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Photos Attached

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Illuminating Hidden Lives: Bringing the Stories to Life

Partnership Shares the Stories of African Americans in the Mid-Atlantic Region through Film

Philadelphia, PA - A multi-year partnership between Cliveden, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and the African American Genealogy Group shares untold stories from our past with the addition of new partner PWPvideo. Generous funding for the project is from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The project began with digitization of documents from the Chew Family Papers, held at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The documents, in this round, focused on stories from Whitehall, a plantation located in Kent County, Delaware. The documents are available online through both Cliveden and the Historical Society's websites: <https://omeka.hsp.org/s/digitalcollections/2050>.

Stories pulled from the documents were reviewed by Cliveden staff and members of the African American Genealogy Group, whose mission is to educate, provide resources, and create a community for anyone interested in African American family history and genealogical research. Three stories were selected to reflect the diverse experiences of African Americans in the Mid-Atlantic between 1790-1810: one from Pennsylvania featuring a freedom-seeker named Jacob, one from Maryland focused on an African American midwife and soon-to-be-mother Nancy, and one from Delaware featuring Merit Allee, a free African American man and his enslaved wife Lucey.

The team worked in collaboration with writer/director James Robinson of PWPvideo, an award-winning Germantown-based Certified B Corp video production company, to develop scripts in the fall of 2024. The series of three videos were filmed at Cliveden in January.

"Collaborating with AAGG and Cliveden offered not just assuredness of the historical accuracy of the script but crucial context that inspired thoughtful characterizations of people we knew solely through documents," said Robinson. "This deeply affected the themes and heart of every story I wrote about. Ultimately, my goal was to create engaging vignettes about Black perseverance that provide a jumping-off point for deeper conversations and education."

A Cliveden Conversation on Wednesday March 12 at 7 P.M. will share the work of the project and the debut of the videos. The free program will be offered on Zoom - registration is required. To learn more about some of the documents, please join us and Adrienne Whaley from the African American Genealogy Group for a Facebook Live event with the Historical Society of Pennsylvania at 12 P.M. on Friday, February 28, 2025.

To learn more about *Illuminating Hidden Lives*, access the digitized documents, visit <https://cliveden.org/illuminating-hidden-lives/>. Please contact Jocelyn Rouse, Marketing & Development Coordinator, at jrouse@cliveden.org for more information.



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ABOUT CLIVEDEN OF THE NATIONAL TRUST

Built as a country house for attorney Benjamin Chew, Cliveden was completed in 1767 and was home to seven generations of the Chew family. Cliveden has long been famous as the site of the American Revolutionary War Battle of Germantown in 1777, as well as for its Georgian architecture. New research is unearthing a more complicated history at Cliveden, which involves layers of significance, including the lives of those who were enslaved and in service to the Chew family. This information broadens the meaning of Cliveden as a preserved historic place, exploring themes and stories of American identity and freedom. <https://cliveden.org/>

ABOUT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, founded in 1824, is one of the nation's largest archives of historical documents. We are proud to serve as Philadelphia's Library of American History, with over 21 million manuscripts, books, and graphic images encompassing centuries of US history. Through educator workshops, research opportunities, public programs, and lectures throughout the year, we strive to make history relevant and exhilarating to all. For more information, visit hsp.org.

ABOUT THE AFRICAN AMERICAN GENEALOGY GROUP

The African American Genealogy Group was founded in January 1989 in response to the ever-increasing number of people who expressed a desire to research their family "roots." Our mission is to educate, provide resources, and create a community for anyone interested in African American family history and genealogical research. Based in Philadelphia, PA and with a membership largely from the Tri-State region, we serve those who are interested in researching their family history locally, regionally, and nationally. <https://aagg.org/>

ABOUT PWPvideo

A Certified B Corporation, PWPvideo (PWP) provides *Video with a Mission*. We are a boutique production company specializing in video services to nonprofit organizations, sustainable businesses, and education agencies. From the time PWP was founded in 2000, we have been aligned with the organizations we serve: helping to improve the lives of others through education and opportunity. PWP is built on courtesy, honesty, and creativity. This recipe has led to our developing long-term client relationships with like-minded organizations. <https://pwpvideo.com/>



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