

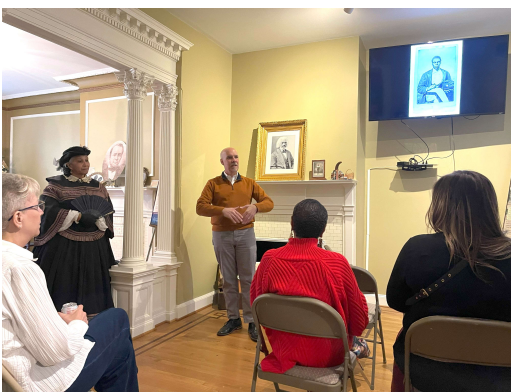
HCC LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
 Do you have a story to tell? Contact the HCC at jpac@crispusattucks.org or



CAY HCC Journal

Journal of The Crispus Attucks York History and Culture Center

We will explore the history and culture of York’s African American community to foster an open dialog about past, present, and future racial issues while promoting multicultural harmony.



Ron Coddington (center)

FACES OF FREEDOM

United States Colored Troops (USCT)

On April 19, 2024, HCC staff attended an event at the Goodridge Freedom Center and Under-ground Railroad Museum (GFC). GFC Director Kelly Summerford unveiled the new “Faces of Freedom” exhibit which will run from April 20 until July 27, 2024. It is intended to highlight wartime photographs and stories of African American Civil War veterans who participated in the Union Army’s United States Colored Troops (USCT) (see USCT on p. 10)

LIVING HISTORY PROJECT – CODORUS STREET

Jeffrey Kirkland, Lead Historian for the CAY HCC fondly remembers growing up with 10 family members in a three-story house in the Codorus Street neighborhood. He recalls a strong sense of community saying “It was like the proverbial village.” The close-knit neighborhood provided a sense of security from many of the racially charged incidents that took place elsewhere in the city, Mr. Kirkland says. Everyone was welcome at each other’s houses. Many of the families originated from Bamberg, South Carolina (see Codorus Street on p. 2).



Jeff Kirkland

BUILDING THE HCC

Wow! Stewart and Tate have really been making progress! The steel structure for the south side of the HCC is in place. You can see the beginnings of the Orr Event Hall and the second-floor classroom. (see Building the HCC on p. 10)

THE FOUR CHAPLAINS – SERVICE AND SACRIFICE

On February 3, 1943, the S.S. Dorchester, a civilian liner that had been converted to a troop carrier was on its way to Greenland, when it was torpedoed by German submarine U-233. Aboard the Dorchester were 904 Army personnel and (see Four Chaplains on p. 9)

CAY HISTORY SPOTLIGHT

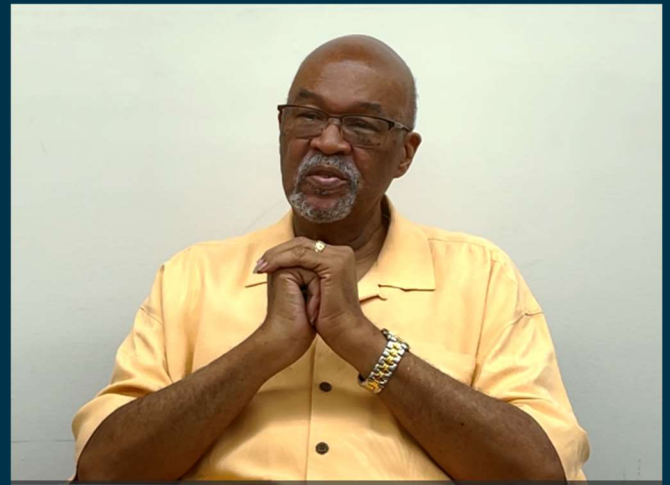
This issue will highlight the story of Dr. Frederick Douglass Holliday. (1927-1985) He was a great friend of CAY and a mentor of CAY CEO Bobby Simpson. (see CAY History on p. 4)



