PROPOSAL
for funding of
THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN PODTOUR PROJECT

Submitted for Consideration to
The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

On Behalf of
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Executive Summary

The history of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania is rich with diverse and interesting stories. However, for the majority of its life, the tourist industry has focused almost exclusively upon the battle which took place in Gettysburg in July of 1863. A group of interested and ambitious local historians, working in partnership with the David Wills House and researchers at the Adams County Historical Society, propose the African American PodTour project to better serve the diverse Gettysburg community and to help foster the increased visitorship of tourists of every ethnic background to Gettysburg.

The project, comprising of both a free downloadable podtour MP3 as well as a borrowable/rentable MP3 player, endeavours to broaden the scope of the interpretation presented in Gettysburg beyond the American Civil War to embrace the African-American community’s unique influences on the borough of Gettysburg. By presenting new and unique stories of Gettysburg’s history to varied audiences, the project hopes to increase minority visitorship to the borough and augment the tourist appeal of the town’s already rich heritage tourism opportunities for existing patrons.
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Introduction and Historical Background

Gettysburg and the history of race in America go hand-in-hand. From some of its first citizens to the modern community, Gettysburg has had a vibrant African-American community living and working within the Borough and surrounding community. Furthermore, the Battle of Gettysburg and Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address helped to solidify the cause of abolition and greater racial equality into the goals of the American Civil War. The stories of Gettysburg’s black community are strong and vibrant, but for the most part remain buried behind a larger, more popular narrative. African-American history is deeply intertwined with the Borough’s history.

Chartered in 1806 by James Gettys, the Borough of Gettysburg lay on a trade route between the rich western Pennsylvania frontier and the ports and treading centers of the east. Gettys created a hotel and tavern complex at his crossroads town on the make, the site of which today sits underneath a municipal parking garage on Race Horse Alley. This business was owned by Gettys, but one of the faces a traveler staying in Gettysburg would have seen sitting down for a meal along their journey was black. Gettys owned a mulatto slave girl, Sidney, who was tasked with helping the family. In spite of Pennsylvania’s 1779 law banning slavery, the institution would continue within the state for over half a century longer. Under its provisions, any person born of slave parents after 1780 was free, but any slave within the state would remain so until death or their manumission. Sidney was a woman caught in between. Although living in the birthplace of independence, the state where Jefferson penned the words, “all men are created equal,” she would be held in bondage until James Gettys’ death in 1815, when freed by his will. Her peculiar situation illustrates the depth to which the “Peculiar Institution,” had buried itself in even the northern states, and just how complicated African-American experience was as our nation was born.¹

¹ For a more detailed discussion of Sidney and the early history of slavery in Gettysburg, see James H. Allison’s article, “Gettysburg’s ‘Oldest’ Family,” available at [http://www.emmitsburg.net/archive_list/articles/history/gb/people/oldest_family.htm].
The most expansive study of Gettysburg’s civilians during the battle, that written by Gerald Bennett in 1994, hardly tells the story of a racially rich community. Likewise, the majority of guides and interpretive information available in the town today focuses on the white experience during the battle. But Gettysburg’s third ward, the center of Gettysburg’s black community both historically and in a modern context, was teeming with activity as the Confederate troops crossed into the Keystone state in June of 1863. In spite of stated goals, Gettysburg’s African-American community was convinced that Robert E. Lee’s army was one of slave catchers and bounty hunters, readying to drag free citizens to a life of hardship in bondage. Mag Palm, one of Gettysburg’s better known pillars of the black community had known that threat all too well. She had been a victim of what Historian Margaret Creighton has called, “life on the fault line.” In the late 1850s, Mag, a washer woman employed by a local white family, was seized by slave catchers, eager to hurry her south. They bound her hands in a dark Gettysburg alley and tried to hoist her into a waiting wagon to spirit her away. But Mag struggled for her freedom and fought off the assailants.²

Baltimore Street, the main north-south thoroughfare in Gettysburg, running from the Diamond to the National Cemetery at the south of town, is scattered with stores and shops focusing on one particular event, the battle which raged across the fields surrounding the town for three days in July of 1863. Souvenir shops and t-shirt vendors sell mementos and items plastered with the Confederate flag while, just one block to the west live the majority of Gettysburg’s African-American citizens. This dichotomy of two narratives, a white and black Gettysburg, has existed for decades. No other time was this dichotomy so vivid as in the 1950s and 60s. The barbershops in town all had tacit segregation

