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Editorial Contact

Andres A. Verzosa
Executive Director and Curator
Stanley-Whitman House
37 High Street, Farmington, CT 06032
(860) 677-9222 ext. 305
averzosa@stanleywhitman.org
<https://s-wh.org/>

Stanley-Whitman House Launches BIPOC Subject Guide to Illuminate Hidden Histories

The new Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Guide documents lives in Farmington and the surrounding region from the colonial era onward

FARMINGTON, CT (June 2025) – Stanley-Whitman House, a ca. 1720 National Historic Landmark and the oldest museum in Farmington, proudly announces the release of its new **Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Subject Guide**—a resource that brings together archival materials documenting the lives, experiences, and histories of people of color in Farmington and the surrounding region from the colonial era onward.

Funded in the fall of 2023 and completed in spring 2025, the Subject Guide is the result of a statewide initiative led by the Connecticut State Historical Records Advisory Board (CT SHRAB) and Conservation ConneCTion, with funding provided by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). Stanley-Whitman House was honored to be selected as one of only ten institutions statewide to receive a Traveling Archivist site visit, supported by Evelyn Green, and coordinated by Kathy Craughwell-Varda, Director of Conservation Connection who oversaw the program administration. Their efforts were essential in helping the museum identify and index archival materials that reflect the often-overlooked contributions and realities of historically marginalized individuals and communities.

“This guide helps restore names and stories that have too long been excluded from Farmington’s historical narrative,” said Andres A. Verzosa, Executive Director and Curator of Stanley-Whitman House. “It underscores our commitment to inclusive storytelling and strengthens the foundation for future research, education, and engagement with underrepresented histories.”

The BIPOC Subject Guide builds upon a rich archival collection amassed over the last nine decades, since the museum’s founding in 1935. These holdings reflect the deep roots and diverse histories of Farmington’s people and institutions. In parallel with this project, the museum has also undertaken a comprehensive effort to digitize its archival collections through both the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA) and Connecticut Archives Online (CAO), making materials in the Stanley-Whitman House Collection more accessible to researchers and the general public, for free, from anywhere. As part of this digital transformation, the museum is also enhancing its internal collections infrastructure through

a strategic revamp of PastPerfect Museum Software, the world's leading platform for museum collection and contact management. These investments are designed to ensure that both behind-the-scenes stewardship and public-facing access meet the highest professional standards.

"We believe that access to our collections should be a public good, not a privilege," Verzosa added. "Thanks to this collaborative guidance and state-level support, small historic house museums like ours can rise to meet public expectations for educational access and digital transparency. This is a significant step forward in making our resources open and usable for all."

The Subject Guide and the digitization efforts it complements are foundational to the museum's mission. By making primary sources visible, searchable, and accessible, the project informs and enhances everything from house tour scripts and historical plays to walking tours, field trips, and exhibits. These authentic archival materials allow the museum to tell Farmington's story more accurately, completely, and compellingly.

Drawing from account books, personal papers, probate documents, photographs, and rare manuscripts, the Subject Guide highlights materials related to:

- The Tunxis people, including 17th- and 18th-century land deeds and cultural references
- Enslaved and free African Americans, named in account books and legal documents
- Abolitionist connections, such as materials linked to the Amistad captives and Farmington's Underground Railroad network
- Visual materials like a 19th-century photo of a Black carriage driver at Miss Porter's School and a rare lithograph of Joseph Cinqué

These materials, once scattered across disparate collections, are now indexed and searchable through Connecticut Archives Online (CAO), a public resource developed by the Western Connecticut State University Archives that provides one-click access to Connecticut's archival repositories. CAO connects users to searchable finding aids that summarize the contents, creators, and significance of archival collections, and often includes links to digitized materials.

To access the guide, visit: [Stanley-Whitman House Archive via Connecticut Archives Online](#)

This initiative builds on Stanley-Whitman House's broader work to preserve and interpret inclusive histories through projects like Voices from the Margins, Memento Mori, and seasonal educational programs. The Subject Guide will inform future exhibits, walking tours, and community partnerships as the museum prepares for the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution.

Support and guidance from this project have been essential for Stanley-Whitman House, particularly as a small historic house museum striving to meet the public's growing expectations for accessible, inclusive, and research-ready collections. This project demonstrates the transformative impact of

statewide partnerships and dedicated archival expertise in equipping institutions like S-WH to serve their communities with greater depth and transparency.

Credit Statement

This project was made possible through funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and administered by the Connecticut State Library on behalf of the Connecticut State Historical Records Advisory Board and Conservation ConneCTion.

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Museum's collection on the CAO:

https://archives.library.wcsu.edu/caoSearch/catalog/ctfarswh_001

Museum's collection on the CTDA:

<http://hdl.handle.net/11134/610002:StanleyWhitman>