



Slavery in Early SW and DC

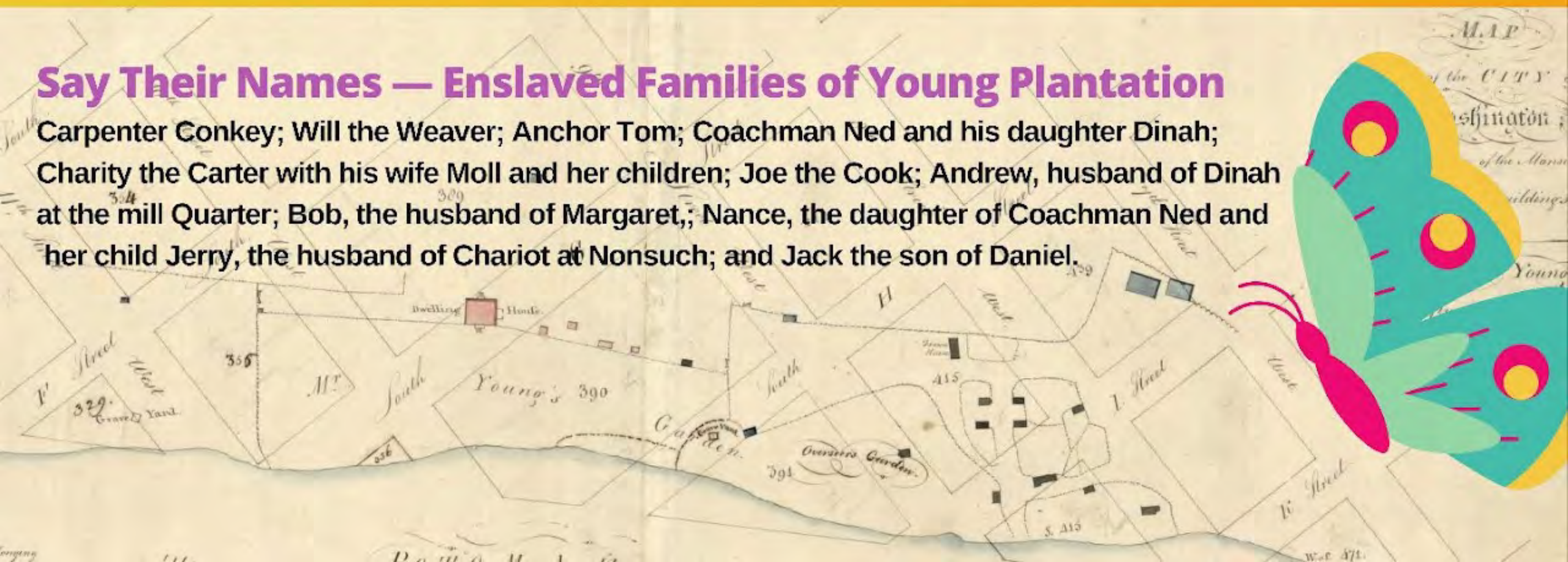


The early history of Washington, D.C. was defined by slavery. Being between the slave states of Maryland and Virginia ensured that slavery was ingrained in every aspect of city life. Enslaved people were forced to work on public buildings and were bought and sold in "slave pens" in today's downtown.

Did you know that in the late 1700's the SW Wharf was the site of the Notley Young plantation? He was a prominent Catholic and a founder of Georgetown College. A map of that time shows cabins for two hundred enslaved families and a building for the "overseer." Young's grandson helped establish St. Dominic Catholic Church in SW.

Say Their Names — Enslaved Families of Young Plantation

Carpenter Conkey; Will the Weaver; Anchor Tom; Coachman Ned and his daughter Dinah; Charity the Carter with his wife Moll and her children; Joe the Cook; Andrew, husband of Dinah at the mill Quarter; Bob, the husband of Margaret; Nance, the daughter of Coachman Ned and her child Jerry, the husband of Chariot at Nonsuch; and Jack the son of Daniel.



WE CANNOT FORGET OUR PAST

In Southwest DC, we see and feel the vestiges of slavery and the lasting legacy of the enslaved Americans whose skills and labor made the world we know. Check out the historic markers at the Wharf and Independence at 7th. Share the story behind the referential use of "Pearl" for businesses on the Wharf and remember these histories as you travel in Southwest:

- Solomon Northrup, a free black man who wrote *12 Years a Slave*, began his horrific journey in the "Williams' slave pen" at 7th St & Independence SW after he'd been kidnapped and sold back into slavery.
- Anthony Bowen, the namesake for the old Bowen Elementary School (now 1st District police station) and its successor, was a former enslaved minister and Underground Railroad conductor who had a home on E Street SW.
- James Dent, like many formerly enslaved people, found refuge and owned land in SW. The house recently named after him at 2nd and Q SW was the old Southwest Community House which grew out of the Colored Social Settlement supported by trailblazer Mary Church Terrell.