² Gerald Bennett, Days of “Uncertainty and Dread”: The Ordeal Endured by the Citizens at Gettysburg, (Camp Hill, PA: Plank's Suburban Press, 1990). has been the standard source for information on the civilian history of Gettysburg, being quite comprehensive. But his discussion of Gettysburg’s minority communities, particularly the African-American community, is notably slim. Margaret Creighton, The Colors of Courage: Gettysburg’s Forgotten History: Immigrants, Women and African Americans in the Civil War’s Defining Battle, (New York: Basic Books, 2005). attempted to change this fact by beginning to integrate the minority communities back into Bennett’s narrative. But her study is gossly incomplete, as it only covers the narrow summer of 1863 and the following fall, barely discussing the community outside of the context of the Civil War.
policies. Black women had the option of traveling to the outskirts of Harrisburg or Rockville, Maryland to obtain haircuts from black stylists. Black men, and the majority of Gettysburg’s women, had to resort to off-license barbers or a pair of scissors awkwardly wielded in a kitchen. One Gettysburg College student, Phillip “Snuffy” Parsons, would not stand for this. The young man, one of only four black students on the campus, and the senior captain of the football team, staged a sit-in with the white members of his fraternity. The group, like those in North Carolina and Alabama, helped win a small victory against injustice.3

These are only a handful of the rich historical tapestry that remains undiscovered by the majority of Gettysburg’s visitors. By offering these and many other stories as downloadable podtours, as well as on borrowable MP3 players, this project stands to broaden the reach of Gettysburg’s historical offerings. The project, working in conjunction with the David Wills House, itself a partnership between the National Park Service and Main Street Gettysburg, as well as the researchers and historians at Adams County Historical Society, hopes to uncover more of these interesting occurrences in Gettysburg’s history. By sharing them with the public through a free service, the African American PodTour project hopes to broaden the reach of works of racial and social history to a wider audience, and inspire new and different audiences to visit Gettysburg. Through social media and digital distribution, the project hopes to engage its audience for the long term and instigate repeated visits to the streets of Gettysburg to learn about the town’s unique racial history by both locals and tourists alike. By presenting new and varied scholarship, the project endeavours to break away from viewing Gettysburg as just a Civil War site, but instead delve deeper and present an interesting, informative and complicated tale of a community with rich cultural diversity through a new and emerging technological means.

3 For more on the Phillip Parsons case, as well as a detailed look at African-American life in Gettysburg in the 1960s, see John Rudy, “”The Unfinished Work... So Nobly Advanced’: The Contradictions of Gettysburg's Racial History at the Centennial of Lincoln's Address,” 2009.
Goals and Objectives

The goal of the African American PodTour project is specifically to attract more diverse audiences to Gettysburg, particularly African Americans, to broaden overall interest in the history of Gettysburg. Currently, African Americans' visitorship to Gettysburg’s attractions and historic sites is relatively low. On a typical day, walking through the National Park Service visitor center, or through the myriad gift shops in town, nearly all of the visitors one encounters are middle-aged white men. The Battle of Gettysburg, and Lincoln’s speech there, were crucial moments during the American Civil War which helped turn the tide against the Confederacy and ensure that African Americans would no longer be subjected to Slavery, would seemingly be prime sites for African American visitorship as a crucial home of freedom. However, on the whole, African American visitors do not seem very interested in the National Park or the town itself. This could partially be blamed on the Lost Cause mentality which, for many years, guided the interpretation in Gettysburg’s museums and which, to some extent, still hovers in its gift shops. However, being that African American history is crucial to Gettysburg, and Gettysburg is crucial to African American history, there is a strong need for a program through which the historical community might reach out to more diverse audiences, both on and off the battlefield.

Gettysburg has been faced with a number of disastrous circumstances which have kept the community from attracting more diverse audiences. To better understand how to attract a more diverse group of visitors to Gettysburg, one needs to understand why African Americans are not active in the present historical experience. First and foremost, the mark of slavery on the landscape has helped to push diverse audiences away from Civil War sites on the whole. As Gettysburg is primarily seen as a Civil War site, it has suffered a similar fate. In general, the African American community as a whole has a great interest in history. African Americans view themselves as having a shared history as a group, and are primarily interested in learning how major historical events shaped their community.
But this sense of community and continuity is currently lacking in Gettysburg. For African Americans, history is not something to be ashamed of to the extent that they are unwilling to address their past. African American audiences generally enjoy learning about their own personal and communal history, for they believe it to be a continuum of progress from the burdens of slavery, through emancipation and the Civil Rights Movement.

