Underground Railroad Museum at Belmont Mansion Free to the Public
July 4th & 5th
On July 4th and 5th the public enjoyed two days of fun filled activities beginning with the UGRR Tours, Underground Legacy Series special guest speakers Dr. Edward Robinson, storytelling by Linda Gross and Dr. Lillian Green. The event was filled with fun and family activities, games, steel band music, face painting, quilt workshops. Patrons enjoyed listening to the Voices of Freedom Choir and watched a Civil War reenactment. There were free refreshments, Stilt Walkers and many other activities to enjoy. The event was broadcast LIVE on WURD / AM radio.

Bob Casey and U.S. State Representative Chaka Fattah are introducing legislation to authorize $45 million for the Centennial District in Philadelphia’s Fairmount Park. The project would transform and revitalize the area extending from the Philadelphia Zoo to the Mann Center for Performing Arts.

Senator Casey and State Representative Fattah announced the Centennial District Authorization Act in a news conference on July 7, 2008. It was held at the John Welsh Memorial Fountain, 4231 North Concourse in the heart of Fairmount Park. The federal lawmakers presented the positive ramifications of their proposal.

High School of the Future Student Docents Thrill Visitors
Students from the School of the Future have been impressing visitors at the Underground Railroad Museum all summer. They participated in the “Welcome America Parade”, on July 4th, and spoke on WURD Radio’s live broadcast during the July 4th celebration.

These energetic young adults have been working tirelessly honing up their public speaking, inter-personal, and on the job-training skills with the aid of AWHS volunteers and staffers to help Belmont Mansion as “Quest for Freedom Partner". The Mansion’s volunteers donated thousands of in-kind hours towards the success of this valued and historical program. They arranged museum visits for the docents, coached them with reenactments and taught them business and personal skills.

The students have developed their own logo, newsletter, biographies and an Underground Railroad Coloring Book featuring historical figures and architectural structures of the Mansion. Using their newly acquired business skills, their task this school year is to market their products and have them placed in museums across the city and country. They are confident they will achieve this goal.

The Belmont Mansion Underground Railroad Museum Students Docents talk about history and they make it happen.

Fairmount Park Makeover Proposal
Fairmount Park has been slated to for a massive beautification face-lift. U.S. Senator
FREEDOM WALL OF FAME

“Receive Public Recognition of Your Support”

In the spirit of great appreciation and recognition of your contributions to the American Women’s Heritage Society at Historic Belmont Mansion, I invite you to participate in an exciting new opportunity entitled Freedom Wall of Fame. This fundraising offer is designed to support and preserve the Underground Railroad Museum and Belmont Mansion.

Freedom Wall of Fame celebrates and honors people and organizations whose dedication and commitment to the struggle for freedom has made a difference, and to those whose support of the American Women’s Heritage Society has enabled us to succeed. Imagine your name engraved in a beautiful, permanent, bronze plaque and publicly displayed at Belmont Mansion.

The American Women’s Heritage Society is proud of its twenty-two year stewardship of Belmont Mansion. Join in supporting the Underground Railroad history of this most historically and architecturally important Revolutionary Era house in America.

_______ I would like to make a commitment today. My check is enclosed.

_______ I want to make a commitment today. I want to arrange a payment plan.

WALL OF FAME DONATION

Please make a difference by sending a donation by check, credit card, or money order. Send me your donation today!

- Harriett Tubman Level $10,000
- Judge Peters Level $10,000
- James Forten $5,000
- Cornelia Wells Level $5,000
- Sojourner Truth $2,000
- Belmont Mansion Level $1,000
- William Still $100
- Jane Johnson $50
- Lucretia Mott Level $25

Please sign below and return to: American Women’s Heritage Society at Historic Belmont Mansion, 2000 Belmont Mansion Drive, Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, PA 19131.

Name ____________________________________________________________ Tele ______________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

Address        City    State   Zip

Email ____________________________________________________________ Fax ______________________________
The Underground Railroad Legacy Series presents a series of notable dialogues led by distinguished scholars who will share historical accounts and exciting, daring stories of escape from human bondage with help from the Underground Railroad. The Series will highlight the timeless story of revolution and Independence, slavery and freedom with a focus on Philadelphia. Participants will explore Slavery to Freedom artifacts in the Charles L. Blockson collection with curator, Dr. Diane Turner, and examine the life of Judge Richard Peters and his son Richard Peters, Jr., the owners of Belmont Mansion, and their relationship with James Forten and Absalom Jones.

