

HARPER FAMILY RECONNECTION REUNION MEETING NOTES for:
Tuesday July 2, 2024

Attendees: Beverly Harper-MD, Beverly Harper-PA, Billy Lee-NY, Cathy Harper Hogan-GA, Cindy Murray-DE, Cynthia Ford-Davis-PA, Delores Harris-PA, Faith Harper-MD, Julia Wilkins-MD, Karen Copeland-MD, Lisa James-PA and Sylvia Ford-George-PA

1. We identified reunion details so far:

- a. 35th Anniversary, 1-day event, August 17, 2024, at Brookside Nature Center, Wheaton, MD where the historic Harper Cabin is located.
- b. Theme: Building on Our Heritage, Tradition & Legacy
- c. August 17th is John Thomas Harper's birthday. He was born in 1837, 187 years ago. He is the identified resident of the Harper Cabin.
- d. Anticipated Attendance: 50 - 60
 - Save the Date has been emailed and placed on Facebook.
 - Family members who are not receiving reunion info or emails directly should send their email address to Sylvia by text or email (215.490.2707, sfordgeorge@yahoo.com).
 - Final reunion details will be identified and emailed this month.
 - We'll ask family members to RSVP so that we can properly prepare for attendees.

2. Report on Harper Cabin Site Visit (Faith Harper-MD) : Faith reported that the site visit went very well. There have been some improvements made at The Cabin and Center since our last visit 10 years ago. Inside The Cabin trinkets and knickknacks have been minimized making it more sustainable. Outside, the walkway path has been improved and benches have been added.

Faith was able to visualize/identify where our reunion activities would take place within the Center. She also discussed parking and identified the need to make it accessible for senior family members.

3. Report on Harper Cabin Heritage Day (Faith & Beverly-MD) : Faith and Beverly served as Harper Family Ambassadors during the Maryland Montgomery County Parks 25th Annual Heritage Days weekend, which showcased The Harper Cabin at Brookside on Sunday, June 30th. Their presence was well received as most of the area cabins have no living descendants identified and/or actively taking part in events and activities. Cabin attendees were delighted to speak with descendants of John Thomas Harper and to hear of his upcoming birthday.

Shirl Spicer, countywide museum manager for the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission, Department of Parks, Montgomery County, was also in attendance and spoke with Faith and Beverly. Ms. Spicer has a wealth of historic knowledge regarding The Harper Cabin, and is creating a home school group history program that includes Emancipation. We understand that she may want to include The Harper Cabin in the curriculum and meet/speak with family members. We discussed her meeting with Sylvia and Beverly-PA.

There was also a local band playing who said they grew up with the Harpers and mentioned FedEx Billy and ??? The music they were playing was very fitting for the time period and atmosphere. We'll see if we can get them to come to the reunion.

4. Brookside Nature Center - Home of the Harper Cabin: 1400 Glenallan Ave., Wheaton, Maryland 20902
We're looking for ideas and suggestions regarding what we can do as a family to build a forever relationship with Brookside especially since it's the home of The Harper Cabin, and because our family member, John Thomas Harper has been identified to represent a historic era in our country's history. The following ideas have been suggested. Family members are asked to forward any ideas they have to Sylvia.

