



**LEWES AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE
COMMISSION**

**Thursday, May 21, 2026, 6:00 PM
Council Chambers, City Hall
AGENDA**

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A. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL	
B. ANNOUNCEMENTS	
C. PRESENTATION & POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE APPROVAL OF MINUTES	
1. 2026 04 16 LAAHC Meeting Minutes	3 - 7
D. OLD BUSINESS:	
1. Continued discussion and possible action regarding future programs.	
• “Once In a Blue Moon” Lewes 250 Event – May 30, 2026 – Update	
Once in a Blue Moon — Lewes250	
• Girl Scouts Program – October 2026 Update	
E. NEW BUSINESS:	
1. Discussion and possible action regarding:	
1. 2027 Black History Month Program – Ideas	
2. Other Programming Ideas	
2. Discussion and possible action regarding grants and fund-raising efforts.	
F. VOLUNTEER RESEARCH & ORAL HISTORIES UPDATES AND POSSIBLE ACTION	
1. Continued discussion and possible action on status of “Voices Heard” oral histories.	
2. Continued discussion and possible action on status of utilizing the Cato Lewis video from W Films. Facebook	
3. Continued Discussion and possible action regarding “Middle Passage Marker Project.” Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Markers Project – RFP from artists	
4. Continued Discussion and possible action regarding “Finding Their Voices” Black History Walking Tours - Tours and Workshops - Historic Lewes	
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G. JOHNNIE WALKER / SAVANNAH BEACH UPDATE AND POSSIBLE ACTION	
1. Update on Sign Unveiling Ceremony – May 30, 2026 Johnnie Walker Beach Interpretive Sign Unveiling Tickets, Saturday, May 30 from 10 am to 12 pm Eventbrite	
1. Public Officials scheduled to attend	
2. Proposed Agenda/Program	
2. Update on Pavilion Design, Placement, Application, and Construction.	
H. JUNETEENTH UPDATE AND POSSIBLE ACTION	
1. Update for Juneteenth 2026 Planning.	
2. Volunteer Status	

3. Discussion and possible action regarding LAAHC Community Appreciation and Recognition Awards.

I. SOCIAL & ECONOMIC WORKGROUP UPDATE, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

1. [Lewes AA Heritage Enhanced Inventory v2](#)

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J. PUBLIC COMMENTS / QUESTIONS / NEXT MTG DATE

K. ADJOURNMENT

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84780893535?pwd=GU9SuVXR1WooGaHMXaR4Di7b7OEpjO.1>

Join via audio:

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Passcode: 064798

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City Hall is located at 114 E. Third Street Lewes DE

Agenda Posted: May 14, 2026 Posted By: BJ

City of Lewes
LEWES AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION
Thursday, April 16, 2026
MINUTES

The Lewes African American Heritage Commission met on **Thursday, April 16, 2026 in Council Chambers at Lewes City Hall**, in accordance with proper notification, with the following members present: Chairperson Darryl Daisey, Vice Chairperson Mickeya Linzie, Secretary Falan Hylton (attending virtually), as well as Commissioners Bill Collick, Stephanie Collick, Calvin Jackson, Dee Lott (attending virtually). Also in attendance were: Ex-Officio Member Pat Garchinsky of the Lewes Historical Society, Ex-Officio Member City Councilmember Kahlil Saliba, and Parks & Marina Supervisor Giulia Kirsch.

A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Darryl Daisey called the April 16, 2026 meeting of the Lewes African American Heritage Commission to order at 6:00 PM. Commissioner Falan Hylton provided several announcements from the Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice, including a screening of "Becoming Thurgood: America's Social Architect" on April 26th at the Cinema Art Theater, and their monthly meeting on April 29th. She also reminded attendees about the "Once in a Blue Moon" event on May 30th and the fifth annual Juneteenth celebration on June 27, 2026.

Ex-officio Khalil Saliba announced a candidate forum scheduled for April 27th at the Lewes Library.

