# Images from the Past, Images from the Present

Black Excellence, Resistance, and Joy Yesterday and Today

Tenth Grade African American History, Rotation Three









## SCHOOL REPORT.

State, School, Hongy Fill Michaels

# Mary Bowser: The Union Spy Who Disappeared

Mary Bowser was a formerly enslaved woman from Virginia. During the Civil War, she became an international spy who posed as a house slave and infiltrated the Confederate White House. She gave secret military and political information to the Union that was crucial in winning the war. Afterwards, she became a teacher for the Freedmen's Bureau and started a school in St. Mary's, Georgia.

The detective cork board background is lit aflame to represent the destruction of her records after the war by the government in hopes of protecting her identity. Also, Mary Bowser changed her name and frequently used various pseudonyms when writing which made tracking her movements more difficult. The idea of the red lines commonly seen in detective tropes connect her to these various places and events in history. We see an image of Elizabeth van Lew, a woman who helped her through her journey, a picture of Mary in the Confederate White House, and two others.

Excellence is depicted through how she stayed hidden for so long in the heart of enemy territory and provided crucial information for the Union. Resistance is shown in how she fought against the Confederacy and resisted social expectations by being a woman of color and spy, resisting slavery in and of itself.



## It's about time this organization of Event Planners took the Center Stage.

Center Stage is an organization founded by Shauntae Doughty and Ebony Bryce that plans a multitude of social events, ranging from non-profits to weddings and birthday parties. It is comprised of an entirely Black staff, providing work experience and classes for adults, teens, and anyone interested in the event planning industry.

These pictures were selected because they show the behind-the-scenes hardwork of those involved in the organization to create memorable events for their clientele. On social media, you're likely to see the end results of their strenuous effort but not the process that goes into each and every party. This is why in the center, you can see a few of the head event planners dressed up nicely for their photoshoot and in the background are faded pictures of what it actually looks like working inside of the industry.

Events by Center Stage is an amazing example of Black excellence seen clearly in the success of their business and their continued efforts to expand further. They share their joy with others in the Black community through their work, creating memorable experiences for both their clients and those in the workplace.