Dr. Holliday courtesy of YDR

Codorus Street Community (continued from p. 1)

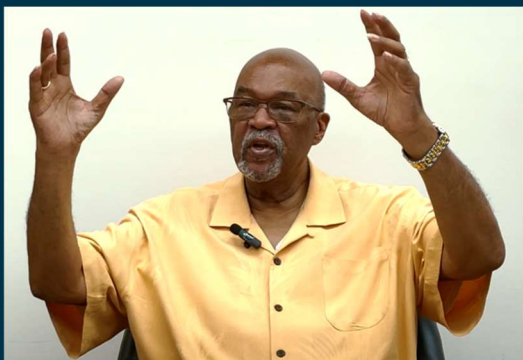
All Bambergers treated each other like family. The neighborhood started to take shape when Jeff's grandfather and 20 other African American families bought houses on Codorus Street. Over 100 kids lived in this 1½ block Street. The parents were very active in protesting the dilapidated conditions and the fact that there was no park for the children to play in. The first play area he remembers was a tree in front of Cookes house (a colonial era house which still exists). The children nailed a peach basket to the tree to play basketball. "We played kickball and softball in the streets because we didn't have a park." It was a relatively safe neighborhood where you could leave your house unlocked.



Jeffrey Kirkland

He learned from an early age that segregation was a stark reality unjustly forced upon African Americans going about their daily lives. One instance that stayed with him was a Bar/Restaurant on the corner that Blacks were prohibited from entering. They could only use the side window to order food.

Jeff went to the segregated Princess Street Elementary School (which is still standing) on the corner of Penn and Princess streets as a child. Later, it was one of the first schools to be desegregated. From there he attended Lincoln School on King St. starting in 1954. There was minimal racial animosity between the children in these early formative years; he had both Black and White friends. Jeff was a CA kid and described it as an oasis that offered a myriad of activities including chess, pool, basketball, shuffleboard, reading, and swimming. He regularly walked a mile to be there. Mr. Kirkland was a chess champion and particularly enjoyed working on the monthly CA newsletter. "CA had it all", he says.



Jeffrey Kirkland

The situation began to change in the late fifty's when the York City government seized all of the houses in the Codorus Street neighborhood under one of the first uses of eminent domain, ostensibly to build a park for the children. Instead they sold half of it to a dental supply company for use as a parking lot (still in use today). With the dissolution of the Codorus Street neighborhood the atmosphere became charged with a sense of injustice and anger as Black residents were forced from their homes into other areas of the city.

White residents resented their new neighbors and made disparaging racially motivated remarks such as "Why don't you go back to where you belong." From the late 1950's, racial tensions escalated from arguments to fights and finally exploded in the riots of 1968 and 1969.

One noted incident is considered to have touched off the 1968 riot. On August 3, 1968, a group of young people including Mr. Kirkland and his brothers Kerry and Eric were coming home from a party that night when they passed the house of Chester Roach, who lived over top of a meat market. Roach started shouting to the group "Why don't you -----s stop that noise?" The group replied "Why don't you come down and stop us?" Roach replied with his shotgun and pistol hitting 11 people that night, including Mr. Kirkland's brother Eric. (continued on p. 3)

Someone knocked the gun out of Roach's hand and he received a severe beating from the group. The police used an armored car to extract Roach from the situation.

Mr. Kirkland was very active in York's Civil Rights movement. For this he was beaten by the police and attacked by their dogs on several occasions as the police were yelling "Sic 'em, kill them little ----s!" On one occasion he was returning home from a Friday night York High School football game with friends on September 20, 1968 when the police cornered them on the George Street bridge and set their dogs loose on them. This event is corroborated by Barry Freeland who was also a victim of the same vicious police attack. Jeff remembers the police using their batons to bash people's heads that night. He recalls his friend James Padgett with a huge bandage on his head. James was also mauled by dogs as well. Mr. Kirkland identified York Police Officer Gerald Sweeney as the racist ringleader of these ferocious attacks.