1848 - The Year of Revolution and Social Awakening

- ***Liberty, Equality, Fraternity***—these words from the 1848 French uprising (shown below) inspired freedom seekers around the world including enslaved people in DC and their allies.
- There were also uprisings in Berlin, Paris, Vienna, Palermo, Milan, Naples, Parma, Rome, Warsaw, Prague, and Budapest.
- The Second Sikh war against British in India started that year.
- The First US Women's Rights Convention was at Seneca Falls.
- Henry Thoreau publishes *Civil Disobedience*, to protest paying taxes to support the United State's war against Mexico.
- Karl Marx and Frederick Engels publish *The Communist Manifesto*.
- The Pearl Escape - the single largest escape by water of enslaved people in US history took place in this revolutionary year.



Lithograph in front of the Town Hall of Paris rejects the red flag
25 February 1848 by Jean Felix Emmanuel Philippoteaux

Social Networking & the Pearl Escape



Elizabeth & John Brent

Amelia's eldest daughter and husband helped raise money to free Mary and Emily.



Harriet Beecher Stowe

Harriet and her brother helped to secure funding to free Edmonson family members with Paul and Amelia Edmonson's appeal



Gerrit Smith

Wealthy anti-slavery New Yorker who was the likely financier for the escape venture.



Amelia Edmonson

She and her husband, Paul Edmonson, had 14 children. Through their heroic efforts and networking following the Pearl Escape, they raised money to free all of their children.



Samuel Edmonson

One of the six Edmonson siblings who were Pearl passengers.



Captain Daniel Drayton

He raised the money and hired the Pearl schooner for this heroic effort.



Captain Edward Sayres

The Pearl's owner



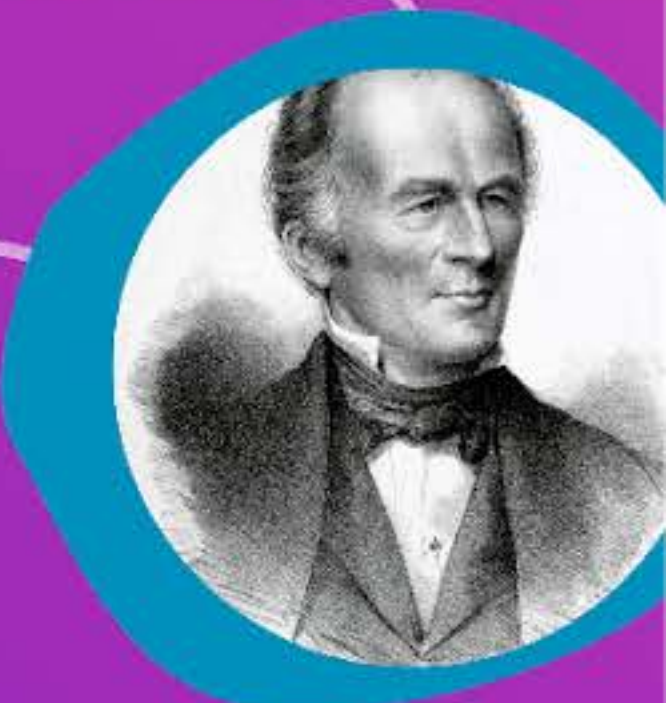
Former First Lady Dolley Madison

Had enslaved Paul Jennings, who helped plan escape, until 1846 and enslaver of 15 year old Mary Ellen Stewart



Mary Ellen Stewart

Pearl Freedom Seeker and enslaved to Dolley Madison Stewart has been "on the run" five months prior to the Pearl



William L. Chaplin

Agent of the New York Anti-Slavery Society and Underground Railroad in DC, helped Pearl planning

Daniel Bell

A free Black man and blacksmith at the Navy Yard, had the largest family unit on the Pearl - his wife, Mary Bell; their eight children; and two grandchildren.



Paul Jennings

Enslaved to President James Madison and First Last Dolley Madison. He was immediately freed when Daniel Webster bought him. Paul helps recruit and plan the Pearl Escape.



