



INTERNATIONAL
STORYTELLING CENTER

Emancipation Saturday: An Appalachian Tradition Transcript

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SPEAKER:

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#MUSIC#

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Good afternoon, I am Alicestyne Turley, director of the International Storytelling Center Freedom Stories Project. Welcome to our second virtual freedom stories to public discussion. Freedom Stories is an international storytelling centre initiative that illuminates and underappreciated, ignored or neglected aspects of African-American Appalachian history. The Freedom Stories program brings together the folk art and storytelling with humanities scholars to guide the public through a deeper appreciation of the role of African-American stories in the American lexicon of struggles for freedom, equality and social justice. This project is designed to trace the history of African-Americans in Appalachia over time, showing how the path to shape and inform the world we know today. While conceived as a regional program based in central Appalachia, the project's multimedia toolkit will serve as a resource for the nation and the world. We're eager to highlight the diversity of our Appalachian communities, the complexities of Appalachian histories, and the role the region has played in U.S.

history all of which has been subject to misunderstanding and stereotypes. The International Storytelling Center is fortunate to be able to conduct this important work and present these public discussions through a generous support of the National Endowment for the Humanities as the major funder of the Freedom Stories Project. During our second discussion, the history of a central Appalachian tradition known primarily as Emancipation Saturday will be explored with an eye toward providing greater depth into the history of the tradition and to gain a better understanding of how far the tradition has spread within and outside the region. We will also have a review of the many people and locations that continue to celebrate the event. This discussion is particularly timely in view of the national discussion now underway to make Texas Juneteenth celebration a national holiday. Today's discussion is recorded and will be made available on YouTube, The International Story Center web page and Facebook page as part of our Freedom Stories Toolkit for Public Use and reference for those unable to view today's broadcast.

I would encourage our viewing audience, if we have questions for our panellists, to please add them to our Facebook page and that we will do our best to answer as many questions as we can as time permits. If you wish to follow remaining freedom stories discussions in the future, please check the International Storytelling Center Web page, which will have the latest updates and program details. On Saturday, August 8th, 1863, the military governor of Tennessee, Andrew Johnson, who was appointed by President Abraham

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Lincoln, freed his personal slaves in Greenville, Tennessee. Thus beginning a one hundred and fifty-seven-year tradition of celebrating the second Saturday in August as Emancipation Saturday in central Appalachia. Today, I'm joined in discussion of this event with three community scholars, documentarians and activists who have been engaged in documenting and promoting the celebration of this event in the region. So I'm happy to welcome to the discussion this afternoon Dr Cicero M.

Fain the third, who is himself a third-generation black Huntingtonian and professor of history at the College of Southern Maryland. Dr. Fain is a recipient of the cottagey Watson Fellowship from Marshall University and the author of several articles and publications. His book, his first book, Black Huntingtonian an Appalachian History, was first published in May of 2019 by the University of Illinois Press. So welcome and thank you, Dr Fain, for joining us this afternoon. Our second panellist is Jasmine Henderson, who serves as a board member and recording secretary for Umoja Unity Committee, a nonprofit organization focused on bridging diverse cultures through education and artistic presentations in East Tennessee. As a board member, Henderson has produced events and campaigns dedicated to celebrating diversity through education and artistic performance, as well as community organizing as the spoken word artist. She has helped produce events and campaigns throughout the region, dedicated to celebrating diversity in Appalachia and outside of the region.

Including raising money for the Water for Flint project, as well as work with the NAACP. Most recently, she has been partnered with the 400 Years of African-American History Commission to develop a series entitled An Evening with Our Elders. Welcome, Jasmine, thank you for joining us. And finally, we have with us a person who has made much of what you'll see today possible, and that is William Isom the second who is a sixth-generation East Tennessean and director of community outreach at East Tennessee Public Broadcasting Service in Knoxville. Mr Isom is director of the Black and Appalachia Project for PBS. He coordinates the project's research, community database development, documentary, film and photography production, oral history collection and educational events where he participates actively with members of the local community to produce what you will see some of this afternoon. And I would certainly encourage after this event to visit that website. So this month, as our storyteller, we are actually using Mr Isom's work that he's going to share.

So we're going to begin our discussion by first hearing from Mr Ned Arter the great, great-grandson of Samuel Johnson, the founder of Emancipation Saturday. We will then come back on the other side of the video clip and discuss this presentation with panellists. Thank you. So we'll hear from Mr Arter.