CAY Black History Committee: L-R, Ethel Lawes, Jeffrey Kirkland, Muriel Beatty, Dorothy Woodyard, Ms. Banks

Racial tensions boiled over again in the Summer of 1969. Jeff feels the rioting was precipitated by a fight on July 17, 1969 that involved Taka Nii Sweeney and a man named Bobby Messersmith, a gang leader of the notorious Newberry Street Boys, who lived right by the railroad tracks on Newberry Street.

Later, Taka Nii Sweeney and Kerry Kirkland, among others, were being rousted by the police when a shot rang out. Mr. Kirkland believes "Bobby Messersmith shot Taka Nii Sweeney across the Philadelphia Street bridge" over Codorus Creek hitting him in the stomach, almost killing him. Taka was standing between Kerry and a policeman.

This is significant because Messersmith is connected to at least two shootings related to the 1969 riot; the attempted murder of Mr. Sweeney and a few days later, the cold-blooded murder of Lillie Belle Allen as she pleaded with her assailants not to shoot her. Messersmith was convicted of second-degree murder in Ms. Allen's death. To date, no one has been brought to justice for the attempted murder of Taka Nii Sweeney.

In response to the riots, the City held a Charrette to let people talk about their grievances. Mr. Kirkland was an active participant in the April 1970 event. Like many Black Yorkers, Jeff feels that Charrette was a "controlled show". Little changed despite the impassioned speeches and pleas for assistance to the city's leaders. The shortcomings of Charrette were apparent when, just a month later, five or six people kidnapped and tortured 14-year-old African American Steven Smallwood.

This incident was recalled by Mr. Kirkland who was working for the Children's Home of York at the time. On May 26, 1970, Steven was abducted while walking down York Street towards the Children's Home. He was driven across state lines into Maryland (continued on p.4).

(continued from p.3)

While in captivity, Steven was badly beaten, receiving severe contusions and lacerations of the head and other injuries. His assailants attempted to scalp him using a razor blade and then dumped him from their car near Abbotstown.

He was rescued by two people who witnessed the kidnapping and pursued the assailants in their car. They took Steven to the hospital. The police tried to cover up the incident in fears of another riot. They buried the police report and marked it "No Publicity". The incident only came to light after a reporter, acting on an anonymous tip, pursued the story. The kidnappers were eventually tried and jailed for their roles in this horrendous incident.

Shortly after this, Mr. Kirkland left the Children's Home and pursued a variety of jobs until he came to Crispus Attucks and worked with our afterschool program and later the Center for Employment and Training. In April of this year, Jeff accepted the position of Lead Historian for the new CAY History and Culture Center.

"It was like the proverbial village", Mr. Kirkland said of the Codorus Street Neighborhood.

CAY HISTORY SPOTLIGHT (continued from p. 1)

Frederick Douglass Holliday influenced the communities in which he lived and worked in many ways – as an educator, an advocate for social justice, and through his skills as an orator and mentor. During his time in York, he served as the Superintendent of Schools and the Director of the York County Community Foundation.

Holliday was born in Philadelphia, PA. He was a Harvard graduate receiving his PhD in education from Tiffin University. He rose to prominence in his field, serving as superintendent for the Plainfield, New Jersey school district, New York City Schools, York City Schools, and the Cleveland Metropolitan School District respectively.

When he arrived in York, the city was going through major racial and social turmoil. Dr. Holliday was like a breath of fresh air and energy to a city which was sorely lacking leadership. He was a good looking, very articulate Black Man who was willing and able to speak out on all sides regarding the issues they were facing. He is reminiscent of then future President Barack Obama. Dr. Holliday was able to ignite the passions and concerns of everyday Black Folks of this city. He lived in York City in one of the most troubled neighborhoods. He provided a personal example of how the community could come together and eradicate the problems it faced.