The core reason that African Americans are not likely to take part in the Gettysburg historical experience is that the local historical community has done a poor job personalizing history for African Americans in a way that connects the major events in the history of the town to the African American community and the continuity of community. What this project, in part, attempts to accomplish is relatively simple. In order to draw more diverse audience to Gettysburg, the battle must be placed in its proper context as one of the most crucial battles in a war over the enslavement of thousands of African Americans. This fundamental interpretive shift, linked with a more community-based and broader historical scope, will likely increase African American interest and therefore visitorship in Gettysburg.

This broader historical context, discussing the history of the African American community within Gettysburg, and how it has contributed to the history of the town and the nation, will help to promote a more complete image of Gettysburg, beyond a few days in July of 1863. With these frank and broad discussions, the local African American community may not only learn about the town’s history, but their own history within the larger local narrative. Furthermore, all residents of Gettysburg may gain a greater appreciation of the roles African Americans have played in Gettysburg’s history and understand their contributions to the town.
Methods and Implementation

Implementing the African American PodTour project calls for a two phased methodology. These break into roughly pre-production and operation.

Pre-Production

Before any visitors may take to the streets with a media player in hand to learn about African Americans’ contributions to Gettysburg’s history, the proper research groundwork must be lain. This will necessitate the hiring of a professional researcher-writer versed in both historical methodology and interpretive technique. This historian will then be tasked with the unearthing of Gettysburg’s African American legacy through the many resources available in the area, including but not limited to Adams County Historical Society, Gettysburg College, the St. Paul’s AME Zion Church, the Third Ward Concerned Neighbors of Gettysburg and the resources of the nearby National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, D.C..

After the research phase has concluded, and a script has been written, the grant organizers have agreed to volunteer their own time in the production of the digital recording and podcast medium. Both John Rudy and Jeremy Schultz are local historians well versed in digital media production and audio design, and have the equipment ready to produce the podtour audio files when the script has been completed.

Naturally, if the highest grant budget amount of $10,000 dollars is awarded, this phase must also include a fund raising drive to obtain the matching funds of $5,000 dollars. This could be accomplished in a myriad of ways. Potential funding sources include but are not limited to; a fund raising dinner, soliciting donations from local philanthropic societies, seeking underwriting from Gettysburg College or other local educational institution and micro-financing through small scale internet donations by interested netizen worldwide.


**Operations**

The second phase of implementation is the distribution of the digital media itself and the rental of media players in Gettysburg to interested visitors. We have negotiated a partnership with the David Wills House on Lincoln Square to host the podtour initiative’s physical location. Here visitors will obtain a media player and map, leaving their driver’s license or credit card as collateral. The Wills House has also graciously offered to provide their bookshop staff for the distribution of players, eliminating the necessity of employing a staff member of our own to distribute the devices.

Visitors will also be encouraged to download the podtour on their own media devices, as well as a digital copy of the map, and take the tour at their leisure, allowing for unfettered visitor access even when the Wills House is closed during evening and off-season hours.

**Digital Audio Players**

A key component of the project will be allowing visitors to borrow the digital audio players (DAP), free of charge. Because the tour will be designed to appeal to all age groups, we have chosen the Ematic MP3 Video player, available for $27.00, as it demonstrates easy accessibility and the lower cost reduce the burden of replacing lost or damaged units. We will not be using the in-ear headphones provided with the units, because of hygiene and safety issues, and instead will be providing over-the-ear headphones. The initial optimal budget allows for the purchase eleven DAPs and fifteen headphones.

**Podcast**

In addition to sharing the podtour on the website, it will be released under the Creative Commons 3.0 license of Non-Commercial - No Derivative Works - Share-Alike, meaning other websites may ‘copy, distribute, display, and perform only verbatim copies of your work, not derivative
works based upon it.’ Having this open license will encourage teachers and community leaders to share the podtour. The Non-Commercial clause of the Creative Commons license ensures that the podcast and material will always be made available for free via the internet.

The podtour will also be submitted to Apple Computer’s iTunes podcast directory and other popular podcast sites in order to increase the public’s exposure to it.

