

Meeting of the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission July 19, 2024 Freedom Park Manager's Report

Prepared by Khadija McNair, Freedom Park Manager, NC African American Heritage Commission

Freedom Park Staffing

- Khadija McNair, Freedom Park Manager
 - Khadija McNair started as Freedom Park Manager in January 2024. She has a strong background in historical research, interpretation, and community engagement, having obtained her BA and MA in History from North Carolina Central University. Before joining Freedom Park, Mrs. McNair worked at NC State Historic Sites and contributed her expertise to various public history projects, including the Orange County, NC Slave Deed database and the Durham Black Burial Grounds Collaboratory.

In her time with Freedom Park, Mrs. McNair integrated the park with the Capital Area Visitor Services (CAVS) platform, which facilitates the organization of tours of downtown Raleigh historical sites for educators. She conducted multiple tours and presentations for various organizations to highlight the significance and uniqueness of Freedom Park. She also edited and helped to add the Freedom Park Virtual Tour to the website. She has supervised and assisted the first Freedom Park summer intern. Mrs. McNair also works with the Freedom Park Friends Group, which recently funded promotional rack cards for Freedom Park. Furthermore, Mrs. McNair also records and reports site visitation and maintenance requirements.
- Vinson Biggs, Freedom Park Curriculum Development Intern
 - Vinson Biggs joined the NCAAHC team through the DNCR HBCU/MIHE Internship Program in May 2024. He is the first intern for NC Freedom Park. Mr. Biggs currently serves as an educator for one of North Carolina's public school districts, where he teaches History and English Language Arts. A graduate of Elizabeth City State University, Mr. Biggs holds a BA degree and an MA in Education. He is committed to

continuous learning and staying updated with the latest trends and advancements in African American history and education.

This summer, Mr. Biggs is researching and developing two field trip outlines for school visits to experience NC Freedom Park, which honors the African American struggle for emancipation and freedom in North Carolina.

Freedom Park Reservation Visitation Reports

- The table below shows the number of reserved visits to Freedom Park through the Capital Area Visitor Services (CAVS) platform, which helps educators organize tours of various downtown Raleigh historical sites, including the NC Museum of History, NC Science Museum, State Capitol, State Legislature, Governor's Mansion, and Freedom Park. Freedom Park was officially included in the CAVS scheduling system in March 2024.

Month	Reserved Tour Groups
March	189
April	1512
May	653
June	690
July *expected	246

Professional Development

- North Carolina Social Studies Conference
 - During the conference, Mrs. McNair had the opportunity to collaborate with educators from Exploris School, along with students and a board member from NC Freedom Park. Together, they delivered a presentation to share their insights on the significant and profound impact of student visits to NC Freedom Park. It was an excellent opportunity to emphasize the importance of experiential learning and its role in shaping students' understanding of history and heritage.
- North Carolina Museums Conference

The North Carolina

African American

Heritage

Commission

- During the conference, Mrs. McNair had the opportunity to engage in valuable networking and connect with fellow professionals working in the museum and historic site industry. It was a great way to exchange ideas, establish new relationships, and learn from the experiences of others in the field.
- Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture; Ethical Interpretation Workshop
 - In June 2024, Mrs. McNair completed the NMAAHC Ethical Interpretation Workshop. The workshop's goal was to provide participants with the tools and skills needed to share challenging historical knowledge with the public. It also highlighted the importance of supporting and utilizing a "community of practice" and emphasized the inclusion of stakeholders, community members, and descendants in interpretive work.
 - As part of the program, each participant must create a capstone project to support interpretive growth within their respective institutions. For her capstone project, Mrs. McNair has chosen to focus on creating a structured approach to interpretation at Freedom Park. The project will be divided into phases, starting with the development of interpretive themes, followed by the creation of a guided tour script, interpretive training, and ultimately the implementation of events and programs that align with the established themes, tour, and training.

Freedom Park Presentations and Tours

- March 4th – Women in Construction Week with Zena Howard
- April 5th - Duke University Forum for Scholars, Recollections Workshop and Panel Discussion
- April 26th - Tarheel Junior Historian Conference Tour
- April 27th- The Day Had Come: Emancipation and Bennett Place State Historic Site Event
- May 1st - Wake County Teachers Tour
- May 6th - NC Museum of History Docent Presentations
- May 15th - Leadership Raleigh Tour
- June 24th - Juneteenth Speaker Engagement with Davinci Education
- *upcoming* July 26th – DHHS/DNCR HBCU Internship Freedom Park Presentation
- *upcoming* November 3rd – Christ Church Freedom Park Presentation and Tour

The North Carolina

African American

Heritage

Commission