Dr. Frederick Douglass Holliday

In 1975, Dr. Holliday gave a speech at Crispus Attucks Community Center in York, PA. The speech was given to Crispus Attucks Board members and other community leaders who were meeting to address racial injustice and oppression. At that time, he was serving as Superintendent of the York City Schools. He advocated for modern technology to be installed in every school. He was a certified pilot who enjoyed flying his private plane. He was known as a disciplinarian with an ebullient personality. (continued on p. 5)

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You could actually see and feel the change, the upward beat and the inspiration the people of this city especially the youth, exhibited when interacting with Dr. Holliday.

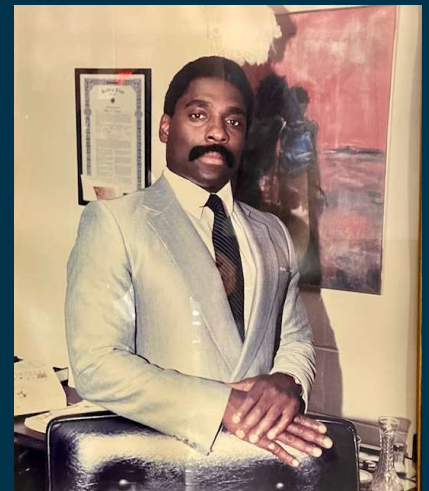
Like many other leaders who are on a mission of community uplift, Dr. Holliday left York for a larger challenge. He became superintendent of the Cleveland City Schools in September 1982, becoming its first African-American superintendent. He improved the attendance, graduation rate, and safety as he had in York and other Districts.

York County Community Foundation established a fund in Holliday's memory in 1993 and a Frederick Holliday Dinner continues to this day, sponsored by the local NAACP to help raise scholarships for deserving youth.

Dr. Holliday had a profound effect on CAY's newly appointed Executive Director Bobby Simpson. Holliday and Mr. Simpson met for two hours every Wednesday before Rotary Club for almost three years. Memories of this friendship and mentorship have had a profound effect on Mr. Simpson and on Crispus Attucks to this day.

In 1975, Holliday gave a speech discussing the psychological, social, and economic barriers facing York's African American and other oppressed communities. Holliday eloquently spoke of the suicidal actions of York's Black Community.

First, Dr. Holliday prioritized a list of the most important issues facing York's minority community. He emphasized the fact that we as Black People were not monolithic in our thoughts and actions and we can't be all things to all people. Nor would we agree 100% on the solutions to our problems. These problems should be addressed in a Mission Statement for the purpose of Crispus Attucks and York's Black community.



Bobby Simpson

Here are a few excerpts from that Famous 1975 Speech:

"The oppressed must build a sense of community" is the text of the speech given by Frederick D. Holliday, York City schools superintendent, at Crispus Attucks' Annual meeting in April 1975. *Dr. Holliday intimated that many oppressed people throughout the world exhibit signs of sickness. In addition to the ravages of malnutrition, which is debilitating, psychological illnesses of the mind are devastating too.* This psychological sickness was later termed Post Traumatic Slavery Syndrome (PTSS) similar to today's Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome PTSD.

"Self-hatred and poor self-concept are the principal psychological maladies which were ingrained in an oppressed people to enable them to continue to be oppressed. *These disorders cause blacks, Puerto Ricans, Africans and even oppressed whites such as Jews and Poles to do some weird things to themselves.*"

In pointing out some of those specific self-destructive acts, Dr. Holliday outlined several of those ongoing acts by our people which kept us in generational malaise which needed to be address by all in order to heal this generational sickness.

"In fact, some of the acts we have all witnessed will support the fact that our sickness of mind, due to oppression, borders upon reckless abandon or suicidal behavior. (continued on p. 6)

(continued from p. 5)

"For example, antics by Black students in Penn Common which invite the attention of local and state police with the National Guard and federal troops standing by, is one example of suicidal behavior.

"Socially, having unwanted babies with no notion of how they are to be fed, educated, loved and developed into productive, socially-adjusted adults, is suicidal.

"Refusing to trade with a Black merchant and bragging that you won't buy because you can't trust a Negro is self-hatred.

