**

Saving Delaware History

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A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

In 2021, the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs took on the unprecedented challenges posed by COVID-19 and found new and creative ways to move forward. With limitations on their operating schedules, our museums' staff improvised, creating exciting programs that the public could enjoy remotely via the web. When our Historic Preservation, Collections, and Business Services teams were limited in meeting together in person, they found ways to get the job done by working remotely and by video conferencing. And, our heroic front-line workers — our horticulturalists, maintenance professionals and museum interpreters — went out every day to make sure that the jobs that required hands-on activities were completed in as safe a manner as possible. By the end of the year, we could well say that our staff had found a way to weather the storm and to steer us into more tranquil waters.

This past year, however, was not simply a year to remain on defense. Instead, in January 2021, we boldly launched a process that culminated in the

creation of the division's new strategic plan for 2022 to 2026. This new plan builds on our institutional values of communication, professionalism, creativity, knowledge, discourse/dialog, community involvement, stewardship and cooperation.

It also builds on the commitment that we have made to racial justice by explicitly recognizing diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion (DEAI) as essential in our work with audiences, partners and constituents. This recognition of the value, role and impact of history, preservation and culture to community wellbeing, education, inclusivity and strong communities is now a core component of everything that we do.

Following is a series of vignettes that highlight the challenges that we successfully faced in 2021 and the vision for where we want to go in the future.

Timothy A. Slavin
Director and State
Historic Preservation Officer

DIVISION COMPLETES STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 TO 2026

In December 2021, the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs completed its [2022 to 2026 strategic plan](#) which will help guide the agency in its mission to serve the public by identifying, collecting, preserving and interpreting inclusive Delaware history and engaging diverse cultures.

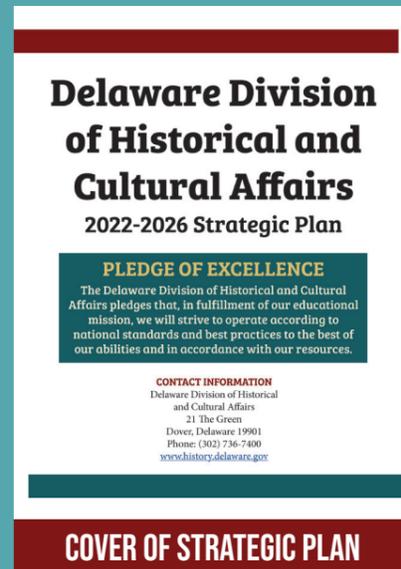
As part of the planning process, the division identified five goals that will guide the agency over the next five years:

GOALS:

- 1 ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH
- 2 VISIBILITY AND AWARENESS

Within those goals, the division identified a wide variety of action steps which include telling a more diverse and inclusive account of the state's history; developing a comprehensive communication strategy; ensuring that the agency's facilities, programs and services are welcoming both physically and digitally; developing an acquisition, collection and preservation strategy that recognizes the breadth of Delaware history; and nurturing and developing staff through professional development, a collaborative work environment and the cultivation of institutional knowledge.

Leadership in the creation of the plan was provided by the division's 14-member Strategic Plan Steering Committee with facilitation provided by consultants from the Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit Advancement (DANA). Planning activities included 30 individual interviews, 10 focus groups, one public town hall and three electronic surveys. More than 250



people participated in the planning process including division staff and volunteers; representatives of partners and affiliates including government and nonprofit cultural agencies; and an age- and culturally-diverse mix of patrons, educators, conservationists, historians, preservationists and archaeologists.

- 3 DIVERSITY, EQUITY, ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSION
- 4 STEWARDSHIP
- 5 STRENGTHENING STAFF

THE DIVISION'S CONTINUED RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Delaware state government has taken a proactive [response to COVID-19](#) since the disease was first identified in the state in 2020. In keeping with Gov. John Carney's [safety guidance](#), the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs did its part by remaining open and serving the public during 2021, while, at the same time, following all recommended hygienic practices.

As with so much of the best responses to COVID-19, the division faced an unprecedented situation with creativity. Division offices remained open, but staffing was limited with as many employees as possible working remotely. For those employees who were required to be physically present at their jobs, strict precautions were followed including the wearing of face masks, social distancing and the provision of copious supplies of hand sanitizer. Despite all the difficulties, the division's employees rose to the occasion — invoices continued to be processed, collections items were acquired and conserved, historic preservation services were pursued, and the division's historic properties and landscapes continued to be maintained.

At the division's [five museums](#), a wide variety of innovative action steps were devised including the creation of virtual programs streamed live on the web, the development of a podcast and the creation of at-home learning opportunities.

In addition, the division's museums and the [Buena Vista Conference Center](#) gradually increased public

visitation opportunities with the museums expanding the number of guided tours, increasing the length of tours to 45 minutes and adding Thursdays, and later Wednesdays, to their days of operation.

Beginning in the late summer of 2021, the division's offices and museums resumed more regular operating hours and by the end of the year, staff had returned to their normal work locations.