B. PRESENTATION & POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE APPROVAL OF MINUTES *The Commission reviewed the March 19, 2026, meeting minutes. Commissioner Stephanie Collick noted a correction needed for the "Once in a Blue Moon" event time, which should be 6 PM to 10 PM rather than 5 PM as stated in the minutes.*

***Motion:** Commissioner Stephanie Collick moved to accept the minutes with the time correction. Commissioner Mickeya Linzie seconded. Motion passed unanimously.*

C. OLD BUSINESS:

- 1. Continued discussion and possible action regarding future programs.**
 - **"Once In a Blue Moon" Lewes 250 Event – May 30, 2026 - Update**
 - **Girl Scouts Program – Update**

Chair Daisey provided updates on upcoming programs. For the "Once In a Blue Moon" Lewes 250 Event on May 30th, the Commission has offered photographs and assistance to the city. The Girl Scout program is still targeting October 2026, with Bethel Church being considered as a potential venue, though no specific date has been set.

- 2. Continued discussion and possible action regarding website review.**

Chair Daisey reported that the website is developing well but noted ongoing issues with video display on mobile phones, where videos overlap and are difficult to view. Commissioner Calvin Jackson observed that the carousel format for videos requires scrolling through the entire sequence to find specific content, suggesting a more direct listing approach might be preferable. The Commission discussed the Johnnie Walker Beach QR code that will direct visitors to the website, emphasizing the need to have all content properly organized and accessible by May 30th.

- 3. Continued discussion and possible action regarding formation of the Social & Economic Workgroup.**

Chair Daisey presented a proposed roster for the workgroup, which includes Commissioner Jackson and Commissioner Stephanie Collick as commissioner representatives, with one additional commissioner spot still available. The workgroup aims to focus on African American heritage tourism, developing strategies to communicate local attractions to visitors from target areas including DC, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and South Jersey. Commissioner Stephanie Collick will help coordinate involvement from the Southern Delaware Tourism group and Lewes Chamber of Commerce as guest speakers rather than permanent members.

4. Continued discussion and possible action regarding 2027 events budget (Update)

Chair Daisey reported that the events budget has been finalized at \$19,000 total. The Commission believes this amount will adequately fund Juneteenth and four additional programs while maintaining fiscal conservatism. The planned events include Black History Month programming, the Girl Scout event, the Johnnie Walker Beach event, and one additional program targeting a different generational demographic than currently served.

Falan inquired about fundraising capabilities, and Park and Marina Administrator Giulia Kirsch clarified that as a city entity, the Commission cannot conduct traditional fundraisers like fish fries, though they may seek grants and sponsorships. Chair Daisey also mentioned difficulties with corporate matching donation programs that require city responses.

5. Continued Discussion and possible action regarding participation in State of Delaware African American Commission. LAHC Vice Chair will represent us.

Vice Chair Mickeya Linzie volunteered to represent the Commission on the proposed state-level African American commission. Chair Daisey confirmed that her name and title would be included in the proposal to the state legislature.

D. NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. Discussion and possible action regarding:**
 - 1. 2027 Black History Month Program – Ideas**
 - 2. Other Programming Ideas**

Chair Daisey emphasized the need to begin planning for the 2027 Black History Month program early, noting the challenge of surpassing previous successful programming. Commissioner Linzie suggested considering a block party or living wax museum as potential programming options. Discussion centered on making events multigenerational, with music and programming that would appeal to different age groups.

The Commission discussed timing challenges for outdoor events, particularly during summer months when the calendar is full with existing city programming like the summer concert series. Ms. Kirsch cautioned against April programming due to budget year transitions that complicate vendor payments.

Chair Daisey expressed particular interest in programming that would address the question of why Lewes was historically called "Dodge City," noting this as an unexplored aspect of local history that intrigued him.

- 2. Discussion and possible action regarding input into City of Lewes new comprehensive planning effort.**

Chair Daisey reported attending the first comprehensive planning committee meeting

and noted that the Commission was mentioned only as being established. He proposed advocating for language in the new plan that emphasizes the city's commitment to valuing and maintaining its diverse heritage and history. The comprehensive plan is due by the end of 2027.

3. Discussion and possible action regarding fund raising efforts.

Chair Daisey emphasized the importance of seeking grants for specific projects, noting that most grants require very specific applications rather than general funding. The Commission identified the pavilion project as a potential grant target. He asked Commissioners Anderson-Clay and Hylton to revisit grant research that had been previously assigned but not actively pursued. The discussion focused on the need to identify specific projects that could qualify for grant funding rather than general programming support.