THE PEARL ESCAPE

Free Seekers Set Flight

After dark on Saturday, April 15, 1848, 77 men, women and children, full of profound hope of escaping to freedom, made their way toward the SW waterfront where they would go below deck of *The Pearl*, a wooden schooner, rented with the help of the Underground Railroad.

Samuel Edmonson was sent to accompany his two sisters, Emily and Mary, who were enslaved house servants of prominent citizens of Washington.

Under the cover of darkness, they made their way from Foggy Bottom, down across Tiber Creek. They could see the silhouette of the cornerstone of the new monument to George Washington. They would have passed near the slave pen, the Yellow House, run by the William H. Williams on Independence Ave. near 7th Street. Finally, they would arrive at the SW waterfront.

SAY THEIR NAMES - PEARL PASSENGERS

Mary Bell (mother of) John, Thomas, Eleanora, Harriet, Andrew, George, Daniel Jr, Caroline, Mary Ellen, Catherine | Jane Brent | John B Brooke | John Calvert | Augustus Chase | George Craig | Philip Crowley | Mima Davis | Mary Day | Mary Dodson | Mary King Leonard King | Joseph Forest | Edmonson Siblings: Ephraim, Richard, John, Samuel, Mary, Emily | Ellen | Emily Corcoran | Henry Graham | Perry Gross | Edward King | Priscilla King (Mother of) Priscilla, Clarisa Marshall: Madison, Elizabeth, Matthew | Daphne Paine | Madison Pitts | Alfred Pope | Priscilla Queen | John Ricks (Child) | Peter Ricks (Child) | Hannibal Rosier: August, Nat Grace Russell | George Shaklin | Henry Smallwood | Mary Stewart | Samuel Turner | Minerva Washington (Mother Of) Louisa, Maria, Melvina | Madison Young | Truman/Newman William | Sam/William | Isaac | Joe And Frank | Jane Kitty | Mary Ann (Mother Of) Charles, John | Gabriel Campbell And Other Unnamed Persons

Can You Find Point Lookout?

6

They set sail. Progress was slow. Finally by Sunday evening they came to the broad Chesapeake where freedom must have seemed so close. But bad weather arose and the man responsible for the vessel refused to let the Captain proceed to the other side of the Chesapeake. They tried to hide the boat in a cove at Point Lookout but their valiant escape was foiled when they were sighted by an armed posse searching for them in a steamboat. Thus, Point Lookout was the farthest the Pearl got.



"I am filled with unutterable loathing when I contemplate the religious pomp and show, together with the horrible inconsistencies, which every where surround me. We have men-stealers for ministers, women-whippers for missionaries, and cradle-plunderers for church members." - Frederick Douglass



7

THE AFTERMATH

Sunday morning, the families used to being served their morning coffee, discovered they were not the only ones whose enslaved help had gone missing.

"Where are the people that we enslaved?"



They quickly organized a posse and hired a fast moving steam boat to try and apprehend their "property"- those on the Pearl.



"Thirty white volunteers and slave owners aboard the Salem steamer overtook the Pearl with weapons in hand." The Pearl was still anchored near Point Lookout. It is said that Samuel emerged first quoting scripture.

"My husband and others are rioting because people escaped from slavery."

Public notice to discourage white violence

TO THE CITIZENS OF WASHINGTON.

It is well known to you that events have transpired within the last few days, deeply affecting the peace and character of our community. The danger has not yet passed away, but demands instant vigilance from the friends of order.

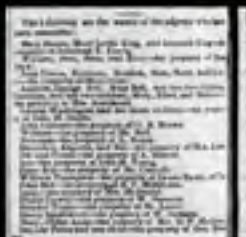
The cruel, deliberate judgment of the People of this community, unquestionably and unequivocally declared, can, and will, we do not see, if the Law is found insufficient, remove any grounds, in a manner worthy of themselves; but the fearful acts of lawless and irresponsible violence can only aggravate the evil.



With The Pearl in tow, the captured were brought back to the Waterfront on which crowds of angry white citizens had gathered, creating a gauntlet of strikes and curses upon the freedom seekers and their helpers. So began three days of rioting by many white citizens who attacked the office of the newspaper they accused of inciting the attempted escape.



American Legacy: A Familiar Scene Plays Out



This article in the April 19, 1848 issue of The Washington Daily Union gives an incomplete list of the Pearl fugitives.