SENATE CHAMBER IN THE OLD STATE HOUSE IN DOVER

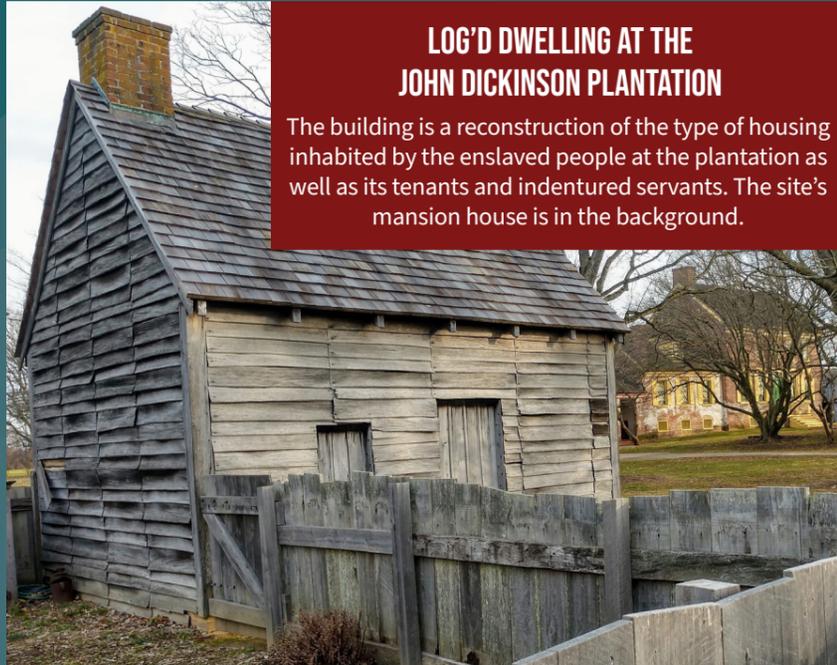
The division's five museums resumed regular operating hours in July 2021.



At the division's five museums, a wide variety of innovative action steps were devised including the creation of virtual programs streamed live on the web, the development of a podcast and the creation of at-home learning opportunities.

JOHN DICKINSON PLANTATION INITIATIVES

Administered as a museum by the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, the [John Dickinson Plantation](#) south of Dover was the boyhood home of John Dickinson, one of the Founding Fathers of the United States. Dickinson wrote eloquently about freedom and liberty while at the same time holding fellow human beings in bondage. The museum not only provides interpretive programming about the paradoxical life of this American patriot and his family, but also of the tenant farmers, indentured servants, and the free and enslaved Black men, women and children who lived, worked and died on his property. Following are some of the initiatives that the division undertook in 2021 to create a dialogue with visitors about the uncomfortable truths, differing views and painful narratives associated with the history of the site and the founding of the nation.



LOG'D DWELLING AT THE JOHN DICKINSON PLANTATION

The building is a reconstruction of the type of housing inhabited by the enslaved people at the plantation as well as its tenants and indentured servants. The site's mansion house is in the background.

AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND IDENTIFIED; GUIDED VISITATIONS ADDED

On March 9, 2021, after several years of research and archaeological fieldwork, the location of a burial ground believed to be the final resting place for up to 400 enslaved men, women and children, and free African Americans was [discovered at the site](#).

Measuring 160 feet by 170 feet, the burial ground was discovered in a farm field located a half mile from the mansion house. Archaeological investigation of the site was conducted by Dovetail Cultural Resource Group and South River Heritage Consulting, LLC utilizing historical research, ground penetrating radar, metal detecting and shovel testing. No human remains were disturbed during the process.

Between Sept. 17 and Nov. 20, the museum launched its first year of [guided visitations to the burial ground](#). The 1 1/2 hour experience included an orientation in the visitor center, a tour of the recreated log'd dwelling and a mile round-trip walk to and from the burial ground, which included a moment of silence. Visits will resume in the spring of 2022.



STAKES MARK THE LOCATION OF THE BURIAL GROUND
IN A FIELD AT THE JOHN DICKINSON PLANTATION

AREA OF REFLECTION DESIGNS CREATED BY UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE STUDENTS

Funded by a \$5,000 grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the division partnered with the University of Delaware's Landscape Architecture program for nine students to offer designs for an [area of reflection](#) at the John Dickinson Plantation. The students' designs incorporated what they had learned about the history of the plantation and other sites where slavery was practiced,

taking into account site interpretation, discovery of the African burial ground and the overall cultural landscape. Division staff, along with archaeologists, staff from other museums, professors, and professional landscape architects critiqued the students' work. The final design was selected by division staff and refined over the summer of 2021 by student/intern Olivia Boon.

PLANTATION STORIES PROJECT

On Aug. 31, 2021, the initial posting of the [Plantation Stories Project](#), featuring the names of 128 individuals, was added to the John Dickinson Plantation website. The project is intended to collect the stories of the enslaved and free Black people who lived, worked and died at the site, particularly those who were oppressed and marginalized, in order to present a more inclusive, accurate and reflective access to history. Project data is temporarily being presented as an online [database](#) which researchers

are continuing to expand. A new, user-friendly digital platform is expected to come in 2022.

In recognition of their work on the project, The Delaware Department of State recognized the plantation's Site Supervisor Gloria Henry and Lead Historical Interpreter Annie Fenimore, division Curator of Education Vertie Lee and Inclusive History Researcher Sakinaa Rock as Employees of the Third Quarter of 2021.

