

*A MONUMENT
TO HONOR
THE BLACK
PATRIOTS*

AT THE
BATTLE OF GUILFORD COURTHOUSE
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA



OUR STORY BEGAN

A CHANCE MEETING. A COMMITMENT
FORGED. A CALL TO ACTION.

In 2022, two strangers crossed paths at the Guilford Courthouse Military Park. They found something in common—ancestors who had fought at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. One ancestor, Major Joseph Winston, a white enslaver from Surry County, has a monument in the park and is recognized as a local hero of the Revolutionary War. The other ancestor, Ishmael Titus, a Black militia soldier from Rowan County, first enlisted as a substitute for his master, served in a military unit near Winston's, and goes unrecognized at the park. Joanna Winston Foley and Sage Chioma, bonded by the spirit and belief in historical justice, call themselves “land sisters.” They quietly celebrate the Black Patriots on Veterans Day and Memorial Day, saying their names out loud in the park in a ritual of remembrance and respect. 🏹

The proposed commemoration project honoring the
Black Patriots of the American Revolutionary War in Greensboro, NC
will be the first of its kind in the entire state of North Carolina.

A committee of twenty plus community leaders and volunteers—historians, museum curators, poets, media representatives, legislators, photo journalists, graphic designers, CEOs and CFOs of institutions, storytellers, pastors, teachers, and professors—forged as a private group in 2025 to pursue funding for this public commemoration project, an important venture in Greensboro, NC.

A BLACK PATRIOTS COMMEMORATION PROJECT PROVIDES:

- An educational and interpretive site
- A local historical tribute to African Americans who fought and supported the Patriot cause during the battle
- National representation for the role of African Americans in the founding of our country
- A source of community pride
- An additional point of interest during tours of Greensboro
- An upsurge in tourism for the area
- Growing interest in tourism for the Guilford Courthouse National Military Park
- An increase in downtown historical tourism—promoting existing Statues, the International Civil Rights Center & Museum, the Greensboro History Museum, the Tanger Center for the Performing Arts, the Greensboro Cultural Center, and numerous businesses, educational, and cultural events

FRONT AND BACK COVER PHOTOS COURTESY OF GUILFORD BATTLEGROUND COMPANY.

OUR VISION REVEALED

FOUR COMPONENTS. BRONZE CAST.
HISTORY PERSONIFIED.

Upon searching for the right sculptor, the committee came across David Newton who is well-known for his extensive bronze statue exhibit at the Freedman's African Memorial Park and Cemetery in Dallas, Texas. A classically trained sculptor, Newton has dedicated a large part of his career to portraying African Americans and other marginalized people of color by depicting their contributions to our culture through public art with a focus on historic bronze figurative monuments. He transforms human flesh and blood into noble bronze symbols of struggle and freedom. Our committee has high regard for his work. Revolutionary War historians plan to use their expertise to enhance the accuracy of the monument. 🏹

DAVID NEWTON WITH HIS FREEDMAN'S STATUES.



One of several possible sites under consideration for the monument
is at the intersection of Martin Luther King Boulevard and Gorrell Street
in downtown Greensboro on land provided by the City.

Left to right: female camp follower (often a wife),
a Black soldier, and a drummer inspire the proposed
monument that will include a fourth figure of another
African American Patriot, the soldiers in uniform.



AN IDEA BLOSSOMED. A PROJECT TEAM FORMED. THE COMMEMORATIVE BUS WRAP REVEALED.

Founding member of the monument committee, B. Bernetiae Reed first made a proposal to the Greensboro City Council in early June of 2023 through her connection to Mayor Pro Tem Yvonne Johnson. The “Black Patriots of the Revolution” bus wrap project came to fruition! An idea cultivated by Joanna Winston Foley discovering 33 soldiers’ names, spurred by interest in her ancestor’s connection to the Military Park and the lack of Black Patriot monuments. Johnson understood the importance of the unsung people of color who contributed so much to this nation. While a student at Bennett College, she took part in the famous sit-in movement at the F. W. Woolworth’s downtown in 1960. During her lifelong fight for equitable living and years of leadership in the nonprofit sector, Johnson broke political barriers to become the first Black mayor of Greensboro. Yvonne Johnson was well-respected for building bridges, not walls, in the community she so loved.