The Underground Railroad Museum at Belmont Mansion kicks-off it’s second annual Underground Railroad Legacy Series on September 15th with an exciting public conversation with Michael Coard, Esq., President of Avenging the Ancestors Coalition.

The Underground Railroad Museum at Belmont Mansion Presents:

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD LEGACY SERIES
September - December 2008

September 15, 2008  Slavery and Freedom at the Presidents House –
5:30 PM – 7:00 PM  A Public Dialogue with Michael Coard, Esq., Founding Member of Avenging the Ancestors Coalition (ATACJ. Learn how ATAC took civic action to reveal and preserve the memory of enslaved people held by George and Martha Washington at the President's House.

September 18, 2008  Animating Democracy-An Underground Railroad Walking Tour
Join this exciting Walking Tour from Belmont Mansion to see the Columbia Philadelphia Railroad tracks still visible in Fairmount Park, just 400 yards from Belmont. Runaways, hidden in box cars by abolitionist William Whipper, jumped the train and ran to Belmont Mansion for safe hiding. A Living History Experience with Lenwood Sloan.

October 5, 2008  Gospel Festival "We Come This Way By Faith"
11:00 AM – 6:00 PM  Held in collaboration with "Women in Partnership with God"
2:00 PM – 3:00 PM  Book signing and Reading w/music: The Gist of Freedom is Still Faith
Author Lesley Gist-Etheridge shares an historical story of how William Still's Underground Railroad and Samuel Gist's mass slave emancipation...created a miraculous reunion. After 40 years in bondage Peter Gist finds his family - The Stills.

October 9, 2008  Animating Democracy - Doent Training Workshop
2:00 PM – 3:00 PM  Presenter: Lenwood Sloan, Pennsylvania

November 15, 2008  "Slavery and Freedom" in The Charles L. Blockson Collection
5:30 PM – 7:00 PM  A public dialogue featuring Dr. Diane Turner, Curator of the Charles L. Blockson Collection, one of the nation's foremost university-based collections of African American prints, photographs, slave narratives, manuscripts, letters and books. Dr. Turner is a graduate of Temple and past curator of the African American Museum in Philadelphia.

November 22, 2008  Pre-Holiday Gift Shop Sale and Meet the Artist Jeanyne James
11:30 AM – 5:00 PM  Don't wait 't1 Christmas. Stock up on your favorite one-of-a-kind collectibles, including Black Angels and Nativities, slavery dolls, and hand-made quilts. FREE

December 4, 2008  Holiday Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony
6:30 PM  Light up your evening with Audrey Johnson Thornton; President of the American Women’s Heritage Society and Underground Railroad Museum, members, and friends at Belmont Mansion's Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Celebration.

December 4-6, 2008  Holiday Gift SALE - Harriet Tubman Gift Shop
12:00 PM – 4:00 PM  Start your holiday shopping early. Purchase one of a kind holiday gifts and collectibles and meet the artist, Jeanyne James. Admission to the Gift Shop is FREE
The American Women’s Heritage Society (AWHS) is a non-profit organization founded in 1986 for the purpose of maintaining and preserving Belmont Mansion. In addition AWHS seeks to build bridges of communication and interaction among the various ethnic communities in Philadelphia. Belmont Mansion is designated as a significant historic site in the National Register of Historic Places and works to interpret the history of Belmont Mansion and its ties to the Underground Railroad. Under my leadership we have raised funds to restore the Mansion and create an Underground Railroad Museum to interpret the Belmont Mansion’s connection to Free Black Community and the Quaker anti-slavery movements in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania. In 2007 a $3 million restoration project was successfully completed and on July 4, 2007 the Underground Railroad Museum opened to the public.
The American National Archives records show that in 1800 the slave ships Schooner Phoebe and Schooner Prudence were captured by the American naval sloop, Ganges, for violating the 1794 Slave Trade Act that made it unlawful for American vessels to engage in the International Slave Trade. The ships and their cargo were returned to Philadelphia for adjudication in the United States District Court for the district of Pennsylvania in front of Judge Richard Peters. Peters placed the 134 Africans under the care of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society who, in turn, arranged indentures for the Africans in Philadelphia and gave them the surnames Ganges. The newly freed captives took the name “Ganges” as their surnames. Descendents of the Ganges still reside in Pennsylvania and Boston today.

The history of Belmont Mansion is a story of Revolution and Independence, and Slavery and Freedom. Richard Peters, Jr., as the Official Reporter to the United States Supreme Court in 1842, challenged the Supreme Court in Prigg v. Pennsylvania in an effort to prevent slave catchers from kidnapping innocent African Americans and runaways in Philadelphia. He won the case. The Supreme Court mandated federal law was still in force, but only the federal government was required to enforce it. This judgment stimulated Underground Railroad activity because the Supreme Court ruled states were not obliged to do anything to enforce the federal Fugitive Slave Act of 1793.