GOV. CARNEY HOSTS PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND

On Dec. 8, 2021, Delaware Gov. John Carney hosted an [online panel discussion](#) on the African burial ground at the John Dickinson Plantation. The video features presentations by the plantation's Site Supervisor Gloria Henry and Lead Historical Interpreter Annie Fenimore on the discovery of the burial ground, the Dickinsons, the tenant farmers, and the enslaved and free Black men and women who were associated with the site. Dr. Kami Fletcher, Professor of History at Albright College, followed

with a discussion of African burial grounds in America which put the plantation's burial ground in a national context. Gov. Carney, Dr. Reba Hollingsworth, Co-Chair of the Delaware Heritage Commission, and the Rev. Rita Paige of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Dover provided personal reflections on the discovery of the burial ground and how Delaware's sometimes difficult history should be publicly recognized.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND AT THE JOHN DICKINSON PLANTATION

Clockwise from top left: Gov. John Carney, Dr. Reba Hollingsworth, Gloria Henry, an unidentified sign-language interpreter, Rev. Rita Paige, Dr. Kami Fletcher and Annie Fenimore



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION (DEAI) INITIATIVES

In June 2020, the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs released a [race and equity statement](#) supporting the elimination of racial injustice, racism, discrimination and exclusionary history. During 2021, the agency took several initiatives, including the following, that put the words of that statement into action.

RACE AND EQUITY COMMITTEE INFORMS THE PRACTICE OF HISTORY

Formed in August 2020, the division's Race and Equity Committee was created to evaluate and construct best practices and to help affect true change within the agency's organizational culture. Comprised of staff members representing a broad cross-section of the [division's teams](#), from business services to historic sites, the committee seeks to impact Delaware communities with the stories that the division collects and shares, the businesses it uses and the people it hires.

Since January 2021, topics explored at the committee's monthly meetings have included African Americans in medicine, internment camps, Native Americans past and present, and the appropriateness of hosting weddings or special events at places of enslavement. Discussions on these topics have opened the committee to new perspectives and ideas which, in turn, have helped inform how the agency practices history.

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE STUDENTS HELP DIVISION INCREASE DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY

In January 2021, the division received webpage-design assistance through a [Collections AID](#) project provided by the University of Delaware Museum Studies program. As part of the project, students worked with professors, staff and an accessibility consultant to create alt text and new captions for division museums' webpages, as well as making recommendations for additional text and reorganization of the pages. These changes make the museums' pages more accessible to people with low vision. The project also created a template that the division can follow to improve accessibility on its website overall.

DIVISION HIRES FOUR DIVERSITY, EQUITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION EMPLOYEES

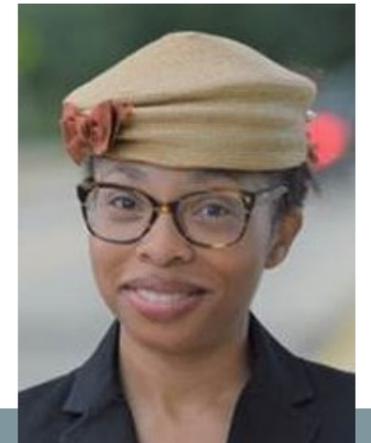
During the summer of 2021, the division added [four new staff members](#) who are focusing on Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion issues.

Amy Golden-Shepherd is a consultant who is aiding division staff on the inclusion of more diverse communities and inclusive topics in Delaware history, increasing diversity in division staffing, and engaging with partners and community groups in order to advance the goals stated in the division's race and equity statement. She has been a powerful ally to the Race and Equity Committee by hosting discussions on racism, micro-aggressions and delving into what creates a person's cultural identity.

Jeanette Bendolph, Carolanne Deal and Sakinaa Rock are inclusive history researchers, each with different teams, whose work is contributing to a broader research knowledge-base with regard to history, collections and preservation.

INTERN PROJECTS

The Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs' [Volunteer Program](#) assists staff members in addressing the agency's goals of protecting and promoting the First State's historical and cultural legacies. Interns working through the program possess an extensive assortment of skills and experience that are utilized in every facet of the division's operations. Following is a sampling of intern projects conducted in 2021:



[Kelli Racine Barnes](#) worked with the Zwaanendael Museum to research a virtual exhibit that will highlight the impacts of Jim Crow laws in Delaware in connection with historically segregated beaches. Her article, "[Beach-going in Delaware: Black perspectives under segregation](#)," appeared in the December 2021 edition of the division's newsletter.

INTERNS ENHANCE THE TELLING OF DELAWARE HISTORY

During the summer of 2021, the division hosted five interns from the University of Delaware who worked in webpage design, historical and archaeological research, and landscape architecture.



[Pamela Ahern](#) worked on two projects — one that helped improve the New Castle Court House Museum's webpages, and a second that researched inequitable laws that were passed during Delaware's early formation, and sharing that research with the public via social media and other digital platforms.



[Matt Miklochik](#) worked with the Johnson Victrola Museum to research recording artists' lives; recording conditions with Victor Records; and payment for musicians' creations in jazz, blues, country and popular music.



[Olivia Boon](#) was selected from a group of students to complete design-development drawings for an area of reflection at the John Dickinson Plantation where visitors will be able to contemplate the system of slavery that dictated everyday life at the site.



[Samantha Side](#) worked with the division's Curator of Archaeology to process, catalog and research portions of an archeological collection excavated in 2000 from Block III at the John Dickinson Plantation.

DIVISION PROGRAMMING

During a period marked by COVID-19 restrictions, the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs produced 17 live programs attracting 298 participants and 42 virtual programs attracting 4,742 viewers during fiscal year 2021. In addition, the Buena Vista Conference Center hosted 88 events serving 2,715 guests. Following is a sampling of some of the activities that were presented:

DIVERSITY IN DELAWARE HISTORY WEBINAR SERIES PROBES HARD TOPICS

During 2021, the division produced six segments of the [Diversity in Delaware History Webinar Series](#), a partnership with the Delaware State Education Association that helps teachers and the general public understand the complex and often difficult role that race has played in the history of the United States and the state of Delaware.