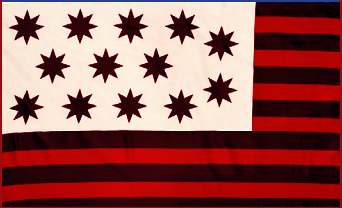
THE WHEELS OF TIME

A Salute to the Black Patriots of the Revolutionary War.

In 2023, just 33 Black soldiers had been identified as participants at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse on March 15, 1781. Since then, one of the historians discovered an additional 11 soldiers for a total of 44 Black Patriots. Many served in North Carolina and Virginia militias. Others served in the Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware Regiments. In fact, some of their descendants currently live here in Greensboro.

GREENSBORO TRANSIT AGENCY HONORS THE BLACK PATRIOTS OF THE BATTLE OF GUILFORD COURTHOUSE

The special bus wrap, titled “Black Patriots of the Revolution,” includes the names of 33 men at the Revolutionary War Battle for Guilford Courthouse, which took place in Greensboro in 1781. It also displays the Guilford Courthouse Flag, believed to have flown during the battle, a battle sketch called “The Calvary Charge” featuring soldiers on horseback, and a copy of a 1784 petition for the freedom of Black soldier Ned Griffin, signed by men who served with him. The bus was unveiled on July 4, 2023 in downtown Greensboro. It operated along GTA Route 8 during the first week of July and then across routes citywide.



Pictured Left to Right: Joanna Winston Foley, Park Superintendent Aaron LaRocca, Mayor Pro Tem Yvonne Johnson, and Greensboro Transit Agency’s Kevin Elwood (designer of the wrap) at the July 4, 2023 unveiling of the City’s bus wrap salute to the Black Patriots.

“I didn’t know anything about the Black Patriots,” was the response heard over and over.

HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE IN GREENSBORO SAW THE BUS WRAP ON JULY 4, 2023.

The bus viewing ritual offered a new way for local residents to commemorate this Independence Day weekend. Many had thoughts and feelings to share.

Some people ran their hands gently over the design on the bus as if it were almost too good to be true. Others lined their kids up by the bus to take family selfies. The predominant tone was celebratory but with touches of sadness. “I’m glad to finally see public proof that we helped to build this country,” said one woman. “But why did it take so long to find out?” A man questioned, “You’re saying that Crispus Attucks wasn’t the only Black man fighting for America’s freedom? He was certainly the only one I learned about in history class.”



ISHMAEL TITUS

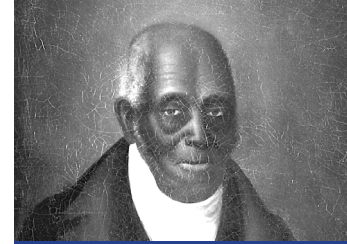
Titus fought in the battles of Kings Mountain, Guilford Courthouse, and Deep River and gained his freedom. After the war, he moved north and died at the age of 110 in Massachusetts.

BATTLE OF GUILFORD COURTHOUSE

On March 15, 1781, General Greene chose the area of Guilford Courthouse for his stand against the British because of the superior position it offered his forces. The forces were arranged in three lines in a wooded area on a gently rising slope. Two brigades of North Carolina militia formed the first line flanked by cavalry and light infantry for security. The second was comprised of two brigades of combat-hardened Virginia militia. The third line was the Continental Army from Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware. Greene's retreat from the field on March 15th gave the British forces a victory, but it came at a high cost. General Cornwallis' losses proved devastating to the British war effort.

Artist Thomas Kelly Pauley's rendition of Ishmael Titus is displayed on a plaque along the Charlotte Liberty Walk in Charlotte, NC that depicts citizens who influenced and participated in the American Revolution.

