

Final Report

An Assessment of the Heritage Tourism Potential

of

Jacob's Chapel AME Church and Colemantown Meeting House
Mt. Laurel NJ



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Chapter 1. Introduction

a) OVERVIEW

This report is the culmination of a brief assessment of the heritage tourism potential of Jacob's Chapel AME Church in Mt. Laurel NJ. This report gives advice to the Church Board and staff as they work with the companion secular organization, Jacob's Chapel Colemantown Foundation (JCCF) Board of Directors, to create a heritage tourism destination for Jacob's Chapel AME Church, the historic Cemetery and the Colemantown Meeting House.

Assessing a historic site's heritage tourism potential helps prepare its stewards to welcome visitors. The assessment identifies specific actions that building owner can take to improve visitor readiness. This assessment report is organized three chapters: Introduction; Short Term Projects; and Long Term projects. There is a credit page and Appendix with two documents.

The Short Term projects discussed are important for any volunteer-driven heritage tourism destination. We believe these projects can be addressed by the JCCF Board, staff and volunteers in the next year or two. Short Term projects include:

- Website Upgrades
- Interpretive Signage
- Visitor Brochure Series
- Regular Tour Schedule
- Recruiting Volunteers
- Volunteer Docent Corps
- Volunteer Job Descriptions

The Long Term Projects that might be realistically implemented in the next three to five years include:

- Expanded School Tour Program
- Lesson Plans
- Reciprocal Web Links
- Funding Opportunities
- Future Projects

Most of our observations focus on the current (2015) organizational capacity of Jacob's Chapel Colemantown Foundation Inc. The recommendations section provides advice about how to implement these projects by volunteers to better promote the historic Church complex to heritage visitors now and in the near-term future.

The report also includes an appendix with two components: an updated visitor services map showing the location of various visitor services, including other African-American and

Underground Railroad historic sites within ten miles of the Church; and visitor amenities, including parking, gas stations, ATM machines, restaurants etc. located within two miles of the Church complex.

The other appendix is an updated Current Conditions memo originally sent in December 2014. This memo contains observations on Jacob's Chapel AME Church's current visitor readiness and organizational capacity to host heritage visitors. This memo contains a first draft of the visitor services map.

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The New Jersey Historic Trust provided funding for this Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential project. Heritage Consulting Inc. was a subcontractor to Westfield Architects & Preservation Consultants who were contracted by Jacob's Chapel AME Church to undertake a Preservation Plan for the property. This report is one of several components of the Preservation Plan.

b) BRIEF HISTORY AND CURRENT CONDITIONS

I. Brief History

The Preservation Plan for Jacob's Chapel included the following brief history of the Church complex. "Jacob's Chapel and Colemantown Meeting House, located at 318 Elbo Lane, Mount Laurel, Burlington County, New Jersey, are significant New Jersey historic resources representing the nineteenth century history and growth of historically black villages and towns in the state. The African-American hamlet of Colemantown was established in 1828 and was a known stop on the Underground Railroad based on the testimony of Rev. Thomas Clement Oliver."¹

"The older of the two edifices, the Colemantown Meeting House, was extant and in use during the mid-nineteenth-century clandestine activities involving fugitive slaves escaping from their bondage in the American South. This building not only served as the first worship sanctuary in Colemantown, placed there in 1840, but also as a schoolhouse for the hamlet's African American children, making it one of the oldest all-black schools still extant in New Jersey. Its survival as both a remnant of the Underground Railroad and as an all-black school and Church is remarkable. Likewise, Jacob's Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church stands as a testament to the growth of the black community at large in Old Evesham Township, Burlington County, New Jersey both before and just after the Civil War. The Colemantown Meeting House could no longer accommodate all of the congregants who came to worship, necessitating the need for constructing a larger building in 1865-67. Today, Jacob's Chapel has endured for more

¹Westfield Architects & Preservation Consultants, Preservation Plan for Jacob's Chapel and Colemantown Meeting House, Draft Edition, October 2014, 9.

than 145 years, despite the demolition of Colemantown's dwelling houses around it, and it remains in use.²

"The buildings are significant as the last remaining buildings of the African-American community of Colemantown. Both free people of color and runaway slaves from southern states made their home in the area. The meeting house, which was also used as a school during the week, is one of the earliest churches from this type of community still standing in New Jersey. The meeting house and the church together provided the two pillars of the community, church and school. In addition to their historical significance, the buildings are also important to the congregation today for the current functions that they serve as worship and meeting spaces."³

II. Current Conditions Facing the Congregation

One of the goals of the Preservation Plan is to provide advice to the Congregation so that the buildings can remain in use for interpretation to the public. "A major issue currently facing the congregation is the deterioration of the meeting house floor and its impact on the Church's ability to use both buildings. The meeting house cannot be used for meetings due to unsafe conditions from the failing floor structure. Although the framing under the rear addition is sound, the entire building has been closed for the public's safety. Therefore, the restrooms are not available for use by the congregation during services at the Church, which renders the Church unusable until the meeting house floor is addressed. In addition, neither the restrooms nor the meeting house in general have barrier-free access. Restoration of the meeting house floor and addressing the water drainage conditions around the building that contributed to the deterioration are therefore immediate priorities, while addressing the inadequacies of the rear addition is a longer term, but still critical priority for functionality."⁴

III. Appropriate Restrooms are Essential for Visitors

The advice contained in this Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential is predicated on addressing the restoration needs of the Colemantown Meeting House, so that appropriate handicapped-accessible restrooms are available for visitors.

Currently the congregation stations a Porto-Potty on the property. This is a temporary and wholly unattractive solution for the congregation members and for visitors. A Porto-Potty is not usable for visitors during the cold weather months due to freezing. Being a gracious host to visitors includes providing appropriate restroom facilities. Until new restroom facilities are available at the Colemantown Meeting House, we do not recommend marketing this site as a visitor destination. This report identifies projects and opportunities for the future when appropriate restroom facilities are available to the public.

² Ibid. 16.

³ Ibid. 76.

⁴ Ibid.

IV. *New Community Development Center Planned*

We understand from the Preservation Plan prepared by Westfield Architects & Preservation Consultants that the “congregation has long-term plans for a new facility on the north side of Elbo Lane that will serve worship and meeting needs without placing additional strain on the historic buildings. The Church and meeting house would then be used primarily for interpretation to the public, but a small addition with a restroom facility attached to the meeting house would still be needed for meetings in the meeting house and for convenience when the buildings are open to the public”⁵. We understand that a new building to be known as the Community Development Center will be constructed in the future. We also understand that “the new development of the site across the street may benefit the historic site by providing support facilities and needed infrastructure, such as adequate, handicapped-accessible parking.”⁶

⁵ Ibid. 77.

⁶ Ibid.

Chapter 2. Short Term Projects

a) WEBSITE UPGRADES

I. Role of Websites in Heritage Tourism

Websites have become increasingly important to all heritage destinations. People planning trips look at the destination's website first to get basic information to determine if they want to make a visit. Historic site website visitors look for open hours, admission fees, photos of the site, maps, contact information, upcoming programs and directions in advance of deciding to make a trip. Without these basic pieces of information available on your website, in a way that is easy to understand and available at any time of day, visitors are unlikely to come to the site, learn more, or financially contribute to the organization.

Observation

Most heritage visitors interested in the rich history of Jacob's Chapel and Colemantown will learn about this historic site via the internet. They will eventually find then either the Church or the Colemantown Foundation's website for trip planning purposes.

There are two websites associated with this historic property. One website is for the Jacob's Chapel AME Church at <http://jacobschapelame.org/>. The other website is for the Jacob's Chapel Colemantown Foundation, Inc. a secular organization founded by the Church to raise funds for the preservation and interpretation of the two historic buildings and cemetery. The Colemantown Foundation Inc.'s website address is <http://www.colemantownfoundation.org/>

A casual visitor planning to come to this historic site now would have to search for basic information that they need to know for a visit: opening hours; admission fees; what they will find; etc. on the Church website. None of the navigation tabs are addressed to visitors, or to those who wish to learn more about the Underground Railroad, book a tour or come and visit for a specific program.

Recommendations

We are suggesting that the Church website add a Visit tab, and provide text and links to the Colemantown Foundation website, where the bulk of visitor information will be lodged.

The Church website Visit tab should have the following information: street address, map, contact us, link to the Colemantown Foundation website, phone number, email address, and links to the major website content in the Colemantown Foundation as suggested below (Home, About, History, Programs, Visit, Press, Donate and Contact Us.)

II. Reorganizing the Colemantown Foundation Website for Visitors

Recent upgrades (January 2015) to the Colemantown Foundation website are quite good. We are suggesting additional improvements to make the website even more helpful for visitors in the future, as a repository about the Underground Railroad history and encouraging more involvement by the public in the stories and history of the site.

The current JCCF website navigation makes sense, but could include more basic information for visitors. The current navigation tabs includes: Home, About, Programs, Events/News, Book a Tour, Blog, Contact Us, and Join the Journey. We are suggesting some modest reorganization or renaming of navigation tabs to make it easier for visitors to find their way around the website.

Our suggested new navigation is: Home, About, History, Programs, Visit, Press and Contact Us. In addition, we propose two new tabs, History and Donate, and additional content for these.

A. Home Page

The Home page now has a good general overview of the JCCF and its role as steward of these two buildings. The current text about impact and mission is very well written. The slide show on the home page now that we viewed on January 20, 2015 is a fine representation of the historic site and showed the variety of projects and opportunities for visitors. We suggest adding captions to each of the 11 slides to help visitors understand the programs offered. We also suggest adding a photo of the exterior of each building in the slide show.

The click through links at the bottom of the page all work and provide good navigation through the site. The right sidebar is consistent throughout the site, and for the homepage we suggest that this be changed to a brief paragraph about the stewardship role of the JCCF and to invite website visitors to support your work through a Donate Now button located at the bottom of the paragraph. The Donate Now button should appear several places in the website, but its placement on the home page is the most important.

B. About Tab

This page should have basic information which may be redundant but needs to be repeated here all in one place. This includes the street address, phone number, location map on a map, written directions, email address, and a link to the Contact Us page.

This page can also include a brief history of each property, and an overview of the Underground Railroad and the significance of Colemantown to the network of locations where escaping slaves on their way north would stay. The current paragraphs about the role of the JCCF are a good start and more information is needed.

This page should identify that the property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (when that listing is finalized), a brief explanation of why being listed is important, and a click through to a PDF of the nomination form located under the History Tab (noted below).

The About page should also include a click through to the visitor services map prepared for this project showing the locations and addresses of other nearby African American and Underground Railroad sites. We have identified which of these historic sites have websites, if JCCF includes these as click through as part of the list, then they may be willing to reciprocate to the JCCF. Alternatively a page could be created for the drop down menu called Other Sites to Visit.

Finally, the About page should also have a drop down menu with the list of the JCCF Board members, with a photo of the entire board or individual photos and a brief biography of each person. This page could also have links to PDF documents including your current bylaws, current IRS 990 forms (nonprofit tax return), and a list of current projects of the Foundation with links to the Projects tab page where that project is more fully explained. Posting bylaws, budgets and tax returns promotes organizational transparency for the public.

C. New Tab: History

We are suggesting that a History tab be created for the JCCF website. The landing page should describe the variety of materials available on separate pages which are navigated through a drop-down menu. We suggest the following sub-pages.

1. A timeline of the history of the site from the Preservation Plan
2. Links to a brief history page about each building, the Cemetery, Colemantown, the Church's role in the Underground Railroad and its role in the Mt. Laurel Housing Decisions (all of this can come from the text in the Preservation Plan). Links to PDFs of the brochure series (discussed below) would go here as well.
3. National Register Nomination. This page should explain that the nomination has an excellent description of the history and significance of the property and the important people associated with the building. Include a short paragraph about who might want to read this document: Students doing research projects about the property or the Underground Railroad; genealogists; historians; and others interested in the Underground Railroad.
4. The Preservation Plan by Westfield Architects, and all sub-consultant reports. A brief paragraph should describe why the Preservation Plan was created.