Hosted by the division's Curator of Education Vertie Lee, the webinars featured PowerPoint presentations and discussions by scholars and specialists on topics which progressed along a timeline beginning with Delaware's Native American history and moving through the centuries by focusing on the historical experience of people of color during the periods of colonialism, slavery, segregation and the civil rights movement.

The Delaware State Education Association's Director of Instructional Advocacy, Dr. Deborah Stevens, praised the series, noting its "accurate portrayal of the experiences, influences and contributions of the Indigenous and Black population in Delaware provided educators and community members with information and resources that can be used to help students and the community at large understand the benefits of cultural diversity and to develop pride in their own cultural legacy."

DIVISION RELEASES VIDEO ON FREE AND ENSLAVED BLACK LIFE IN DELAWARE 1790-1840

In April 2021, the division released "[A Mere Mock Freedom: Free and Enslaved Black Life in Delaware 1790-1840](#)," a video presentation that explores anti-slavery activity in Delaware in the late-18th century and the subsequent passage of repressive legislation targeting free Blacks in the 19th century.

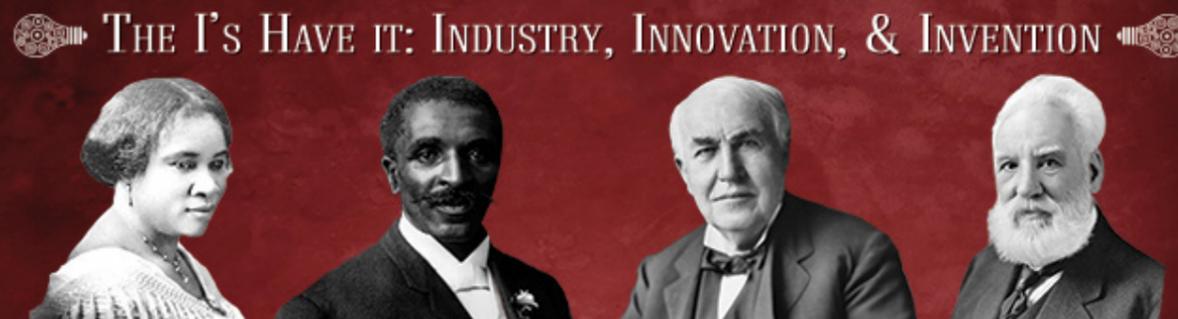
Commissioned by the division, "A Mere Mock Freedom" was created by Miles Stanley, a doctoral candidate in history at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. Stanley's research experience focuses on the history of slavery in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States during the Early Republic (circa 1780-1830).



"FRANCIS BARRAUD: HIS MASTER'S VOICE"

Virtual living-history performance from the Johnson Victrola Museum on Jan. 22 in which historical interpreter Steven Mumford portrayed artist Francis Barraud whose painting of a dog staring into a talking machine became the trademark of the Victor Talking Machine Company.

-DELAWARE'S 23RD ANNUAL CHAUTAUQUA -



"THE I'S HAVE IT: INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, AND INVENTION"

Delaware's 23rd Annual Chautauqua from Sept. 9 to 12 featured a series of virtual and live activities from Lewes and New Castle culminating with living-history re-enactors from the American Historical Theatre portraying noted American inventors and businesspeople.

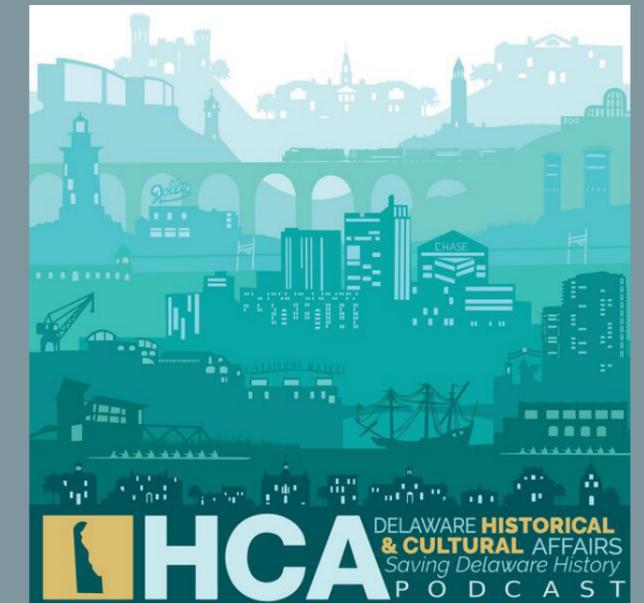


BAYBERRY CANDLE WORKSHOP

Nov. 20 program presented in partnership with the St. Jones Reserve at the John Dickinson Plantation examined bayberries and their use in creating bayberry candles.

"THE FIRST WOMEN OF THE FIRST STATE"

Virtual program from The Old State House on March 20 in which Theo Braunskill, Elders Council member of the Lenapé Indian Tribe of Delaware, and division staff members discussed the role of women, past and present, in Lenapé culture.



STUDENT CREATES HISTORY-FOCUSED PODCAST

During the 2020-2021 school year, Madeline Messer, then a senior at the Charter School of Wilmington, created the [Saving Delaware History Podcast](#) for the division. Between November 2020 and August 2021, Messer produced 42 podcasts focused on a wide variety of topics including the division's museums and properties, the State Historic Preservation Office, and the division's Horticulture and Collections teams, among many others.