SAY THEIR NAMES



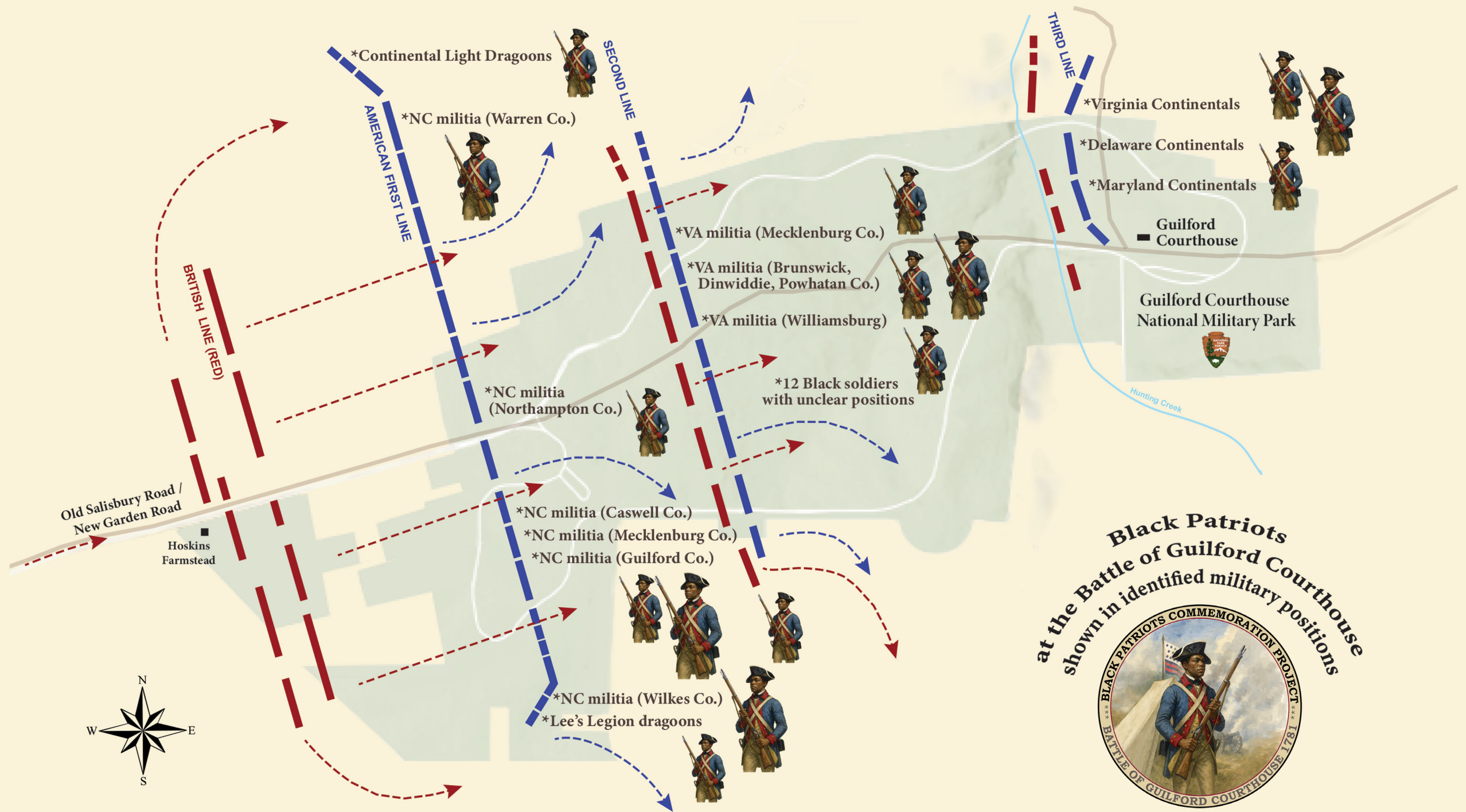
AGRIPPA HULL

Freeborn patriot who served more than six years and greatly influenced the abolitionist thoughts of a Polish military engineer during the Revolutionary War.