NED ARTER:

My name is Ned Arter, Samuel Johnson was my great great grandfather. And he was my father's grandmother's dad and Samuel started the 8th of August once you get free. Well, as far as I know, before Andrew Johnson bought him, he was a slave on the Forbin Plantation in (UNKNOWN) Andrew Johnson bought his sister, then went back the next day at her suggestion bought him and he on them. And they lived in Greenville until, you know, they were free. They continued to live in Greenville and raised, you know, his kids and so forth until he died, you know that. Where to win was free from slavery, eventually, he moved to Knoxville and became a chef at one of the restaurants here. And during that time when the TVA dam was first built and Franklin Roosevelt was here, William wanted to meet him. And that didn't work out. And the famous news reporter, Ernie Pyle, was eating one day in the restaurant where Samuel worked and, I mean where William worked and somehow he was brought to his attention that William had wanted to meet the president.

And so Ernie Pyle decided to interview him and he ended up writing a story about, you know, William and so forth. And he was, you know, syndicated like, you know, Walter Winchell or somebody, you know, big. And because he wasn't on television back then, so hard to read the newspaper. Well, Eleanor Roosevelt read the article and then showed it to her husband, Franklin Roosevelt. And I don't know if the Secret Service didn't

have automobiles in Knoxville at the time, but anyway, a Secret Service agent came from Louisville, Kentucky, to there to Knoxville to pick him up and take him to Washington, D.C. and to meet the president. Well, I got very interested, you know, in the 8th of August, and I came down here a few years ago to the celebration in Greenville and which was where, you know, my father was born. And then I would be able to make it this year because I didn't know that they were having it. But, you know, I had planned to come to this one. And then after I got here, I found out about another celebration in Knoxville, which I attended yesterday.

So hopefully going forward, I'll be able to keep up with the dates of all of them and, you know, be able to, you know, attend. OK. Obviously, it is significant to me because of the history, because of my family connection, because my great-great-grandfather founded it. And it's big now kind of like being here, it's an elusive type of thing and they have it at this place, but they don't have it at that place, and then they have it another place. And it's kind of amazing how it skips different places. And I remember this gentleman I used to work with when I was about, I don't know, 18, 19 years old. He was from Paris, Tennessee, and he would always take off and go home for the 8th of August. And so I knew what the 8th of August carnivores was, but I didn't know all this. Where I live we don't celebrate it. But about 60 miles north of there in a place named Eminence, Kentucky, they do celebrate it. And it's just you know, I think it's 19 or so different cities that is celebrated in Hopkinsville is one, Paris, Tennessee is one.

And you know, I forgot the name of the city up in eastern Kentucky. You know where it's celebrated, but maybe it'll catch on be celebrated in more places. Oh, I think it's a great, big, great idea and to merry it up with the fortieth anniversary of the cultural centre, I mean, it's just excellent. And hopefully, they'll be intertwined, you know, for all time to come and it promotes both events. And, of course, you know, (INAUDIBLE) go on and on. And hopefully, the 8th of August will go on and as well. And the young people will understand and know about what it means. Because I really didn't know anything about most of this when I was a little kid growing up. I would tell kids about my great great grandfather. I'll tell kids about Slurm because young kids really don't have any idea about a whole lot of stuff that went on to get to where we are today. And therefore, they have little appreciation for the suffering and sacrifices a lot of people made for things to be like they are now. So I think I could probably tell them a part of it.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

All right. Very significant story. I think we can get everyone to mute so we can talk with each other. I'd like to start with William. That was your work. So tell me, how did you catch up with Mr Arter? How were you able to find this gem?

WILLIAM ISOM:

Yeah, Ned actually started coming around the emancipation celebrations after that cane that he was holding was actually the cane that was given to his, I guess, great, great uncle William Johnson, who was an ex-slave by President Roosevelt. It's a silver-headed cane. And he started coming to the 8th of August celebrations in Newport, in Greenville, in Knoxville. And so he was easy to find. You just had to be at the celebration. That's how I came to be acquainted with him.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Awesome. Awesome. And then I need to ask everyone if you could just give us a brief. How did you know about Emancipation Saturday? Let's start with Dr Fain. Is this been a tradition you were familiar with?

CICERO FAIN:

No, no, not growing up. You know, I was first exposed to it when I started doing research dissertation research on Huntington and travelled throughout the region to talk to various community members and throughout the region. And I ended up learning about it most profoundly. And Gallipolis, Ohio, where I interviewed some local citizens and they informed me about, by the way, Gallipolis is about a thirty-five-minute drive from Huntington up the Ohio River. And I ran into some locals and they informed me of this

celebration. And I think it's affiliated, I think it grew out of the AME, African Methodist Episcopal Church, which might be the oldest church AME Church west of Ohio. I won't swear by that, but it was established around 1818. And so in any event, that was news to me. It had been a tradition for quite many years by the time I got there, of course. I could never, unfortunately, my obligations at that time and responsibilities of trying to do the dissertation research, trying to meet the dictates of my fellowship, I could never go back and attend any of the celebrations.