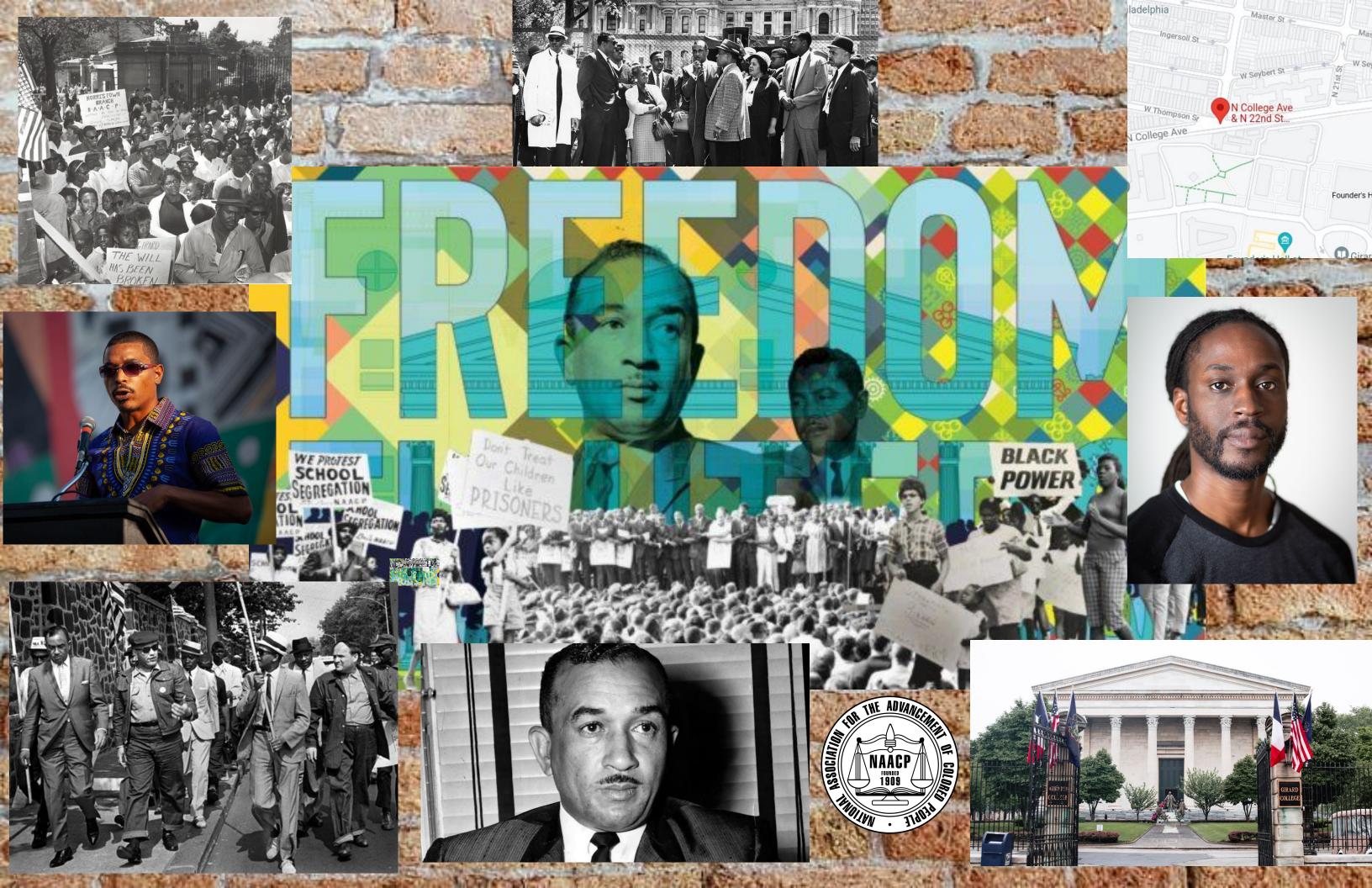
# Early Black Churches In Philadelphia

The above images are a collection portraying Absalom Jones, Richard Allen, the St.Thomas Episcopal Church, and the Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Absalom Jones was a monumental figure from the late 1700s to the early 1800s, by becoming the first Black priest in America (1802), creating the "First African Church" (1792), and collaborating with Richard Allen to form the Free African Society (1784). The reason for Absalom Jones becoming a priest was that a requirement for an Episcopal Church to be officialized was that the leader would be the priest, and Jones would not let anything stop his resistance, so he went along and became a priest for his church to be accepted by the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Richard Allen also created one of the first Black churches in America, right after his usual church started to segregate its parishioners even though Richard Allen was one of the preachers. The church was segregated to give Black people a safe place to pray. This method of Black resistance was so successful that they had to expand their church into a second building and empty lot nearby. The church resisted even more against slavery by providing refuge to 30 runaway Jamaican slaves in 1795.

At the center of the collage we have an image of the original black episcopal church. In the right corners are pictures of Absalom Jones and Richard Allen two founders of these first churches. Then in the top left we have a drawing of Mother Bethel when it was built, and in the bottom left a picture of Jones' Episcopal church today, showing the resilience against time and everyone who didn't want them congregating.



## Felix St. Fort and Gabe Tiberino and the Cecil B. Moore Mural

Felix St. Fort and Gabe Tiberino are the artists who created the mural located on College avenue and 22nd street in Philadelphia. The mural represents the Cecil B. Moore Philadelphia Freedom Fighters the civil rights group that is most well known for taking a major part in desegregating Girard College in 1965.

Girard College was a boarding school that barred Black students which caused outrage from the Black applicants, as the school was in the center of North Philadelphia, a predominantly Black neighborhood. Consequently, a group of students under the leadership of Cecil B. Moore took to the streets with picket signs and protested for over seven months. The protesting ended with legal action on behalf of the young Black children being unable to attend the school, desegregating the school.

The artists included Adinkra Symbols to represent concepts and ideas from West Africa, or today's Ghana. These symbols have specific meanings, including Knowledge, Unity, Perseverance, Power of Love, Fortitude, Service, Democracy, Justice, Excellence, and Encouragement. The artists also distributed mini Mural Kits to local public schools and other neighborhood sites. As St. Fort said, "it's frustrating that people are still fighting for the same things the Philadelphia Freedom Fighters fought for almost 60 years ago", but these acts of resistance and joy through murals in Philadelphia show signs of hope and determination.

The collage has the picture of the mural in the center, with the artists Felix St. Fort and Gabe Tiberino on either side of the center image. Apart from that, other images depicting the protests and Girard College are scattered around the center image as well as a location of the mural from Google maps.

# The 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment



#### **54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment**

The 54th regiment is the first Northern Black volunteer regiment enlisted to fight in the Civil War. They participated in the unsuccessful attack against Fort Wagner on July 18, 1862. It is this battle that made them famous. The valor the 54th regiment displayed proved to all that they were courageous soldiers. They further fought against discrimination such as fighting for equal pay. The 54th regiment also helped boost Black enlistment in the war.

