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*Southside Community Center &  
Black Girl Alchemists Presents*

# **Black Consciousness Curriculum**

**Historic Black Figures in Tompkins County**



# About the Black Consciousness Curriculum & Black Girl Alchemists



In alignment with Southside Community Center's mission, our Black Consciousness Curriculum aims to center the history, culture, and experience of Black people.

Guided by the 7 principles of Kwanzaa that focus on building and reinforcing family, community, and culture, we use our voices to to express ourselves through movement, art, music, writing, and performance.

Learn more at: [sspride.org](http://sspride.org)

## About The History Center in Tompkins County's Black History Collections

Our Black History archival collections contain a wide assortment of materials on local, regional, and national African American history with an emphasis on local. The dates covered range from early 19th century to late 20th century. Including: abolitionist pamphlets, information on a long lost enslaved persons burial ground in Newark Valley, the breakaway Hayt's Corner chapel, the Underground Railroad in Tompkins County, the Webb/Bailor Family of Caroline, a compilation of local archival holdings on African American history and a deed for the sale of four enslaved persons in Galveston, Texas.

The Black Experience in Tompkins County Oral History Collection highlights interviews and stories in our audio collections that explore the experiences of Black, African-American, African diaspora, and African people living in Tompkins County.

# **Beverly J. Martin**

## **(1935-1993)**

**Educator and community leader in Ithaca NY.**

***Learning about Beverly J. Martin  
means learning about building a community of  
Black educators & children who love learning.***

*Beverly J. Martin, a native of Ithaca, New York, was an educator, community leader, and inspiration to everyone who knew her. As a child, in the 1940's she attended Central Elementary School (renamed Beverly J. Martin Elementary School in 1991).*

*She graduated from Ithaca High School in 1953, where she was elected class president. After receiving her college education at Cornell University, she served the Ithaca City School District as a teacher for several decades, including six years at Central Elementary School teaching fifth grade.*

*Ms. Martin's classroom offered a home for a science activity program at the school, which was the inspiration for what would become the Sciencenter. Described to be very lively and with a great sense of humor, her warmth led the children to call her "Mama Bear."*

*In 1968 she was named Central Elementary School's principal, becoming Ithaca's first Black school administrator. Well known for recruiting and mentoring many of Ithaca's great leaders, Beverly J. Martin's legacy lives on.*

**Artwork: Maryam Adib @Smarf.Art**

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**BEVERLY J. MARTIN**

# Harriet Tubman

## (1822-1913)

**Visited Ithaca multiple times during her life to speak at the St. James AME Zion Church.**

### ***Learning about Harriet Tubman (who lived until 1913) means learning about humanity.***

*Harriet Tubman escaped slavery to become a leading abolitionist. She led hundreds of enslaved people to freedom along the route of the Underground Railroad.*

*Born into slavery in Maryland, Harriet Tubman escaped to freedom in the North in 1849 to become the most famous "conductor" on the Underground Railroad.*

*A leading abolitionist before the American Civil War, Tubman also helped the Union Army during the war, working as a spy among other roles.*

*In early 1859, abolitionist Senator William H. Seward sold Tubman a small piece of land on the outskirts of Auburn, New York. The land in Auburn became a haven for Tubman's family and friends. Tubman spent the years following the war on this property, tending to her family and others who had taken up residence there.*

#### **QUOTES**

*"Don't ever stop. Keep going. If you want a taste of freedom, keep going."*

*"I was the conductor of the Underground Railroad for eight years, and I can say what most conductors can't say; I never ran my train off the track and I never lost a passenger."*

*"I freed a thousand slaves I could have freed a thousand more if only they knew they were slaves."*

*"I go to prepare a place for you."*

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**HARRIET TUBMAN**

# Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1825-1911)

**Visited Ithaca in 1888. Following her visit a Black women's community organization was formed which would later become Southside Community Center.**

***Learning about Frances Harper, means learning about a poet, author, orator, abolitionist, suffragist, and temperance activist.***

*By age twenty-one, Harper wrote her first small volume of poetry called "Forest Leaves".*

*First woman instructor at Union Seminary, a school for free African Americans in Wilberforce, Ohio.*

*Harper spent the rest of her career working for the pursuit of equal rights, job opportunities, and education for African American women.*

## QUOTES

*"Every mother should be a true artist, who knows how to weave into her child's life images of grace and beauty, the true poet capable of writing on the soul of childhood the harmony of love and truth, and teaching it how to produce the grandest of all poems - the poetry of a true and noble life."*

*"It was a strange sight to see these black men rallying around the Stars and Stripes, when white men were trampling them under foot and riddling them with bullets."*

*"We are all bound up together in one great bundle of humanity, and society cannot trample on the weakest and feeblest of its members without receiving the curse in its own soul."*

*"My hands were weak, but I reached them out To feebler ones than mine, and over the shadow of my life Stole the light of a peace divine."*

*"The respect that is only bought by gold is not worth much."*

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**FRANCES HARPER**



# Peter & Phyllis Webb

**(est. 1790's-ca. 1868 & 1881)**

***Enslaved in the Town of Caroline and later lived as a free Black family in Ithaca during the 19th century.***

## ***Learning about Peter & Phyllis Webb means learning about true determination.***

*In 1833 Peter Webb and his wife Phyllis Webb purchased property on Wheat St. (now Cleveland Avenue), joining the newly formed denomination of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (1796).*