5. Genealogical information such as the Cemetery map, list of famous people buried in the cemetery, brief biographies of selected people, and other related information in the Church archives.
6. Links and descriptions of other New Jersey African-American historic sites in the area to visit with links to their websites. Use the Visitor Services map here to show the relative location of the other sites, including street addresses and website links.
7. Historic and new photos with good labels of key buildings and historic features that would interest visitors. This is not a photo gallery of Church related events.
8. Further information, or more information about anything relevant not already in another category.⁷

D. Programs Tab

Right now, the Programs tab lists two programs: TIME and Underground Railroad. We recommend that the TIME program be removed from the JCCF website and returned to the Church website, as it appears to be a Church endeavor, rather than one geared to visitors interested in the history of the two historic properties.

The Programs tab landing page should have a list of all of the sub-pages in a drop down menu explaining the various programs offered by the JCCF. Suggested pages might be:

1. In School Programs/Assemblies about the Underground Railroad
2. School visits to Jacob's Chapel and the Colemantown Meeting House
3. Home School Visits to Jacob's Chapel and the Colemantown Meeting House
4. Adult Group Tours of Jacob's Chapel and the Colemantown Meeting House

Each of these pages should explain the program fully, include photos of an interpreter interacting with a group, any fees for the program, and how to book a program via email or phone. You can also link each of these pages to your Contact Us page, which includes a form to fill out requesting further information. The pages for In School Programs/Assemblies, School Visits and Home School Visits should also identify the target audience for the each, include links to lesson plans and further reading for teachers. We provide advice about lesson plans later in this report.

E. Rename Events/News to "Events"

⁷ Further advice on content for websites for historic sites can also be found in "An Ideal Historic Site Website" www.heritageconsultinginc.com/assets/pdfs/An_Ideal_Historic_Site_Web_Site_Heritage_Consulting_Inc..pdf

This landing page should discuss the upcoming events, whether regular Sunday Tours (see below) or special events offered to the public. Drop down menus can direct website visitors to separate pages where each special event is described in detail. Remember to use high quality photos on your event pages, or make photo albums of each event available on the website itself or through a photo sharing site like Flickr.

It is essential that the Home page include announcements of any upcoming special event(s) with a link to the event page where a visitor could get further information. They should also be able to sign up for a newsletter that contains updated information about the event, or to register for the event if tickets are required. Consider using Eventbrite or other online ticketing platform if you are going to sell tickets in advance. These are fairly easy to set up and costs for using these services should be included in the ticket price. These platforms allow the ticket buyer to use any credit card to purchase their ticket and give immediate receipts for payment.

F. Rename Book a Tour to “Visit”

We have learned in our research about historic sites over the last fifteen years, that 45% visitors do not always want a guided tour.⁸ The breakdown between those that want a guided tour is often generational with older visitors more interested in a guided tour than younger people. Therefore historic sites must offer both guided and self-guided experiences to reach the entire audience for their historic sites.

The self-guided visitor experience at Jacob’s Chapel and the Colemantown Meeting House can be undertaken with PDF versions of the brochure series that we are suggesting in Section Five below. These brochures should be placed on this webpage with a brief description of the content of each brochure. Visitors should be encouraged to download the brochures that interest them before their visit so they can visit at their leisure when the grounds and buildings are available for touring as noted on a regularly updated homepage. The brochure series will include information about the exterior of the buildings, photos of the interiors so visitors can understand the interiors when they are not open for public view, and images of the grave yard.

G. Rename Events/News to “Press”

This tab should be devoted to the articles and other press received about the property. Right now each article is printed in its entirety in a drop down menu. The current drop down list requires the visitor to scroll down the page to see all the listings, which is too long and cumbersome. We recommend the current drop down list be eliminated and a simple list created on the Press page, listing all the news articles by date, with article title, date and newspaper as a click-through to the newspaper website or a PDF of the article itself. This list will grow over time, and this page will become an excellent repository of your press coverage

⁸Reach Museum Advisors, The Love/Hate Relationships with Guided Tours, February 11, 2009 http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum_audience_insight/2009/02/the-lovehate-relationships-with-guided-tours.html

over the years. If you wish to repost the articles on this website, be sure that the JCCF has the express permission from the publisher of each article to do so.

This page should also have high quality color digital images of the exterior and interior of the Church and Meeting House with a brief caption that can be downloaded by the public and other press. Call this the Photo Gallery. These color images should be at least 300DPI, and come with a photography credit from the JCCF. These images should be taken by a professional photographer who will assign his/her rights to the JCCF.

H. Rename Join the Journey to “Donate”

The donation area of the current JCCF Foundation is not obvious with a title Join the Journey. It is also not on the regular navigation page. We recommend that this button be eliminated, and replaced with a Donate Now button placed prominently on the Home Page, and a new tab be created called simply Donate.

This Donate tab should go into further detail about the reasons why someone would contribute to the Jacob’s Chapel Colemantown Foundation. A Donate Now button should also appear here. There should be 2-3 sentences about the work of the Foundation with a call to action such as “Please help us restore these precious buildings” with an obvious button that says donate on it. This button will link to the JCCF PayPal account (or other nonprofit donation website such as Network for Good). The PayPal/Network for Good page for JCCF should offer a series of giving options such as: \$25, \$50, \$100, \$250, \$500, \$1000 or \$2500 giving levels. Make sure there is also a “Chose your own donation” and a blank space for the donor to list the amount they wish to give. If possible, automate a thank you email to the donor immediately after the gift is made, and follow up with a written thank you within a few days. Add your new donor’s name to your email list to be sure you communicate with them regularly throughout the year.

I. Contact Us Tab

The simple form is excellent as is. The drop down message which includes directions using a Google Map is excellent, but also consider adding the street address and phone number to the map page as well -- visitors may find themselves on this page and need the exact street address. The website needs to have a certain amount of redundancy because visitors may be using smart phones during their journey through the site.

III. *Other Churches with extensive visitor information on their websites*

We suggest that the Foundation board members charged with upgrades to the Foundation website look at the following Church websites that provide extensive visitor information for further ideas for programming or visitor services in the future.

Mother Bethel AME Church in Philadelphia has an excellent and very sophisticated website, <http://www.motherbethel.org/Church.php> that focuses on its two key audiences: the Church Congregation, and visitors. The navigation is very simple: Church, Museum, Archives. The Museum tab has extensive drop down menus, and sidebars with click throughs to an online gift shop, virtual tour, testimonials and other information of use to visitors. The Archives tab explains how a visitor can use the archives, materials available online, and other resources of interest.

Another Philadelphia church, Christ Church, is a major tourist attraction in the historic district near the Liberty Bell. Their website serves both congregation members as well as visitors, but visitor information seems to dominate with three tabs: Explore our History, Worship with Us, and Plan Your Visit. See how they organize their website at: <http://www.ChristChurchphila.org/>

Old Pine Street Church in Philadelphia has both a History Tab and series of Quick Links on the left side navigation column (<http://www.oldpine.org/>) aimed at visitors. The majority of this website is focused on Church affairs rather than visitors. Some pages are repeated in both Quick Links and in the History drop-down menu.

b. INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE

Observations

As noted in the Preservation Plan, the Jacob's Chapel complex has two signs used for interpretive purposes. The free standing cemetery sign was placed some years ago by the Questors, a philanthropic history-oriented group, according to Pastor Person. It is made of metal with white lettering on a black background and located at the edge of the gravel driveway in front of the cemetery. The sign offers very brief interpretive information about the cemetery and some of the famous interred there. There is another interpretive sign on the door of the chapel placed there by the DAR, according the Pastor. Both of these signs are in good condition and offer basic, useful information for visitors who arrive outside of normal church opening times.

Recommendations

Exterior interpretive signs tell the story of a history site 24 hours a day, and are helpful for visitors who drop by when the building is closed to visitors. It would be most useful if any new interpretive signage would have contemporary photographs of the interior of the both the Church and the Meeting House, so that visitors who do not arrive when the Church building and Meeting House are open can understand the interior spaces. This interpretive sign should also include text that adds to the existing interpretive signage on the property and provides context to understand the significance of the Church/cemetery site.

In the future, when the Community Development Center is built, it would be smart to place additional directional signage for casual visitors to direct them to the Congregation Office, where they could obtain orientation, maps and brochures. We understand the Preservation Plan project has funding for one interpretive sign which Margaret Westfield will design and have installed. The location of the interpretive sign should be closer to the road in front of Jacob's Chapel, or between the Chapel and the Meeting House so that a visitor could pull off into the gravel parking lot and walk about 200 feet to read it.

c. VISITOR BROCHURES

Observations

We learned that there is currently no general interest visitor brochure about the Jacob's Chapel, the Colemantown Meeting House, or the Cemetery. We were shown a handsome student visit workbook for school children prepared by a Girl Scout Troop and a framed map of the Cemetery prepared by a Boy Scout Troop. Unfortunately, the glass on the Cemetery map was broken and it is not available for visitors. Both are important beginnings of an interpretive program for the buildings and site.

Recommendations

The unique history of Jacob's Chapel and the Colemantown Meeting House necessitates a series of brochures for visitors. This brochure series we are recommending can be developed over time. Topical brochures aimed at lay people should be available for visitors who wish to explore the buildings and the Cemetery at their convenience or when a guide may not be available.

Not all visitors will be interested in both buildings, and the many stories that can be told about each individual structure's history through basic brochures, so that is why a series of brochures on various topics is suggested. Consider making a brochure series that divides up the important interpretive material you wish to convey to visitors. We make recommendations about where these racks should be later in this report.

Our brochure recommendations are based on our review of the National Register Nomination and the Preservation Plan. Much of the material for the brochures can be gleaned from these two documents.

If you choose to do a series of brochures, a gifted writer (paid or volunteer) should prepare them, and they should be laid out (designed) by a talented graphic designer, so that they are consistent in tone and appearance. We include volunteer job descriptions for both of these jobs in other sections below.

I. Suggested brochures for the series include:

- A. Basic visitor brochure about the Church, Colemantown Meeting House, and the Cemetery
- B. Jacob's Chapel and the Underground Railroad
- C. If These Stones Could Talk—brief biographies of men and women interred in the cemetery with a map showing gravestone locations
- D. Colemantown: An African-American Settlement in Mt. Laurel
- E. Jacob's Chapel and our African Methodist Episcopal Church Heritage
- F. Jacob's Chapel's Role in the Mt. Laurel Housing Decisions

II. Brochure design and content

All of the brochures mentioned here should be designed in a consistent format. The brochure size can be either letter or legal size format, and fold all brochures into a standard format for use in a rack card presentation holder. The brochures should be designed in color so they can be printed on a laser printer or by Vista Print or other low cost printer. You may wish to pay to print the brochures on very nice paper, but that might be cost prohibitive and isn't necessary.

Create a consistent design for all brochures as a series. Distinguish one brochure from another by color, number or other visual device. The text size font should be 11 or 12 point if at all possible. Include captions for any photos (10 point). If there are floor plans or site plans, make sure the legends are at least 10 point so visitors can read them. Include at least three to five photos in each brochure and make them large enough to illustrate the point you want to make. Use captions for each photo, including the source of the photo if not the church archives, along the edge of the photo in smaller type (10 point).

Add brochures with new content as suggested above. Most, if not all, of the materials needed to write these brochures is included in the National Register nomination. It would be ideal if all the brochures were written by one person so the "voice" was consistent. Regardless, have an editor review the text of the entire set of brochures to make them consistent in approach and tone and to remove any redundancy between brochures. Use footnotes or references to document all the historical information in the brochures. Include a date on the back of each brochure to indicate when the writing was updated.