E. VOLUNTEER RESEARCH & ORAL HISTORIES UPDATES AND POSSIBLE ACTION

1. Continued discussion and possible action on status of “Voices Heard” oral histories.

Ex-officio Pat Garchinsky of Historic Lewes reported having the working oral histories in her car and confirmed she would deliver them to city staff for website uploading. She noted that the Historic Lewes' education director had resigned, complicating their own website management, but confirmed the plan to get the videos onto the LAAHC website. Some additional videos with technical issues remain unlocated.

2. Continued discussion and possible action on status of utilizing the Cato Lewis video from W Films. [Facebook](#)

Chair Daisey reported meeting with Denise Clemons about archive space and sharing the Cato Lewis video with her. Ms. Clemons had not previously seen the video and was impressed with its quality. Ms. Garchinsky confirmed the Historical Society's interest in using the video and mentioned it would be brought to their website team's attention, though she requested continued pressure given organizational changes.

3. Continued Discussion and possible action regarding “Middle Passage Marker Project.” [Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Markers Project](#)

Ms. Garchinsky reported that the project continues seeking artists who can both design the marker and identify appropriate materials for canal-side installation. The marker will represent Cato Lewis and maritime shipbuilding history rather than just a simple commemorative marker. She requested commissioner assistance in identifying potential artists, suggesting possible connections through the city's Public Arts Commission. Chair Daisey mentioned Dane Tilghman as a potential local artist who focuses on African American experiences.

4. Continued Discussion and possible action regarding “Finding Their Voices” Black History Walking Tours - [Tours and Workshops - Historic Lewes](#)

Ms. Garchinsky provided a comprehensive update on the walking tours, which are scheduled every Tuesday at 4 PM from May 19th through October 7th, 2026. Tours last approximately 1.5 to 2 hours and focus on landmarks and buildings throughout Lewes while incorporating African American history. She emphasized the need for additional tour guides, particularly young people from Lewes who could bring personal connections and family history to the tours.

The tours are experiencing steady signup through their website and Fair Harbor booking

system. Ms. Garchinsky noted that having tour guides who are people of color and from the local community would significantly enhance the authenticity and depth of the tours. The Historical Society provides training and scripted information for all volunteers.

Commissioner Stephanie Collick suggested making tours more accessible through bus or vehicle options for elderly participants who lived in the area historically but cannot manage walking tours. Ms. Garchinsky mentioned the Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice's bus tours of Western Sussex as a potential model.

5. Continued discussion and possible action regarding LAAHC artifact storage and Voices Heard Traveling Exhibit loan agreements.

Chair Daisey reported progress on storage solutions, with the city agreeing to store items they purchased and the Historical Society providing space for other artifacts, including Councilmember Trina Brown-Hicks' plow. Denise Clemons requested an inventory before items are transferred. The voices heard materials will also be stored at the Historical Society. The item loan agreement still requires legal review, though the storage agreement may no longer be necessary.

F. JOHNNIE WALKER UPDATE AND POSSIBLE ACTION

1. Update on Interpretive Sign creation/placement/installation.

Chair Daisey reported that the interpretive sign has been completed and delivered, with installation planned by May 30th. Ms. Kirsch confirmed coordination with construction teams for ground installation. The sign will be placed on the right side of the beach entrance, opposite the existing Johnnie Walker Beach sign, and will be covered until the unveiling ceremony.

2. Sign Unveiling Ceremony – May 30, 2026 [Johnnie Walker Beach Interpretive Sign Unveiling Tickets, Saturday, May 30 from 10 am to 12 pm | Eventbrite](#)

Commissioner Jackson outlined the ceremony program, scheduled for 10 AM to 12 PM (maximum one hour duration). The program includes welcome, benediction, speakers including potentially Senator Lisa Blunt Rochester and Representative Sarah McBride (pending availability), current and former commissioners, and concludes with the sign unveiling. Delaware 250 representatives will be invited to speak given their grant funding contribution. The event will provide water but no food, and no formal printed programs will be created due to the fluid nature of official attendance.

The subcommittee reported good advance registration numbers, though Ms. Kirsch expressed concern about space limitations at the beach location. The team scheduled one additional planning meeting for May 21st before the event.