*The Webb family founded and built a house of worship, where African Americans would feel welcome and empowered. St. James AME Zion Church established in 1836, was a stop on the Underground Railroad aiding self-emancipated African to find a life of freedom in the Northern States (NYS abolished slavery in 1827).*

*After the Fugitive Slave Act of 1851 the Church became a transfer station on the Underground Railroad and hosted freedom fighters, abolitionists and women's rights advocates as well as being a place of education for African Americans.*

*Peter and Phyllis Webb were an integral part of the fight for freedom.*

**Learn more about the Webb Family at:  
[thehistorycenter.net/Webb-Family](http://thehistorycenter.net/Webb-Family)**

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**PETER & PHYLLIS WEBB**

# Frederick Douglass

## (1818-1895)

**Lectured in Ithaca and surrounding areas multiple times during his life.**

### ***Learning about Fredrick Douglas, means learning about the relationship between literacy and liberation.***

*Abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass was born into slavery sometime around 1818 in Talbot County, Maryland. He became one of the most famous intellectuals of his time, advising presidents and lecturing to thousands on a range of causes, including women's rights and Irish home rule.*

*Among Douglass' writings are several autobiographies eloquently describing his experiences in slavery and his life after the Civil War, including the well-known work Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave.*

*Defying a ban on teaching slaves to read and write, Baltimore slaveholder Hugh Auld's wife Sophia taught Douglass the alphabet when he was around 12. When Auld forbade his wife to offer more lessons, Douglass continued to learn from white children and others in the neighborhood.*

*Douglass married Anna Murray, a free black woman, on September 15, 1838. Douglass had fallen in love with Murray, who assisted him in his final attempt to escape slavery in Baltimore.*

*Following the publication of his first autobiography in 1845, Douglass traveled overseas to evade recapture. He set sail for Liverpool on August 16, 1845, and eventually arrived in Ireland as the Potato Famine was beginning. He remained in Ireland and Britain for two years, speaking to large crowds on the evils of slavery. During this time, Douglass' British supporters gathered funds to purchase his legal freedom. In 1847, the famed writer and orator returned to the United States a free man.*

#### **QUOTES**

*"If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters... Power concedes nothing without a demand."*

*"Once you learn to read, you will be forever free."*

*"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."*

*"I prefer to be true to myself, even at the hazard of incurring the ridicule of others, rather than to be false, and to incur my own abhorrence."*

*"The white man's happiness cannot be purchased by the black man's misery."*

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**FREDERICK DOUGLASS**



# Jaqueline Melton Scott

## "Mama Scott"

(1937-2019)

**Activist and educator who lived their entire life in Ithaca NY.**

***Learning about Jacqueline E. Melton Scott (1937-2019) means learning about the power of direct and firm love through storytelling and human connection.***

*An activist, educator, and all-around hustler born and raised in Ithaca, New York.*

*Mama Scott's parents were part of the group that founded the Southside Community Center, where she also served as the Executive Director in the 1990's.*

*While teaching at the Cambridge Montessori School, Mama Scott built a nationally acclaimed education program.*

*Mama Scott was a teacher and family liaison at Beverly J. Martin Elementary School from 1997-2017.*

### QUOTES

*"The best sermons are lived, not preached."*

*"Live a good, honorable life... Then, when you get older and think back, you'll enjoy it a second time."*

*"Forgive your enemies - it messes with their heads."*

*"Live simply. Love Generously. Care Deeply. Speak Kindly... AND LIVE OUT LOUD"*

**Artwork: Maryam Adib @Smarf.Art**

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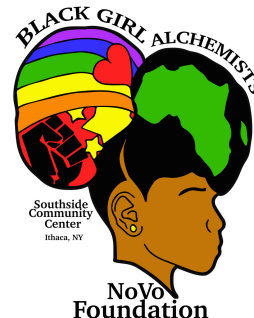
**JACQUELINE MELTON  
SCOTT**

# THE HISTORY CENTER

in Tompkins County

## The History Center in Tompkins County

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## Southside Community Center

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### **Black history in Tompkins County archives & related collections at The History Center in Tompkins County.**

- Guide to the Black History Collection V-3-2-13
- Black Experience in Tompkins County Oral History Collection
- Club Essence Photograph Collection FBO - 0123
- Council for Equality Collection V-3-2-12
- Dorothy Bliss Collection
- James Gibbs Photograph Collection FBO - 0067
- James L. Gibbs Southside Community Center Collection V-63-9-9
- Martin Luther King Jr. Assns Record V-64-6-4
- Sean Eversley Bradwell Collection V-64-9-4
- Southside Community Center Photo Collection FBO-0015

Contact [archives@thehistorycenter.net](mailto:archives@thehistorycenter.net) to access these collections.  
Explore more Black stories at [thehistorycenter.net/Black-History](http://thehistorycenter.net/Black-History)

*The Black Consciousness Curriculum materials were designed in 2020 by Southside Community Center with original artwork by Maryam Adib. Booklet re-design by The History Center in Tompkins County in 2021.*