III. Brochure Racks and Locations

A brochure rack will be needed, either hanging on a wall or freestanding. You may want to consider having two round racks or buy a larger round rack instead. These racks need to be filled with brochures regularly. We suggest the following locations for the brochure racks: in the narthex of Jacob's Chapel, in the Church office, and in the Meeting House when it reopens.

The rack needs to be checked at least weekly to make sure it is full. Consider an outside rack as a future project. While a covered, outdoor brochure rack for all the brochures would be ideal so that casual visitors would have access to the brochures for self-guided purposes, vandalism may be a concern.

d. REGULAR TOUR SCHEDULE

Observations

There is currently no opportunity for a casual visitor to drop by and have a tour of these two important historic structures or the cemetery, unless they make an appointment with the Pastor. The JCCF Board members we met with on February 2, 2015 seemed interested in being open more often for heritage visitors to the extent that there are sufficient trained volunteer docents to host them. The creation of a well-trained group of volunteer tour guides or docents is essential for this effort, especially when the Pastor is not available to conduct tours. A small group of well-trained volunteer docents/guides is needed to implement any new guided tour or “guide on demand” program as discussed below.

Recommendations

At our November 18, 2014 meeting with Pastor Person, we discussed the need to provide high quality interpretation of the two buildings and cemetery on a regular basis. If the Congregation wishes to make a concerted effort to provide additional tour opportunities for adult visitors, either in groups or during events, then a regular tour schedule needs to be established. The interpretive content of guided and self-guided tours for adults will be different than for School Tours, and a curriculum will be need to train volunteers to offer guided tours or tours on demand (see description of guide on demand on page 20 below).

Public tours should be offered year-round on the same Sunday each month. We are recommending that a simple tour schedule be the first Sunday of the month after the last Church service of the morning. This regular tour should be publicized on both the Church and JCCF websites. This should be viewed as a public service and offered at no charge (donations gladly accepted).

This tour does not have to be extensive or long, but should visit both buildings (once they are available again for visitors) and the cemetery. A 30 to 45 minute tour should be enough time to cover the basics about the site, plus additional time to answer visitor questions. The JCCF would need to identify docents, train them (see below), and schedule them for these regular tours each month.

e. RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

We understand that the JCCF board is small and comprised of both interested citizens and Church members. At our February 2, 2015 meeting there was genuine interest in identifying other groups and individuals to help undertake projects. We suggest that the JCCF consider creating simple volunteer job descriptions to be used to attract both individuals (including students) and groups to assist with projects. Sample volunteer job descriptions for individuals and groups are provided below.

Soliciting individuals to help would go faster if there was an individual willing to serve as a volunteer coordinator. A volunteer coordinator would manage the volunteer recruitment, matching, and management process. The job of the volunteer coordinator is to: develop and gather job descriptions from other volunteers; solicit and recruit individuals to fill the jobs advertised through social media and personal solicitation; match a potential volunteer with a job suitable to them; connect the volunteer to the supervisor for a likely project; check upon the volunteer to make sure they are put to work quickly and are enjoying their work; and finally to organize a recognition event or party each year to celebrate the work of all volunteers. We provide further advice about soliciting volunteers below.

I. Individuals and Student Volunteers

We suggest creating brief volunteer job descriptions that can be used for recruitment purposes, once you decide which jobs are the most appropriate to fill first. For example, if you wish to solicit volunteer tour guides, the leader(s) in charge of that effort must first develop a training curriculum and general tour outline for those interested in providing tours. You will also need to schedule a time for training the volunteers. Once the tour curriculum and training program date is set, you are then ready to recruit for volunteers.

We suggest posting the volunteer job description for tour guides on your Facebook page, on both the Church and JCCF websites, and sending a press release to the regular media list noting the date and time for tour guide training. You might also want to send this press release to other African American historic sites or churches in the area. You might offer to train their tour guides about your site as a way to reciprocate and learn about each other's historic property. You will be more successful if you establish a personal rapport with the leadership of the church or historic site in advance of soliciting them for help.

Other possible tour guide prospects might include college or university history department students, or high school history, honor society, or other community service clubs. To be successful in reaching these organizations, you must make personal contact with the professor/teacher, school administration, or club leadership. Start by identifying likely schools/colleges and university departments, and then the names of their leadership. Send an introductory email with the job description and request for help, and state when you will follow up by telephone. Once you are able to schedule a phone call, explain the benefits to the

students, the training program you will use and identify when and how students can help. Clubs and college students may have months-long lead time to fit this project into the school schedule. Do not rely on just one college/university/school for your prospective tour guides. Contact as many colleges and universities as make sense. Given the church's suburban location with little access to public transportation, students with access to cars are the most likely prospects.

II. Other student volunteer projects

Research projects are ideal opportunities to involve graduate students in history, preservation and architecture in the work of the JCCF. There are a variety of colleges and universities located nearby or in Philadelphia that can be tapped for projects. We have included a preliminary list of New Jersey and Pennsylvania colleges and universities. Likely programs in the Delaware Valley to approach for research projects related to Jacob's Chapel and Colemantown might include:

- A. Bucks County Community College, Newtown Square PA Historic Preservation Certificate Program <http://www.bucks.edu/academics/departments/social-behavioral/historic/>
- B. Delaware State University, Dover DE (Graduate School Historic Preservation) <http://www.desu.edu/arts-humanities-and-social-sciences/historic-preservation-ma>
- C. Drexel University, Philadelphia PA (undergraduate History and Politics Program) <http://www.drexel.edu/histpol/>
- D. Philadelphia University, Philadelphia PA (undergraduate architecture program, emphasis in Historic Preservation) <http://www.philau.edu/archstudies/Concentrations/HistoricPreservation/index.html>
- E. Rowan University, Glassboro NJ (History Department) <http://www.rowan.edu/colleges/chss/departments/history/acad/index.html>
- F. Rutgers University, Camden NJ (History Department), <http://history.camden.rutgers.edu/>
- G. Rutgers University, New Brunswick NJ (undergraduate certificate in public history in the History Department) <http://history.rutgers.edu/undergraduate/public-history-certificate>
- H. Rutgers University New Brunswick NJ (Cultural Heritage and Preservation Studies program) <http://chaps.rutgers.edu/programs/masters-program.html>
- I. The College of New Jersey, Ewing Township NJ (History Department) <http://history.pages.tcnj.edu/>
- J. Temple University, Philadelphia PA (Graduate School History Department, Public History) <http://www.cla.temple.edu/history/graduate-program/>
- K. University of Delaware, Newark DE (Graduate School Historic Preservation Program) <http://www.sppa.udel.edu/content/ma-historic-preservation>

- L. University of Delaware, Newark De (Graduate School Urban Affairs and Public Policy) <http://www.sppa.udel.edu/content/ma-curriculum-and-program-requirements>
- M. University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia PA (Graduate School Historic Preservation program within the Graduate School of Design) <http://www.design.upenn.edu/historic-preservation/work>

As with all efforts to solicit volunteers, the key to success is to interest someone, here preferably a faculty member in the research project so that he /she can pass it along to a qualified student. You will need to make contact with the Department Chair or other faculty in the department to make your approach.

We suggest developing brief descriptions of the research you wish undertaken and the information you have available. For example, you might wish to have additional research conducted on other people interred in the Cemetery to learn more about the people who lived in the Colemantown settlement. The National Register nomination may also contain research avenues that need further exploration.

III. *Groups of Volunteers*

Some volunteer projects might be best for groups that could help for a short period of time, such as directing cars to parking spaces during a Family Fun Day special event. This kind of small group project might be appropriate for a group like a Scout Troop or Youth Sports Team. Groups may need some kind of reciprocal benefit to encourage their participation as volunteers at Jacob's Chapel such as being permitted to share fees, or undertake fundraising for their own efforts as part of their volunteer experience. We call these "quid pro quo" incentives. As with other volunteer opportunities, a brief job description of the project should be developed describing the project, number of hours needed, supervisor's name/contact information, and the "quid pro quo incentive" that would be permitted. See one sample volunteer job description below.

f. VOLUNTEER DOCENT CORPS

Observations

Providing regular tours of historic sites is an important way to build an audience. By offering regular tours, rather than permitting appointment-only visits, you will be able to reach more people, and offer a valued service for those interested in Underground Railroad and African American History.

Recommendations

We are recommending that the JCCF develop a volunteer tour guide (also called docent) training program so there is a group of trained and skilled people who can offer tours on a regular basis at Jacob's Chapel, the Colemantown Meeting House and Cemetery.

We recommend training docents for two specific kinds of jobs: as a tour guide for occasional or once a month public tours (see Section 6 above about regular scheduled tours) and as a "guide on demand" to be stationed in one location at either in the Chapel, Meeting House, or at the Cemetery to provide brief interpretative remarks about that space/location if approached by a visitor during a large event, when tours might be too difficult to manage.

Starting a tour program will require inspired leadership from the JCCF. One person needs to be the leader of the effort, preferably someone trained as a teacher of adults. They would need to create the tour program and a curriculum. We recommend using *Great Tours!: Thematic Tours and Guide Training for Historic Sites*, as a starting point for developing a curriculum and training process for Jacob's Chapel and Colemantown Meeting House tour training.⁹

Regular tours held on the first Sunday of the month would be the primary work of the docent corps. A docent would be scheduled for that time period, whether there are visitors or not. The regular schedule for tours should be publicized on the websites of the Church and JCCF, on the Church and Foundation Facebook pages, and a press release sent each month to local media. Other publicity sources would be identified over time.

This docent corps can also be used as a "guide on demand" as mentioned above. The purpose of a guide on demand is to provide information to a visitor when they approach the guide for further information. The docent does not offer remarks or a "canned" recitation unless asked by a visitor, thus offering the visitor a self-guided experience.

An important 2009 article based on national research of audiences who visit historic sites notes that 55% of visitors to historic sites dislike guided tours and prefer to visit "on their own" and at their own pace.¹⁰ A guide on demand provides visitors with additional information beyond a written brochure and adds to their enjoyment, while still permitting them to visit at their own speed.¹¹ Historic sites must be able to provide both experiences—a typical guided tour, as well

⁹Levy Barbara Abramoff, Sandra Mackenzie Lloyd and Susan Porter Schreiber. *Great Tours! Thematic Tours and Guide Training for Historic Sites*, Nashville TN: American Association for State and Local History, 2002.

¹⁰ Reach Museum Advisors, *The Love/Hate Relationships with Guided Tours*, February 11, 2009. http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum_audience_insight/2009/02/the-lovehate-relationships-with-guided-tours.html.

¹¹ Reach Museum Advisors, *Interpretation Preferences: How 40,000 museum-goers prefer to experience museums*, May 19, 2010. http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum_audience_insight/2010/05/interpretation-preferences-how-40000-museumgoers-prefer-to-experience-museums.html.

as a self-guided experience—because providing only one or the other will alienate half of your visitors based on this research.

g. VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Observations

We understand that the Pastor provides virtually all of the tours to visitors. We believe that having a group of trained tour guides and a published regular tour schedule will help boost attendance and knowledge about Jacob's Chapel as noted earlier in this report.

Recommendations

To facilitate the completion of a variety of volunteer projects related to upgrading the visitor experience at Jacob's Chapel and the Colemantown Meeting House when the congregation returns to use the buildings, we prepared these brief volunteer job descriptions for use to solicit volunteers for these jobs. Please consider them drafts and add detail as needed.

We suggest placing one or two of these volunteer job descriptions in the church newsletter or on the congregation and Colemantown Foundation websites to solicit volunteers. A coordinator is needed to be the contact person should a volunteer come forward, to make a match and get the volunteer started as soon as possible on the work.