Judge Richard Peters had a great influence on shaping his son’s abolitionist views. Like his father, who had become one of the first non-Quaker members of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society in 1787, Richard Peters, Jr. became President of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society.

Richard Peters Jr. initiated the commercial development of the property following his father’s death in 1828 and no family members lived at Belmont Mansion. Peters, Jr. was on the design team for the Columbia Philadelphia Railroad and laid tracks on an incline located 400 yards from the Mansion on Belmont property. This incline forced the trains to slow down, thus providing an opportunity for runaways, hidden aboard the trains with assistance from William Whipper, a noted African American businessman and Railroad executive, to hop off the trains when the cars slowed down on Belmont property. Runaways would have hidden in the Belmont Mansion attic, which was also built at this time, and in the basement. Richard Peters, Jr. became President of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, the legal representative African American sail maker, abolitionist, and businessman James Forten from 1814 – 1830’s, and legal advisor to Absolom Jones, founder of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas in 1820.

Like his father, Richard Peters, Jr. fought to repeal federal laws that oppressed the enslaved and the free black population. He managed Belmont Mansion until his death in 1848. After his death, trustees for the Peters family heirs managed the Belmont Estate until the Fairmount Park Commission acquired it in 1868. During the 1876 Centennial Celebration Belmont Mansion was used as a restaurant for Centennial visitors.

The Legacy of Belmont: The Underground Railroad at Belmont Mansion

HO: The permanent Underground Railroad exhibition titled, The Legacy of Belmont, was created by the American Women’s Heritage Society at Historic Belmont Mansion to celebrate the grand opening of the Underground Railroad Museum at Belmont Mansion. The exhibition materials are drawn in large part from many sources including the Pennsylvania Historical Society, The Society for the Abolition of Slavery, The Library Company of Philadelphia, the National Archives, and the Peters Family.
WHAT: Permanent exhibition panels exhibition, a video and interpretive and educational materials document and interpret the history of Belmont Mansion, the Peters family that built Belmont Mansion and lived here, and the heroic deeds of Judge Richard Peters and his son, Richard Peters, Jr. The exhibition presents personal letters, documents, and photographic reproductions. Among the highlights are: life sized reproductions of William Peters, his wife Mary Breitnell, and their son Richard Peters; a reproduction of a painting by Rembrant Peale of Judge Richard Peters. The graphic panels are comprised of reproductions of documents and images in the exhibition, drawn largely from the Peters Family Estate, Pennsylvania Historical Society, the Library Company of Philadelphia, and the National Archives. These materials are supplemented by materials from various museums and public institutions.

THEME: Slavery and Freedom. Revolution and Independence. The exhibition raises interrelated questions: Who were the Peters family and why did Judge Richard Peters and his son, Richard Peters, Jr. risk their lives, property and social status to participate in the abolition movement anti-slavery movements? What role did Richard Peters play in the Revolutionary War? Why is Belmont Mansion and important Underground Railroad site? Who were the abolitionists? The Legacy of Belmont was conceived by Audrey Johnson Thornton, with principal research by Mary Dabney, PhD. and Olivia Butler, Ph.D.; Design and graphics were provided by Steve Feldman Design, exhibit building by Bill Holloway. The materials are organized in thematic sections: An Orientation Room which includes: An Underground Railroad video; Exhibit panels including The Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania, Abolitionists, Pro-Slavery Factions in Philadelphia and poster panels that include 1) an Underground Railroad Timeline and 2) History of the American Women’s Heritage Society. In the main building, the Peters’ Mansion, themes include: Judge Peters, The Peters Family, and The Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery, Richard Peters, Jr., Cornelia Wells; and the Revolutionary Era (publications and letters). People and themes are made available to visitors via hands-on push button audio kiosks that provide lively stories and historic background.

SPONSORS: This exhibition and restoration project has been made possible with funding by The American Women’s Heritage Society, The City of Philadelphia, the State of Pennsylvania, the Institute for Museum and Library Services, The Pew Charitable Trusts, and others.

RESERVED TOURS: Tours are available Tuesdays through Sundays from 12:00PM – 4:00PM. Reservations can be made by calling 215-878-8844. One teacher, parent, or guardian must be assigned to escort and supervise every ten students.