**Website**

A crucial element of this program’s success will be a strong web presence, in order to both enhance the tour for those who take it in person, and offer a way to virtually experience it for those unable to visit Gettysburg themselves. The website address will be [http://www.tour-gettysburg.com](http://www.tour-gettysburg.com), chosen for the simplicity, ease of memory and because it will allow the project to expand to other diverse ethnic tours of the borough when and if this project proves successful. The web hosting company Host Monster ([www.hostmonster.com](http://www.hostmonster.com)) will provide data services for $84 a year. The fees include web design tools, email accounts, and unlimited bandwidth for unrestricted podcast sharing. Using the design tools provided by Host Monster, we will construct a simple, yet effective website. The website will include the following:

1. Downloadable tour in MP3 format, playable on nearly every portable music device.
2. Printable map of tour in PDF format.
3. Supplementary photographs and text
4. Streaming video (hosted on Vimeo)
5. Contact information

**Networking**

In order to inform the public of this podtour, we will make effective use of social networking. Our group will establish accounts in Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, and other social websites. In
addition, we will link to other local history websites in exchange for them linking to our program, thus helping drive traffic toward other area attractions, and drawing interested potential podtour listeners. These networking tools amount to free advertising and will be very effective in spreading the word about this exciting new tour.
Impacts

As Gettysburg has had a long and diverse history in the state of Pennsylvania, it was only logical that our project would cover the struggles of a group that adds to Gettysburg’s cultural landscape. African Americans, though a minority in Pennsylvania, have added to this contribution in Gettysburg’s cultural landscape. The broad period of history that we will be covering shows that African Americans have played an active role in Gettysburg’s history. From slavery to emancipation, the Great migration to establishing a cultural identity, African Americans have played an important role in adding to Pennsylvania’s melting pot. But with a historic tour aimed at drawing minority groups to Gettysburg, it is important to establish metrics by which we can measure success.

The African American PodTour project stands to have deep impacts on the tourism industry, the overall community of Gettysburg, and the future of cultural tourism in general. As stated earlier, our plan to have a free guided podtour is intended not only to provide an inexpensive and convenient way for the public to learn about African American history, but to offer an interactive means of hands-on-history by showing tourists around the historical streets of Gettysburg. This stands to pave the way for added tourism income in the Gettysburg area. While Gettysburg’s tourism industry is currently heavily focused on the Battle of Gettysburg and the American Civil War, we intend this project to go beyond the Civil War narrative, thus broadening the reach of the existing tourism market and allowing for other interested entrepreneurs and philanthropists to create new tourist industries. Though we will include elements of the Civil War, as it had significant impact in shaping Gettysburg’s history, this historical tour will cover African Americans in Gettysburg from the borough’s inception to the current events that affect our everyday lives. In developing programs like the African American Podtour project, the local community stands to begin developing a history which celebrates Gettysburg’s cultural diversity. In doing so, we feel that not only will tourists coming to Gettysburg to observe the Battlefield have
another perspective on the Civil War, but new tourists, who had never imagined visiting Gettysburg, will come to town interested in a rich cultural history.

To measure the success of such a program, a variety of methods will be employed. First, the use of a web host service which tracks usage statistics, along with the IP addresses of the individuals downloading the podtour, will help the project to assess not only if the program is being utilized, but by whom. The IP addresses logged will help pinpoint the location of our users, so that the project can tell if it is reaching both a broad national and international audience, and the desired local audience as well. At the physical podtour borrowing site in the David Wills House, careful statistics will be recorded on group sizes using the tour. Visitors both to the web based tour and the Wills House will be presented a comment card, either virtually by e-mail or by hand, to fill out. Among the optional statistical choices will be age, sex and racial identification. With these metrics, we can better determine if the tour is reaching a diverse and broad audience, and if it truly is bringing more diverse visitors to the borough of Gettysburg.
Continuing Funding and Long Term Planning

After establishing the African American PodTour project through the monies obtained through the PHMC grant program, to continue making Gettysburg more attractive to diverse visitors, alternative funding sources will be necessary to continue the project. After grant funding has been exhausted, private donors, both large and small, will be the most important funding source for the project. The chief means for accomplishing this continued fund raising is from the users themselves. Through the http://www.tour-gettysburg.com website, visitors and podtour users will be able to donate to keep the project alive through PayPal into an operating account. By creating interested and informed stewards of the historical knowledge, and developing meaningful relationships with the podtour’s users, the project stands to create a powerful micro-financing structure with which to develop and grow. In this light, the planned website would also include an e-mail update newsletter, so that visitors know of important changes to the podtour program, users can share their experiences and the coordinators can gauge interest for future expansion of the project. The projects’ continued success may also hinge on underwriting from a corporate sponsor, preferably one or two local businesses willing to sponsor the project in exchange for a mention on the website or at the end of the podtour itself.