The center image of the collage is a painting depicting the 54th Massachusetts regiment charging Fort Wagner. On the right, there is another painting of the 54th in battle. In the top right corner, there is a quote about the valor of the soldiers. On the opposite corner, there is a recruitment advertisement, to represent all the Black soldiers who joined up to fight, and the impact the 54th had on enlistment. There is also a casualty list on the top left corner, as it represents the sacrifices made by the regiment. The bottom and bottom right are the individuals who were part of the 54th. The two people shown are Sgt. William Carney, the first Black person to receive the medal of honor, and Sgt. Henry F. Stewart. In the bottom left corner are the monuments commemorating the heroes.

The 54th regiment embodies Black excellence through their heroic skills that were honored across the United States. The soldiers' ability to deter the Confederates, and suffering heavy losses because of it, portrayed Black resistance and Black excellence during the Battle of Fort Wagner.

# The Stadium Stompers



Change is going to happen. We are aware of that. But change happening to drive black folks out of their homes' history, our history, our culture and most of all, our memories, will not be tolerated. Yes, I am passionate about stopping the stadium. I am not naive. This effort is wrong-headed no matter how you look at it.

**UP WITH THE** 

COMMUNITY

DOWN WITH

THE STADIUM

Stadium

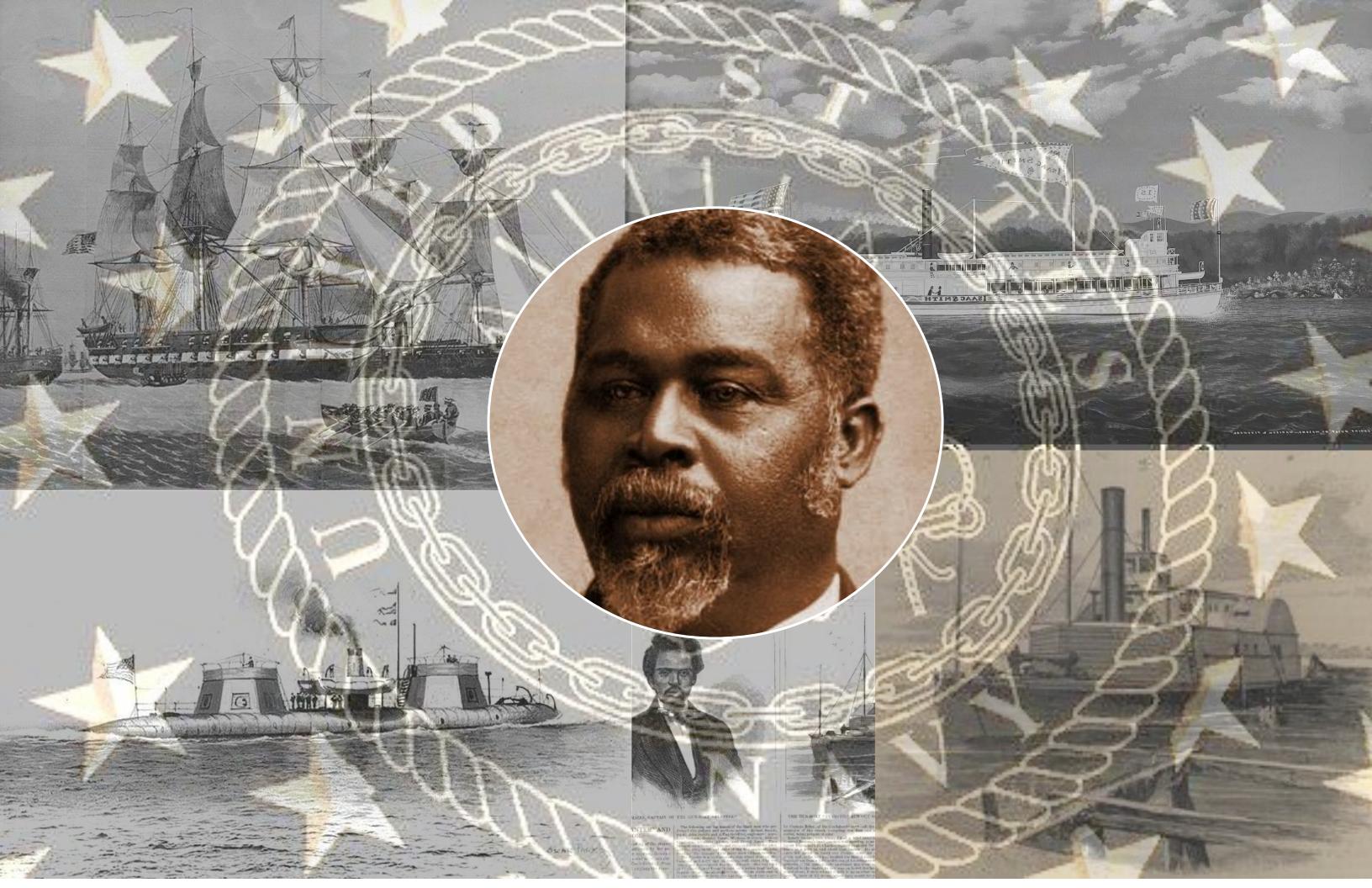
- Jackie Wiggins, Stadium Stomper

#### **The Stadium Stompers**

The Stadium Stompers is an organization based in North Philadelphia that is unifying the community and building power in order to stop the Temple University Stadium from being built. The Stadium Stompers organizes monthly meetings to discuss issues or changes in North Philadelphia. Although they have halted the Temple University stadium from being built through many protests and events, they still continue to unite community members. The Stadium Stompers was founded by three Black women who have led numerous protests and events for this cause.

In the center of our collage, we have placed the three women that founded the Stadium Stompers organization in 2015: Denise Toliver, Jackie Wiggins, and Gail Loney. Together, they were able to accomplish their goals through numerous protests, which is why they are the centerpiece of the collage. The format of our collage depicts the two sides of the protests. On one side, we show images from the Stadium Stompers protests and events that they have organized. On the left, we have included their logo for their organization along with their primary goal listed beneath the logo. On the other side, there are images that represent Temple University. For example, on the top right it is a rendition of what the stadium would have looked like and below it is the Temple University logo. A similar rendition of the stadium, except from an aerial view is shown below the Temple University logo. On the bottom, we have placed a quote from the women who founded Stadium Stompers.

This organization shows Black resilience because of the many protests that Stadium Stompers have organized to push back against the stadium from being built. Through their resilience for their community, they have also shown Black excellence. Furthermore, the ability of the women to unify their community and create the successful organization of Stadium Stompers displays Black excellence.