The American Women’s Heritage Society invites you to visit the Underground Railroad Museum at Historic Belmont Mansion in Fairmount Park. See the new and exciting exhibit, “The Legacy of Belmont Mansion” that explores The Underground Railroad and Belmont Mansion in the struggle to abolish slavery.
Weddings at Belmont Mansion
Raab says it’s “truly a remarkable document”.

The document unveiling was placed at the Raab Collection office in Philadelphia.

Black Independence Day
George Washington owned 316 Black Human Beings as slaves in Virginia and transported 9 of them to America’s first “White House” here in Philadelphia at the 6th & Market Site of the New Liberty Bell Center.

Within the next few months of 2008, construction of a stone Memorial will resume at that site to honor those 9 and all other enslaved blacks. Enslaved people who live and work at the Presidents’ House.

For more information, contact Avenging the Ancestors Coalition at 215-553-8751 or www.avengingtheancestors.com.

We Need Your Help!
To build a monument in Philadelphia to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., SUPPORT FREEDOM’S DREAM. A life size bronze monument of DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. with a granite donor base is proposed for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. For more information call or write 215-382-3869 or rebeccaroserm-fac@yahoo.com

Women of Distinction
The Philadelphia Congress of the National Congress of Black Women held its 23rd Black Splendor Weekend. The four day event was kicked off with “Joy Night”.

Other events included a prayer breakfast, the presentation of the annual Chisholm Awards Honoring Women Physicians and an Education forum.

The weekend culminated Sunday with an awards luncheon at First District Plaza.

Justine Winslow, Gladys Evans and Audrey Johnson Thornton received the Onah C. Weldon Worthy of Honor Award.

On November 2, 2009 President of the American Women’s Heritage Society Audrey R. Johnson Thornton will be honored for her achievements by Kappa Community Development Corporations, Burlington Camden, NJ.

The Welcome Mat is Out
Peek inside the door of historic homes in two sections of the city sponsored by Friends of Independence National Historical Park. Nine Fairmount Park houses are open including Belmont Mansion, which contains the Underground Railroad Museum, and the newest park attraction. The Ohio House built for the 1876 Centennial Exposition and then renovated to a museum and restaurant. University City is opening dozens of historic twin houses, from antebellum to Twenties Revival. And view the creative adaptations the residents have made to these early suburban homes.

The Penn Town Links will honor President Audrey Johnson Thornton on October 11th at the Hyatt Hotel for keeping the legacy of a people alive for generations to come.
HOME OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD MUSEUM
BELMONT MANSION

In Collaboration with “Women in Partnership with God”

Presents “FREEDOM SONGS”
A GOSPEL EXTRAVAGANZA

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5TH, 2008
3:00 PM TO 7:00 PM
BELMONT MANSION
FAIRMOUNT PARK
PHILADELPHIA, PA

Story of the GIST family highlighting the connection between the success of the Underground Railroad and religious faith. After 40 years in bondage, Peter Gist finds his family. Freedom Songs will entertain and inspire the public to have a greater interest in the rich stories of those who survived and were sacrificed during America’s longest running and remaining greatest tragedy of 200 years.

Your $10 TAX DEDUCTIBLE admission fee will be a donation to the Underground Railroad Museum.

Featuring:
- Gospel Music Performance by the Freedom Choir
- Spoken Word Performance by Linda Goss & Michelle Thornton
- African Dance Performance
- Live Storytellers
- Art Exhibition
- and more

BELMONT MANSION
HOME OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD MUSEUM

American Woman’s Heritage Society
Underground Railroad Museum at Belmont Mansion in Falmount Park
2000 Belmont Mansion Drive
Philadelphia, PA 19131

Phone: 215-878-8844
www.belmontmansion.org
The American Women’s Heritage Society is a non-profit organization founded in 1986 for the purpose of maintaining and preserving Belmont Mansion. In addition to preserving and interpreting Belmont Mansion as an historic site, AWHS seeks to build bridges of communication and interaction among the various ethnic communities in Philadelphia. Belmont Mansion is designated as a significant historic site of the Fairmount Park Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places. Through the site, AWHS has made a tremendous investment in documenting a more inclusive history of the Belmont Mansion and its ties to the Underground Railroad.

**Officers**

Audrey R. Johnson Thornton, President  
Dr. Naomi J. Booker, 1st Vice President  
Carole I Smith, 2nd Vice President  
Paulette O’Neill, 3rd Vice President  
Gayle Dickerson, Recording Secretary  
Mollie D. Robinson, Corresponding Secretary  
Linda B. Watson, Treasurer  
Keya Perry, Financial Secretary  
Joan Howell, Parliamentarian