



CT Freedom Trail / Black Narratives Committee

ctfreedomtrail.org

The Black Narrative Committee:

Tammy Denease, Co-Chair, Connecticut Freedom Trail Outreach Director

Andre Keitt, Co-Chair, Greatheart Griot

Joan Di Martino, Museum Curator & Site Superintendent, *Prudence Crandall Museum*, Canterbury, CT

Lynette Fisher, Site Administrator, Southeast Region, *CT Landmarks*

Rev. Dr. Eric J. Hearst, Minister for Faith Formation and Social Justice, *First Church of Christ in Hartford/Center Church*

Christine Jewell, Educator / Consultant, Historic Sites & Museums

Paula Mann-Agnew, Executive Director, *Discovering Amistad*, New Haven, CT

John Mills, Genealogist/ Independent Scholar, *Alex Breanne Corp.*

Michael Sawyer, Museum Interpreter, *Old State House*, Hartford, CT

Nicole Thomas, Assistant Site Administrator, Southeast Region, *CT Landmarks*

Sally Whipple, *CT Democracy Center / Old State House*, Hartford, CT

Amyrs Williams, Executive Director, *CT League of Museums*

MISSION:

The Black Narratives Committee provides interpretive guidelines that center and elevate the culture of the people of African descent and experiences represented by the sites and stories along the CT Freedom Trail (CFT). These guidelines, coupled with training sessions, will set standards for inclusive storytelling, enabling sites to infuse their work with respect for the stories, the people in those stories, their descendants, and the people who visit their sites to learn.

ABOUT US:

The Black Narratives Committee, a sub-committee of the CT Freedom Trail (CFT), seeks to address the impacts of conscious and unconscious bias on the selection, research, interpretation, and conveyance of those stories through exhibitions, programs, tours, and publications at history sites throughout the state.

Resources

From *Writing About Slavery*

P. Gabrielle Foreman, et al. "Writing about Slavery/Teaching About Slavery: This Might Help"

<https://www.pgabrielleforeman.com/writing-about-slavery-guide> Accessed 6/11/2024

Language to Consider Adopting/Preferred Terms:

Enslaved (Africans, people, mothers, workers, artisans, children, etc).

Using enslaved (as an adjective) rather than "slave" (as a noun) disaggregates the condition of being enslaved with the status of "being" a slave. People weren't slaves; they were enslaved.

Captive (Africans, fathers, families, workers, infants, etc). Note that this term nuances depending on geography vis-a-vis the slave trade, as Ana Lucia Araujo notes.

Enslaver (rather than many of the terms below).

The term "master" transmits the aspirations and values of the enslaving class without naming the practices they engaged in.

Language to Consider Avoiding:

- Slave master (see above)
- Slave mistress and enslaved mistress (to name sexual violence/relations/conditions)
- Slave breeding/breeders (for forced reproduction)
- Slave concubine and enslaved concubine
- Slaveholder / Slave owner / Captor
 - Alternatives: those who claimed people as property, those who held people in slavery, etc.

From *Writing About Slavery* | Principles to Consider:

- Avoid using “runaway slave.” Alternatives: “self-liberated” or “self-emancipated” or “freedom seeker”
- If you’re writing about sexual violence, rape, assault and coercion under slavery, please name that violence rather than obscuring it by using terms such as “interracial sex” or “sexual intercourse” or “mistress”
- The headline language in this [JSTOR piece](#) about abolition and venereal disease is one example of using “interracial sex” to describe sexual violence.
- Please honor the humanity of the millions of people treated as chattel property by naming enslaved people whenever possible.
- No one was “born a slave”; instead people were born into “freedom” or “enslaved”
- Avoid using “people of color” as a blanket term when writing about Black people or other specific groups
- Remember that slavery was the economic foundation of every country in the Americas, not just the United States. If you mean specifically the U.S., please use the term “United States” rather than “American”
- Be mindful that the vast majority of enslaved Africans lived in Latin America and the Caribbean; this includes Mexico, when more than half of the country we now call the United States was Mexico until 1848. Havana, Cuba and Salvador, Brazil were the most important port cities of the region.
- Be specific when using the names of nations that often were not nations at the time of consideration, or at least underscore their colonial political condition until independence.
- Use this as a guideline to research the people whose stories you are trying to tell. Try to understand and highlight a multilingual, diasporic existence.
 - Be aware of shifting allegiances with regards to national identities as claimed by the people on the ground themselves: if a child was born free in Western Africa, captured and traded to Havana, and lives the majority of his adult life in New Orleans, how would you describe him?