Many of the small projects we are recommending can be accomplished by dedicated volunteers. To attract people to these jobs, we suggest that simple volunteer job descriptions be created to discuss what needs to be done and to interest someone in speaking with a JCCF Board member in charge of implementing the project. All of the job descriptions should have current contact for the job supervisor should a volunteer step forward to offer their help.

Below we list some very simple volunteer job descriptions that can we hope will spark some interest in these projects.

I. Writer/Editor of Church history brochure(s)

A skilled writer and editor is needed to create one or more history brochures based on the information contained in the National Register Nomination. This project will take about a month or more, and involve reading the Nomination and the history chapter of the recently completed Preservation Plan and writing copy and captions for the brochure(s). The writer/editor will have to identify historic and current photos to illustrate these brochures and obtain the rights to them if they are owned by others. The writer/editor should identify how many brochures and the topics. This volunteer will work with a designer (see brief description

below) to produce the Church history brochure series for visitors. The supervisor for this project should be a JCCF Board member or a Jacob's Chapel Board member.

II. Designer of Church history brochure(s)

A skilled graphic designer is needed to create a design concept for one or more brochures on various aspects of the history and heritage of Jacob's Chapel and Colemantown Meeting House. The designer should work with a writer/editor (above) who will provide the copy, captions, photos and work with a JCCF Board member on display options for the folded brochures. We estimate that this project will take less than a month to complete. The brochure should be made printed in color on high quality paper, and be available at the Church and Meeting House. The brochure(s) should also be uploaded to the Colemantown Foundation website as PDF documents so interested people can download them or print them before their visit. The supervisor for this project should be a JCCF Board member.

III. Coordinator for docent corps

A current teacher or retired educator of adults is needed to manage and create a new volunteer guide or docent program for Jacob's Chapel. This program will identify and train adults to provide tour guide and "guide on demand" services as noted above. The coordinator will create a curriculum and training program as suggested in the *Great Tours!* book mentioned previously. An ideal number of volunteer docents for the first year of this effort would be eight (8) to start. These volunteer docents would not be costumed interpreters or reenactors. These docents would provide guided tours as needed for regular tour schedule or for other groups of visitors.

We anticipate that designing the curriculum and sourcing materials for docents to read would take several months. Preparing a short training program, say a four to six hour training, would take an additional month. Working with volunteer guides as they prepare their presentations and training them on its delivery would take another few months. The coordinator would also take charge of scheduling these docents for monthly tours of the property on a selected Sunday each month throughout the year. The coordinator does not need to be present at the tours, but make sure that there is at least one guide available as needed. The coordinator will also schedule docents to work during large events when the public visits the site. The supervisor for this project should be a JCCF Board member.

IV. Coordinator for cemetery database

A volunteer interested in Underground Railroad history is needed to review, and update current information about the church cemetery so that a complete list of those interred in the cemetery can be uploaded to the Foundation's website. Photos of key views and monuments have already been taken as part of an earlier Eagle Scout project, but these need to be reviewed and coordinated with the database. We estimate that this work would take a few months to

complete. The supervisor for this project is a member of the JCCF Board or Jacob's Chapel AME Church Trustee.

V. Archivist and scanner of key archival documents for website

A volunteer interested in local and church history is needed to work in the archives and with the Pastor to identify key archival documents that can be scanned and uploaded to the Foundation's website for public viewing. Architectural plans, reports and materials produced about the restoration of the Jacob's Chapel and the Colemantown Meeting House should be prepared and scanned for upload as PDF documents to the website. This work might be ongoing or undertaken in a concentrated period of time. The supervisor for this project is a member of the JCCF Board.

VI. Coordinator reciprocal tourism links

A volunteer is needed to help coordinate with other African American historic sites in the general vicinity (see Appendix A- Updated Visitor Amenities Map) to establish reciprocal web links with their historic sites/tourism entities including the updated web links to new tourism materials on the Foundation's website. This work will involve contacting the sites illustrated on the visitor services map and others to seek their help in creating an appropriate web link to the Foundation page from their website. This work might take a few months. An explanation of reciprocal web links and their value is in the next chapter of this report. The supervisor for this work should be the person that manages the Foundation's website.

VII. Group Project parking lot assistance

A supervised group of 10 people (over 12 years old) are needed to help Jacob's Chapel AME Church manage and direct visitors to the parking lot during the Family Fun Day to be held on May 9, 2015. This is a perfect opportunity for a School or Church club, Boy or Girl Scout Troop, School team or other organized group of students to work together and earn funds for their project. The church expects to charge a small fee of \$2.00 per car to park on the church property on Elbo Lane; this fee would be split with the group if they were willing to staff the lot with two responsible adults and at least 10 other people who would help direct visitors to the lot, and point them to the correct parking spots. The lot can hold up to 400 cars. Anticipated hours would be from 7AM until 5PM for one day. The church will provide a parking map, safety vests for all, striping of the lot, and work with the Township police to direct traffic. The volunteer group would have to be available for the entire time, and work closely with a supervisor who is a volunteer in charge of this aspect of the special event, a Board member of the JCCF.

In the next chapter of this report we will identify four longer term projects that the JCCF Board of Directors can undertake within the next three to five years, once some of the short term projects have been completed.

Chapter 3. Longer Term Projects

a. LESSON PLANS

At our meeting on with the Colemantown Foundation board members on February 2, 2015, there was considerable interest in solidifying the existing relationship with the Mt. Laurel public schools and expanding the current educational programming to other school districts and counties and to the home school community in the area.

I. Understanding State Education Standards

There has been much discussion about the need to create quality educational experiences at historic sites so that teachers have a reason to make the effort to visit. Nationwide, historic site educators have noticed a dramatic decline in school visits since the 2007 Recession. But even with the upswing in the economy in the last two years, student visits to historic sites have not returned to previous levels.

Part of the reason why school groups have not returned, is because of the 2002 federal legislation No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) where the focus has been “teaching to the test”. A blog post from the American Association for State and Local History explains why teachers have not made school visits a priority. This blog post also provides an excellent, real world example of how an educator at a Georgia historic site was able to understand the state standards as they apply to his historic site and identify teaching objectives that made sense for his historic property <http://blogs.aaslh.org/where-are-the-school-groups/>.

We have learned in our work with historic sites in New Jersey that state educational standards also change every five to seven years, either because of Federal mandates, state department personnel changes or because of changing political whims. Teachers must present educational materials that fit within the Core Curriculum Standards to their students. Historic sites are challenged with making their interpretive story “fit” within these standards. The curriculum standards for Social Studies can be found here: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/history.htm>. If historic sites cannot fit their interpretation within the learning goals and objectives of the State Standards, and document that they do, by providing lesson plans and follow-up materials for teachers, then teachers are unlikely to make the effort to visit.

The second article in this blog series talks about working with teachers to excite them about your historic site by creating the curriculum materials they need to justify the time and expense

to make a visit: <http://blogs.aaslh.org/where-are-all-the-school-groups-part-2-teachers/>. We recommend that Board members interested in the school programs review these materials.

Observations

During our meeting on November 18, 2014 at Jacobs Chapel, we learned that the Pastor provides most of the interpretive programming for schools. We asked several times to review the presentation materials used, but they have yet to be provided to us. We also understand from our meeting with JCCF Board members, that there are no lesson plans for any of the presentations.

We understand that the Pastor recognizes that school visits to Jacob's Chapel might be limited, and has embarked on a program to send a costumed interpreter into the schools as either a classroom activity or student assembly. Offering several educational options, such as an in school visit or class trip are an excellent ways to expand the educational reach of the JCCF. In school class room visits or assemblies, like any school visit to the historic buildings, must have lesson plans that directly relate to grade appropriate NJ State Curriculum standards. There are many resources to help historic sites create appropriate lesson plans based on the state standards and we detail them below.

Recommendations

Any educational program about Jacob's Chapel designed for schools should be grounded in the current New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. Student learning must comply with the state curriculum. Fitting the story of Jacob's Chapel into the state core curriculum content standards will make it easier for teachers to justify the time (and pay for) both your In School Programs and Class Trips to Jacob's Chapel.

We believe that once lessons plans are available and the presentation is rethought to conform to the NJ Standards Curriculum and learning objectives that are being taught in the NJ schools, that there will be far more interest in the educational programming of the Foundation. Below we review the state curriculum standards and identify several other historic sites that have created lesson plans around the key interpretive themes for Jacob's Chapel and the Colemantown Meeting House.

II. New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards

The long-term goal for social studies as taught in the New Jersey public schools, is to ensure that K-12 students go on to develop a "deep understanding of concepts that enable students to think critically and systematically about local, regional, national, and global issues." There are three standards: Standard 6.1 U.S. History: America in the World; Standard 6.2 World History/Global Studies; and Standard 6.3 Active Citizenship in the 21st Century. Each of these has the following four sub-categories: (A) Civics, Government, and Human Rights; (B)

Geography, People, and the Environment; (C) Economics, Innovation, and Technology; and (D) History, Culture, and Perspectives.

The history of Jacobs Chapel and the themes that emerge lend themselves to answer questions in several of these areas, especially within Civics, Government, and Human Rights, and History, Culture, and Perspectives, within any of the three larger categories. The ways in which these themes and topics should be organized and disseminated to students must vary by school year (grammar school, middle school, high school). As students get older, they can and should understand not only the information but also timing within history. The social studies curriculum includes much more detail of how this breaks down for each category and sub-category.

Please refer to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for Social Studies at this location: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/standards/6/6.pdf>. A veteran teacher with a teaching certificate will be familiar with these Curriculum Standards and how to apply them in practice. Perhaps a teacher in the Congregation might be willing to take on this critical project.

III. Revise educational content at Jacob's Chapel

After your review of the social studies curriculum standards, it would be wise to review the content of the educational materials being shared with students at Jacob's Chapel. Reconsider whether the materials being presented are truly grade appropriate. Since we have not seen the material being presented we are not able to make specific comments. However, we suspect that much of the material being presented now to fourth grade visitors might be far too complex for them to fully comprehend and appreciate. We recommend working with a long time educator to review the core curriculum standards and create grade appropriate lesson plans for Jacob's Chapel for grammar school, middle school and high school grades. Your educational programming will have to be tailored to the teaching requirements of each group.

IV. Sample Lesson Plans

All lesson plan materials presented below were selected for their relevance to the historical topics related to Jacobs Chapel and their compliance with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards.

A. Local Sources for Lesson Plans

1. New Jersey State Library African American History Curriculum Guide: Grades 9 to 12

The New Jersey State Library offers through its African American History Curriculum a holistic resource for grades 9-12 that focuses specifically on the intersections of American, Black

American, and New Jersey history. The larger curriculum is broken down into 15 Units. Units 3-6 deal with early slavery up through the end of the Civil War, 1619-1865.

Each Unit includes readings that students can review in advance, activities to meet various objectives, key persons for the time and subject, printable teaching materials, and a bibliography for educators. Unit 5: Slavery and Abolition in Post-Revolutionary and Antebellum America, 1790-1960 even includes a list of related historical sites for students to visit. Jacobs Chapel is among the sites listed. The entire curriculum is available free online through the Library's

website: http://www.njstatelib.org/research_library/new_jersey_resources/digital_collection/african_american_history_curriculum/.

2. New Jersey Women's History

New Jersey Women's History has developed a lesson plan aimed at middle-school aged children that deals with slavery in the state of New Jersey, with a focus especially on enslaved women. This PDF document includes brief history write-ups and a short bibliography of sources for further research. Their activities for students use different skills such as reading, researching and discussion. The discussion activities deal with use images of eight historical documents they have included to be printed out. These are a combination of documents with text, historic drawings and photographs. They also include a part of the lesson plan that gives guidance on how the students can approach reading the documents.