Every year on November 11, Veterans Day commemorates all men and women whose military service protected our nation. Their strength and sacrifice in the American armed forces is honored in traditional parades, wreath laying, and special media salutes. These observances stand in sharp contrast to the lack of commemoration for another group of equally brave veterans: the Black Patriots who fought at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse on that cold, wet day of March 15, 1781. Substantial numbers of Black and mixed-race soldiers fought with determination and courage in that famously ferocious clash with British forces. Black Patriots, here in Greensboro and all over the country, were fighting a two-fold struggle in the Revolutionary War—for the freedom of the emerging nation and for their own liberation. We believe it is time that the story of an estimated 5,000 African Americans who served on the American side during the Revolution be presented more accurately in our Nation's public art.

Adam Adams—First Maryland Regiment
Jacob Blake—First Maryland Regiment
Willis Boon—Washington's Legion, Continentals
Cyfax Brown—Prince Edward County, VA Militia
Isaac Brown—VA Brigade, Continentals
Thomas Carney—First Maryland Regiment
Edward Coleman—Continental Army
Francis Coley—Brunswick County, VA Militia
Mason Collins—VA Brigade, Continentals
William Cuff—VA Brigade, Continentals
Andrew Ferguson—Dinwiddie County, VA Militia
George (last name unknown)—Second Maryland Regiment
John Gibson—Guilford County, NC Militia
Edward Going—Warren County, NC Militia
William Going—NC Continentals
John Hammonds—Anson County, NC Militia
Lazarus Harman—First Maryland Regiment
Edward Harris—VA Brigade, Continentals
Nathaniel Harrison—Continental Army
Henry (last name unknown)—Wagoner
Micajah Hicks—NC Continentals
Henry Hill—VA Brigade, Continentals

Major Hitchens—Delaware Regiment
Agrippa Hull—Continental Army
Zachariah Jacobs—Brunswick County, NC Militia
George Kendall—VA Brigade, Continentals
Moses Knight—Continental Army
William Lomack—NC Continentals
Robin Loyd—VA Brigade, Continentals
Thomas Mason—Caswell County, NC Militia
Ambrose Month—VA Brigade, Continentals
Bazaleel Norman—First Maryland Regiment
Andrew Peebles—Lee's Legion, Continentals
Richard Pendergrass—Caswell County, NC Militia
Jesse Peters—VA Brigade, Continentals
John Pipisco—VA Brigade, Continentals
Record Primes—NC Continentals
Dempsey Reed—Mecklenburg County, NC Militia
John Rolls (Rawls)—VA Brigade, Continentals
Daniel Strother—Wagoner
Ishmael Titus—Rowan County, NC Militia
John Toney—Powhatan County, VA Militia
Matthew Williams—VA Brigade, Continentals
David Wilson—First Maryland Regiment



**Black Patriots
at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse
shown in identified military positions**



THE *PAST IS* OUR FUTURE

TELLING STORIES. FINDING FACTS.
REENACTING HISTORY.

Words spoken in court, inspiring their descendants and informing today's historians, are legacies of the Black Patriots that extend well beyond their service and sacrifice on the battlefield. In 1832, Ishmael Titus chose to apply for the federal pension which had recently become available to Revolutionary veterans. He told his story in his own words in open court. He persisted, submitting several supplements to fill out his military experience. His request was denied. It was an economic hardship for a man of 89. But the written record provided by pension applications from Titus and other Black Patriots is a rich trove of information—for their descendants and for modern historians seeking to learn more about the role that African American soldiers played in the Revolution. ¶

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER:

- Crispus Attucks, a man of mixed African American and Native American ancestry, was the first person to die for the cause of American independence. He and four other men were shot by British soldiers in the Boston Massacre, March 5, 1770.
- An estimated 5,000 African American soldiers, sailors, marines and laborers played important roles in the American Revolution.
- African Americans and mixed-race soldiers constituted five to six percent of Patriot troops.
- They served in the military from before the beginning of the Revolution, fighting in every major battle and almost every skirmish.
- African Americans enlisted for longer terms than white soldiers.
- American forces were more racially integrated during the Revolutionary era than they would be until the Korean War.
- New facts are emerging as scholars research newly-digitized pension records of soldiers who described in their own words their experiences as fighters in the War for American Independence.
- “They were good soldiers,” declared Henry Hallowell, a white revolutionary soldier who described the Black soldiers who fought alongside him in battle.

Battle of Guilford Courthouse Reenactments

COURTESY OF GUILFORD BATTLEGROUND COMPANY.



“THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS CENTER & MUSEUM proudly expresses its support for the fundraising to establish a Black Patriots Commemoration Project, a long-overdue tribute honoring the courage, service, and sacrifice of African Americans who fought for the founding and defense of the United States.

This monument will stand not only as a symbol of gratitude and remembrance but also as an educational beacon—leading the people of this community and visitors to imagine more fully the scope of our shared history and the depth of Black contributions to freedom and democracy.

The ICRCM recognizes that this project will enrich the cultural landscape of this community, and it will strengthen our collective storytelling. The Black Patriots Commemoration Project can be expected to enhance visitation to this area, inviting new audiences to explore the historical and cultural landmarks that make our city and state a vibrant destination for learning and reflection.

We enthusiastically encourage donors, civic leaders, and community members to support this important act of public creativity and memory. By investing in monuments, exhibits, and experiences that uplift untold stories, we help shape public spaces that inspire visitors to discover even more of what our beloved place has to offer. And we at the International Civil Rights Center & Museum view the addition of this powerful symbolic work of art to the landscape as a valuable supplement to the civil rights story that we tell regularly at the preserved F. W. Woolworth's National Historic Landmark.

Together, we can ensure that the legacy of Black Patriots endures—visible, celebrated, and woven into the fabric of our nation's best stories.

—John Swaine, CEO
International Civil Rights Center & Museum

ON THE UPBEAT

The NC A&T Four

On February 1, 1960, the four students staged a peaceful protest, sitting at a whites-only lunch counter at a Greensboro F.W. Woolworth store. Their action sparked a movement for the desegregation of public accommodations across the United States.

South Benbow Road

This district is on the National Register of Historic Places. One of the largest concentrations of Black-designed modernist homes in the state, such as the famous J. Kenneth Lee House, it's Greensboro's first historically African American neighborhood to receive the honor.

The Historic Magnolia House

Opened in 1949 as one of the only hotels between Atlanta, Georgia, and Richmond, Virginia, that allowed African American travelers to stay overnight due to lodging restrictions under Jim Crow, it was listed in the now historic Green Book. The house is on the National Register of Historic Places. Open for overnight, dining, and events.

TOURISM FACTS

—\$32.4 million during 2024 for visitor spending at The Guilford Courthouse National Military Park in Greensboro, NC.

—\$1.79 billion during 2024 for tourism spending in Guilford County. The Steven Tanger Center for the Performing Arts and Greensboro Complex venues pumped in more than \$553 million, and the International Civil Rights Center & Museum brought in more than \$1.2 million. These attractions as well as others contributed toward the positive jump in job and economic growth.

1781 Battle Reenactments

The annual Battle of Guilford Courthouse weekend reenactments include military encampments, historical demonstrations, and vendors, attracting more than 300 participants and thousands of spectators from across the United States.

Warnersville

The area's first planned African American community. In 1865, Yardley Warner, a Quaker, bought more than 35 acres. Divided into plots, they were available to "freedmen." The federal Urban Renewal Program in the 1960s decimated this Heritage Community. It has fought to preserve its neighborhood.

An Underground Railroad

Opposed to slavery, Quakers Levi Coffin and Vestal Coffin (his cousin) fed, hid, and assisted freedom seekers at their family farms near present day Guilford College. In 1816, New Garden Friends built the Little Brick School and included the education of enslaved children. Met with community resistance, the school was forced to close.

“THE NC BLACK PATRIOTS COMMEMORATION PROJECT is a vital step toward telling a complete and honest story of our nation's founding. For far too long, the contributions of Black Americans to the Revolutionary War, especially those who fought with courage and conviction at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse, have been left out of the narrative. This monument isn't just a tribute; it's a long-overdue correction to those omissions.

Here in Guilford County, we're proud of our role in America's history. That pride means telling the whole story. The America 250 NC- Guilford County Committee supports this project to ensure that when we celebrate the 250th anniversary of independence, we do so with integrity, recognizing every person who fought for freedom, not just those who history chose to remember.