<u>Updated</u>	<u>Historical Record / Outdated</u>
Indigenous or Native	Indian / Native American
Marginalized	Minority (see below)
Enslaver	<u>Master/Mistress</u> : The nouns used in historical narratives to indicate a person who enslaved another person
People of African Descent	<u>Negro / Colored</u> : The word used to identify people of African descent or Indigenous descent from early American records; census, birth, death, marriage, etc.
Multi-Ethnic Multi-Heritage	<u>Multi / Bi-Racial</u> : avoid using race (race is a social construct) <u>Mulatto</u> : In American colonial historical documents (such as a birth or death record), this term can mean different things in different settings

"fugitives from slavery" or "self-liberated" or "self-emancipated," "Freedom seeker"	Runaway Slave
An enslaved person.	<u>Slave</u> : a person who is the legal property of another person. Used in a sentence: a person who is enslaved.

[American Psychological Association: Inclusive Language Guide](#) Accessed 6/11/2024

Helpful Terms:

ally/allies: People who recognize the unearned privilege they receive from society Whiteness, male gender, Christianity, heterosexuality, ableism, and other identities and take responsibility for advancing equity.

Decolonization: The process of "undoing the impacts of historical domination on oppressed populations by the dominant power group"

implicit bias: An attitude, of which one is not consciously aware, against a specific social group, also known as implicit prejudice or implicit attitude.

Marginalization: "Marginalized communities are those excluded from dominant social, economic, educational, and/or cultural life" (Sevelius et al., 2020, p. 2009). Examples of marginalized populations include, but are not limited to, groups excluded because of age, gender, gender identity and expression, ethnicity, religion, national origin, immigration status, language, disability, sexual orientation, weight and socioeconomic status. Marginalization occurs because of "unequal power relationships between social groups" that perpetuate and sustain inequities (Sevelius et al., 2020, p. 2009).

minority

A minority group is a population subgroup (e.g., ethnic, racial, religious, or other group) with differential power than those who hold the majority power in the population. The relevance of this term with regard to race and ethnicity is outdated given the changing demographics of the U.S. population. Thus, refrain from using the term "minority." Instead, use the specific name of the group or groups to which you refer, or use broader terms such as "people of African descent" or "communities of African descent" as opposed to "ethnic and racial minorities"

Other Resources: (to organize)

Joseph Aitavale, "The Atlantic world economy and colonial Connecticut,"

<https://urresearch.rochester.edu/institutionalPublicationPublicView.action?institutionalItemId=8317>

<https://www.pgabrielleforeman.com/writing-about-slavery-guide>

<https://www.drcheryllaroche.com/>

John Mills

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzW7zciV0n4>

https://www.aam-us.org/2024/11/15/k-12-history-education-museums-and-perceived-curricular-gaps-a-2024-annual-survey-of-museum-goers-data-story/?utm_source=American+Alliance+of+Museums&utm_campaign=6ad9a31769-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2024_11_14_10_00&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-6ad9a31769-67645221

<https://cdn.aaslh.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/09101028/FWI-Reframing-History-Report.pdf>

<https://aaslh.org/reframing-history/>

<https://www.apa.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/language-guidelines>

<https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/bias-free-language>

<https://apastyle.apa.org/instructional-aids/inclusive-language.pdf>

Writing about "Slavery"? This Might Help

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1A4TEdDgYsIX-hlKzLodMIM71My3KTN0zxRv0IOTOQs/mobilebasic>

Black Folk Mental Health: Generational Trauma, Traditions & Truth | Jalan Agnew | TEDxDelthorneWomen

<https://youtu.be/B1Bn9OWDqF0?si=dRI9HOKmpwGhaZu7>