3. Update on Pavilion Design, Placement, Application, and Construction.

Ms. Kirsch reported that the pavilion design requires full construction plans before submission to the building official and flood plain manager. After plan review and any necessary modifications, the project will proceed through the Johnnie Walker Beach subcommittee, the Heritage Commission, Parks Commission, and finally Mayor and City Council, potentially requiring a public hearing.

G. JUNETEENTH UPDATE AND POSSIBLE ACTION

1. Update for Juneteenth 2026 Planning.

Commissioner Linzie reported strong vendor participation with 49 vendors signed up

across food, authors, and merchandise categories. Vendor registration closes June 15th, though late applications will be accepted. She noted concern about volunteer recruitment, having received only nine responses from last year's volunteer list. The Commission discussed outreach to Cape Henlopen School District student volunteers, though contact has been challenging.

Contracts are being sent to performers, volunteer t-shirts have been ordered with the new commission logo, and swag bag samples have been received. The team is evaluating swag bag options and contents, referencing successful items from previous years including coloring books, crayons, stickers, and educational materials from Oriental Trading and Positive Promotions.

Ms. Kirsch reported sponsor outreach to previous contributors, with Truitt providing \$250 and Community Bank being solicited for \$1,000. The sponsorship response appears consistent with previous years' levels.

H. LAAHC COMMISSIONER UPDATES

Commissioner Jackson announced that Councilmember Brown-Hicks was honored at the NAACP Freedom Fund Scholarship Brunch. Ms. Garchinsky reported that Commissioner Bill Collick participated in filming for the new Maritime Museum exhibit, portraying Cato Lewis in what was described as challenging weather conditions at the canal. The new maritime exhibit had a soft opening and will have its full opening in a couple of weeks, featuring a continuous-loop film and serving as both museum and visitor information center.

I. OTHER / PUBLIC COMMENTS / QUESTIONS / NEXT MTG DATE *No public comments were received from the audience or online participants.*

J. ADJOURNMENT

***Motion:** Commissioner Bill Collick moved to adjourn. Commissioner Linzie seconded. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:14 PM with the next meeting scheduled for May 21st.*

Minutes submitted by: Jeffery Coover, Administrative Support Specialist

Minutes generated by HeyGov.ai

Transcripts available by request

LEWES AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

*Social & Economic Workgroup***Lewes African American Heritage***Attractions, Sites & Assets — Inventory*

May 2026 | Working Document Only

Overview

Lewes, Delaware possesses one of the most remarkable and largely untold African American heritage stories on the Mid-Atlantic coast. Spanning more than 200 years, this history encompasses a majority free Black population in 1800, documented slave trading thru-port, Black maritime history - “Men of the Sea”, Maritime Underground Railroad involvement, early work-place integration (fishing), a segregated beach and playground, and generations of community resilience. No competing Mid-Atlantic beach destination has this depth of documented heritage.

This document provides an enhanced inventory of existing and emerging African American heritage attractions, sites, events, media, and assets in the Lewes area — organized by category and mapped to five core Heritage Narrative Threads (initial placeholders) that anchor the LAAHC Social & Economic Workgroup strategy.

• Open

• Future

• In Progress

• Proposed

The Five Heritage Narrative Threads (Initial Placeholders)

All sites and assets in this inventory connect to one or more of distinct, interconnected narratives — each with national resonance:

Thread 1: Freedom in an Unfree Place	In 1800, 30% of Lewes was free Black — an extraordinary statistic in a slaveholding state. The estimated demographics of the approximate 1000 residents of Lewes: 53% White, 30% free Blacks, 17% enslaved Blacks A story of Black autonomy, community-building, and survival.
Thread 2: The Slave Trade & Its Evidence	Documented slave quarters on Pilottown Road (1891 map), the Ryves Holt House inventory, and Lewes as a small slave trading thru-port.
Thread 3: Black Maritime Power	Cato Lewis (Middle Passage survivor) and his son Peter Lewis (free shipbuilder, A.M.E. Church benefactor). Maritime labor underrepresented in Black heritage tourism nationally.

