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Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is Your Fourth of July?"

Saturday, June 28, at 12:00 Noon

Colburn Park, Lebanon (and other towns across NH)

Upper Valley Joins Other NH Communities to Read Frederick Douglass' Iconic Speech

On Saturday, June 28, 2025, at 12:00 noon in Colburn Park, Lebanon will join twenty other communities across New Hampshire to participate in the annual reading of Frederick Douglass' historic speech "What to the Slave is Your Fourth of July?" This statewide Black Heritage Trail of NH (BHTNH) event marks a significant moment for reflection and dialogue on the legacy of slavery and the ongoing struggle for equality.

Renowned abolitionist and orator Frederick Douglass delivered this powerful speech on July 5, 1852, challenging the hypocrisy of celebrating freedom while millions remained enslaved. His words, echoing through time, continue to resonate with profound relevance today, prompting critical examination of America's past and present.

"We believe in the power of Frederick Douglass' words to spark meaningful dialogue and inspire positive change," said JerriAnne Boggis, Executive Director of BHTNH. "By coming together to read and discuss his speech, we will create a space for reflection and action towards building more inclusive and just communities."

For several years, BHTNH has partnered with community leaders statewide to facilitate these readings, fostering dialogue and reflection on Douglass' message. The event serves as a platform for communities to engage in necessary conversations about racial injustice and inequality.

As we commemorate the ideals of freedom and justice this Fourth of July, let us also commit to advancing the unfinished work of equality for all.

Individuals interested in hosting a reading in their community or seeking more information are encouraged to contact BHTNH at 603-570-8469 or visit www.blackheritagetrailnh.org.

For details specific to the reading in Lebanon, or to volunteer to read a paragraph, please contact Brian Clancy (church@fccleb.org).

About the Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire

The Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire promotes awareness and appreciation of African American history and life in order to build more inclusive communities today. They work to visibly honor and share a truer, more inclusive history through exhibits, educational programs, curriculum development, and tours that can change the way our country understands human dignity when it is free of historical stereotypes. Building on the success of the Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail that started more than two decades ago, the statewide Black Heritage Trail connects the stories of New Hampshire's African heritage by documenting and making visible many of the historic sites that testify to this rich history.