



JCBHPS Overview and The Great Tablet

James Taylor/JCBHPS President, James Tolbert/JCBHPS Secretary



Jefferson County Black History Preservation Society
Jefferson County, West Virginia



Background

- James Taylor, Nathaniel Downing (deceased), James “Alvin” Tolbert and George Rutherford formed the JCBHPS in 2000 (The Founding Fathers)
- The organization’s goal is to research and preserve little- or unknown facts and historical contributions by African Americans in Jefferson County
- Findings are published and shared through books, pamphlets, social media and on our website (www.jcblackhistory.org)



Significant Achievements

- Purchased the Webb-Blessing House in 2003; this unique structure is on the National Register of Historic Places (major tourist attraction soon)
- Restoration project in progress; meeting room in honor of Nathaniel Downing completed, along with rooms dedicated to the Blessing family and African American Veterans from Jefferson County
- Rear porch will be rebuilt, garden and log cabin will be added in back yard, and water pump and hitching post will be installed in front





Partial List of Publications

- The Capture, Trial and Execution of Shields Green and John Copeland
- The Life and Death of Dangerfield Newby
- The Black Book – Directory of African American Facts (1800-2004)
- Africans in America of the Lower Shenandoah Valley (1700-1900)
- African American Heritage Trail Brochure
- African Americans of Jefferson County

Awards and Recognition

- Received the prestigious “Arts and Letters Award” from the Eastern Panhandle Alumnae Chapter of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority
- Honored with West Virginia Senate Resolution #29 for outstanding work in historical research
- Coordinated with local Landmarks Commissions to identify historic African American landmarks and install plaques and wayside signs at the sites
- Worked with Highway Commission and legislators to get highway markers installed



The Shepherd Monument

- Heyward Shepherd, a free Black man, was the first casualty during John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry
- The United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) and the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) praised Shepherd's death, considering it an effort to preserve the institution of slavery
- The UDC and SCV erected the controversial stone monument in Harpers Ferry, as a memorial to Heyward Shepherd



The Great Tablet

- In 1932, the NAACP planned to erect the Great Tablet on the Storer College campus in tribute to John Brown
- The College President and the Board of Trustees refused the NAACP request for fear of racial violence
- In July 2006, the Great Tablet was placed on the Storer College campus by NAACP delegates with the original inscription from May 1932

W.E.B. Du Bois Response

- In 1932, Du Bois (founder of the Niagara Movement and a founder of the NAACP) responded to the Heyward Shepherd Monument
- Du Bois wrote, “Here John Brown aimed at human slavery a blow that woke up a guilty nation...John Brown’s body lies a mouldering in the grave, but his soul goes marching on.”
- The Du Bois marker is next to the Shepherd Monument outside the John Brown Museum in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia



Contact Information

- If you're interested in receiving our publications, please contact us through the website or by mail at— JCBHPS, P.O. Box 569, Ranson, WV 25438
- We're also accepting donations toward the Webb-Blessing Restoration Project; if you'd like to help, please send your check to the address above and write, "Friends of Webb-Blessing" on the memo line. Thanks in advance!
- www.jcblackhistory.org