Thread 4: The Underground Railroad	Sussex County safe houses connecting Lewes to one of the most traveled Black heritage trails in America. Smuggling slaves on ships heading to Philadelphia, or small boat escapes across the bay to NJ.
Thread 5: Segregation & Resilience	Johnnie Walker Beach, the Nassau School, the DuPont Avenue School, and 200+ years of a community that persisted, built, and claimed space in Lewes.

1. Beaches & Waterfront Sites

Johnnie Walker Beach (formerly Beach 2)

• Open

During Delaware's Jim Crow era, Beach 2 was designated for 'colored' families while Beach 1 (now Savannah Beach) was reserved for white residents. In 1958, Johnnie Walker — a respected entrepreneur — built a restaurant and dance hall that became an epicenter of social life. For much of its history the beach featured a wooden pavilion for social events, worship, baptisms, and celebrations. Renamed unanimously by Lewes Mayor and City Council in 2021. The LAAHC has gathered photographs from the 1920s–1960s for interpretive signage. A new interpretive sign with rare historical photographs was installed in May2026. | *Lewes Beach, Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Segregation & Resilience*

Johnnie Walker Beach Interpretive Sign

• Open

A major interpretive sign installed at Johnnie Walker Beach in May2026, featuring rare photographs from the 1920s through the 1960s. Jointly funded by the City of Lewes and a Delaware 250 grant. Tells the story of Johnnie Walker's legacy and the beach's role in the African American community during the segregation era. | *Johnnie Walker Beach, Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Segregation & Resilience*

Johnnie Walker Beach Pavilion Replica

• Future

The LAAHC's next major goal is to build a replica of the original wooden pavilion that stood at Johnnie Walker Beach — a venue for social events, worship, baptisms, and community gatherings. The new Pavilion is planned to include performance infrastructure (stage, power, lighting, sound), ADA accessibility, weather-resilient design, and interpretive elements. Targeted for completion 2027–2028 as the anchor of a full destination launch. | *Johnnie Walker Beach, Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Segregation & Resilience*

Middle Passage Marker

• Proposed

A proposed memorial as part of the national Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Markers Project — placing Lewes within a national network acknowledging the transatlantic slave trade. Lewes served as a symbolic gateway at the mouth of Delaware Bay, through which slave-trade-linked vessels passed. Three locations under consideration: Cape May–Lewes Ferry Terminal (highest visibility), Cape Henlopen / Harbor of Refuge (strongest maritime accuracy), and the Lewes Canal/Downtown Waterfront (most accessible for public interpretation). | *Multiple proposed sites, Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *The Slave Trade & Its Evidence*

2. Churches & Cemeteries

St. George A.M.E. Church

• Open

Founded in 1816, St. George A.M.E. Church is one of the oldest African American churches in Delaware and a cornerstone of Lewes's free Black community. The church was benefited by Peter Lewis — free Black shipbuilder and son of Cato Lewis (a Middle Passage survivor) — whose legacy makes it a focal point of the Black Maritime Power narrative. The church most likely served as a community anchor for Maritime Underground Railroad coordination, providing temporary shelter, food, and connections. Located at 317 Park Avenue. | *317 Park Ave, Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Black Maritime Power | Freedom in an Unfree Place | Maritime Underground Railroad*

Old St. George's A.M.E. Cemetery

• Open

Established around 1816 on land donated by Peter Lewis, the free Black shipbuilder. A 2022 project led by the Greater Lewes Foundation discovered that as many as 550 African Americans are buried here — far more than the previous estimate of fewer than 100. A historic marker is present. This is one of the most significant African American burial sites in Sussex County. | *Near St. George A.M.E. Church, Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Freedom in an Unfree Place | Black Maritime Power*

St. Paul's Methodist Church

• Open

Founded in 1882, St. Paul's is now a well-preserved private home, but it was once one of the most influential African American churches in the Lewes area. Included as a stop on the Lewes African American History Walking Tour. | *318 W. Fourth St, Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Black Religious Heritage*

Friendship Baptist Church

• Open

Founded in 1957 and moved to its current location in 1969. One of the continuing active African American religious institutions in the Lewes area. | *Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Black Religious Heritage*

3. Schools & Educational Sites

Nassau School (Belltown)

