



For Immediate Release

Black History Month Celebrated Across Massachusetts

All Regions Offer Events, Exhibits, and More to Honor Contributions from the Past & Present

BOSTON, February 1, 2010. Massachusetts honors Black History Month this February with numerous events and attractions statewide. The Commonwealth's rich African American history can be explored through the events listings on www.massvacation.com, the website of the Massachusetts Office of travel + Tourism (MOTT).

“Black History Month is an opportunity to commemorate and celebrate the rich history that contributed to our Commonwealth and the country,” said Betsy Wall, executive director of the Massachusetts Office of Travel + Tourism. “With activities, events and festivities that celebrate our diverse state, we hope that people will take advantage of all Massachusetts has to offer.”

MOTT's social networking pages on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Visit-Massachusetts/132857061913> and Twitter <http://twitter.com/VisitMA> provides additional vacation week suggestions.

The following is just a sampling of historic trails, exhibits, lectures, and musical performances across the state to honor Black History Month.

Trails & Tours:

Black Heritage Trail (Boston, MA)

<http://www.nps.gov/boaf/planyourvisit/things2do.htmC>

The Boston African American National Historic Site is comprised of the largest area of pre-Civil War black owned structures in the U.S. It has roughly two dozen sites on the north face of Beacon Hill. These historic buildings were homes, businesses, schools, and churches of a thriving black community that, in the face of great opposition, fought the forces of slavery and inequality.

The African American Heritage Trail (Martha's Vineyard)

www.mvheritagetrail.org

This trail is comprised of 16 sites and is dedicated to the formerly unrecognized contributions made by people of African descent to the history of the island. A significant landmark on the trail is the Shearer Cottage, an inn established in 1912 by Charles Shearer, the son of a slave and slave owner. The Shearer Cottage catered to African Americans who were not welcome as guests at other Island establishments.

Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House (Concord, MA)

www.louisamayalcott.org

Louisa May Alcott, long known as one of the world's favorite children's authors for her classic work, Little Women, was also a member of a fiercely abolitionist family. In commemoration of Black History Month, special guided tours throughout the month of February will highlight the Alcotts' commitment to anti-slavery and social justice— as evidenced by Miss Alcott's own service as a Civil War nurse, among many other reform activities.

Black Heritage Trail (New Bedford, MA)

www.whalingmuseum.org/kendall/old_nb/old_nb_african.html

The trail commemorates significant landmarks of African American history in New Bedford. When Massachusetts abolished slavery in 1780, New Bedford became an important stop on the "underground railway," a network of people who hid runaway slaves in homes and churches. Frederick Douglass is one African American who found refuge in New Bedford before becoming a renowned abolitionist, orator, politician and writer.

Roxbury's Black History Trolley Tour (Roxbury, MA)

www.discoverroxbury.org

Boston's Black community has been on the move politically, socially, and artistically for centuries. Once centered in the North End, the community moved to Beacon Hill, the South End, and then the highlands of Roxbury. Join us on an informative trolley tour through three centuries of Boston's historic Black neighborhoods. Follow the progression of the Black churches, gain an appreciation for the importance of the arts, learn about the struggles during the civil rights movement, and become more familiar with the movers, shakers, and strivers in Roxbury's Black history.

African-American Patriots Tour of the Freedom Trail (Boston, MA)

www.TheFreedomTrail.org

Friday and Saturdays throughout February, history lovers can join a 90-minute guided walking tour through historic events of the American Revolution and the contributions of African-Americans who played a significant role in the country's formation, including Crispus Attucks, Phyllis Wheatley, Prince Hall, Peter Salem and others. Tours leave from the Visitor Information Center on Boston Common. Tickets can be purchased online and at the Visitor Information Center.

The Black History Trail (Nantucket, MA)

www.afroammuseum.org/

Presented by the Museum of Afro-American History and the Friends of the African Meeting House on Nantucket, the Black History Trail features 10 sites that reveal the heritage of African Americans living on Nantucket, especially in the nineteenth century.

The Parting Ways Story (Plymouth, MA)

www.partingways.org/cms/

The Parting Ways story reopens the history books to tell a tale of four former slaves who were the first African American veterans in America. Parting Ways Township in Plymouth, founded by these men, was one of the very first African American settlements in North America. Today this small acreage is in the process of being redeveloped into a place of beauty and education.