## **Robert Smalls**

Robert Smalls was born enslaved on April 5, 1839 in Beaufort, South Carolina and gained freedom when he was 19 years old. During the Civil War, the Union Navy blockaded Confederate harbors. Smalls stole a Confederate Navy ship and daringly sailed his family and friends to Union lines across heavily guarded waters. He later became a first generation Black politician who served on the South Carolina State Assembly and as a Representative for five terms.

The central picture is an image of Robert Smalls as an older man. We put this image in the center as it is one of the few images of the person we chose to study. The image directly below that one and the image in the lower right hand corner represent Smalls' daring escape from enslavement, in which he commandeered a Confederate Navy vessel and sailed through heavily trafficked Confederate waters to the Union blockade, surrendering the ship and its armaments to the Union Navy. The other images on the slide are ships that Smalls piloted during his time in the Union navy, eventually reaching the post of acting captain of his own ships. The translucent stars scattered around the collage form the navy seal, the center of which is covered by the image of Smalls.

Robert Smalls represents Black resistance because of how he got himself, his family, and his crew of other enslaved Black people to freedom. Robert Smalls also represents Black excellence because although he was born enslaved, he defied expectations to become one of first Black politicians of the United States.



# Mama Tee Community Fridges

Mama Tee Community Fridges is an organization committed to providing food in underserved communities and fighting food insecurity in Philadelphia. The organization was founded by Dr. Michelle Nelson and is led by women of color. In addition to maintaining and stocking community fridges, Mama Tee sells apparel that promotes racial equality and donates the proceeds to a different organization each month.

Two images of fridges are positioned at the bottom of the collage as they are the purpose of the organization and represent the goal of Mama Tee: providing free and sustainable food to communities in need. A picture of Dr. Michelle Nelson is centered on the page with the quote, "Food for everyone. Feed Everyone." As the founder of the organization, Dr. Nelson made Mama Tee possible and her generosity has impacted many people, which is demonstrated by her offering food to the viewer. Centered at the bottom of the page is an image of Restoration Church and Mama Tee members celebrating the addition of a new refrigerator, showing the joy experienced by both those giving and receiving food. At the top of the collage, the Philadelphia skyline is positioned behind five t-shirts that are sold by Mama Tee. These shirts share important messages about racial equality and benefit the whole city by spreading awareness and donating the proceeds to important organizations.

Mama Tee community fridges represent Black excellence because the program was founded by an African American woman with the purpose of helping local communities of color. Dr. Nelson and Mama Tee represent Black resistance by combating food insercutity in impoverished neighborhoods and fighting against racial inequality and discrimination.



#### FREEDOM'S JOURNAL

The *Freedom's Journal* was a newspaper created in 1827 by John B. Russwurm and Samuel Cornish, both influential freeborn Black Americans with Russwurm being the first African American graduate of Bowdoin College and Cornish being a Presbyterian leader in New York. The paper was meant to improve the lives of Black people in the United States and was published for two years. Russwurm and Cornish had debates about the colonization movement, and Cornish eventually left. After Russwurm became the only editor, he made the newspaper's favorable stance on colonization clear, and it began to lose subscribers, with the last issue released on March 29, 1829.