• In Progress

Built in 1922 near the Five Points intersection outside Lewes, the Nassau School was one of 33 Black schools built in Sussex County with funding from philanthropist Pierre S. du Pont. Students attended 1st through 8th grade here through 1965. Currently undergoing renovation — a collaboration among Delaware's Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs (current owner), the Greater Lewes Foundation, Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice, and the Nassau School Coalition. The building received a new roof in 2020 and asbestos removal is underway. Vaguely planned to open as a museum and interpretive center as part of the coordinated 2027–2028 destination launch. | *Near Five Points / Plantation Rd, Belltown, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Segregation & Resilience*

DuPont Avenue School / Frederick Thomas Building

• Open

Originally opened in 1922 for Black students with funding from the Pierre S. du Pont Foundation. Featured a three-classroom structure that expanded with an elementary wing (1932) and a gym, cafeteria, and high school wing (1951). Now known as the Frederick Thomas Building, named for the school's former principal. Currently houses the Sussex Consortium special education program operated by the Cape Henlopen School District. A powerful and rare standing physical manifestation of educational segregation and community resilience. | *520 DuPont Ave, Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Segregation & Resilience*

First Black Public School in Lewes (1907)

• Open

The city's first Black public school opened at 307 Park Avenue. The original or remodeled structure still exists. A historic photograph taken outside the school in 1907 is held in the collections of the Lewes Historical Society and is a featured element of the African American history walking tour. Currently used for storage by the Cape Henlopen School District | *307 Park Ave, Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Segregation & Resilience*

Fred Thomas Middle School

• Open

A new, state-of-the-art school for up to 600 students, named for the former Principal of the segregated DuPont Avenue School. Represents the continuing legacy of Frederick Thomas and the African American educational community in Lewes. | *Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Segregation & Resilience*

4. Historic Sites & Markers

Ryves Holt House

• Open

The oldest standing house in Delaware (218 Second Street). A household inventory listing an enslaved woman provides one of the most direct documentary records of slavery in Lewes. A stop on the African American history walking tour and directly connected to the Slave Trade narrative thread. Visitors primed by sites like Monticello or the NMAAHC are ready for exactly this kind of on-the-ground encounter with documented history. | *218 Second St, Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *The Slave Trade & Its Evidence*

Pilottown Road Slave Quarters (1891 Map)

• Open

An 1891 map documents slave quarters on Pilottown Road, across from the St. George A.M.E. Cemetery — a tangle, mappable remnant of slavery in Lewes.. | *Pilottown Rd, Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *The Slave Trade & Its Evidence*

Peter Lewis Historic Marker

• In Progress

A historic marker honoring Peter Lewis — free Black shipbuilder, son of Cato Lewis (a Middle Passage survivor), and benefactor of St. George A.M.E. Church. Application is in final stages. This marker anchors the Black Maritime Power narrative and honors one of the most exceptional American family stories in Lewes's history. | *Location TBD, Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Black Maritime Power | Freedom in an Unfree Place*

George H.P. Smith Park

• Open

Named for the first Black mayor of Lewes. A symbol of Black civic leadership and achievement in the community. A marker stands in the middle of the park to honor Smith. | *Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Segregation & Resilience*

Martin Luther King Way (West 4th Street)

• Open

An honorific renaming of what was once the predominately Black West 4th Street neighborhood. Reflects the community's history, resilience, and civic recognition in modern Lewes. | *W. 4th Street corridor, Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Segregation & Resilience*

Black Harry's Spring

• Open

A spring named in honor of Harry Hosier — an 18th-century pioneering Black Methodist preacher known as 'Black Harry.' Hosier was one of the most celebrated preachers of the early Methodist movement and may be the origin of why people in Indiana are called 'Hoosiers.' A rare and nationally significant piece of African American religious heritage. | *Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Black Religious Heritage*

Menhaden Fishing Net Reel

• Open

An artifact from what was once the largest fish processing port in the country. The reel is a symbol of Lewes's early workplace integration — a time when white and Black employees worked together despite segregation elsewhere. On the Lewes Historical Society campus and included on the walking tour. | *Lewes Historical Society campus, Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Black Maritime Power*

Free Black Family Home — Summers & Seymour

• Open

A former free Black family home at 330 Market Street, included on the African American history walking tour. Represents the story of Black autonomy and community life in Lewes during and after the slavery era. | *330 Market St, Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Freedom in an Unfree Place*