The penultimate section deals with the specific New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards that this lesson plan meets. It can be downloaded online for free from the following address: <http://www.njwomenshistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Slavery-in-New-Jersey.pdf>.

3. Bergen County Technical Schools

This resource is titled, "A Look at Slavery in New Jersey" and features two lesson plans, one for middle school, and one for high school. The strength of these is the local focus of the material. Both lesson plans were written by local public school teachers. They each mention which New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards they meet. They include bulleted lists of what students will come to understand, their activities in the projects, and the skills and knowledge they will gain or improve upon. Each lesson plan is organized differently but provides good examples of how people with years of teaching experience organize this information based on the State Standards. Both lesson plans are available here: http://sites.bergen.org/ourstory/Resources/slave&war/Slavery_NJ.htm.

4. Rutgers University

Rutgers University houses the New Jersey Center for Civic Education. On their website there is a page dedicated to New Jersey History and Government lesson plans organized into two age groups: Upper Elementary and Secondary. In the first age group is included a lesson on the Underground Railroad in New Jersey, and in the second age group there is a lesson on Slavery in New Jersey. Both are very detailed and well-organized and are valuable resources for reaching a large age range. They include handouts to distribute to students. These lesson plans are available as Word Documents and can provide either a document for immediate use or a basis to build off of when developing a Jacob's Chapel lesson plan. They are found on this web page within the listed lessons at the bottom: <http://civiced.rutgers.edu/njlessons.html>.

B. National Sources for Lesson Plans

1. Library of Congress

The Library of Congress has a lesson plan about Slavery in the United States that focuses on analyzing and reading historical sources and records. It is geared toward grades 6-12 and available here: <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/slavery/index.html>.

Not only does the Library have lesson plans available but also classroom presentations. These can serve as an example of how to organize engaging lesson material into a presentation for this age range. A more general presentation entitled, "From Slavery to Civil Rights: A Timeline of African-American History" is available from the Library of Congress website here: <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/civil-rights/>.

All Library of Congress educational materials allow you to look up which Core Curriculum and State Curriculum standards each educational resource meets. They provide a detailed account of each theme and sub-category these meet for the New Jersey Core Curriculum.

2. National Park Service

The National Park Service has created an initiative called Teaching with Historic Places. The materials they have created use properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places to bring the social sciences to life for students. They have different products and activities available for teachers. These include a step-by-step process for developing a Teaching with Historic Places Lesson. This resource is ideal for developing teaching materials unique to Jacob's Chapel. The tutorial is available here: <http://www.abolitionseminar.org/lesson-plans/>. This can be used in conjunction with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards to develop a lesson plan and activities that are appropriate for use with New Jersey schoolchildren.

V. Additional Resources for Lesson Plans

National Education Association; Five Free Underground Railroad
Resources: <http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/50644.htm>.

The Library Company of Philadelphia and National Endowment for the Humanities; The
Abolition Seminar, Lesson Plans: <http://www.abolitionseminar.org/lesson-plans/>.

National Underground Railroad Freedom Center; Lesson
Plans: <http://freedomcenter.org/educators/lesson-plans>.

Public Broadcasting Services; Slavery and the Making of American Lesson
Plans: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/teachers/lessons.html>.
Public Broadcasting Services Learning Media, Slavery in the North

b) RECIPROCAL WEB LINKS

Observations

One way to expand tourist knowledge about Jacob's Chapel and the Colemantown Meeting House is to create reciprocal links with other like-minded organizations and with African American and Underground Railroad historic sites in New Jersey and around the country. Currently the JCCF has no links to other Underground Railroad historic sites or African American historic sites. Reciprocal web links can drive web traffic to the JCCF website, and will place JCCF higher in search rankings when people are searching for the site or the themes that you interpret at the properties.

Recommendations

We recommend approaching the following organizations to seek their help in creating reciprocal web links to Jacob's Chapel and the Colemantown Meeting House pages once restoration is complete for either or both properties.

We do not recommend obtaining links to these sites until the two properties are properly restored and that there is an interpretive program for the complex in place. We fear that making an effort to publish links to the site now, when the congregation is not able to use the property, will disappoint visitors who come, and who are not able to visit the interiors of the buildings. Without brochures or a regular tour schedule the visitor will be frustrated and will likely not return. It will be essential to have visitor amenities such as barrier-free restrooms and handicapped parking spaces when you begin to advertise your site through web links and encourage increased visitor traffic.

Our research identified many other websites that would be worth approaching to create web links between sites. We also include a volunteer job description in the section below for this particular project.

I. *Web sites for reciprocal web links*

A. State of New Jersey official tourism website

There is no link or mention of Jacob's Chapel on the State of New Jersey official tourism website <http://www.visitnj.org/>. Again, we do not recommend listing Jacob's Chapel on this website until a restroom is available, brochures and interpretive materials have been developed, and the congregation is able to use the buildings again.

We suggest that the following websites would be logical to create reciprocal links. Start by listing these sites on the JCCF website and then ask these sites to create a link to the JCCF page on their website.

Please note, that an indicates that this historic site is present on the visitor services map located in the appendix.*

B. National Underground Railroad Sites

1. National Underground Railroad Freedom Center

Website: <http://www.freedomcenter.org/>

Comments: This national group celebrates the heroes of the Underground Railroad. The headquarters are in Ohio, but the themes and stories connect well to those in Burlington County, NJ.

C. New Jersey Historic Sites

1. New Jersey Underground Railroad and African American History Sites

The Underground Railroad Tour Guide

Website: <http://www.tourburlington.org/TourUGRR.html>

Comments: This website outlines a self-guided tour of significant sites in African American history, notably related to the Underground Railroad in and around Burlington, NJ. It describes eight sites along an approximately 1.5 mile distance, including: The City of Burlington Historic District, Burlington Island, Bethlehem African Methodist Episcopal Church, Oliver Cromwell House, Grubb Estate, Burlington Pharmacy, Friends Meetinghouse, and William R. Allen School.

2. Historic Burlington City, NJ Blog

Website: <http://burlington1677.blogspot.com/>

Comments: Information on various historical sites and figures in Burlington City, New Jersey; with links to blog posts on many specific sites, individuals, and groups under the categories of General Information, Historical Organizations, Historic Sites, Historic Figures, and Assorted History. This includes information on three sites and two people, all five of which are on our map: Burlington Pharmacy, Burlington Island, Burlington Meeting House, William R. Allen, and Oliver Cromwell.

3. New Jersey Historic Trust

Website: <http://www.njht.org/dca/njht/>

Comments: The New Jersey Historic Trust was created by law in 1967 to preserve New Jersey's historic resources across the state. The Mission of the Trust is to advance historic preservation in New Jersey for the benefit of future generations through education, stewardship and financial investment programs that save our heritage and strengthen our communities. This site outlines their process and links to numerous resources, including links to the historic sites, notably the James Still House and Jacob's Chapel.

4. Tour Guide to African American Historic Sites in Burlington County New Jersey

Website: <http://www.co.burlington.nj.us/DocumentCenter/View/1337>

Comments: This downloadable PDF outlines a self-guided tour of significant sites in African American history in and around Burlington County, NJ. It describes sixteen sites, including: New Jersey Manual Training and Industrial School for Colored Youth, William R. Allen School, Burlington Pharmacy, Oliver Cromwell House, Burlington Island, Bethlehem African Methodist Episcopal Church, Burlington Friends Meeting House, Wesley African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Timbuctoo, John Woolman Memorial House, Office of Dr. James Still, Dr. George Haines House, Isaac Evans/Thomas Evans House, Jacob's Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Elisha Barcklow House, and Trinity African Methodist Episcopal Church.

5. *Historic Images of Burlington Island, Burlington, NJ

Website: <http://www.westjerseyhistory.org/images/Burlington/burlingtonisland/index.shtml>

Comments: This site has a set of historic photos of Burlington Island.

6. *Burlington Friends Meeting House and Center for Conference, Burlington, NJ

Website: <http://burilmhcc.org/>

Comments: The website for the Burlington Meeting House includes information about its history and artifacts as well as its current activities. The Friends helped to catalyze the anti-slavery movement, and this meeting house's burial ground holds the remains of African

American clock and watchmaker Peter Hill (1767-1820).

7. *Wesley African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Burlington, NJ

Website: <http://wesleyamez.org/>

Comments: The website for the Wesley AME Zion Church, with current information and the history of the AME denomination.

8. *Timbuctoo Discovery Project, Westampton, NJ

Website: <http://www.timbuctoodiscovery.com/>

Comments: This site outlines the Timbuctoo Discovery Project, uncovering artifacts of the former Timbuctoo village, founded around 1820 by free blacks and runaway slaves.

9. *The Secret Town Fed by the Underground Railroad, Timbuctoo, Westampton, NJ

Website: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=128754990>

Comments: This is a link to the NPR story on the history of the Timbuctoo village and the archaeological discoveries there.

10. *John Woolman Memorial Association, Mt Holly, NJ

Website: <http://woolmancentral.com/JWMA.html>

Comments: A basic history of the site, with a link to information on first property owner John Woolman, who fought throughout his life to end slavery.

11. *Office of Dr. James Still, Medford, NJ

Website: <http://www.state.nj.us/pinelands/about/events/handouts/handouts/StillOffice.pdf>

Comments: A downloadable PDF with the history of Dr. James Still, "Black doctor of the Pines" and a brief description of the proposal to develop it into a "first class historic site."

12. *Borough of Lawnside, NJ

Website: <http://www.lawnside.net/>

Comments: This is the town's website, with a thorough history on the home page, highlighting the borough's importance to African American history as an early black settlement of freed and escaped slaves.

13. *Lawnside Historical Society: The Story of the Peter Mott House, Lawnside, NJ

Website: <http://www.petermotthouse.org/museum.html>

Comments: This site outlines the history and importance of the Peter Mott House to the Underground Railroad.

14. *The Benson History Museum, Lawnside, NJ

Website: <http://www.thebensonhistorymuseum.org/>

Comments: The website for this Lawnside, NJ museum outlines the area's importance and the museum's collections, although the building is temporarily closed for construction. This museum tells the story of the African American community of Lawnside.

c. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

There are a variety of funding sources to pay for small historical projects that might be produced based on the advice in this report. We provide some general information here, but we recommend that you read the grant guidelines in detail to make sure the project qualifies and that they will accept applications from the Jacob's Chapel Colemantown Foundation, your secular fundraising organization. Some of these funding sources specifically prohibit churches from making applications.

I. *New Jersey Sources*

A. New Jersey Historic Trust History License Plate Fund

Deadline: Anytime throughout the fiscal year, July 1 – June 30, until the annual allocation has been exhausted.

Maximum Allotment: \$5,000

Description: The Discover NJ History License Plate Fund provides small grants to develop and promote visitor-ready sites as heritage tourism destinations. Eligible applicants are agencies or entities of state, county or municipal government and nonprofit organizations organized under the New Jersey Nonprofit Corporation Act that qualify for tax-exempt status under Section 501(c) 3 of the Internal Revenue code and are current with their NJ Charitable Registration. These technical assistance grants may be used to promote interpretation, marketing links among heritage sites; to assess visitor-readiness of a heritage site or sites; to establish performance evaluation systems; and to provide training initiatives, workshops and educational activities that foster the goals and objectives of the NJ Heritage Tourism Plan. This is the most likely source of support of all listed in this section.

B. *New Jersey Historical Commission*

The information below is from the NJHC website. If you plan to make an application, please check it to make sure dates and funding programs are current.

General Operating Support Grant

Deadline for Fiscal Year 2017 (assuming similar each year):

Intent to Apply: March 1, 2016

Application Deadline: April 5, 2016

Notification: July 2016

Funding Level: Minimum Request: \$5,000

Budgets under \$30,000: \$5,000 to \$10,000

Budgets of \$30,000 or more: Up to 33 percent of the average of the non-state operating income from the last completed fiscal year and the current fiscal year.