In the center, there is a document from *Freedom's Journal*, the very first edition from March 16th, 1827. The left hand side shows John B. Russwurm while the right shows Samuel E. Cornish, both respective owners of the *Freedom's Journal*. Russwurm and Cornish each have a quarter next to them from 1827 since a journal would cost 1-3 quarters at the time. The flags near each of the men are of Sierra Leone and Haiti, which were two countries that the New York-based (hence the New York pin) journal wrote about. The other three people on the collage are Paul Cuffe (left), Phillis Wheatley (top right), and Toussaint L'Ouverture (bottom right). Each of these people had their biographies featured in *Freedom's Journal*. *Freedom's Journal* also covered announcements regarding births, deaths, and weddings. This is why there are wedding rings and a coffin in the collage. *Freedom's Journal* advocated for black voting rights, hence the VOTE pin. The word "revolution" was included on the left side because *Freedom's Journal* had details on the Haitian Revolution.

Black excellence is represented by the *Freedom's Journal* because it was the first newspaper in the United States published by African Americans, and it inspired Black people to fight for their own rights and freedom. Founders John B. Russwurm and Samuel Cornish said that it was "devoted to the improvement of the colored population" and would show the virtues and successes of Black people that were not often depicted.



#### BLACK HISTORY MONTH EXHIBIT AT SMITH MEMORIAL PLAYGROUND

The Smith Memorial Playground at East Fairmount Park recently unveiled their Black History Month exhibit which showcased twelve excellent Black Philadelphia leaders, including Octavius Catto, Marian Anderson, Otis Hackney, and Robert Bogle. Across the playground, large five by seven foot panels are displayed to highlight the past and career contributions of each individual. It is accompanied with a fast facts quiz section, short audio biographies, and a blank "Future Leaders" photo exhibit for young children. This is the second year that Smith has done the exhibit and they are planning to keep it going for a long time so that many different people can be honored. Smith has been around for over one hundred years and there is evidence that they have always been welcoming to people of different races, and so the exhibits are meant to show that inclusivity.

Just below the Smith's Black History Month Exhibition banner on the collage is an image of what the exhibition looks like right now. Below that image is Frances Hoover, the executive director of Smith Memorial Playground. Around these images are a few of the signs included in this collection. The images towards the bottom are included as they go with what these black leaders' careers and accomplishments, which include basketball coach, baseball star, surgeon, scholar, journalist, vocalist, dance instructor, and more.

The Black History Month exhibit at the playground displays Black excellence with background information on twelve historical Black Philadelphia leaders. Octavius Catto, for instance, was a notable Black Philadelphian educator and activist who fought against laws that segregated schools or banned Blacks from riding on railways. A contemporary leader highlighted in the exhibit is Robert Bogle, the president of the Philadelphia Tribune, which is the oldest continuously published Black newspaper in the US. The exhibit was organized by Frances Hoover, the executive director of the playground who aims to spark conversations of diversity and equity with young children and inspire Black children to be leaders themselves with these stories of Black excellence.



## PHILLIS WHEATLEY

Wheatley was born in current-day Gambia in Africa, but was enslaved at the age of eight and brought to Boston, MA. She was educated by her enslavers, and in her studies she showed signs of extreme intelligence. At the age of fourteen, she began to write poetry, and later her collection of poems, *Poems on Various Subjects Religious and Moral* was published, making her the first person of African descent to have her work published. For all of us, her story was particularly interesting, since she did not receive formal education, yet still became incredibly successful.

We chose to create a collage to display Wheatley's excellence and genius through images of her writing, such as the image of the title page of her book, *Poems on Various Subjects Moral and Religious*, an excerpt from her a book, the poem "On Being Brought from Africa to America." In the collage we also included portraits of Wheatley, because it was rare for an African American person, let alone an enslaved person to have their portrait drawn at the time in which she was alive, yet she had two drawn of her.

Phillis Wheatley exhibited the concepts of Black joy, resistance, and excellence. She displayed signs of genius and demonstrated creativity, which displays excellence. She exhibited joy through her writing and inspired others in the process. And she showed resistance, exceeding all expectations and limitations that are associated with being enslaved.



