Shipcarpenter Square (former African American Playground)

• Open

A former African American playground in Lewes. A possible future marker is under consideration to formally acknowledge this site. | *Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Segregation & Resilience*

Robinson's Coliseum / The Happy Day Club

• Open

The former site of a significant African American social gathering space at the corner of W. Fourth Street and DuPont Avenue. Featured on the African American history walking tour. The Happy Day Club was a significant regional stop on the famous “Chitlin Circuit” and featured artists such as Duke Ellington, James Brown, Fats Domino, Little Freddy King and Cab Calloway. Unique point is that white residents were allowed to attend shows, but had to sit in the balcony | *Corner of W. 4th St & DuPont Ave, Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Freedom in an Unfree Place | Segregation & Resilience*

5. Museums & Exhibits

Lewes History Museum — Maritime Exhibit (Future)

• Future

The forthcoming Historic Lewes maritime exhibit will include prominently featured content on Black maritime workers — including the story of Cato Lewis and Peter Lewis as a named, centerpiece narrative. Maritime labor is underrepresented in Black heritage tourism nationally; this exhibit gives Lewes the opportunity to own it. The exhibit should be included on the heritage trail map from day one and treated as a major PR moment targeting the five target cities. Opened in 2026. | *Lewes History Museum, Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Black Maritime Power*

Nassau School Museum

• In Progress

The renovated Nassau School in Belltown is planned to open as a museum and interpretive center as part of the coordinated 2027–2028 destination launch. Programming is being developed by the four-organization coalition. Planned programming includes genealogy workshops, school group tours, oral history programs, and Black History Month events. Could be permanent future home for “Voices Heard” or “Black Maritime” exhibits Progress seems slow, so timeline may not be certain. | *Near Five Points, Belltown, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Segregation & Resilience*

"Voices Heard" Traveling Exhibit

• Open

A traveling photographic exhibit featuring old photographs of the Black community from the late 1800s through the 1970s, with dozens of digitally enhanced images. Hosted by the Lewes Historical Society working with the Lewes African American Heritage Commission as part of ongoing heritage programming. | *Lewes Historical Society, Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Multiple Threads*

Zwaanendael Museum - "Segregated Sands" Exhibit

• Open

This museum houses artifacts and oral histories specifically documenting the lived experience of Black Delawareans at segregated beaches. | *Zwaanendael Museum, Lewes, DE*

Heritage Thread: *Segregation & Resilience*

6. Tours

"Finding Their Voices" — African American History Walking Tour

● Open

Debuted February 2022, developed by the Lewes Historical Society. Nine sites highlight the African American history of Lewes from the Colonial period through more recent times. Tours are held at 2 p.m. most Saturdays and Sundays, and 4 p.m. most Tuesdays (May–September). Tickets are \$10 per adult. Currently the only live, recurring visitor experience of Lewes's Black heritage — the product all marketing will point to. Priority enhancements recommended to align with “The Story” as required: could include full content audit, bus/van component to reach dispersed sites including Johnnie Walker Beach, expanded weekend availability, and enhanced tour guide narrative. On-line version of tour could also be explored | *Begins at Lewes Historical Society campus*

Heritage Thread: *Multiple Threads*

7. Events

Event	Timing	Notes
Juneteenth Celebration	June (annual)	A flagship annual event with exceptional authenticity — held in a town with documented free Black population dating to 1800. Priority: market as a destination for African American tourist and Regional Residents.
Johnnie Walker Beach Day	September (annual)	Annual beach celebration anchoring the fall season. Organized by the LAAHC. Strong community attendance and growing profile as a heritage tourism draw.
Black History Month Programming	February (annual)	Annual programming by the LAAHC and partnering organizations, including George H.P. Smith Day (February 5th).
George H.P. Smith Day	February 5th (annual)	Annual commemoration honoring Lewes's first Black mayor. Part of broader Black History Month programming.
Rehoboth Beach Jazz Festival — JWB Pavilion Debut Alignment	October (future, 2027+)	Target: establish Johnnie Walker Beach as a named venue for the RBJF once the Pavilion opens. Frame the partnership around the historical significance: jazz at a formerly segregated beach.
Sussex County AA Arts & Food Festival (idea only)	TBD	Potential inaugural festival to launch with the Pavilion. County-level sponsorship required. Positioned as a major regional draw for all five target cities.
Neighboring Town Festivals	Varies	Black Book, Film, and Jazz Festivals in neighboring towns offer co-promotion opportunities. Clifford Brown Jazz Festival