Description: The New Jersey Historical Commission is a state agency within the Department of State dedicated to the advancement of public knowledge and preservation of New Jersey history. All of its grant funding is provided by legislative appropriation.

ELIGIBILITY: Operating support grants are available only to organizations. There are general standards of eligibility as well as specific requirements for programs. For details regarding eligibility see guidelines available on website. All applicants will be notified of grant decisions. **(The next two-year cycle begins in FY 2017.)** Successful applicants will receive notification of the grant award for FY 2017 and a provisional commitment to fund for FY 2018.

The NJHC GOS grants might be a good source for support to develop a larger, multi-phase program to address many of the projects identified in the recommendations section.

Project Grants

Project Grants and Mini-grants Deadlines for fiscal year 2016:

Intent to Apply: April 1, 2015

Application Deadline: May 1, 2015

Notification: July 2015

Funding Level for Project Grants: \$3,000-\$15,000

Funding Level for Round I Mini-grants: Up to \$3,000

Description- Project Grants: Funding is available for expenses of specific projects relating to New Jersey history. Eligible categories include conservation of historical materials (manuscripts, books, costumes, historical visuals); editorial and publication projects; educational initiatives; exhibitions; media (films, radio, videotape, digital media); public programs; and research (including archaeological projects, fellowships, oral history, and National and New Jersey Registers of Historic Places nominations).

Description- Mini-grants: Mini-grants provide support for smaller projects related to New Jersey history. Applicants may request support for planning (long-term, strategic, and interpretive) but they may not use Mini-grant funds for other types of operating support. Eligible categories include conservation of historical materials (manuscripts, books, costumes, historical visuals); editorial and publication projects; educational initiatives; exhibitions; media (films, radio, videotape, digital media); public programs; and research (including archaeological projects, fellowships, oral history, and National and New Jersey Registers of Historic Places nominations).

C. New Jersey Humanities Council

Grant Types	Maximum Request	Draft Application Deadline	Final Application Deadline	Notification of Decision	For Projects Taking Place
Major	\$20,000	April 1 September 1	May 1 October 1	June November	August 1, 2015 or later January 1, 2016 or later
Mini	\$3,000	January 15 April 15 July 15 October 15	February 16 May 15 August 17 November 16	March June September December	May 1, 2015 or later August 1, 2015 or later November 1, 2015 or later February 1, 2016 or later
Humanities Festival	\$500	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD

For major and Mini-grants, applicants must provide at least a 1:1 match (cash and/or in-kind) for every dollar requested from the Council.

Description: The New Jersey Council for the Humanities invites New Jersey-based nonprofit organizations and public entities to submit requests for funding in support of their public humanities projects. The Council regularly receives applications from public libraries, historical societies, museums, arts groups, service organizations and institutions of higher education. The Council does NOT provide grants to individuals.

Eligible applicants include:

- Registered New Jersey nonprofit organizations
- Local, state, and federal government agencies operating within New Jersey
- Registered New Jersey or out-of-state nonprofit organizations sponsoring a film about a New Jersey subject

Grants are awarded through a competitive review process several times each year. As a state partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Council receives federal funding for its grants program.

To be considered for support, projects are required to:

- Have the humanities at their core
- Actively involve a humanities scholar
- Involve public discussion of and/or distribution of humanistic work
- Present objective points of view
- Feature free and open access for any public events (Nominal donations may be requested but cannot be required for admission. Regular museum entrance fees may be collected, but no additional fee may be charged for a funded exhibit or event.)

NJCH encourages projects that:

- Present fresh and original ideas
 - Present traditional ideas in new and novel ways
 - Foster public discourse
 - Promote cross-cultural understanding
 - Exhibit contemporary relevance
 - Involve intended audiences in the planning process
 - Examine issues of public policy
- Provide free humanities resources to the public

NJCH does not fund:

- Direct social action or political advocacy
- Projects that provide academic credit, scholarships, fellowships, or regular course offerings
- Projects focusing on teaching methodology
- Research monographs
- Research or individual scholarship not connected with a public program
- Programs that charge admission (Nominal donations may be requested but cannot be required for admission. Regular museum entrance fees may be collected, but no additional fee may be charged for a funded exhibit or event.)
- Scholarly programs directed at a limited audience
- The performing arts

D. *New Jersey State Council on the Arts*

Deadlines for Organizational Grant Programs (The next three-year cycle begins in FY 2017):

Notice of Intent to Apply: Wednesday, December 17, 2014 for all grant categories

Application Deadlines: Wednesday, February 4, 2015 for all grant categories

General Program Support (GPS) Grant

Description: Support for the costs of full-time, ongoing public arts programs that are maintained by nonprofit organizations, agencies, institutions or units of local to help underwrite the expense of presenting major, ongoing arts programs. This grant category is open to a variety of organizations that produce or present on-going public arts programs

E Cultural Trust Grants

Deadlines for Institutional & Financial Stabilization Grants: not listed

Description: Operated in collaboration with the New Jersey Cultural Trust and the New Jersey Historical Commission, this program provides Cultural Trust grants for projects that help organizations increase their financial and operational stability and build their capacity. The Arts Council designs and manages the program that solicits and reviews applications from arts organizations and recommends awards to the Cultural Trust. To be eligible an organization first be designated as "qualified" by the New Jersey Cultural Trust.

Arts Project Support (APS) Grant

Description: Support for a single arts event that upholds high standards of artistry, management and accountability and provides significant public benefit. A project is defined as a public activity or event that occurs once during the year either as a single day or weekend presentation, or a series of the same presentation occurring within a very limited and specific timeframe generally not exceeding six (6) weeks. Examples include: a concert, an exhibition, a reading, the run of a single theatrical production, or a festival.

Please note: This category does not support on-going or multiple programs or an annual series of events or the general operations of the sponsoring organization.

The project must be wholly dedicated to the arts and the applicant should clearly demonstrate its commitment to the arts project through the allocation of its resources and funds raised from the community. Applicants unclear about the distinctions between a project and a general on-going program as defined here should contact the Council staff.

Please note: General Operating and General Program Support grantees or applicants are not permitted to also apply for APS grants except in Folk Arts.

F. Other funding opportunities

There are federal grants from the Institute of Library and Museum Services that may be worth considering. We suggest viewing their website to determine if the projects of the JCCF might be eligible: <http://www.ims.gov/applicants/default.aspx>.

Small grants are also available from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Their Preservation Grants from the National Trust Preservation Funds encourage preservation at the local level by providing seed money for planning and education projects. Grants range from \$2,500 to \$5,000 and require a dollar-for-dollar match. Full eligibility requirements and grant guidelines, along with a link to their application, can be found at <http://www.preservationnation.org/funding>. These grants are highly competitive, since they are drawing applications from the entire nation.

As with any grant application, you are wise to talk to staff of the foundation/organization first before making the effort to send in a complete grant application. Many funders may want a brief overview of your project, such as a letter of intent, to see if it fits their guidelines before accepting applications. This is worth the time to do, and will sharpen up your application if you do eventually apply.

A thorough search of the now online Foundation Directory would also be a worthwhile effort to identify possible grants from area foundations: <https://fconline.foundationcenter.org/>.

Finally, it would be wise to contact both your State Senator and Assembly person, as well as your Congress person and Senators to get their advice on grants and appropriations available from the state or federal government outside of traditional granting agencies.

d. FUTURE PROJECTS

Observations

There will be several opportunities for interpretation in the future when the two buildings are restored and the Community Development Center opens. We offer some recommendations for future projects below.

Recommendations

I. Make the Restored Jacob's Chapel Narthex into an Exhibit Space

Once the Community Development Center is built and open, consider removing the various capital campaign and non-historical plaques, choir robes and other materials to the new facility

to free up the Narthex in Jacob's Chapel to become a small introduction exhibition about the long and varied history of Jacob's Chapel. This location, although small, can give you flexible space to mount interpretive materials about the Church, Meeting House, Colemantown and the Church's role in the Mt. Laurel Housing Decisions. We recommend that this exhibit be organized as a self-guided introduction to expand and augment the visitor brochure series mentioned earlier in this report.

Exhibit materials can be text and photos and might include simple wall-mounted panels about the history of this interesting and important African American historic site. The space could be used for very small changing exhibits about the restoration work, newly uncovered research about those interred in the Cemetery or other topical issues.

II. Other locations for interpretive displays.

Once the new Community Development Center is open, and much of the materials needed for regular Church services are removed to the new sanctuary, there are other options open for the use and interpretation of Jacob's Chapel. If the historic sanctuary space is to be restored strictly to preservation standards, then lining the wall with exhibit panels may not be appropriate. But if this space is intended as a multipurpose meeting room, then the back wall of the Church could be a location for additional interpretive wall panels with text and photos/graphics.

The Colemantown Meeting House might also house a small exhibit space. Preferably this would manifest as light movable panels so that they can be moved into a closet if the room is to remain as a flexible meeting space, which we recommend. While this is the older property of the pair, more of its physical integrity has been compromised over its 160 year existence and its use as a meeting house for many congregational uses should be retained. The fact that the meeting house is a large open room lends itself to a variety of interpretive possibilities, from staging small plays with costumed actors or re-enactors, or space for children to play historic games during the winter months.

We suggest working with a capable exhibit designer to identify theme, text and photos to be used for these spaces.

III. Cemetery documentation

The cemetery at Jacob's Chapel has many old stones, but also many newer stones that have significance to surviving family members. Schnabel Conservation L.L.C. in their *Paint Analysis and Cemetery Assessment for the Colemantown Meeting House and Jacob's Chapel Cemetery, Mount Laurel, NJ* has recommended that the Cemetery stones be documented in the form of a data base and keyed map.

When we visited the Church with Pastor Person on November 18, 2014, the Pastor showed us a framed map of the cemetery with the grave stones located on it, which had been completed by a

Boy Scout Troop in the past as a public service project. This is a good start, but the map does not have a data base associated. This is vital so that genealogical researchers can identify their ancestors from this information, which is the primary purpose of such a document. A project is suggested below to create such a data base. Uploading a complete data base and map to the JCCF website will permit genealogists to search for their ancestors from their computers.

IV. *Updated data base and map of Graveyard*

Ms. Schnabel suggests obtaining a current aerial map (such as those from Google Maps or Bing Maps), and creating a simple data base keyed to the map. The data base creation could be done by volunteers. Another option is to obtain a grant to undertake a detailed measured drawing of the cemetery. Consider New Jersey Historic Trust License Plate funds for this research and mapping project as grants are now up to \$5000 and require no match.

The cemetery data base, according to Schnabel “should include information on the stone type and condition (i.e. Soiling, losses, etc.), the type of marker, and the condition of the marker itself along with any legible inscription. She suggests how to get better information from deteriorated stones below.

“There are two safe ways of making apparently unreadable inscriptions more clear. These methods do not require cleaning the stone first! The first, safest method is to use what is called a “raking” light. This is a light directed at an angle across the face of a stone. A mirror can be used very effectively to cast this kind of light. The second method is to use thin aluminum foil; this is somewhat less safe as it does involve direct contact with the stone. Wrap the stone with the foil, and then press (in and out motion, not side-to-side) the foil onto the surface of the stone with a soft brush. Often very fine detail will be revealed. Making rubbings (putting a paper or cloth over the stone then rubbing the surface with a crayon) can cause damage to fragile stones and should be avoided. Using chalk, flour or shaving cream to make inscriptions more readable is sometimes recommended but all these materials can cause later problems.

The documentation should also note the location of stone fragments still partly visible but largely buried in the grass or soil. Loss of pieces from their context is problematic in understanding the history of the cemetery. During the documentation process, broken fragments should be left in place until such time as funds become available for repair work. Though they will continue to deteriorate, a deteriorated fragment in place that might later be used to restore an existing marker is preferable to a lost fragment.”¹²

Documentation can easily be done by volunteers with a small amount of training from an experienced professional architectural conservator.