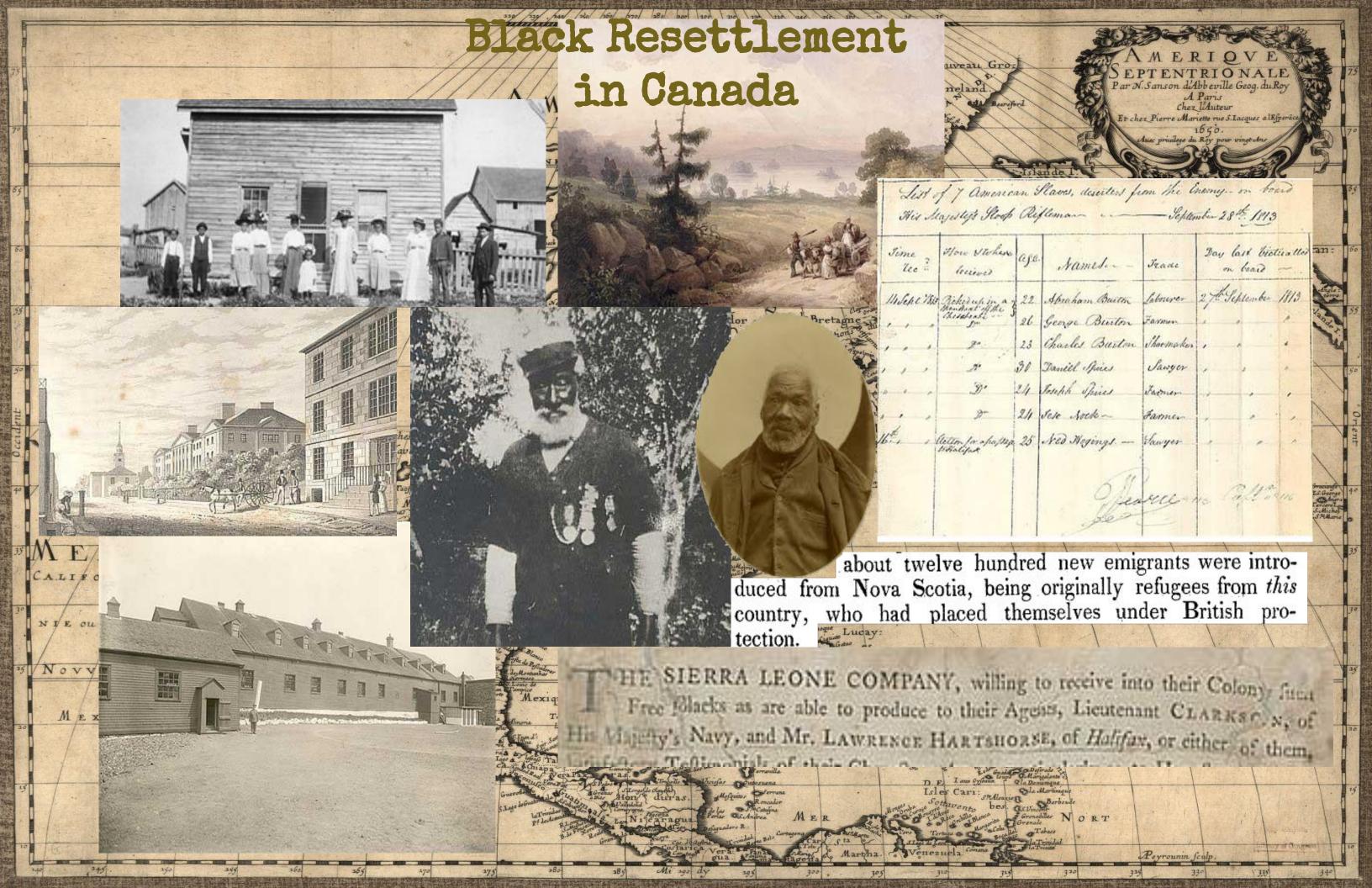


# **Black Doctors COVID-19 Consortium**

We chose to make our collage about the Black Doctors COVID-19 Consortium (BDCC) because they provide health care services, specifically relating to COVID-19, to the Black community in Philadelphia. The BDCC also has a mobile COVID-19 testing and vaccination unit that strives to make COVID-19 related healthcare services more attainable for African Americans in areas hit especially hard by COVID.

We decided to represent the BDCC by showing them directly serving the community through images of doctors providing vaccines, tests, and education about COVID to the Black community. Additionally, we attempted to represent the group's various locations by showing images of their home base at the Dr. Ala Stanford Center for Health Equity, a BDCC meeting in a church, and a BDCC site located on the street. Our collage also included multiple images of the BDCC's founder and leader Ala Stanford to emphasize the impact of leadership on an organization's trajectory and success.

The BDCC encompasses the themes of joy, resistance and excellence. Through providing free healthcare services to underprivileged populations in Philadelphia, the BDCC represents excellence. As they began this organization in response to the disproportionate effect of Covid-19 on Black communities, they displayed resistance. And finally, they bring joy to the community through their affordable and accessible healthcare services.



