

Gettysburg Museum Receives NEH Grant

Gettysburg, PA: Before the Battle of Gettysburg erupted in the small crossroads town on July 1, 1863, south central Pennsylvania was the scene of another struggle, between slavery and freedom, over the course of 85 years. To tell this story, Seminary Ridge Museum and Education Center (SRMEC) was recently awarded a \$19,000 Public Impact Project in Smaller Organizations grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). This grant will support a new public project, “Investigating the Legacy of Slavery on Gettysburg’s Seminary Ridge.”

SRMEC was one of 28 organizations across the nation to receive funding. This award will enable SRMEC staff, scholars from United Lutheran Seminary (ULS), and outside historians to conduct archival research in repositories in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia to uncover information about the lived Black experience on Seminary Ridge. Project staff will work with an interpretive planner to create new tours and programs to explore these stories with the public.

“We know that before the Civil War there were Black residents who lived on Seminary Ridge, including formerly enslaved persons,” said SRMEC Executive Director Peter Miele. “However, we have not told their full story. We are looking forward to better understanding their lived experience in the borderlands between slavery and freedom and sharing those stories with our visitors.”

The project team, headed by Miele, will conduct research this spring and summer. New tours, which will focus on the three pre-Civil War Seminary buildings and surrounding battlefield, will begin by the end of 2024.

“It is fitting that two faculty members from United Lutheran Seminary, Drs. Maria Erling and Teresa Smallwood, will be part of this grant team,” said the Rev. Dr. R. Guy Erwin, president of the Seminary. “Their historical knowledge of this vital topic, combined with their close affiliation with the Gettysburg campus, will bring a valued perspective to the project.”

The Public Impact Projects at Smaller Organizations grant program is a new award from NEH. Developed as part of the agency’s *American Tapestry: Weaving Together Past, Present, and Future* initiative, these grants assist small and mid-sized cultural organizations—particularly those in underserved communities—in strengthening public humanities programming.

About Seminary Ridge Museum and Education Center:

Seminary Ridge Museum and Education Center is located in the original 1832 building of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (now United Lutheran Seminary). Opened in 2013, three floors of exhibits connect individuals and groups to the dilemmas that led to the Civil War, provide a powerful and personal view of the battle's first day, and show the work of one of the battlefield's largest field hospitals.



Seminary Ridge Museum and Education Center is located along the Gettysburg National Military Park tour route at 111 Seminary Ridge, Gettysburg, PA 17325. The Museum is currently open Thursday through Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., and Sunday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

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"It Began Here...An Unforgettable Gettysburg Experience Begins Here, Too."