This monument will bridge the past and the present, teaching future generations that the fight for liberty and equality was carried out by people from all backgrounds. By honoring these Black Patriots, Greensboro and Guilford County have the opportunity to preserve and elevate history, creating a space that embodies the diversity, courage, and resilience that truly define the American story.

—Sarah M. Lanse, Chair
America 250NC - Guilford County Committee

“A Black Patriots monument can serve as a permanent reminder of African American service during the Revolutionary War and the sacrifices made by them in the founding of our nation.”

Dr. Goldie Wells
Greensboro City Council

POSITIVE EFFECTS OF TOURISM



BOOSTING THE CITY'S ECONOMY

“This monument is a long overdue acknowledgment of the brave Black Patriots who willingly sacrificed their lives to ensure the creation of our American Republic.”

Josh Myers, President
Guilford Battleground Company

THE PASSPORT TO FREEDOM

REMEMBERING THE PAST. LIVING IN THE PRESENT.
PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE.

Building on the existence of a monument honoring the Black Patriots of the Revolutionary War, the committee anticipates a slate of prospective programs to further enhance the experience. By exploring the historical aspect in an audio and visual landscape rich with newly discovered facts and personal histories, the committee can create an enriched, immersive happening that feels fresh, fun, and inviting. The educational benefit of the Black Patriots Commemoration Project can be far reaching by enhancing classrooms, historical tours, museums exhibits, and cultural events. As Greensboro continues to expand in population, entrepreneurship, and big business, the monument will generate new avenues for the City. ¶

The commemoration project’s Return On Investment factor is the educational value for both present and future generations as well as dollars earned with increased tourism that affects businesses and cultural events.

CONTINUING EDUCATION PROPOSAL

Programs

Partner with the Guilford County School system to present the Black Patriots of the Revolutionary War, their role in the history of Greensboro, the influence exerted nationwide, and to encourage further study.

Videography

Videos are everywhere, especially as a learning tool and as an archival treasure. Webinars are a great teaching tool. Visual podcasts with a cinematic feel can reach a wider audience. People love faces.

Photography

A story in pictures can be visually stunning and evoke emotions. Vibrant images add value to print, social media, cultural events, and presentations. Storytelling through the lens is a powerful experience.

Web & Print

Dedicated website. Provide collateral material such as brochures, posters, billboards, and postcards for future programs or cultural events tied to the new commemoration project or when requested by outside groups.

Social Media

Partner with local and nationwide social media influencers to spread the word about the new commemoration project. Post viral content to sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Bluesky, and YouTube to generate interest.

WE ARE MADE BY HISTORY

A
PERSONAL
STORY

KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR. BEST-SELLING
AUTHOR. COMMITTED SOCIAL ACTIVIST.

This Black basketball superstar is acclaimed by millions as an NBA Hall of Famer. Moreover, he is a best-selling author, committed social justice activist, and winner of the 2016 Presidential Medal of Freedom. Interestingly, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar is now bringing attention to a neglected area of American history—African Americans who contributed significantly to the Revolution. He is determined to see that Black Patriots finally get the credit they deserve for bravery and dedication. The important role of African Americans during the American Revolution “wasn’t pointed out to me in the history books I had to deal with in the 50s and 60s,” remembers Abdul-Jabbar. His remedy for this gap in the story of America was to narrate and co-produce a documentary film—*Black Patriots: Heroes of the Revolution*. ¶

Abdul-Jabbar grew up in “the last part of Manhattan that George Washington controlled before he had to escape” British forces. Finding musket balls in the parks he explored with childhood friends, he felt “a real connection to the history of the area.”

Walking in the footsteps of Washington’s troops gave him a lifelong love of history. He went on to read the book *Black Heroes of the American Revolution*, written by a North Carolina-born historian. “I was stunned to learn that African Americans played a crucial role in our country’s fight for independence,” he said. “What I learned changed my life and my sense of my heritage. This is a story every American should know.”

StoryMap

Use this QR Code to explore a Black Patriots Tour of Historic Greensboro North Carolina



THE BLACK *PATRIOTS* *AT THE* BATTLE OF GUILFORD COURTHOUSE IN COMMEMORATION OF THEIR SERVICE