## **Black Resettlement in Canada**

During and before the Civil War, formerly enslaved persons from the U.S. would cross into Canada to gain more security in their freedom. One of the greatest exoduses in this time period was during the War of 1812. Our collage consists of several pictures representative of that time and the joy and resilience shown during the time.

One of these pictures is of a chart, recording information about Black Refugees on a ship to Canada. A text image describes the immigration to the British Colonies during the War of 1812. Many freedom seekers would rebel against their enslavers escape to Nova Scotia and other British colonies on British ships.

Another image is one of the Melville Island military prison where Black Refugees were "accommodated" in the aftermath of the War of 1812. Black Refugees in Canada still faced systemic and ideological oppression. A text image also shows some of this oppression, stating that the Sierra Leone Company had agreed to take some Black Refugees to Sierra Leone. In the end, only 95 from Nova Scotia decided to go to Africa. Despite this hardship, as well as other ideological and systemic oppressions that economically disadvantaged them, such as licenses of land occupation, Black people were able to gain their legal rights to land grants.

A few of the pictures represent the lives promised to Black Refugees after they had settled. In one image, a Black family is shown outside of their new house. Another one shows a family traveling in Halifax. A third picture shows white and Black citizens in a town in Halifax. Though it wasn't perfect, Black people in Canada were able to live in a more peaceful and welcoming environment than those in the United States.

Two of the pictures also show individuals who are symbolic of the immigration to Nova Scotia. One picture is of Gabriel Hall, a refugee who arrived in Nova Scotia after the war of 1812. The other picture is of William Hall, the son of two refugees and the first Nova Scotian, not only the first Black Nova Scotian, and third Canadian to receive the Victoria Cross.