"The oppressed behave in such a way as to make true what is said about them, and the prophecy of poor self-human worth is self-fulfilled.

"This mark of oppression appeared at that time to be upon Crispus Attucks. Although it is one of the finest facilities in the city, it bore a yoke of oppression.

Dr. Holliday's strong connection with Crispus Attucks was enhanced by his relationship with the Executive Director at that time, Mr. Robert Simpson, who Holliday chose to mentor. Their partnership made sure that Crispus Attucks would not succumb to that Mark of Oppression.

"Don't, for one instant, blame the lack of development of this facility, past or present, on one man or its board of directors. Rather, blame all of us who hate ourselves because anything which is Black has to be bad".

"Basically, that is what Negroes unconsciously believe. And, the feeling has persisted from generation to generation because of slavery. This yoke is still upon a portion of York's Black community causing them to refuse to place a foot in the door of this excellent building. Not all the blame can be based upon race, attitude or slavery. The economics of the United States, which bars some of its citizens from participating fully in its industries, businesses and government, adds to Black psychological and physical ailments.

"Sixty-six percent of those Blacks living in poverty were families headed by women. This situation worsens yearly. In 1959, 23 percent of all Black families were headed by women. Ten years later, in 1969, 32 percent of all Black families were headed by women. These female-headed families, if eliminated, would cut Black poverty overnight by two-thirds. That is, if there were a husband in each female-headed household.

Dr. Holliday believed that a Strong Black Family could also be at the Root of community change and he encouraged Crispus Attucks to address information on family planning through a clinic or other educational setting

He urged that, what Black men do or do not do for their families is a case for Black community concern. However, the problem of female and male relationships is much deeper than the simplistic notion I have just presented.

When discussing schooling and education and its effects on our community standing, Dr. Holliday says,

"The Area Vocational School enrolls less than 5 percent Black people. Yet, York City's William Penn is 31 percent Black. If saleable skills are not attainable through vocational training, how then can Black men enter into the York area's labor market which provides abundant high-paying jobs?"

"A closer look at our schools nationally shows that 84 percent of all Black students are performing less than what is normally expected. (continued on p. 7)

(continued from p. 6)

On the other hand, only 16 percent of all white students perform below predictions. To make a comparison that is more frightening – throughout the United States, at the end of high school white students attain 14 years of education in 12 years, while their Black counterparts average nine years of educational attainment in 12 years.

"Further, for every white student suspended in the United States, there are two black students suspended. C.A. might wish to consider guidance for Black children, or, the formulation of some questions about school systems which allow such inequalities in what children learn and when and why they are suspended.

Crispus Attucks might wish to think of an alternative school in cooperation with the York City School District-again another of Dr. Holliday's prioritized suggestions for community improvement.

One of Dr. Holliday's take on the black power movement of the 1960's is that. If nothing else, it did produce one very constructive idea. That is, people who are oppressed must build a sense of community.

"Charles V. Hamilton, one of America's great political scientists, who happens to be Black, described the plight of the oppressed by issuing a declaration to the disaffected to unite, to recognize their heritage and to build a sense of community.

"Turning specifically to Blacks, he said, "It is a call for Black people to define their own goals, lead their own organizations and to support those organizations." However, the Black movement never progressed too far beyond this point. Even to this day, Blacks have not united. Blacks do not recognize our heritage. Blacks have not built a sense of community. Blacks have not defined their goals. Blacks are not leading their own institutions. Blacks do not support their own organizations.

These are some of the areas in which we hope the new History and Culture Center will be successful in addressing.

Dr. Holliday also discussed the lack of trust amongst Blacks and each other, holding each other accountable for troubling behaviors and putting more energy and emphasis on making education a number one priority with our children.

"What can be done immediately? Don't look for the bargain that the "junkies" have to sell. Don't tolerate the houses in your block that purvey vice. Teach your children about boy/girl relationships. Encourage school attendance and excellent.

