

Potter Place Joins Black Heritage Trail with Historic Marker

Dedication on Sunday, August 7

Press release

The Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire (BHTNH) and the Andover Historical Society (AHS) are excited to announce the dedication of a new marker commemorating the life and works of celebrated Black ventriloquist and magician Richard Potter. The ceremony will be on Sunday, August 7, at 10:30 AM, at the Andover Historical Society's Old Time Fair.

Fairgrounds will be open from 9 AM to 2 PM at Potter Place on 105 Depot Street in Andover. Fairgoers can enjoy food, live music, miniature train rides for children, and old-fashioned pumper car rides. The event is free and open to the public.

Guest speakers for the event will include John Hodgson, author of *Richard Potter: America's First Black Celebrity*, and BHTNH Executive Director JerriAnne Boggis. There will be a

short demonstration of 19th-century magic by Andrew Pinard, African drumming, and the singing of *Lift Every Voice and Sing* by vocalist Louise Grasmere.

Richard Potter, a magician, ventriloquist, and humorist in the early 1800s, was the first American performer to gain nationwide fame. He helped make popular entertainment a major part of American life.

Born in Boston to an enslaved mother, Potter studied there and in Europe with renowned performing artists. Early on, Potter's wife Sally assisted him on stage. He toured the United States and Canada for nearly three decades, charming audiences with his humor, ready wit, and showmanship.

Nonetheless, he encountered racism and danger. Potter and his wife Sally, both Black, moved to Andover in 1815, where he built a house of his own design. The Potters are interred here at Potter Place.

On Friday, September 30, AHS and

BHTNH will co-sponsor an evening to celebrate Potter's influence on American theater, hosted by Proctor Academy. Award-winning magician, ventriloquist, and puppeteer Dan Richard will give a ventriloquism show. In addition author John Hodgson will present a talk on Richard Potter's impact on American theater. Hodgson published the definitive biography of Richard Pot-



Andover Historical Society celebrates its 40th anniversary on August 7 with the return of the Old Time Fair. In collaboration with the Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire, the AHS will commemorate early-19th-century magician and ventriloquist Richard Potter and unveil a new historic marker.

Photo: Grace Schust

ter in 2018, after 25 years of research on Potter's life and career.

The Andover Historical Society owns and maintains several historic buildings including the grounds and family graveyard of Richard and Sally Potter, the Potter Place train station, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and a Boston and Maine railroad freight car and freight shed. The nonprofit offers museum tours on weekends, from Memorial Day to Columbus Day. For more info visit AndoverHistory.org.

The Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire promotes appreciation and awareness of African American history and culture and fosters dialogue about race, diversity, and inclusion. The BHTNH offers educational programs, exhibits, curriculum development, and research that can change the way we understand human dignity when free of historical stereotypes. For more information, visit BlackHeritageTrailNH.org or call 603 570-8469.

Historical Society Freight Shed Offers Antiques and Useful Items

Open Saturdays, 10 AM to 2 PM

Judy Perreault

Andover Historical Society

Don't miss shopping at the Andover Historical Society's Freight Shed. In addition to items listed in previous *Beacon* issues, we have added inventory. There are two nice drop leaf tables which, as they are the same height but different lengths, can be put together to accommodate a large gathering. The drop leaves mean they take up less space, but you have added width when you need it.

Another Danish style kitchen table was also donated. An adorable antique school desk complete with inkwell would be a perfect addition to a child's bedroom. A comfy rocking chair, throw pillows, three nice bureaus, one with a marble top, and two bikes in good condition. Need more light? We have a large collection of table lamps and floor lamps and lanterns. For storage we have a blanket chest and a couple of steamer trunks.

Come check us out. We are open on Saturdays from 10 AM to 2 PM on Depot Street in Potter Place off Route 11. Look for the sign.



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