And to this day, I regret not being able to go back, because one of the reasons is and what we find out while people do research on, you know, the slavery era and the history so many of these folks are passing on. And so we're losing bits and pieces and narratives and stories that the likelihood of recapturing them is greatly diminished. And what I really appreciate about going to Gallipolis was this kind of many of the people had discovered like a fountain of youth there. You know, their memories, their recollections, their lucidity was just amazing. I might have met 90-year-old people still driving. You know, that's not common to me. And so I think, you know, it's important to recognize that when folks go out and talk to elders, have these conversations, we learn things and we continue to revitalize them and move them forward.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

That is awesome. And how about you, Jasmine, when did you learn about emancipation Saturday/

JASMINE HENDERSON:

I did not learn about Emancipation Saturday until about five years ago. And I could not, for the life of me, figure out why Tennessee was celebrating Juneteenth in August. It did not make sense to me, I've always known it to be celebrated in June until I was invited to Emancipation Saturday event here in Johnson City. Toria Hale and Melissa Morrison and Johnson City put together an event and it was a small event and I had to go back. Because I made a little snarky comment, like, why are they celebrating Juneteenth in August? And I had to be corrected and educated about the history of Emancipation Saturday in Tennessee. And so, I think that's just a direct result of us not talking about our stories enough, us not celebrating our stories enough. I'm not surprised that Mr. Ned Arter had no idea his relationship to his great, great, great grandfather and his great, great, great grandfather's contribution to Emancipation Saturday because we don't... We have to be very intentional with finding out our history and our story, it doesn't come by default like others.

So, I'm not surprised at all. I mean, it takes incidents like running into scholars like you all or events like this to kind of educate people. It doesn't just happen. So, luckily, I came to Johnson City and was invited to this Emancipation Saturday event and really got the history and the relationship of Greenville, Tennessee, to the event. So, my job now is to continue to spread that knowledge and create events and things that continue to celebrate it so the people behind me who also don't know can figure it out as well.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Yeah.

SPEAKER:

Thank you. How about you, William? Did you grow up knowing about Emancipation Saturday?

WILLIAM ISOM, II:

I grew up going to, we just called it the block parties in Greenville or every other year in Newport. So, we just thought it was a time to let go see girls and (INAUDIBLE). (CHUCKLE) We didn't know what the meaning of it was, we just knew that it was the block parties. And then, really after I got out of college and I started looking more... And there was a group in East Tennessee called AAHA once upon a time, the African American Heritage Association of East Tennessee. And they I think they're pretty much gone now, but they they used to put on educational events in Greenville and in Knoxville, little panels and stuff that talked about that history. And that's where I really learned about these celebrations that we just went to, but we didn't know what the

meaning was. And I think a lot of the history with our folks and our families isn't passed down because it's painful. Like I know my dad said, like his parents would be like, well, why do you want to talk about that? Like, just like move on.

And so, I think we lose a lot of our stuff because some of the stories are painful for people to recount and they got work to do. So, they don't sit and dwell on some of these stories.

SPEAKER:

Well, unfortunately, though, that's how we get written out, because certainly as a child, I knew I mean, my great grandfather, we celebrated beginning with the marriage of my great grandmother and great grandfather who took the opportunity of emancipation to get married, even though they were a family, they officially got married. So, here in Powell County, Kentucky, we celebrated this will be our 154th year to celebrate it. But like most people, we had no idea. We just saw a second Saturday in August, I really didn't understand the importance of it until about five years ago when we tried to change the date to Labor Day weekend and the elders in our family were like, no, you can't. They really took the canes out and tried to beat us down, but it's like so we had to stick with the second Saturday. But that made me want to know why that date. And so, that's really when I started to investigate. So, you're right, Jasmine, just not knowing, just stumbling into our history accidentally, really, that's not good.

So, my other question, you mentioned, Dr. Fain... We'll have to talk once this is over, because you're now into my dissertation when you're talking about John Gee and Gallipolis and being purged because he's out of northern Kentucky (UNKNOWN). And he's an African-American who was emancipated in Kentucky and ended up in Gallipolis, where he started the church. So, there's a direct underground railroad escape route connected from Kentucky to Gallipolis. So, this will be a wonderful conversation we can continue.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Sure.