Exhibits:

Basketball Hall of Fame: Become Legendary, The Story of Michael Jordan (Springfield, MA)

<http://www.hoophall.com/>

This new exhibit on Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame Class of 2009 member and arguably the game's greatest player, Michael Jordan, chronicles his entire career. Highlights include, all six of his Chicago Bulls championship rings, game jerseys from high school all the way through the Dream Team, a showcase of all 23 sneakers in the Jordan line and a complete historic Jordan timeline with authentic artifacts from his life and career. February 1-28

Museum of African American History: From Iowa to the White House (Boston, MA)

<http://www.afroammuseum.org/>

These historic photographs shed light upon the process by which President Barack Obama achieved this nation's highest office. The exhibition not only celebrates the historic election of the first black President of the United States, it also honors the organizational prowess, business and political acumen, and cohesion and courage of the early community of black Bostonians whose efforts helped to make this achievement possible.

Museum of Springfield History (Springfield, MA)

http://www.springfieldmuseums.org/the_museums/springfield_history/

Conceived and created by ninety 11th-grade students from the class of 2011 at the Springfield Renaissance School. The exhibit will be on view at the museum from February 2-28.

Films

Lectures

W.E.B Du Bois Center of American History (Great Barrington, MA)

<http://www.duboislc.org/>

W.E.B. Du Bois birthday & Du Bois Center 4th-year Anniversary Celebration. Featured guest, Ed Bullins, one of the foremost playwrights of the 20th century Professor Bullins will receive the Du Bois Center lifetime achievement award and participate in the Center's "Why History Matters" lecture series, providing commentary on a play, which will be aired on screen. Novelist Wesley Brown will host the affair. Reservations required. February 27 - 5 pm.

Frederick Douglass Read-a-thon (New Bedford, MA)

A nonstop reading of the first autobiography of New Bedford's most famous resident. Douglass escaped slavery and lived in New Bedford from 1838-1846. He became one of the nation's greatest abolitionist leaders. Sunday, February 7. First Unitarian Church, Union & Eighth Streets, New Bedford 508.979.8828

Dr. Kweisi Mfume Presents "Obama's America: Where do we go from here? (Worcester, MA)

<http://www.worcester.edu/default.aspx>

Dr. Mfume has been an active leader in the civil rights struggle for many decades. As a congressman, Mfume became one of the most well-known African American politicians in Washington, D.C. Believing that he could achieve more for civil rights by working for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Mfume eventually left congress to become president of the organization for nine years. February 2.

New Bedford Whaling Museum: The Parallel Lives of Frederick Douglas & Abraham Lincoln

<http://www.nbhistoricalsociety.org/>

John Stauffer's collective biography of Douglass and Lincoln tell a moving story of the two men who dominated the 19th century American life; as allies across the racial divide, friends who drew a common inspiration from hard scrabble beginnings and fellow travelers on the road of American self-making. Join us for a great lecture and discussion. Co-sponsored by Baker Books. February 21.

New Bedford Whaling Museum, Daggoo's Brothers: African American and Cape Verdean Whalemens

<http://www.nbhistoricalsociety.org/>

Presented by Mary Malloy of the SEA Education Association. From Colonial times to the twentieth century, men of African ancestry worked aboard New Bedford ships, in every capacity from greenhand to Captain. In this illustrated lecture, Mary Malloy will trace the history of black

whalemen through documents and photographs in the Museum's collection. Saturday, February 6, 2:00-4:00pm.

Dance & Music

Berklee College of Music: Roots and Reason (Boston, MA)

<http://www.berklee.edu/>

"Roots and Reason" Roots music is a chronicle of the ongoing story of America told through song. The Africana Studies program at Berklee presents students, faculty, and very special guests in a celebration of traditions from West Africa, the Caribbean, and rural America. "The Great American Songbook: The Music of Motown" Motown celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2009. In tribute, a Berklee student and faculty orchestra will perform the timeless music of Motown artists The Jackson 5, Stevie Wonder, The Temptations, The Supremes, and others. February 28 Berklee College of Music

John F. Kennedy Library Museum (Boston, MA)

<http://www.jfklibrary.org/>

On February 15th celebrate Black History Month with Djembe Dell Arte, African Dance and Drumming . Everyone in the family will enjoy this dynamic program, led by Michelle Bach-Coulibaly of Brown University and featuring songs, high-energy dance, and drumming from West Africa.

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About MOTT:

The Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism is the state agency dedicated to promoting Massachusetts as a leisure travel destination and to stimulate the Massachusetts economy by generating state and local tax revenues, creating jobs, and supporting the growth of travel related businesses. MOTT serves as a leader in the tourism industry, bringing together the public and private sectors to promote Massachusetts as a leisure travel destination. For more information about MOTT visit www.Massvacation.com