- **"Diving Into History: A Look at Maritime Archaeology"**
Virtual program on May 26 in which division archaeologist Stephanie Soder explored the history and methods of maritime archaeology, and discussed work completed on Delaware's famous (and infamous) wrecks.
- **Artists' group paints at Buena Vista**
Members of the Sunshine Plein Air Artists visited the Buena Vista Conference Center on June 15 to paint in the out-of-doors.
- **"William Penn Day"**
Day-long series of programs on Oct. 23 at the New Castle Court House Museum commemorated the 339th anniversary of Penn's disembarkment at New Castle, his first landing in the New World. Activities included re-enactors performing historical theatre and tours of the historic court house.

TWO NEW ADDITIONS TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES



During 2021, two First State properties were added to the [National Register of Historic Places](#), the official list of the nation’s historic places worthy of preservation. The [Delaware State Historic Preservation Office](#) provided vital assistance to property owners, consultants and volunteers in the preparation of their nominations which were subsequently reviewed by volunteer members of the City of Wilmington’s Design Review and Historic Preservation Commission as well as the [State Review Board for Historic Preservation](#) prior to submission to the National Park Service.

ST. NICHOLAS UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH 610 S. HEALD ST., WILMINGTON LISTED JAN. 25, 2021

Now home to the New Calvary Baptist Church, this church was initially constructed in 1909 in a plain, rectangular shape of rusticated cement blocks. It is an excellent example of early 20th century vernacular Ukrainian religious architecture in Wilmington and is noteworthy as an example of an unadorned building that was later adapted to better reflect the ethnic and religious identities of the east Slavic immigrant community. Notable adaptations include the addition of a stepped brick front gable with a central oculus window crowned by three Byzantine-style domes. After being sold to its current African American Baptist congregation in 1969, interior adaptations were made to facilitate rituals and practices distinctive to their denomination. These later modifications extend the structure’s vernacular character, adding yet another layer to the building’s history.



AFRICAN UNION CHURCH AND CEMETERY OF IRON HILL 1578 WHITTAKER ROAD, NEWARK LISTED SEPT. 9, 2021

Constructed between 1852 and 1856 and now known as St. Daniel’s Community Church of Iron Hill, this building is the oldest known surviving free Black church in northern Delaware that was built as part of Peter Spencer’s African Union Church movement.

As a Spencer church, the structure is representative of the religious practices and culture of rural Black communities in New Castle County. Built on land given to the church by freeman William Walker in 1852, it now stands as the only known extant building of the antebellum-era, free-Black population at Iron Hill. This historic house of worship played a key role in forming and sustaining the community from the antebellum period through desegregation during the late 1960s.

Architecturally, the building reflects the small size, impermanence and plainness of rural Spencer churches and, more generally, is representative of spaces in which the county’s Black population worshipped during much of the 19th and 20th centuries. Later modifications reflect the popularity of early-20th-century vernacular Gothic Revival renovations.

“WE JUST WANT A KINDER WORLD THAN THIS”
BY J THE ARTIST. PLYWOOD, PAPER, ACRYLIC, 2020

In response to the civil unrest that took place in Wilmington on May 30, 2020, the non-profit organization, Flux Creative, worked with local artists Erica Jones, JaQuanne LeRoy, James Wyatt and J the Artist to install four original works of art in the windows of storefronts which were impacted during the protests. Works by Wyatt and J the Artist were accessioned into the State’s collections in June 2021.



Objects added to the State’s Historic Collections

The Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs’ [Collections Program](#) preserves, and holds in public trust, a record of Delaware’s heritage by acquiring objects made in the First State or used by Delawareans throughout history. During 2021, the division’s Collections, Affiliates, Research and Exhibits Team made a determined effort to diversify the types of objects accessioned into the Historic Collections in order to provide a fuller, more nuanced view of the state’s history.

Paralleling a growing trend in the museum field to conduct “rapid response collecting,” the team sought to acquire objects representative of significant moments in recent history. One of those moments was the widespread protests for racial justice that surged across Delaware, and the nation, beginning in May 2020 following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Included on this page are examples of Delaware-made protest objects from that period that were acquired for the Historic Collections during the past year.



RECENTLY ACQUIRED PROTEST FACE MASK AND SHIRT

Anthony Sims, produced these objects with his friend, James Karcha, because he “did not want to be someone who just posted about wanting change” but that he “wanted to do something that would have an impact.”

The donor and creator of the recently acquired protest face mask and shirt, Anthony Sims, produced these objects with his friend, James Karcha, because he “did not want to be someone who just posted about wanting change” but that he “wanted to do something that would have an impact.” The austere design of the apparel — featuring a black background with a contrast of white, bold, all-caps lettering — speaks to the seriousness of the topic and stresses the urgency of the phrases which are quotes by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Orders for the apparel were received from all over the state and even some in different parts of the country. The objects’ creators then took the profits from the sales and donated them to the [Ella Baker Center for Human Rights](#) and [So... You Need A Tutor?](#) organizations.

LOOKING FORWARD

In addition to its ongoing programming and services, the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs will be engaged in several significant projects during 2022. Most notably, the agency will begin the process of implementing the goals and objectives identified in its strategic plan that was written in 2021. Full implementation of the plan will take place over the next five years.

Fittingly, the division will begin this new chapter in its history by **moving into a new home** for its administrative offices in Richardson Hall located at 29 N. State St. in Dover. In coordination with this move, ownership of the division's current home, 15/21 The Green in Dover, was transferred to the Biggs Museum of American Art in September 2021.