- a. Coordinate communications between Brookside and family members re: upcoming events and activities, especially those involving the Harper Cabin.
 - b. Secure family members to become family representatives/ambassadors.
5. **Report on Reunion T-Shirt Contest (Cathy)** : There were a couple designs sent in which Cathy is working with a printer to format visually on a shirt for showing to family for a vote. The process took longer than expected. However, we anticipate being able to provide the designs to family members the week of 7/8/24.
- There was also a discussion regarding placing a date on the shirts. After the meeting we pulled the list of previous t-shirts. All but one of them have *the reunion year only*—not the specific date. We should continue that tradition. (See the previous shirts at the end of the meeting notes.)
6. **Report on Hotels (Cathy, Cynthia and Sylvia)** : Cynthia contacted a couple hotels in Wheaton, MD and is awaiting feedback. Cathy provided a list of hotels for follow-up. We hope to have some definitive info available at the next meeting.
7. **Report on Bus from Philly** : Beverly-PA will provide information regarding, cost, date/time, and location for sending to family members.
8. **Reunion Itinerary :**
- a. **Honoring Our Past:** We'll identify family members who have passed beginning 2020 through this year by the reading of their names and the ringing of a bell, followed by an all-encompassing prayer to pay tribute to all others. Later this month we will ask family members to provide the names of their loved ones who have passed beginning 2020, along with the date; and we'll identify who that information should be forwarded to. Family members will also be asked to provide obituaries of their beloved family members so that they can be placed on the new family website. Obituaries and pictures can be sent to: admin@harperfamily.online
 - b. **Icebreaker Activity:** We'll have a Family Member Scavenger Hunt, where reunion attendees receive a prepared list of questions and/or clues about specific family members and/or Harper Family facts to be answered or completed. It was decided that this will be an icebreaker only, no prizes will be distributed for participating.
 - c. After the meeting we were asked about door prizes, which will be discussed at the next meeting.
 - d. **Family Discussion:** We'll carve out some time to discuss where the family goes from here. Family members who have ideas, suggestions or specific topics of interest they'd like discussed should send them to Beverly Harper-PA.
9. **Suggested Menu:**
- AM:** Dunkin Donuts: water, coffee and donuts, fruit - whole
- PM:** Chicken, sliced ham, potato salad, coleslaw, dinner rolls, chips, water and soda, fruit salad
 Birthday cake to celebrate John Thomas Harper's birthday
10. **Identifying reunion costs:** All of the costs identified to date have already been taken care of. We'll revisit the costs again during the next meeting and identify any needed

11. Draft Timeline/Schedule:

	Time	Activity	Team Lead(s)
a.	10:00 am	Set-up, DJ – Clinton Hogan-GA We'll need to identify where to take the family photo	Team
b.		Band asked to play	Faith, Bev-MD
c.	11:00 am	Meet & Greet : Sign-ins & Sign-ups	Sylvia + TBD
		Family History Updates - We'll need a form to capture updates	Sylvia + Keisha
		Individual Family Photos - Photo Booth Style - at The Harper Cabin We'll need to identify a spot/location for photos. We'll also identify a "hashtag" so that photos taken during the reunion can be forwarded/collected in one place.	TBD
d.	12:00 pm	Where do we go from here...	Bev-PA moderates
		Show Brookside PowerPoint re: The Harper Cabin	HFR/Brookside
		Quame to speak on how family lived during Emancipation - id timing	Quame
		Guest and/or family speaker	TBD
		Family discussion	Bev-PA
e.	1:00 pm	Group Family Photo	Clinton Hogan-GA
f.	1:30 pm	Light Eats & Refreshments	Evelyn & Faith
g.	2:00 pm	Meet & Greet : Sign-ins & Sign-ups : Family History Updates – cont'd	Sylvia + TBD
h.	3:00 pm	Closing – Until next time	TBD
i.	4:00 pm	Clean-up	TBD

12. Next Steps:

- Follow-up meeting with Brookside (Sylvia - TBD)
- Communications re: speaker (Sylvia)
- Research/contact hotels (Sylvia, Cynthia, Cathy)
- Follow-up with Bev Harper-PA re: getting a bus
- Name tags that identify which brother and what generation attendees are related to (CFD). It's one of our goals that by the end of the year all descendants of Alfred Harper know which of his son's they're related to (John Thomas or George Columbus) and what generation they are.












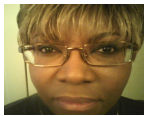




13. Non-reunion Topics

- New family website *harperfamily.online*** is under construction. It will house info that has been researched so far + keep family members updated with one another. Comments, suggestions and/or request responses can be forwarded to Sylvia, Keisha or admin@harperfamily.online.
- The National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC (NMAAHC) - Virtual Genealogy Meetings: Beverly-MD is taking the lead on identifying when these meetings are occurring and making sure family members who want to participate can. The meetings last one hour, and are usually provided on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday between 11am and 3pm. Bev will get info regarding the next session and let us know when.

14. Upcoming Dates

- Next Harper Family Game Day : Tuesday, July 9th by Zoom
- Next HFRR Meeting Date : Tuesday, July 16th by Zoom

Harper Family Reunion T-Shirt Designs & Designers

1.	1989 Robert Harper, Sr.* ▶		
2.	1991 Michael George* ▶		
3.	1993 Stephon Harper ▶		
4.	1995 William Davis ▶		
5.	2002 Jordan Eichorn ▶		
6.	2007 Michael George* ▶		
7.	2009		
8.	Megan Harper ▼ 		
9.		<front>	<back>
10.	2012 Sylvia Ford-George ▶		
11.	2014 Sandra Ford* ▶		
12.	2017 Sylvia Ford-George ▶		

*deceased