



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

A "History Note" from Arthur Sudler, Director
St. Thomas Historical Society and Archives

**AUDACIOUS FREEDOM:
African Americans in Philadelphia 1776-1876:
The African American Museum in Philadelphia**

Audacious Freedom: African Americans in Philadelphia 1776-1876 is the title of the core exhibit at the African American Museum in Philadelphia (AAMP).

Audacious. Intrepidly daring. Marked by originality and verve. The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas (AECST) is acutely apparent in this all-powerful and authoritative affectation of a centenary of the abundant aptitude of African Americans in Philadelphia. It is described on the AAMP website as a "narrated, interactive timeline ... highlight[ing] a sequence of images and documents ... drawn from the historical record, that illuminate and explore topics of relevance including entrepreneurship, environment, education, religion, and family traditions." It runs the gamut from the Free African Society through Reconstruction.

This exhibit, according to the AAMP website, "recounts the stories of and contributions made by people of African descent in Philadelphia during the tumultuous years following the founding of our nation."

AECST entrepreneurs sailmaker James Forten and caterer Robert Bogle are there. AECST educators Fanny Muriel Jackson [Coppin] and Octavius Valentine Catto are there. AECST artist David Bustill Bowser is there. AECST physician Dr. Rebecca Cole is there. AECST rectors Rev. Absalom Jones and Rev. William Douglass are there. AAMP posits that "[t]hrough this exhibit [we] learn who the people were, how they lived and worked, and their unheralded impact on our nation." Skillfully curating, and adeptly contextualizing, a broad swath of local history, AECST members will meet their congregational forebearers throughout the multimedia presentation.