SPEAKER:

Any other thoughts on what you heard from Ned Arder and his willingness to travel? William, does he spend, what, the entire week of August traveling or how does he manage to cover all these events?

WILLIAM ISOM, II:

I don't know how he does it. But he told a story that back in the day to drive from I guess he lives around Indianapolis and to drop down through Kentucky back in the day before the advent of the interstate, they would have to drive down Highway 25 and it was 12 hours in the car, 12 hours on a train. And so, I think he's kind of used to that, like people come home. And I think people travel to get home. And I don't know how he does that. You'll leave a place and go someplace else and he's there, too. It's like magic. (INAUDIBLE) (CHUCKLE) But he definitely makes it a point to attend every 8th of August or Emancipation Day event in the region that he can. And he's there.

SPEAKER:

I am so glad that you got him on tape now and that we know this beginning history, because I think it's going to inspire quite a few other people. Anything else we want to comment? We want to move on to our next clip. We've got three we want to share. And I would say when we share our next clip, be sure to mute yourselves. But this next clip, I think, is important because of how this story is interpreted. The Andrew Johnson home in Greenville is a national historic site. I don't know how many people have actually ever visited the site, but this is how the story of Johnson and Emancipation Saturday is shared with the general public when they do attend Andrew Johnson's home in Greenville. So, if we all listen to our next clip and then we'll come back and discuss it.

KENDRA HINKLE:

(VIDEO BEGINS) Andrew Johnson accompanied a friend to Parrottsville, which in those days was a crossroads of sorts for the Drover trail, for livestock and whatnot going to market in Asheville. There he bought Dolly, who was a 14 year old girl who, again, based on William, asked Andrew Johnson to buy her. He said because she liked his face, basically, but perhaps Dolly knew that he was a politician. Perhaps he knew that Johnson was from East Tennessee, a smaller area as far as slaveholders went, probably a better chance at having housework instead of field work. And somewhere along the line, she convinced him to return and buy her half brother, Sam. And he did. And this also gave Sam a much better existence than he may have had somewhere else. Whether it was a status symbol of reaching a certain mark in life, there have also been speculations that it was almost as Dolly suspected, a mercy buyings to keep them from a worsen fate somewhere else. Andrew Johnson held nearly every political office that you can hold on the way to the presidency from alderman, mayor, state representative and senator, U.S.

representative and senator, Governor of Tennessee. And through it all, you see slavery mentioned in speeches. You see evolving ideas about slavery until later on in his career you see a gradual emancipation is starting to form. He was concerned about the reaction to the way these people would be treated with immediate emancipation, the way they could be worked into society. And by the time he was military governor of Tennessee, re-establishing union control of the state during the Civil War he freed not only his slaves August 8th, 1863, but all the rest of the slaves in the state in October of the following year. The Emancipation Proclamation did not cover Tennessee because it was no longer a state in rebellion at that point. Andrew Johnson in many ways is a dichotomy. He was a Southerner, but he was a staunch defender of the union. He was a defender of the Constitution. He believed in the federal government, limited federal government, but he also believed that many elements should be left to the individual states.

He was a slave owner, and yet when the time came, he said that slavery is a cancer upon the body politic and it must be cut out. And he realized that one of the most critical means of preserving the union was for slavery to be abolished. As military governor of Tennessee during the Civil War he freed his own slaves August 8th, 1863, and the remainder of the slaves in the state the following year on October of 1864. August 8th, 1863. The two sources that we have for that date come from, well, one of Andrew Johnson's former slaves, Dolly's son. The family was living in Nashville at that time that Andrew Johnson is military governor, Eliza and the children had made their way to join them. Judge Patterson, Andrew Johnson's son in law, had eventually arrived helping some of Johnson's slaves. Williams says in one account that Eliza called them all in and told them that they were now free. In another account, he says that Andrew Johnson told them of Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and that they were all free now if they wished to go.

Ad he said we all stayed. Albeit there is no absolute documentation that we know of for that day being the day that he freed the slaves, he did later attend an August 8th celebration in Greenville with his former slave, Sam, who was serving as officer the day at Tusculum and Johnson gave speeches there. So, that's authentication, if you will, of him approving of that date. So, August 8th, 1863, that is a relatively early date for emancipation of slaves as far as Andrew Johnson is concerned. By September of that same year, The New York Times says that Governor Johnson plants himself on extreme anti slavery ground. (VIDEO ENDS)

SPEAKER:

Alright. So, how many people studied Andrew Johnson in high school or college as a president?