"Despite this dismal picture, we can change the way it is. I have stated that the abortive movement for Black dignity during the 1960s did produce a useful notion; that is, the need to build a sense of community.

"However, no one got beyond that to the needed second statement. How to build a sense of community. This is the question Crispus Attucks is asking. How can a community center help build a sense of community?

"I say to the Board of Directors and the Center Director, take this analysis of the problem as presented here, and if you agree that it has some merit, then commence the formulation of a statement of mission for Crispus Attucks. (continued on p. 8)

(continued from p. 7)

"My suggestion, as a start, is: The mission of Crispus Attucks is to improve the quality of life for the citizens of York, especially those who are Black and oppressed. Major emphasis is to improve health and employment opportunities, education and recreation for the Center's participants. In addition, it is the Center's aim to teach the less fortunate to become their own advocates and mediators.

"Once such a statement of mission or purpose is drafted, the difficult task of mission accomplishment may begin; the only restraints being, your limit of fiscal and human resources. We can change the way things are. And, of all the institutions in York, Crispus Attucks is the logical choice to improve the quality of life among the disaffected.

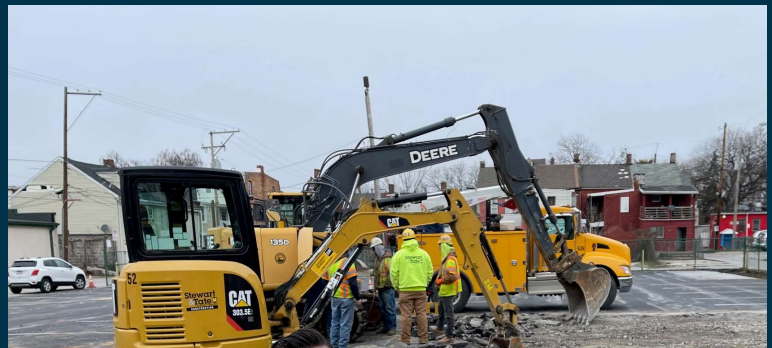
"Your new leader, this fine facility, and your Board of Directors give us all cause to hope. When Mr. Simpson became CEO of CAY he took Holliday's words to heart. Tackling oppression and removing barriers became the mission of Crispus Attucks under his leadership.

On January 26, 1985, Frederick Douglass Holliday took his life while serving as Superintendent of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District.

Bobby Simpson, Holliday's protégé, wrote a letter to Doc, upon his death: *"Doc, after I learned of your passing, I was hurt and angered. Angry at you because you could have come back home where you were wanted." "But after a while, I began to smile. I smiled because I was happy. Happy in the fact that I took the time to know and talk with you. Happy for I had the opportunity (as did many others) to work with a genius."*

Crispus Attucks has come full circle in turning Dr. Holliday's thoughts into an actionable plan for the improvement of York's Black Community.

Construction has begun on a new History and Culture center which will address another goal raised by Dr. Holliday as well as our founders; "to improve the quality of life for the citizens of York, especially those who are Black and oppressed."



Thank you, Dr. Holliday, for leaving York with a stronger sense of hope and inspiration for our Future.....

Edited by Jeffrey Kirkland

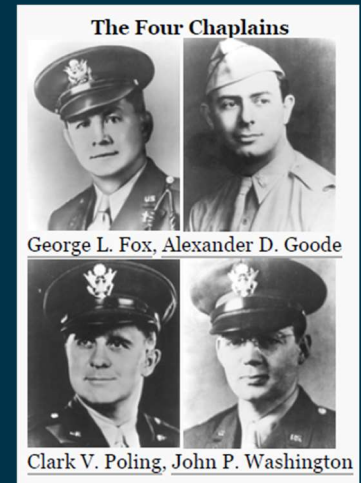
“Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom.”

— George Washington Carver

THE FOUR CHAPLAINS – SERVICE AND SACRIFICE (continued from p. 1)

and crew, including four chaplains: Rev. George L. Fox (Methodist), Reform Rabbi Alexander D. Goode (PhD), Father John P. Washington (Roman Catholic), and Rev. Clark V. Poling (Reformed Church in America). All four of the men were close friends and classmates from Harvard University Army Chaplain school.