Mary & Emily Edmonson memorialized in Old Town Alexandria, VA

Within days of capture, most of the 77 escapees were sold to slave traders. Most notably, Hope Slatter, a Baltimore-based trader, had purchased fifty or so of the Pearl freedom seekers. Slatter played a prominent role in the forced internal migration of enslaved people from the dying tobacco industry of the north to the booming cotton industry of the south. After the end of the transatlantic slave trade, this domestic slave trade, "The Second Middle Passage," saw the breeding, sale and forced movement of millions of enslaved people.

It was widely circulated that Slatter was also a Methodist church pew owner. Slatter had been spotted among the angry crowds around the jail where freedom seekers were held in DC. "After thirteen years of dominating the trade in Baltimore, Slatter was winding down his career, and this purchase may have been one of his last. In all, Slatter had completed sixty shipments, taking a total of 2,533 enslaved people to the Lower South from the Baltimore wharves. It is not known how many more were walked south in coffles."

As far as Slatter's victims and other freedom seekers who lives after the pearl we know so little about. We remember them and seek to restore their personhood and dignity.

Taking Their Place in History



Fifty or so of the Pearl fugitives were "sold down the river" as part of the Second Middle Passage. Their story and that of Pearl passengers who eventually found freedom is one of the great American stories - illustrating both the tragedy and redemption in the vicissitudes of American life. Edmonson siblings - Ephraim, Richard, John, Samuel, Mary and Emily - were among the 77 participants in the Pearl Escape of 1848.



The Edmonsons are shipped to New Orleans to be resold. "Mary and Emily, along with their brothers and the thirty-four other passengers, were marched about six blocks east to a slave pen on Esplanade Avenue near the corner of Chartres Street on the eastern border of the French Quarter. Samuel Edmonson was taken away from the slave pen in a carriage and did not return. He was the first of the Edmonsons to be sold." Samuel Edmonson eventually self-emancipates, leaving for Jamaica, then England, then Australia. He and his family, with whom he managed to reunite, did return later to the US.



Paul Edmonson, the patriarch, went to New York City in early September and is sent to Rev. Beecher of the Anti-Slavery Office. Rev. Beecher led a meeting at the Broadway Tabernacle in New York to raise the money to free Emily and Mary Edmonson. They were freed on Nov. 4, 1848. "Harriet Beecher Stowe (top) found the funds to support Mary and Emily's studies at Oberlin College". Later, Mother Amelia Edmonson met with Harriet Beecher Stowe to free her last children held in slavery, Josiah and Louisa. In 1853, the famous author told the Edmonson's story in Chapter 6 of *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*.



POLITICAL AFTERMATH

1848

LEGISLATION INTRODUCED TO BAN SLAVERY IN DC

"The coverage of the fugitives of the Pearl being paraded through the streets of the District of Columbia to be jailed and then sold to traders, and the widely circulated story of the railroad car of fugitives saying good-bye to their loved ones as they waited to be transported to Hope Slatter's slave pen in Baltimore, appears to have contributed to a change of heart in a number of congressmen. On January 31, 1849, a bill to end the slave trade in the capital was introduced in the House."

Ricks, Mary Kay. *Escape on the Pearl* (p. 201). HarperCollins, Kindle Edition.

SLAVERY ABOLISHED IN WASHINGTON, DC 1862

On April 16, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed a bill ending slavery in the District of Columbia. The DC Compensated Emancipation Act provided for immediate emancipation of enslaved persons. It also provided compensation to former owners who were loyal to the Union of up to \$300 for each of the 2,989 persons who had been enslaved.

PRESIDENT JAMES POLK REACTS TO PEARL ESCAPE



A sympathizer to slavery and an enslaver himself, he noted in his diary about the escape that the mob was rightfully provoked. Nevertheless, he order the US marshal's office to suppress further violence.

ANTI-FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW CONVENTION 1850

Frederick Douglass, Gerrit Smith, and the Edmonson sisters are among those speaking against the Fugitive Slave Act at this August 1850 convention in Cazenville, NY. The Act, later passed by Congress as part of the Compromise of 1850, would require that slaves be returned to their owners, even if they were in a free state and made the federal government responsible for finding, returning, and trying escaped slaves.





Zumbi

Yanga

RESISTANCE TO ENSLAVEMENT IN THE AMERICAS

Throughout the Americas enslaved people sought to regain or gain their freedom in various ways, in some places and times succeeding in creating their own independent societies. This phenomenon is called marooning in English—from simala in the Taino language of Cuba designating horses and cattle that escaped to the woods to resist being tamed, and leading in Spanish to cimarron to designate escaped Africans.