Other significant projects that will be undertaken in 2022 will be the **installation of a fire sprinkler system** in the New Castle Court House Museum; and rehabilitation and preservation efforts at several of the division's historic properties across the state including Buena Vista, the Cooch's Bridge campus in Newark, the John Dickinson Plantation, Weldin House in New Castle County; and the division's properties on the Seventh Street Peninsula in Wilmington.

In keeping with the agency's commitment to diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion, 2022 will see the continued partnership with the Delaware State Education Association in creating the Diversity in Delaware History Webinar Series; and the publication of two division-funded studies: "The DuPont 'Colored' Schools, 1920-1931: An Architectural Survey," produced by the University of Delaware Center for Architecture and Design, and a related oral history project on African American schools in Delaware conducted by Preservation Delaware, Inc.

Finally, in addition to several other research projects, division staff members will be conducting an oral history project, and creating a digital exhibit, on the formerly segregated beaches for African Americans in the First State, and continue investigating the identities of the enslaved and free African Americans who lived, worked and died at the John Dickinson Plantation in the 18th and 19th centuries.



**Richardson Hall, future home of the
Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs**

ABOUT THE DELAWARE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs is an agency of the State of Delaware, organized as a division within the Department of State. The division enhances Delaware's quality of life by preserving the state's unique historical heritage, fostering community stability and economic vitality and providing educational programs and assistance to the general public on Delaware history and heritage.



**The Kirk/Short Building, a contributing property to the Dover Green Historic District
and administrative office of the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs**

The division's diverse array of services includes administration of the State Historic Preservation Office, operation of museums and a conference center, conservation of the State's archaeological and historic-objects collections and management of historic properties across Delaware. The division's museums are accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. Primary funding for division programs and services is provided by annual appropriations from the Delaware General Assembly and grants from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, a federal agency.

DELAWARE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

**21 THE GREEN
DOVER, DE 19901
302-736-7400**

[HTTPS://HISTORY.DELAWARE.GOV](https://history.delaware.gov)

MISSION

The Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs serves the public by identifying, collecting, preserving, and interpreting inclusive Delaware history and engaging diverse cultures. Our activities foster strong communities, engaged citizens, economic vitality, and a deeper understanding of Delaware's role in world history. We do this for current and future generations.

VALUES

KNOWLEDGE

We are committed to the growth and professional development of staff and volunteers in order to ensure that all of our activities are strongly grounded in scholarly research, current and reliable best practices, and relevant laws, rules, and regulations.

COOPERATION

We are committed to developing and maintaining trust and respect amongst co-workers, partners, and our audiences to provide a positive and collaborative atmosphere to achieve common goals.

PROFESSIONALISM

We are committed to conducting ourselves in a professional manner to co-workers, partners, and the public in order to be recognized as a reputable and reliable resource.

CREATIVITY

We are committed to supporting innovative thinking and nurturing a creative environment. Our passion for history inspires us to risk taking new approaches.



Zwaanendael Museum

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

We are committed to actively listening to, and communicating, collaborating, and partnering with, the community in the development of our programs and services.

COMMUNICATION

We are committed to an open, proactive, and thoughtful exchange of information and ideas that promotes trust and understanding in our internal and external relationships.

DISCOURSE/DIALOG

We are committed to open debate and discourse on subjects relevant to the past, present, and future of Delaware.

STEWARDSHIP

We are committed to the responsible management of the division's assets, seeking to exceed best practices.

VISION

We actively engage individuals to share how Delaware history is meaningful in their lives. We provide opportunities for communities to explore a diversity of historical and cultural perspectives that inform and influence decisions about the future.

We collect and preserve, for future generations, the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of all Delawareans, and the material culture of Delaware history.

We create an environment where all people feel welcome, valued, and encouraged to question, explore and share.

The Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs is a trustworthy, ethical, and reliable partner with organizations, agencies, and individuals with whom we have common goals. All division staff and volunteers will consistently make use of each other's knowledge and skills, building professional relationships across teams.

GOALS

ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

Cultivate an inclusive environment that supports educational and collaborative opportunities for the public and professionals alike to broaden understanding of Delaware's history and cultural resources.

STRENGTHENING STAFF

Enhance our professional capacity to meet the increasing demand on the division's resources.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSION (DEAI)

Ensure all feel welcome and heard and can see themselves and their culture's history represented in our work.

STEWARDSHIP

Foster a more complete understanding of humanity through the lens of all of Delaware history and the collection and preservation of our shared cultural assets.

VISIBILITY AND AWARENESS

Promote the division's resources and programs to the public, scholars, and potential partnering institutions.



New Castle Court House Museum

APPENDIX DELAWARE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS FISCAL YEAR 2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ENGAGING AUDIENCES

- After the implementation of Gov. Carney's COVID-19 Phase I reopening guidance in June 2020, the division's museums gradually expanded public visitation opportunities during fiscal year 2021 by including a guided-tour component, increasing the length of tours to 45 minutes and adding additional days to their schedules. Museum operations complied with all safety guidelines including social distancing and hygienic procedures established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Given the necessary reductions in live public-programs, division staff still produced 17 live programs attracting 298 participants and 42 virtual programs attracting 4,742 views. Highlights included the "22nd Annual Chautauqua Tent Show: ['Women's Work: Campaigning for Social Change,'](#)" streamed live from the Zwaanendael Museum and the New Castle Court House Museum; a live concert by Charlie Zahm at The Old State House; ["Mischief Managed: Throwing a Hotsy-Totsy Halloween Bash"](#) from the Johnson Victrola Museum; and demonstrations by the Thistledown Fiber Arts Guild conducted outside at the John Dickinson Plantation
- Hosted 88 events serving 2,715 guests at Buena Vista
- The New Castle Court House Museum published "19 Days of Suffrage," a series of Facebook posts about the women's suffrage movement in Delaware and the nation
- Utilized the Collections Program's [Instagram account](#) to showcase 76 objects that have not been accessible to the public through exhibits and displays



Marion Taylor of the Sunshine Plein Air Artists painting on the grounds of Buena Vista on June 15, 2021.