¹² Schnabel Conservation L.L.C., *Paint Analysis and Cemetery Assessment for the Colemantown Meeting House and Jacob’s Chapel Cemetery Mount Laurel, NJ*, 4-5.

V. Creation of an Accurate Cemetery Map

If names and birth/death dates are available from the stones, they can be compiled into a brochure to be available for visitors and on the JCCF website for download. The brochure can use a map or the aerial photograph with a key to locating the specific stone. This brochure should also be posted on the Foundation's website as a PDF document that is available for download and searchable by genealogists.

VI. Cemetery Tab on website

Create a cemetery tab or a separate page on the History Tab on the JCCF website to include the data base of those interred in the Cemetery, the aerial photo or map with a key to locate each gravestone, and a PDF of the Cemetery map.

VII. Additional research about the Interred

Finally, archival research can be undertaken about the individuals buried in the cemetery based on information from the head stones/markers. This information can be compiled and made available on the Foundation's website as a service to the genealogical community.

e. CONCLUSION

Jacob's Chapel and the Colemantown Meeting House are significant New Jersey historic resources representing the nineteenth century history and growth of historically black villages and towns in the state. The return of the congregation to these properties, when restrooms are finally available, will usher in many new opportunities to interpret these sites to the public. This Assessment of the Heritage Tourism Potential lays out many exciting possibilities for the future. We hope you are successful in raising the necessary funds to implement some of these projects in the next few years.

Credits

Donna Ann Harris wrote this Assessment of the Heritage Tourism Potential for the Jacob's Chapel, Mt. Laurel NJ. Moira Nadal an intern with Heritage Consulting Inc. supplied additional research on web links, lesson plans and funding sources. R. Lindsey Uhl, another intern with Heritage Consulting Inc. prepared the visitor amenities map.

Donna Ann Harris is the principal of Heritage Consulting Inc., a Philadelphia-based consulting firm that works nationwide in several practice areas: downtown and commercial district revitalization, historic preservation, heritage tourism, program evaluation and nonprofit organizational development. Prior to starting her firm eleven years ago, Ms. Harris was state coordinator for the Illinois Main Street program for two years and the manager of the Illinois suburban Main Street program for four years. During her tenure, Ms. Harris served 56 Illinois Main Street communities, led a staff of 12 and managed a budget of over a million dollars.

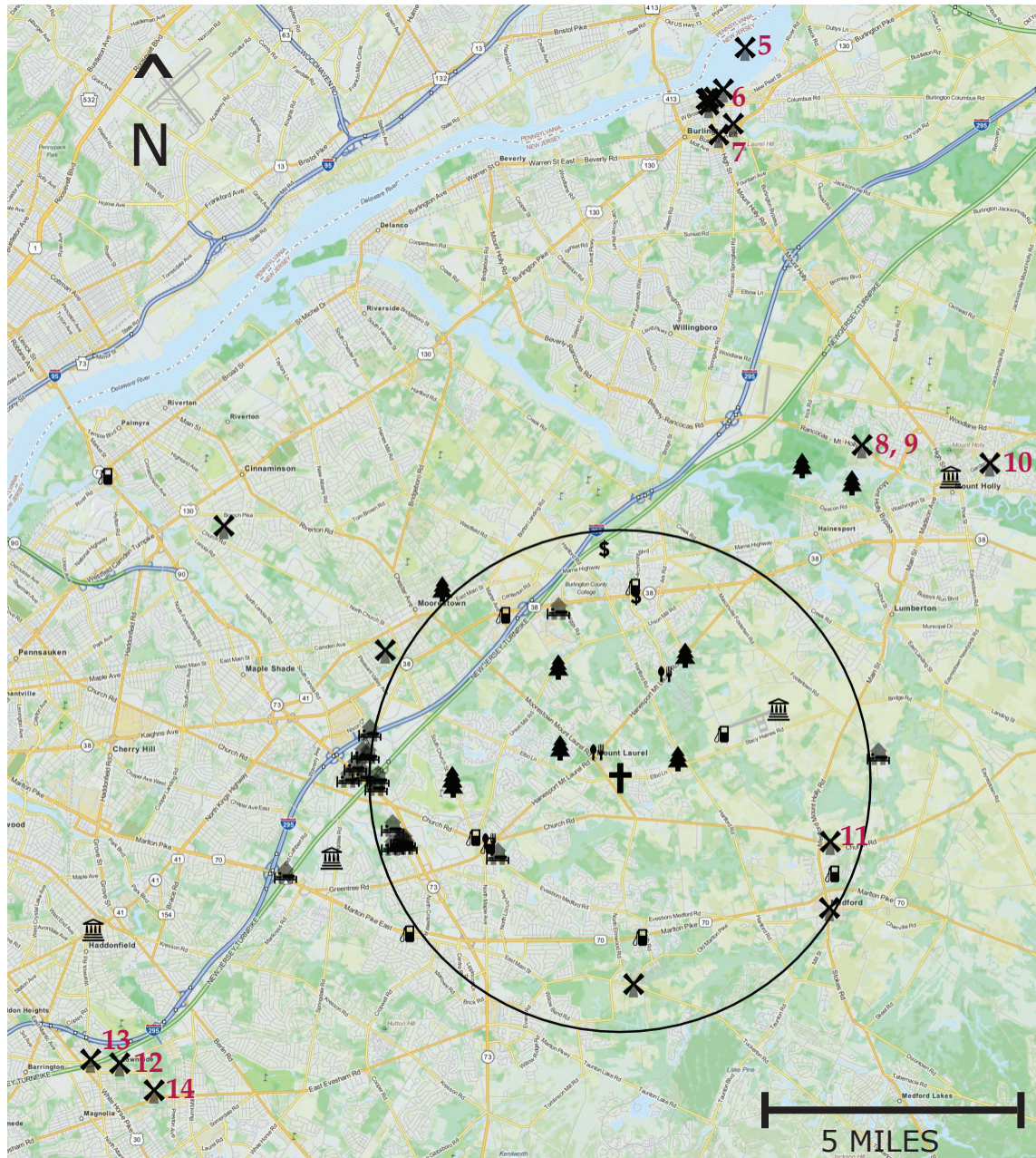
Prior to her Main Street career, Ms. Harris spent 15 years as an executive director of three start-up and two mature preservation organizations, each with its own organizational and fundraising challenges. AltaMira Press published her book *New Solutions for House Museums: Ensuring the Long-Term Preservation of America's Historic Houses* in 2007. In the past eleven years, Ms. Harris has spoken at more than 35 national, regional and statewide conferences about historic house museums and alternative uses and stewardship responsibilities. Ms. Harris has published articles about reuse of historic house museums in *History News*, the quarterly magazine of the American Association for State and Local History and *Forum Journal*, the quarterly journal of the National for Historic Preservation. Preparing heritage tourism assessments and audience research studies have been a major focus of her practice for the last four years.

Contact

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Appendix A Visitor Services Map

RESOURCES IN PROXIMITY TO JACOB'S CHAPEL: HISTORIC SITES, MUSEUMS, NATURAL PARKS, LODGING, DINING, FUEL, AND ATMS



LEGEND

✚ JACOB'S CHAPEL

✕ HISTORIC SITES

🏛️ MUSEUMS

🌲 NATURAL PARKS

🏠 LODGING

🍴 DINING

⛽ FUEL

💰 ATM

HISTORIC SITES PROMINENT IN AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY*

- 5 - Burlington Island
- 6 - Burlington Friends Meeting House
- 7 - Wesley AME Zion Church
- 8, 9 - Timbuctoo
- 10 - John Woolman Memorial House
- 11 - Office of Dr. James Still
- 12 - Lawnside
- 13 - Peter Mott House
- 14 - Benson History Museum

* Numbers correspond to Link List

Appendix B Updated Current Conditions Memo



Heritage
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422 South Camac St., Philadelphia, PA 19147

March 16, 2015

To: Pastor Terrell Person

CC: Margaret Westfield

From: Donna Ann Harris

Subject: Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential—Jacob's Chapel and Colemantown Meeting House, Current Conditions, Updated.

Jacob's Chapel AME Church and The Colemantown Meeting House in Mt. Laurel NJ are two significant historic resources for the state of New Jersey. They represent the growth of historically black villages and towns the nineteenth century. Both structures were listed on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places on January 31, 2013. The nomination, prepared by historian Paul Schopp, is awaiting listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Jacob's Chapel is currently not usable by the Church Congregation because the restrooms located in the Meeting House are inaccessible due to damage to the floor structure. The congregation is meeting in a local high school until next year when work on the Meeting House is completed. Therefore these two important historic structures are not available to visitors at the present time, except on a scheduled tour. The Church formed the Jacobs Chapel Colemantown Foundation, Inc. a secular organization to raise funds for the preservation and interpretation of the two historic buildings and cemetery.

This memo is the first deliverable for this portion of the Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential project funded by the New Jersey Historic Trust as part of the Preservation Plan for the property. This memo provides a discussion about visitor readiness and the organizational capacity of Jacob's Chapel AME Church and the Colemantown Foundation to host heritage visitors now and when the restrooms are again available and the site is available to the public. We have also included a draft visitor services map showing the location of African American and Underground Rail Road historic sites within five miles and other visitor amenities including the locations of gas stations, ATM machines, restaurants, and other amenities within two miles of the Church.

The final report will offer further observations and recommendations on the following topics: Upgrades to the Church and Foundation websites; creating a regular tour schedule; a visitor brochure series; a volunteer docent corps; interpretive signage; expanded programming for school children; small interpretive displays in the historic buildings; reciprocal web links with other Underground Rail Road sites; funding opportunities; and volunteer job descriptions for some small initial projects.

Jacob's Chapel AME Church is at the very beginning of establishing itself as a heritage tourism destination and we hope that our final report will assist the Church to actively promote these two important buildings when they reopen for visitors in the future.

Current Conditions: Church Staffing

We understand that Pastor Person and a part-time church secretary are the only staff. Pastor Person conducts all school and visitor tours and works with a small team of costumed re-enactors who assist with school programs, in-school presentations, and at special events about church history occasionally held on the grounds. The part-time church secretary responsible for website updates and regular Church office duties will retire this year. We are uncertain what role the church staff plays in staffing the Colemantown Foundation's work.

Opportunities: Church Staffing

We understand from the Pastor that a new secretary will be hired and that they might be interested in making website and social media updates. Social media is an important component of any tourism and visitor readiness effort. The Church Board should determine how to staff visitor service functions (with paid staff or volunteers) in this interim period while restroom facilities are unavailable, and in the future when restrooms become available again. Volunteers, along with staff, can help expand the Church's capacity to offer more visitor and interpretive services in the future. In our final report we will make suggestions about developing a docent corps to help with interpretation of these sites.

Current Conditions: General visitor brochure

We learned that there is currently no general interest visitor brochure about the Jacob's Chapel or the Colemantown Meeting House. We were shown a handsome workbook for school children prepared by a Girl Scout and a framed map of the graveyard prepared by a Boy Scout Troop. Unfortunately, the glass on the churchyard map was broken and it is not available for visitors. Both are important beginnings of an interpretive program for these important historic sites.

Opportunities: Brochure series

The unique history of Jacob's Chapel and the Colemantown Meeting House necessitates a series of brochures for visitors. These can be developed over time. Topical brochures aimed at lay people should be available for visitors who wish to explore the buildings and the churchyard at their convenience or when a guide may not be available. Not all visitors will want a guided tours so at least one of these brochures should offer a self-guided option. Consider making a brochure series that divides up the material.