The danger in this project’s continued successful growth comes if larger donors or corporations wish to underwrite the project. While these larger groups have the potential to donate vast amounts of money to ensure the project’s vitality, as well as the added benefit of spreading publicity about the project, there may be a hidden cost. By giving large entities a stake in the project, we would potentially open the project to political agenda and off-mission endeavours. To avoid these possible changes to the program, it is the intention of the African American PodTour project organizers to limit, where possible, large scale donations to the project. If, at any time, a donor wishes to change the focus of the podtour initiative, or force an alteration in our mission, then that donor will be refused, and other
donors, friendlier to our overall mission, will be sought.

The second funding source for new and varied programming will be grant applications similar to this, either through PHMC or without. When the project has data to support the growth of African American visitorship to Gettysburg, and the increased participation of the local community in the historical dialogue, it will be time to broaden the scope of the project to other ethnic and minority groups, including but not limited to Hispanic-American, Women’s, Asian-American and Greek-American history. By applying for continued grant funding, the project will maintain its objectivity while still growing to service ever broadening groups of visitors and communities. In the end, the project is expecting to see growth and success within the first year of podtour distribution. By broadening the reach of Gettysburg’s history, by tapping markets not serviced previously and especially by encouraging small, regular donations over larger, one-time input from the community, the project hopes to become a staple of the tourists’ trip to Gettysburg, and the attraction to which local residents most desire to bring out of town visitors to share in Gettysburg’s rich heritage.
Conclusion/Call to Action

There is a narrative of Gettysburg that goes beyond the Civil War in Gettysburg. This narrative is a rich tapestry of different races and cultures. Sometimes there has been discord, sometimes harmony, but Gettysburg is such an important place in the history of America that any event that happens there is naturally magnified by the overarching presence of Abraham Lincoln and his words spoken on the battlefield in 1863. The African American PodTour project is designed specifically to shed light on a cultural narrative of African Americans (and eventually many races, creeds and sexes) not previously known to the general public. The podtour is one which stands able to inform the visitor of a history which goes beyond the American Civil War, a history which chronicles African Americans from slavery to the Civil Rights Movement to the modern day. This tour not only adds to Gettysburg’s cultural narrative, but serves as a model for the future. The African American PodTour project stands to revitalize the Gettysburg tourist economy with new ideas, new methods, new history and a more diverse visitorship for the 21st century.
Appendix: Proposed Budget Tracks (3 options)

**Option 1 – PHMC Grant of $1,000**

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<td><strong>Equipment</strong></td>
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<td>Ematic MP3 Video Players</td>
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**TOTAL:** $981.00

**Option 2 – PHMC Grant of $5,000**

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<td>Apple iPod Nano</td>
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<td>Headphones</td>
<td>20 sets @ $5.00 each</td>
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<td><strong>Web Expenses</strong></td>
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<td>Website Hosting</td>
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**TOTAL:** $4,973.00
### Option 3 – $10,000 total Operating Budget
(PhMC Grant of $5,000, matching $5,000 to be raised by AA Podtour Project)

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<td>Apple iPod Nano</td>
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<td>Headphones</td>
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<td><strong>Web Expenses</strong></td>
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<td>Website Hosting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>per month for 2 year</td>
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**TOTAL:** $9,958.00

Notes:
- These expenses cover the core expenses of the African American PodTour project: the media players that will ultimately hold the tour media file for the patrons, the independent researcher’s salary who will be finding the information included on the tour, and the website that will be accessible to the patrons in order to download the MP3 versions of the podtour.
- The mp3 player and headphone prices were tabulated by researching prices through a number of different websites that sold both mp3 players and Apple iPods. The final prices were obtained from www.walmart.com after determining that they had the lowest prices for the necessary equipment. This website was also chosen because there was no charge for shipping as long as the equipment could be picked up at the local Gettysburg area Walmart.
- The website hosting price was based on Host Monster’s ranking among other hosting services and was chosen because of its reliability and because of all services that were offered along with the base price. It seemed to be a greater value for the money.
- The independent researcher salaries were tabulated by researching what many professional agencies offer for their researcher’s services and finding a number that fell between the highest and lowest pay rates. It is estimated that if a researcher worked a full week for 5 days a week, 5 hours a day at the lowest possible amount for a grant that we could at least get a good portion of our research done. The more funding we could get the better the quality of the product produced. It will take at least a month of solid research to be able to create a suitable podtour script given the subject matter and available resources.