- Hosted the Sunshine Plein Air Artists at Buena Vista where group members painted outdoor scenes of the historic property
- Offered opportunities for the public to virtually enjoy scenes from Delaware's historic towns through ["Uniquely Lewes,"](#) ["Uniquely New Castle"](#) and ["Museum Madness"](#) photo contests that were held via the Facebook pages of the Zwaanendael and New Castle Court House museums
- [Hosted](#) members of the 287th Army Band of the Delaware National Guard at Buena Vista where they video-recorded segments of their virtual holiday-concert-series, "The 12 Days of Christmas"

VISIBILITY AND AWARENESS

- Increased followers of its seven Facebook pages by 19 percent to 10,397 with "likes" rising by 16 percent
- Published 773 posts on the division's six Instagram accounts, a 253 percent increase, resulting in a 48 percent increase in followers to 4,930
- Increased Twitter followers by three percent to 2,091 with 225 tweets published generating over 74,000 organic impressions
- Published 65 posts on the Johnson Victrola Museum's new TikTok feed
- Conducted 38 Saving Delaware History podcasts attracting 1,238 total downloads with 24 percent of listeners from Apple Podcasts and 16 percent from Spotify
- Published 78 [news articles](#), and registered 364,359 total pageviews and 238,413 visitor sessions on its website, an increase of 31 and 46 percent respectively. Over 6,300 of these sessions were attributed to social media, particularly Facebook, which drove over 90 percent of all traffic to the website from social media. Over 75 percent of website users were new visitors with average daily users rising to 502, a 60 percent increase. Age demographics for users tilted toward younger readers with 24 percent for ages 18 to 24, 19 percent for ages 25 to 34, 12 percent for ages 35 to 44, 13 percent for ages 45 to 54, 15 percent for ages 55 to 64 and 16 percent for those over age 65



- Published the division's [2020 Annual Report](#)
- Working with the Miles Partnership, revamped the division's social media sites, developed an electronic mailing-list registration for the agency's newsletter, added an online calendar of events and simplified URL addresses for the division's webpages
- Revamped the division's electronic [newsletter](#) with a new, visually attractive design featuring more photos and easier to navigate features that make it more compatible with hand-held computing devices. The publication is distributed to over 2,100 individuals each month

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION INITIATIVES

- Created a Race and Equity Committee within division staff that would put into action the declarations noted in the agency's racial justice statement, and to help affect true change in the division's organizational culture
- Partnered with the Delaware State Education Association to create the Diversity in Delaware History Webinar Series
- Produced "[Delaware Day 2020 — Expanding the Delaware Story](#)," a five-part video that explores the experiences of four enslaved individuals and an abolitionist
- Added four staff positions focusing on including more diverse communities and inclusive topics in Delaware history
- [Removed a whipping post](#) that had been displayed on the grounds of the Old Sussex County Court House in Georgetown. The artifact was placed in storage pending development of future exhibits that will provide historical context regarding its use
- [Produced a video](#) exploring the genetic background of eight white and three Black people who lived in early Colonial Delaware
- Released "A Mere Mock Freedom: Free and Enslaved Black Life in Delaware 1790–1840," a video presentation by Miles Stanley, a doctoral candidate in history at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland

JOHN DICKINSON PLANTATION INITIATIVES

- Created an advisory committee that will assist with future improvements to site interpretation, inclusive history research, educational and public programming and capital improvements
- Announced the discovery of a burial ground at the site that served as the final resting place for several hundred enslaved and free African Americans
- Museum [named a member](#) of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience
- Received a \$5,000 grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation for the creation of an area of reflection on slavery at the site
- Continued compiling a census of enslaved and free individuals who lived and worked on the property

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- Partnered with the Kalmar Nyckel Foundation and the First State National Historical Park to offer summer visitation hours at Fort Christina National Historic Landmark in Wilmington
- [Partnered with the Sussex Gardeners](#) who provided holiday décor at the Zwaanendael Museum
- Completed production of the digital "[At Home Concert Series](#)," a partnership with the Delaware Friends of Folk, which featured video performances of musicians from across the state recorded at division-owned venues
- Partnered with the Friends of Cooch's Bridge, a nonprofit group dedicated to the restoration and maintenance of the historic property that was the site of the only Revolutionary War land battle in Delaware