These freedom-seekers revolted against their enslavers and created communities in inaccessible areas in forests and up mountains and rivers in Brazil, Mexico, Colombia and elsewhere. These African/Afrodescendent communities asserted their freedom more than a century before their former enslavers fought for their own independence from the European nations of which they were colonies. So maroon communities were the first free spaces in the Americas.

Zumbi, the major leader in Brazil's Palmares that lasted from 1605 to 1695, has become a national Afrodescendent hero, as have Yanga in Mexico and Benkos Bioho in Colombia. In the United States, enslaved African Americans escaped from southern slavery to northern freedom via what was called the Underground Railroad. The most famous "conductor" was Harriet Tubman who led more than 70 people from slavery in Maryland to freedom in Pennsylvania and even Canada.

Benkos Bioho

Pearl Descendant Writes First Book on Pearl Escape (1930)



JOHN HENRY PAYNTOR
1862-1948

GREAT-GRANDSON OF PAUL
AND AMELIA EDMONSON

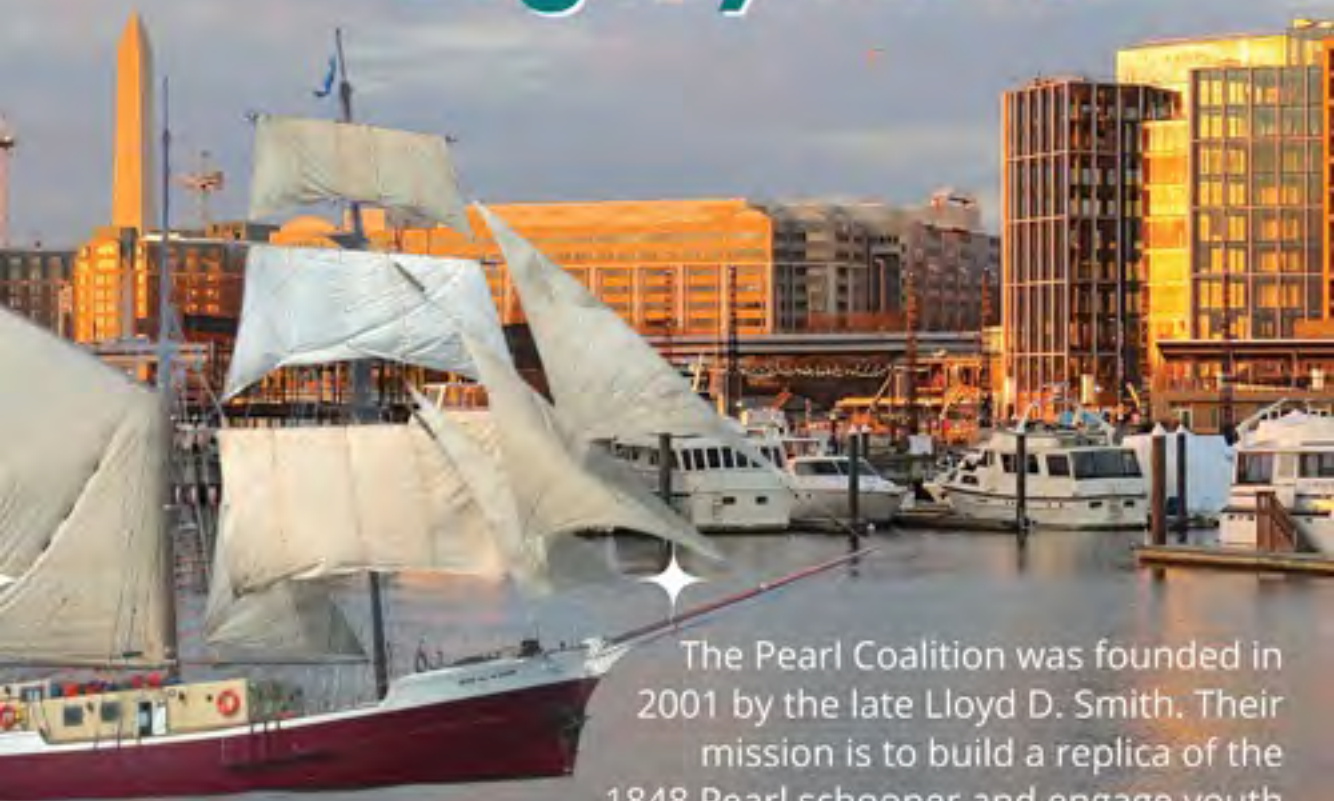
An author, Navy veteran, journalist and businessman, John Payntor is best known for *Fugitives of the Pearl* (1930), the story of the single largest mass escape attempt of enslaved people in the U.S. The book is based on the 1916 article published in the *Journal of Negro History*, based on oral histories from his own family, including his great-uncle Samuel Edmonson and Harriett Beecher Stowe's book, *The Key To Uncle Tom's Cabin*. (1853). John moved to Washington as an infant with his parents, Catherine Brent and James Henry Paynter. Catherine was the oldest daughter of John and Elizabeth Edmonson Brent. Her aunts were Emily and Mary Edmonson.