The stricken ship began to sink rapidly, hampering evacuation efforts. Supplies of lifejackets ran out and the men began to panic. The Four Chaplains bravely calmed the men, guiding them to available lifeboats. All of the chaplains gave up their lifejackets to the desperate soldiers. As the ship went down, the chaplains linked arms and began to pray for the safety of the men. Prayers in Latin, Hebrew, and English were heard as the ship plunged into the depths. Only 230 men were rescued of the 904 on the ship's roster.



This story of service and sacrifice galvanized the American public at a critical time during the war effort. The four Chaplains were posthumously decorated for their heroism and sacrifice, each receiving the Distinguished Service Cross, the Purple Heart, and the Congressional Four Chaplains Medal.

Two of the Four Chaplains had roots in Pennsylvania. Rabbi Goode was active in promoting interfaith community cooperation and was instrumental in founding York's first interracial Boy Scout troop (Troop 237). He served as a Rabbi at Temple Beth Israel in York, PA prior to joining the Army. To honor his service, the Alexander D. Goode Elementary School was named in his memory. Located in the York City School District, it is a constant reminder of the heroism displayed by Rabbi Goode and his fellow chaplains.

Reverend Fox also had roots in Pennsylvania. Born in Lewistown on March 15, 1900, Fox lied about his age to serve in WWI as a member of the Army's Medical Corps. During his heroic service in the Great War he received the Silver Star, the Purple Heart, and the French Croix de Guerre for Valor. More recently, York County's efforts to memorialize the chaplains has taken the form of a yearly veteran's breakfast and The Four Chaplains Scholarship Endowment Fund. The Four Chaplains Scholarship is awarded to one or two students every year who have previously attended Alexander D. Goode Elementary School.

The story of the Four Chaplains will continue into the June issue.



S.S. Dorchester

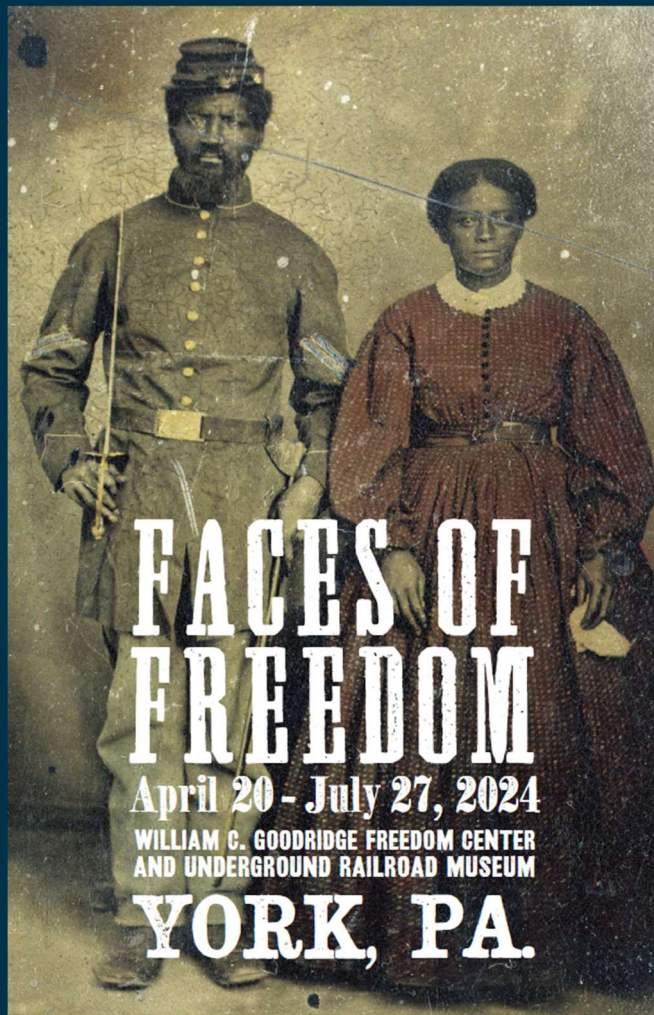
BUILDING THE HCC (continued from p.1)



Stewart and Tate Construction personnel can be seen working on the under-decking for the roof of the CAY HCC Orr Event Hall.

**Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed
Let it be that great strong land of love
Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme
That any man be crushed by one above**

— Langston Hughes

U.S.C.T (continued from p.1)

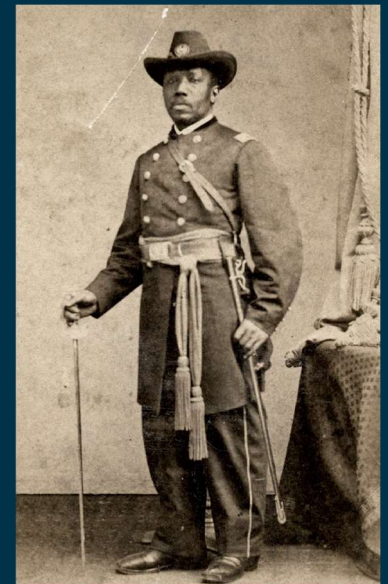
and the U. S. Navy. The impetus for this exhibit came about when author and historian Ron Coddington began examining the photographic record of U. S. soldiers in the Civil War. His first publication was well received by most. However, it was criticized by one of his patrons at a book signing in Gettysburg for the absence of soldiers from the United States Colored Troops. Though these photographs are harder to find, Mr. Coddington realized that it was an important omission if he were to tell the complete story of the war. He scoured primary sources from pension files, service records, the U. S. Library of Congress, and other archival materials. Through diligent research, he discovered and pieced together the biographies of approximately 30 African American servicemen and published his findings in a booklet entitled "Faces of Freedom" in conjunction with the GFC and others. More than 178,000 Freedmen, freedom seekers, and free Blacks served in the USCT and Navy.

Black men were initially denied the right to serve in the Union Army. This changed following a vocal advocacy campaign spearheaded by men like Frederick Douglass and the issuing of President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.

"Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letter, U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pocket, there is no power on earth that can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship."

This was not just talk, both of Douglass' sons joined the USCT in April, 1863 and served with distinction in the cavalry and infantry. Formal recruitment of Black soldiers began on May 22, 1863 with General Order Number 143 issued by the United States War department.

Each of the soldiers and sailors discussed in the exhibition made unique contributions to the Union war effort. Men like Martin Delany who has the distinction of being the first Black field officer, rising to the rank of major and commanding the 104th and 52nd U.S. Colored Infantries. Major Delany felt a strong sense of duty. Nothing else would do but he must serve his country in the Army. A biographer stated of Delany "He cared not how, provided his admission recognized the right of his race to do so."



Major Martin Delany, U.S.C.T

Delany is also noted for being one of the first three African Americans accepted into Harvard Medical School. His studies, along with his Black colleagues were terminated a month after their arrival because of protests from White students.



Regiments Sergeant Major Milton Holland, U.S.C.T

Another soldier that is highlighted in the exhibit is Medal of Honor (MOH) recipient Regimental Sergeant Major Milton Murray Holland of the 5th U.S. Colored Infantry. He has the distinction of being one of only 16 USCT members to receive the MOH for heroism. At the Battle of New Market Heights, he assumed command of the unit after all of the officers were wounded or killed, continuing the fight to victory. Murray was promoted to the rank of Captain but his commission was refused by the War Department because he was Black.

After the war he moved to Washington, D.C. where he became a prominent advocate for African American rights and Chief of Collections for the Auditor Office of the United States, Sixth District. Murray was also a businessman founding one of the first Black owned insurance companies.

**You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may tread me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.**

**Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.**

**Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.**

— Maya Angelou