Cooch House and grounds



ENHANCING PRESERVATION

- Added two listings to the National Register of Historic Places: the American Vulcanized Fibre Company plant and St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church, both in Wilmington
- Awarded \$8 million in [State Historic Preservation Tax Credits](#) for repairs and improvements to historic properties, including owner-occupied, nonprofit-owned and income-producing properties
- Accepted a proposal for an oral-history project related to African American schools in Delaware to be conducted by Preservation Delaware, Inc. The project will compile interviews with alumni of selected DuPont schools. The project is scheduled for publication in 2022
- Received for review and comment several hundred new [environmental-review](#) projects. Nearly all of these reviews have since been completed. The projects reviewed were undertaken by entities applying for funding or permitting from a wide variety of federal agencies, as well as projects and comprehensive plans that are reviewed through the State [Preliminary Land Use Service](#) (PLUS) process
- Re-granted funding from the federal [Historic Preservation Fund](#) to support preservation-related activities conducted by Delaware's [Certified Local Governments](#)
- Reviewed multiple applications for the [Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive program](#) which is often used in concert with the State program
- The Delaware General Assembly passed legislation [extending the Historic Preservation Tax Credit Act](#) through 2030; and [revised the state's unmarked burials law](#) to, among other provisions, include the Lenapé Indian Tribe of Delaware in the body that determines the treatment and disposition of Native American unmarked burials, and establish an ad hoc committee when burials or remains are determined to be other than Native American. Both bills were later signed into law by Gov. Carney
- Accepted a proposal for a context study and survey of African American schools in Delaware to be conducted by the University of Delaware Center for Architecture and Design (UD-CHAD). Entitled "The DuPont 'Colored' Schools, 1920-1931: An Architectural Survey," the study, together with an accompanying digital story-map, will be published in 2022
- Contracted with the University of Delaware Institute for Public Administration for the institute to conduct a study on the current state of preservation practice in Delaware. Entitled "Assessment of Delaware's Historic Preservation Policy and Governance," the study is scheduled for publication in 2022



Street scene in the Milton Historic district. The town is one of Delaware's seven Certified Local Governments.

PLANNING

- Working with consultants from the Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit Advancement (DANA), began work on the division's strategic plan for 2022 through 2026
- Completed design-phase planning for restoration work at Weldin House and the installation of a fire-suppression sprinkler system at the New Castle Court House Museum

STEWARDSHIP

- In Lewes, completed the [exterior rehabilitation](#) of the Zwaanendael Museum and the [repair and repainting](#) of the Delaware Breakwater East End Lighthouse
- Completed a variety of miscellaneous repairs at Abbott's Mill, Belmont Hall, Buena Vista, Cooch's Bridge campus, John Dickinson Plantation, Octagonal Schoolhouse and Weldin House
- Purchased Richardson Hall located at 29 N. State St. in Dover. The property will become the division's administrative office in 2022
- Continued work with the Biggs Museum of American Art regarding the transfer of the division's main office at 15/21 The Green to the museum
- Received a [\\$22,000 grant](#) for the preservation of Weldin House in north Wilmington
- Donated plastic was collected by the Zwaanendael Museum to offset the purchase price of a [recycled-plastic bench](#)
- The division's in-house trades specialists completed 1,460 service requests providing carpentry and plumbing repairs, mechanical-equipment installations, repairs to furnishings, preservation treatments, and special fabrications and finishes in order to maintain the agency's historic structures

- Partnered with the Kalmar Nyckel Foundation and the National Park Service in working on a land-use plan for a section of Wilmington's historic Seventh Street peninsula which include properties owned by the foundation, and the Kaiser property and Fort Christina National Historic Landmark, owned by the division
- Master plans in process for major capital-improvement projects at the [Cooch's Bridge campus](#) and the John Dickinson Plantation
- Continued work with the Delaware Department of Transportation regarding the transfer of ownership of the Nassau School from the department to the division. Located in the Belltown area of Lewes, the property is one of several schools built by industrialist Pierre S. du Pont for the education of Black students during the segregation era
- Accessioned several items into the State of Delaware's Historic Collections including a protest face mask and shirt that were created as part of the calls for racial justice that surged across the nation in 2020

Members of the Thistledown Fiber Arts Guild conducting a demonstration at the John Dickinson Plantation.



HORTICULTURE TEAM INITIATIVES

- Severe destruction at Belmont Hall from Tropical Storm Isaias, totaling over \$100,000, was assessed, planned, coordinated and executed utilizing inhouse personnel, [volunteers](#), and state-contracted vendors. A Federal Emergency Management Agency award of over \$68,000 covered a portion of the cleanup costs. Damage included 35 trees that were completely lost, and over 400 that were assessed and then trimmed or removed for proactive safety precautions. The historic house was not damaged
- Participated in the Governor's Counsel on Greenways and Trails
- Planted 2,500 spring flowering bulbs and 750 summer annuals at sites across the state
- Three staff members completed the University of Delaware horticulture class in preparation of the Certified Nursery Professional exam. Team leader Betsy Gant is now one of 94 certified nursery professionals in the state
- Over 100 evergreen shrubs at division properties were renovated rather than being replaced

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

- The division's 601 volunteers provided 7,201 service hours, valued at over \$195,867, assisting with administrative tasks, historical research, horticultural and grounds maintenance, cleaning and care, data collection, and preparation of reports for academic and collections research; providing tours of historic sites; helping conduct education programs and activities with virtual and in-person audiences; transcribing for outreach and records; creating educational displays and videos; and cataloging collection materials and artifacts. Volunteer hours were greatly reduced in fiscal year 2021 due the closure of division sites and cancellation of activities due to COVID-19
- [Encouraged participation](#) in the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service through virtual or socially distanced activities
- Partnered with a variety of volunteer groups that provide operational services at State-owned, division-managed, historic properties including the Cooch's Bridge historic site, Fenwick Island Lighthouse, Hale-Byrnes House, the John Dickinson Mansion and the Milford Museum. Each year, these supportive and generous groups of individuals contribute thousands of volunteer hours offering tours; raising funds; hosting events; and providing educational enrichment, outreach, meetings and basic care of the historic spaces. During fiscal year 2021, the Thistledown Fiber Arts Guild marked 20 years of service offering educational outreach, activities and demonstrations at the John Dickinson Plantation and other division properties



Autumnal display at the Buena Vista Conference Center created by the division's Horticulture Team.

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