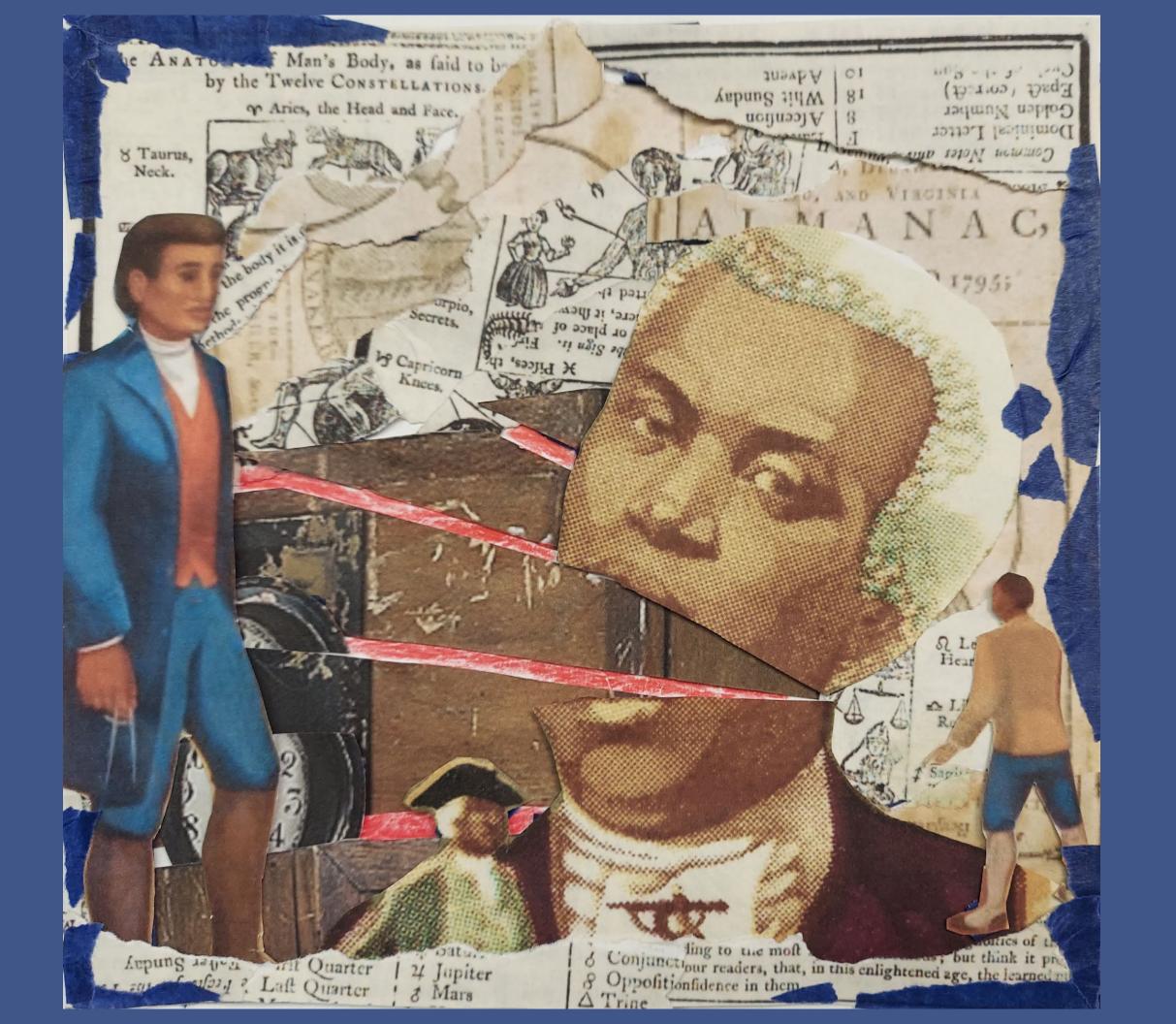


### The Malcolm Jenkins Foundation

Malcolm Jenkins is a safety in the NFL for the New Orleans Saints who previously played for the Eagles. He has achieved three Pro Bowl appearances and has won two Super Bowls, one with the Saints and one with the Eagles. He has a history of activism with the league. He founded the Malcolm Jenkins Foundation and co-founded the Players Coalition.

While Jenkins wasn't dominating on the field, he worked for numerous humanitarian causes and racial justice in Philadelphia and surrounding communities. A lot of his work involves providing stem and humanity opportunities for youth. He works with children to further their education through his programs, including Project R.E.W.A.R.D.S and Summer S.T.E.A.M.

The images we chose center around the Malcolm Jenkins Foundation, with the Foundation's logo in the center of the collage. The other images surrounding the logo include depictions of Jenkins' activism within the Foundation, focusing on youth in underserved communities. One image shows him with various school-aged children of colour raising resistance fists. Another image is of him standing in front of the Promise Mural located in West Philly. This mural depicts Jenkins and a younger child participating in Jenkins' summer camp. These two images show Jenkins' commitment to underprivileged youth and the strength sense of joy he was able to give people through his activism. The image in the middle towards the top are students who are a part of Project R.E.W.A.R.D.S, which aims to improve high-school graduation rates and college eligibility in underserved communities. Our final image is an NFT created by Jenkins, part of his collection titled "A Minted Legacy". A portion of the profits are being donated to the Malcolm Jenkins Foundation, as the image shows the values of the Foundation. Malcolm Jenkins' story and activism shows resilience within the Black community.



# Benjamin Banneker

This collage is about Benjamin Banneker, a mathematician and astronomer. His recognition and accomplishments in science as well correspondence with prominent political figures helped shape how Black Americans were viewed in the Federal Period.

In our collage, we used five images. The first image, the lighter of the two background images, is a page of Banneker's almanac about the parts of the body assigned to the star signs. That and the cover image of the Almanac were used to fill up the background. The large head of Banneker is from a stamp of him from 1980. His mouth opens, out bursting his own creation, a clock that he made when he was 22. The two smaller images of Banneker are from a mural called "Benjamin Banneker: Surveyor-Inventor-Astronomer." It was painted by Maxime Seelbinder in 1943.

Benjamin Banneker's work in science, including his building of the first wooden clock in America, assisting in surveying the Nation's capital, writing almanacs, constructing irrigation systems, and much more, are all a show of Black excellence. He was self-taught in many of the fields he practiced, including astronomy. He also displayed resistance in his letters to Thomas Jefferson in which he challenged Jefferson's racist ideas of what qualities are inherent to Black people. He spoke out against Jefferson at a time when extreme racism hindered him in doing so.



## Mama LaVerne's Chicken and Waffle Mix

Donna Richardson, a fitness influencer, and Mama LaVerne, her mother, founded a business centered around their product, Mama LaVerne's Chicken Seasoning, Waffle, and Pancake Mix. Their recipe has been passed down in their family, a tradition in the household. Now the mix is selling in Philadelphia grocery stores and Amazon.

The background image is collage of their product, the Chicken and Waffle Mix. From out of the bag rises Richardson and LaVerne. In the background are two more images of Richardson and LaVerne. Another image that comes out of the product bag is a picture from the amazon review of the product, the chicken and waffles someone made with the mix.

Black excellence was shown through Richardson and LaVerne's entrepreneurship. Not only did they found a successful business, they did so amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The women commented that, because of the pandemic, they had time to be together at home and formulate the recipe. Furthermore, Black joy is shown in the fact that this is a family business. The mother-daughter duo worked together to shape their family tradition into a product.