

Friends of the African Union Church Cemetery
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE PORT PENN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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**Grand Opening of African Union Church Cemetery Restoration Project
Preserving and Sharing the Story of this Circa 1835 Historic Site**

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Delaware City, DE- The African Union Church Cemetery, resting place of five members of the United States Colored Troops Civil War soldiers, celebrates an historic dedication following an ambitious restoration project. The event is Saturday, September 17, 2016, at 10:00 AM and is open to the public. Governor Jack Markell has confirmed his attendance at this event

The Friends of the African Union Church Cemetery celebrates the completion of the restoration/preservation of this historic cemetery established in 1835 and owned by the Mt. Salem UAME Church. The site is a historic destination along the Michael Castle Canal Trail in Delaware City. The cemetery represents part of Polktown, one of the first free black settlements in the State of Delaware. Neglected for the better part of the 20th century, the Friends group celebrates their achievement in site improvement and remembering these resting Civil War soldiers and family members. The 'lost story' of this cemetery has been brought to life not only by preservation of the site but with meticulous historical research by local historians, supplemented with a living history program available at no cost to schools and community groups.

The event will be held at the cemetery next to the trail across from the Paul Morrill Community Center (Delaware City) located at 250 Fifth Street. Parking will be at the Paul Morrill Community Center. Trail transportation to the cemetery will be available for those with mobility issues. Please note that due to a bridge closing no traffic can travel north into Delaware City using Route 9. Access to Delaware City will be from SR-1, exit 152.

Restoration and interpretation of the site is a joint effort between the Friends, the Mt. Salem UAME Church, The City of Delaware City, those who provided grants and donations, and local community members. To learn more about the event or request an advance interview, please contact Tracy Beck at 610-842-1975, or tl-beck@hotmail.com. For information on the traveling educational program contact Laura Lee at AUCCPrograms@gmail.com