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Bullock Museum to host program and workshop on Texas Freedom Colonies

Free program held at the Museum in partnership with The Texas Freedom Colonies Project

OCTOBER 26, 2021 (AUSTIN, TX) — The Bullock Texas State History Museum and The Texas Freedom Colonies Project will host a free discussion and workshop at the Museum on Saturday, October 30 from noon to 2 pm. The event, Reclaiming our Stories: Preserving Texas' African American Placemaking History, will explore strategies for preserving the heritage of historic African American settlements in Texas.

During the Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras, formerly enslaved people founded hundreds of historic Black settlements in Texas—known as freedom colonies or freedmens' towns. The descendants of these colonies have since dispersed, and the status and location of many settlements are unknown. The Freedom Colonies Project is dedicated to putting these settlements back on the map and preserving their stories and artifacts in partnership with descendant communities.

The first half of the Reclaiming our Stories event will detail The Texas Freedom Colonies Project's efforts to identify, map, and record the history of freedom colonies in Texas through collaborative research with descendants. Attendees will hear community origin stories, promising preservation practices, and challenges descendants face in documenting these place histories.

Following this discussion, The Texas Freedom Colonies Project will lead a workshop on strategies for digitizing photos and documents and ethically recording oral histories. Attendees will have the opportunity to share their own images and stories of Black settlements in Texas with the public through The Texas Freedom Colonies Project's Atlas.

Organizations participating in the event include Council of Texas Archaeologists, Huston-Tillotson University Downs-Jones Library, Travis County Historical Commission, The Alexander Farm - Pilot Knob, TX, Austin History Center, and Textile Artist and Independent Researcher Jennifer Steverson.

This program is held in conjunction with the exhibition *Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow*, on view at the Bullock Museum through November 28, 2021. The exhibition explores the struggle for full citizenship and racial equality in the 50 years following the Civil War.

For more information about Reclaiming our Stories: Preserving Texas' African American Placemaking History or *Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow*, visit thestoryoftexas.com.

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The Texas Freedom Colonies Storytelling Project is a collaboration between The Texas Freedom Colonies Project™ and the Bullock Texas State History Museum. Made possible in part by funding from the Whiting Foundation.

Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow was organized by the New-York Historical Society. Lead support for the exhibition provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities: Exploring the human endeavor. Major support provided by the Ford Foundation and Crystal McCrary and Raymond J. McGuire.

Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in these programs do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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The Bullock Texas State History Museum is a division of the Texas State Preservation Board. Additional support for educational programming provided by the Texas State History Museum Foundation.

ABOUT THE BULLOCK MUSEUM

The Bullock Texas State History Museum, a division of the State Preservation Board and an accredited institution of the American Alliance of Museums, illuminates and celebrates Texas history, people, and culture. With dynamic, award-winning exhibitions, educational programming for all ages, and an IMAX® theater with the largest screen in Texas, the Museum collaborates with more than 700 museums, libraries, archives and individuals across the world to bring the Story of Texas to life.

ABOUT THE TEXAS FREEDOM COLONIES PROJECT

The Texas Freedom Colonies Project is an educational, social justice initiative dedicated to preserving the heritage of Texas' historic African American settlements' heritage and the planners and preservationists that made them possible. The Texas Freedom Colonies Project puts freedom colonies on the map, and at the center of Texas history. Our goal is to prevent the erasure, destruction, and decay of home/farmsteads, churches, lodges, and schools within settlements in partnership with descendant communities.

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