The Wormley Family



- 1) Imogene Wormley** - Director of DC Kindergarten instructor for Black schools **2) Elizabeth Edmonson Brent** - eldest daughter of Paul and Ameila Edmonson **3) John Brent** - husband of E. Brent **4-6) James Wormley**, owner of the Wormley Hotel in D.C. where secret meetings ("Wormley Conference") were held leading up to the "Wormley Compromise" for the disputed Hayes-Tilden presidential election of 1876, instrumental in first taxpayer-formed African American school in DC ("Wormley School") **7-8) G. Smith Wormley** - Principal, Randall Junior High School, grandson of James Wormley **9) E. Wormley** - Taught Native American children in Arizona. Daughter of G. Smith Wormley **10) Alice Francis** - daughter of Garrett Smith Wormley. Graduate of Minor Normal School, Teacher in DC before her marriage to Dr. John Francis. Son, H. Minton Francis, a West Point graduate. **11) Edith Wormley** married Harry Minton **12) Julia Wormley**, oldest daughter of William Wormley's second marriage, teacher and Elocutionist, taught English in the Armstrong Manual Training School. In the 1890's she was with the Jubilee Singers, touring the world.

Keeping the Pearl Legacy Alive



The Pearl Coalition was founded in 2001 by the late Lloyd D. Smith. Their mission is to build a replica of the 1848 Pearl schooner and engage youth and volunteers as an educational and training experience. Smith was a pioneer and leader in housing, community and economic development. He led the National Capital Revitalization Corporation, laying the groundwork for a Wharf development - to include a Pearl replica.



LIBERATION IN SOUTHWEST DC

"The virulence of systematic racism must be matched by our resistance."

A multiracial and economically diverse historic community steeped in a tradition of collective self-help, Southwest DC is the site of liberation movements to combat environmental racism, gentrification, displacement, economic marginalization, and community erasure.

These have taken the form of an environmental justice group in Buzzard Point, the city's only neighborhood-based social justice newspaper ("Southwest Voice"), justice-centered churches, SWNA Youth and Scholarship Task Forces, a public housing non-profit, the Pearl Group, and other community-based groups. In 2019, it hosted the first Enslaved Families Remembrance and Personhood Restoration Day in Benjamin Banneker Park.

Systematic Haze by P.S. Perkins

What does happen to a dream deferred
delayed
denied?

Does it eventually become
diss-missed
by the busboy and poetess

waiting to clean and entertain
generations of greed while pleading for the nickels and dimes
leftover from hyper-consumption?

Statistics twisted to be obtuse and of no use
so, the ones confused can continue to lose while
lost in a systemic maze of generational blight?

Having lost the will to fight institutions controlling the words
the words
the WORDS
filling minds with destructive language & images
that converge.

But this truth we hold evident,
ALL LIVES MATTER

to the Great Equalizer
ready to re-claim JUSTICE in spite of just-us!

So, find YOUR voice and be re-membered to the
Ancestral strength, courage, and hope
of all LOVE people, LOVE!

Gentrification and Greenleaf
redevelopment are current
battle lines for racial justice



April 2021

2ND
ANNUAL

PEARL GROUP

Commemorative Art Exhibit, April 1-30

Memorial Walk, Friday, April 15, 6:00-7:30 PM | from 4th & I St SW

**SW DC Freedom Festival
April 16, 2022, 1:00 - 3:00 PM**

We are a group of SW community members invited by Vyllorya Evans and Rev. Ruth Hamilton of Westminster Presbyterian Church to renew interest in the story of "The Pearl" and its powerful meaning for today. We honor the long-standing work of The Pearl Coalition led by David Smith, grandson of founder Lloyd Smith. Group participants have included: Audrey Hinton, Vania Georgieva, Dr. Sheila S. Walker, Jean Shulman, Patricia Bishop, Jonathan Holley, Ed Henderson, Georgine Wallace, Kenneth Ward, and Christopher Williams (chief curator)