Based on our review of the Preservation Plan history chapter and Lorraine Schnabel's (Schnabel Consulting LLC) condition assessment of the cemetery, we recommend the following brochures. Much of the material for

the brochures can be gleaned from the National Register Nomination and from the Preservation Plan. If you choose to do a series of brochures, a gifted writer (paid or volunteer) should prepare them, and they should be laid out by a talented graphic designer, so that they are consistent in tone and appearance. Suggested brochures for the series include:

1. Basic visitor brochure about the Church, Colemantown Meeting House and Cemetery
2. Jacob's Chapel and the Underground Rail Road
3. If These Stones Could Talk—brief biographies of men and women interred in the cemetery with a map showing gravestone locations
4. Colemantown: An African American Settlement in Mt. Laurel
5. Jacob's Chapel and our African Methodist Episcopal Church heritage
6. Jacob's Chapel's Role in the Mt. Laurel Housing Decisions

The self-guided brochures should be available on site in an attractive holder, and posted to the Colemantown Foundation's website as PDF documents. Tourists planning to visit should be encouraged to download brochures to their arrival. We will provide more suggestions about the content and execution of the brochure series in our final report.

Role of Websites in Heritage Tourism

Up to date websites have become increasingly important to all heritage destinations. People planning trips look in advance at the destination's website first to get basic information to determine if they want to make a visit. Potential historic site visitors also look to websites for open hours, admission fees, photos of the site, maps, contact information, upcoming programs, and directions. Without these basic pieces of information available on your website, in an easy to understand format available to a casual visitor at any time of day, they are unlikely to visit, learn more, or financially contribute to the site.

Most visitors interested in the rich history of Jacobs Chapel and Colemantown will learn about this historic site via the internet. When planning their trip they will eventually find either the Church or the Colemantown Foundation's website. We will be recommending in our final report that the Foundation website become the major repository for architectural, historical, and visitor planning purposes. We will suggest content to upload, and how to organize the material within the current navigation system on the Foundation's website.

Current Conditions: Websites

There are two websites associated with this historic property. One website is for the Jacobs Chapel AME Church, <http://jacobschapelame.org/>. This was built using a very basic website system we were not able to identify. The other website is for the Jacobs Chapel Colemantown Foundation, Inc. The Colemantown Foundation Inc. website, <http://www.colemantownfoundation.org/>, is hosted on a Webby.com content management platform. Pastor Person noted that the church secretary is responsible for updating content on both websites.

The Church website is simple and fairly easy to navigate and clearly meant for Church members. This website has seven navigation tabs across the top: Home, Church History, Pastor's Message, Contact Us/Feedback, Officers & Organization, Announcements/Programs, and Jacobs Chapel Colemantown. Each of these pages

contains what one would expect. We will offer recommendations for additional content for each website in our final report.

Opportunities: Church Website

The Church website's History Tab features a one page, nicely written, essay about the history and significance of the two buildings. The essay has more than a dozen bold call out words and phrases on this page, but these are not links to further information. This is a missed opportunity. The text on this page does not link to or explain the role of the Colemantown Foundation Inc., or the future preservation of the historic buildings and cemetery. It also does not ask its readers for support, provide additional information, or link to the Foundation as the fundraising arm. All of these features can be added easily to this page.

A casual visitor currently planning to come to these historic buildings would have to search hard on the Church website for the basic information they need for a visit (opening hours, admission fees, what they will find, etc.). None of the navigation tabs are addressed to visitors, those who wish to learn more about the Underground Rail Road, book a tour, or come for a specific program. We will offer suggestions on reorganizing and expanding content of the Church website in our final report.

While there is a navigation tab for the Jacobs Chapel Colemantown Foundation on the Church website, here are no active links that would then take a visitor to the Foundation website. The Church web page explains what the Foundation is, but is not explicit about the role of the Foundation in relation to the Church, why it was set up, and the benefits of the Foundation to the mission of the Church. This is important information to include on both websites with corresponding links to each other. We will discuss the need for links between both websites in our final report.

An up to date website is critical for visitors. They need to know that visitation information is current. Nothing is worse for a visitor or site than to have a website that says the site is open, having visitors drive to get there, and then finding it closed. It is frustrating for visitors and the site administrators as well, because they are not prepared for irate visitors who call to complain. Out of date website information will diminish potential tourism traffic if deemed unreliable.

Our review of the Church website this week showed that the home page is promoting a July event and it appears that the website has not been updated since the summer. This can be easily remedied once the new secretary is in place. We will also offer suggestions for how to keep the website current in our final report.

Current Conditions: Foundation Website

Of the two websites, the Colemantown Foundation Inc. website is the more robust of the two, and is organized in logical pages for visitors. It is easy to navigate. The website has a minimum amount of material about the secular role that the Colemantown Foundation plays in advancing tourism to the church complex on Elbo Lane in Mt. Laurel. More information could easily be added to explain the relationship between the Church and Foundation.

Opportunities: Foundation Website

We recommend that the Colemantown Foundation become the main source of information for planning trips, including directions and accurate information about what a visitor will see if they come to Jacob's Chapel and the Colemantown Meeting House. The Colemantown Foundation website should also become a repository for

all the historical information, plans, and reports about the Church and Meeting House that would be of use to any researcher interested in this site as a station on the Underground Railroad, Still family history, historic architecture, and key people associated with the property and those interred in the cemetery.

An initial list of documents to be uploaded to the site include: The Preservation Plan and all sub-consultant reports (when complete), the National Register Nomination by Paul Schopp, the Master Plan for the Community Development Center, and all historic photos in the possession of the Church. These documents are important research tools for local historians and should be readily accessible to anyone seeking information about these two structures. We are certain there will be other documents that should be uploaded to the Colemantown Foundation website in the future.

Scanning and making key documents available to the public on the Foundation website will greatly expand web traffic and interest in the property and its rich history. Grant funds may be available for such purposes but additional research is needed. We will provide some suggestions about where to turn for funding in the final report.

Current Conditions: Facebook pages

The Jacob's Chapel AME Church has a Facebook page with 203 likes/fans, an excellent showing for a small congregation. The Facebook page seems to be used mainly for Church news which is appropriate and is updated at least weekly with the "Word for You Today" Bible verse and commentary. There are also occasional posts about Church related events and activities of interest to the Congregation.

The Jacob's Chapel Colemantown Foundation has a Facebook page with only 24 likes/fans. The last Facebook post was on July 14, 2014 and is about one of the "If These Stones Could Talk" Living History Tours held during the summer of 2014.

Opportunities: Facebook pages

There is much opportunity to drive people interested in the rich history of the site to the Colemantown Foundation website and to the Facebook page. The Foundation's Facebook page has unmet potential to promote the historic buildings once they are usable again for the public. Cross promoting Colemantown Foundation events on the Church Facebook page is a good plan. We will provide some suggestions for both Facebook pages in our final report.

Current Conditions: Living History Tours

Over the summer, the Living History Tours were offered three times in 2014; in June, July, and August, on the third Saturday of the month from 9 AM to 1 PM. Thirty minute performances were held hourly. This is an excellent existing model to increase awareness and build a visitor following. We understand these events were highly labor intensive, and included a variety of paid costumed re-enactors to tell the story of the Still family and their involvement at Jacob's Chapel. Vendors provided food and books for purchase.

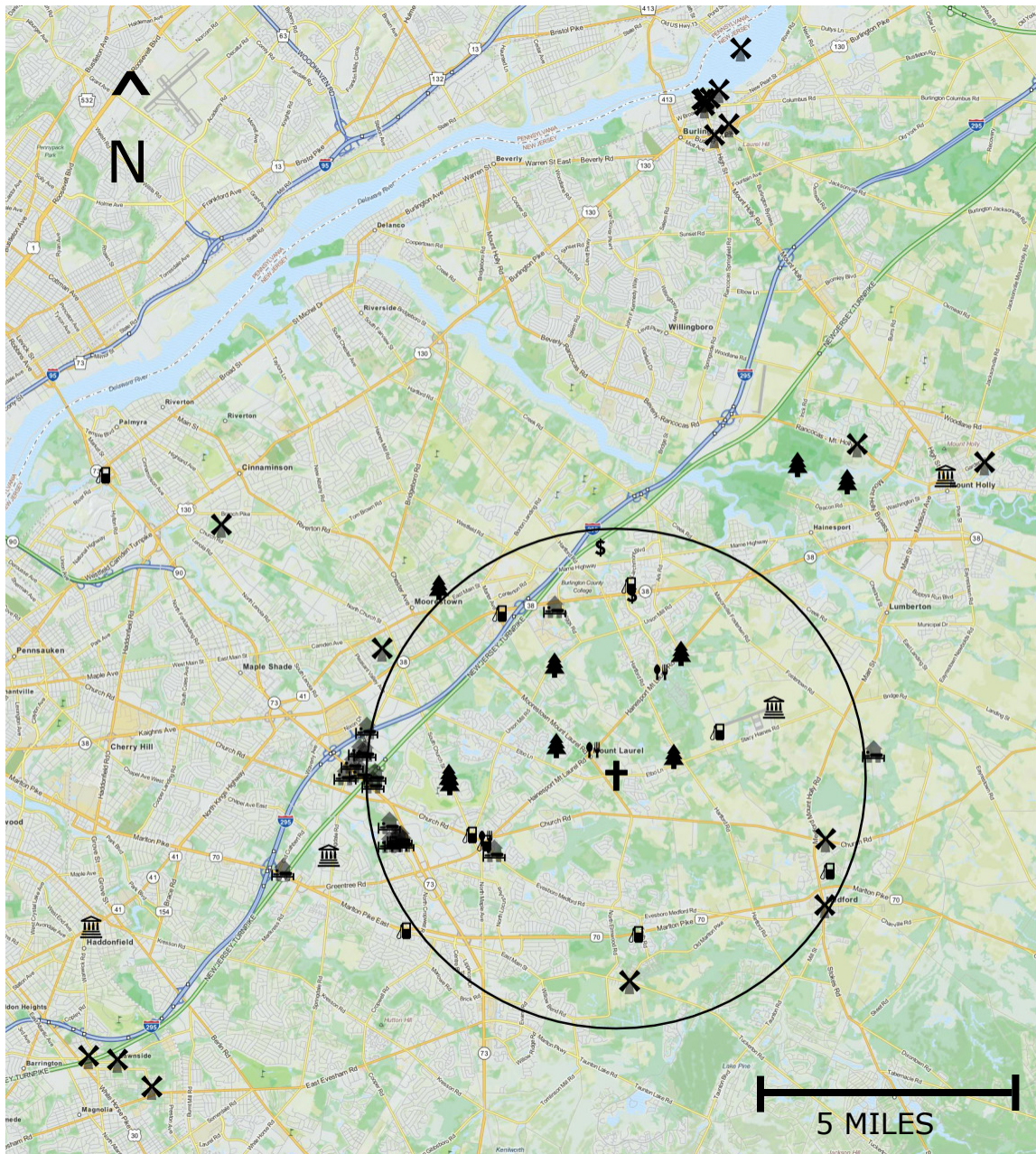
Opportunities: Living History Tours

This interesting tour model has great potential to offer regular opportunities for visitors to come to Jacob's Chapel. Being open regularly is important to create an audience for any historic site, even if that means having

the event just once a month during the typical visitor season of April to October. Because the event was so labor intensive, we suggest that the event be reviewed to determine how it can be streamlined, or to add component parts during higher visitor months. Living History Tours are very attractive to visitors, and we will offer some suggestions about marketing these tours to a broader audience in our final report.

Conclusion

This memo discusses the current conditions of heritage tourism visitor-readiness and the organizational capacity for Jacob's Chapel AME Church and Colemantown Meeting House. This information and the visitor services map will be updated based on the Board of Trustee comments from our December 18, 2014 meeting. We will create our final report for the project by the end of 2014.



LEGEND