		(Wilmington) and Eastern Shore AFRAM Festival (Seaford) are peer organizations.
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8. Films, Videos & Digital Media

The following media assets support the Lewes African American heritage story and can be leveraged for marketing, visitor engagement, and earned media:

- Voices Heard Documentary & Booklet— full-length documentary on the Lewes African American community.
companion video to the traveling exhibit
- Lewes Oral History Videos — a growing collection of video oral histories from community members
- Cato Lewis Short Video (LHS) — a reenactment produced by the Lewes Historical Society
- 3 Degrees of Connection Video — explores connections within the community
- LAAHC Website — central digital hub with the Lewes Black History Timeline and Historic Lewes Black Families Charts
- Voices Heard Booklet - The Voices Heard Booklet is the exhibit guide companion to the Voices Heard exhibition. This booklet will bring you deeper into an often-untold history showing you multiple rarely seen photographs ranging from the 1900s to present day. Published by the Lewes Historical Society
- Enlarged Historic Photographs (30+) — available for exhibit and interpretive use
- Hundreds of community photographs — late 1800s through 1970s, dozens digitally enhanced
- “Sailing to Freedom: Maritime Dimensions of the Underground Railroad” by Timothy Walker.
- “Integrating the Lewes Public Schools” – Video of discussion with Allen and Daisey family members who integrated the public schools in 1961 & 1962
- “This Used to be My Playground” – video of panel discussion about Shipcarpenter Square
- “Where Menhaden was King: The Lewes Fishing Industry (1883-1966)” – book about the town's maritime heritage and integrated workforce.

Recommended additions: a 3–5 minute destination launch film and a mobile-friendly audio guide with QR codes at each heritage trail site.

9. Heritage Trail — Full Site Map

The table below maps all current and emerging assets to their Heritage Narrative Thread — forming the backbone of the Lewes Black Heritage Trail.

Site / Asset	Heritage Thread	Status
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Pilottown Rd Slave Quarters (1891 map)	The Slave Trade & Its Evidence	Open
Ryves Holt House	The Slave Trade & Its Evidence	Open
St. George A.M.E. Church (est. 1816)	Maritime Power / Free Black Community / UGRR	Open
Old St. George's A.M.E. Cemetery (pre-1880)	Free Black Community	Open
Peter Lewis Historic Marker	Black Maritime Power	In Progress
Maritime / Shipbuilding Sites	Black Maritime Power	Open
Menhaden Fishing Net Reel	Maritime Labor / Early Integration	Open
Black Harry's Spring	Black Religious Heritage	Open
Maritime Underground Railroad Marker (future)	The Underground Railroad	Future
Nassau School, Belltown (renovation underway)	Segregation & Resilience	In Progress
DuPont Avenue School / Frederick Thomas Bldg.	Segregation & Resilience	Open
First Black School, 307 Park Ave. (1907)	Segregation & Resilience	Open
Shipcarpenter Square (former AA playground)	Segregation & Resilience	Future Marker
George H.P. Smith Park	Black Civic Leadership	Open
Martin Luther King Way (W. 4th Street)	Community & Neighborhood History	Open
St. Paul's Methodist Church (est. 1882)	Black Religious Heritage	Open
Friendship Baptist Church (est. 1957)	Black Religious Heritage	Open
Robinson's Coliseum / Happy Day Club	Freedom / Resilience	Open
Free Black Family Home — Summers & Seymour	Freedom in an Unfree Place	Open
Johnnie Walker Beach — Interpretive Sign	Segregation & Resilience	Open
Johnnie Walker Beach — Pavilion (replica)	Destination Anchor	Future
Middle Passage Marker	The Slave Trade — Gateway	Proposed
Lewes History Museum — Black Maritime Exhibit	Black Maritime Power	Future
Nassau School Museum	Segregation & Resilience	In Progress