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Very little.

SPEAKER:

Yeah. He's not a president that gets a great deal of mention. So, where any of you, either of you, aware of his impact on African-American freedom in Tennessee before this, before Williams words?

DR CICERO M FAIN:

No, I wasn't. And this is one thing I really appreciate about this forum is that I get to deepen my knowledge about Tennessee, about black Appalachia, that section of black Appalachia. So, I really appreciate it. He's a complicated man for sure. I'd be interested to know... The narrator, commentator, talked about him purchasing the stepbrother perhaps as a moral imperative. And I will be interested to counter and say perhaps that was also an economic imperative as well, presumably that that person is young and has some many years of potential labor to provide for Johnson and the family. But this is all great to be enriched, to gain some knowledge and to see the connections and disparities between what happens up in my neck of the woods, which is the tristate region of southeast Ohio, east of Kentucky and southwest Virginia and West Virginia, because there are some real commonalities, but there are also some distinct differences between these circumstances.

SPEAKER:

Correct. And so, where is Parrottsville, William? Is that close to the North Carolina border?

WILLIAM ISOM, II:

Parrottsville is in Cocke County, which borders North Carolina. And so, Parrottsville is in between Newport, Tennessee and Greenville, Tennessee. It's a rural farming community. And there is a African-American church there and an old Rosenwald school that has been converted basically into the Black Churches Fellowship Hall now, but it's preserved. And so, Parrottsville Tennessee, I guess, at one point was the slave market.

SPEAKER:

Wow. And we speak of Johnson, if you study what's happening in the country today and you study Andrew Johnson's views, he pretty much was laying out white nationalist agenda in post Civil War, Tennessee. So, I'm struck by the number of African-Americans we showed you earlier, 14 legislators who came out of Tennessee. Kentucky did not have black elected officials. West Virginia did not have black elected officials. I think the closest in the region would have been North Carolina, who had nine elected officials. Still, Tennessee seemed to be very, very progressive at the end of the Civil War. So, do either you have any idea as to what happened? I think Johnson had a big part in changing that. That's my take on it, but I would like to hear what each of you think.

JASMINE HENDERSON:

So, as I was kind of learning up on this, I mean, obviously, well, who stood out to me is Samuel Johnson. I think that he was, of course, a personal slave or from what I understood - you can correct me if I'm wrong -, they were pretty close. And like I feel like Samuel doesn't get enough credit for maybe persuading Andrew Johnson that black people are people. And not to say that Andrew Johnson looked at Samuel as an equal, but I definitely think that their relationship had some some kind of influence on his relationship with African-Americans in Tennessee. Samuel was an excellent leader, someone who could call Andrew Johnson and ask for land and Andrew Johnson, say, here you are. And so, I don't think Samuel is given enough credit in this of being maybe the person who kind of clicked the switch for Mr. Johnson. Their families were very connected for a long time, even after Emancipation Saturday. So, like I said, I'm a story person and reading up on this I just could not help but to be very intrigued by Samuel and his influence on Andrew Johnson's decisions.

SPEAKER:

Do you think Andrew Johnson - and this is something we don't talk about when we talk about presidents -, number one, Andrew Johnson was a poor man himself. He had been indentured himself. He was a laborer. He had been (UNKNOWN). He might have felt some form of kinship with anyone who was a laborer, which would have, of course, included Samuel. But then I think as he goes on, as he becomes more politically involved, you see him separate from this common man thread. And I don't know how much he's being

influenced by those who cannot accept blackness as part of the political landscape. But what do you think, William, on Johnson and his influence?

WILLIAM ISOM, II:

I think that Johnson is a perfect illustration of kind of how all of our history kind of exists and operates within these vast contradictions. Like I think that the kind of friction that occurs within these contradictions, we had a lot of early black politicians right after the Civil War, but also we were the home of the Ku Klux Klan and Nathan Bedford Forrest. I think Parson Brownlow being the governor of Tennessee at the time, was also like staunchly anti Democratic Party and mobilized the Tennessee militia against the Klan, but then also Parson Brownlow was not necessarily a friend to the black person, like he clearly was trying to use black people's votes to remain in power. So, I think like these contradictions and even with Andrew Johnson, he did some of these things that you can look at and think that maybe he was a friend of the black man, the working black man, but also he was responsible for the dismantling of reconstruction and like the removal of all these black politicians from South Carolina and Tennessee and the murder of some of them, actually.

And then I wanna kind of go back to what Dr. Fain said, like we got to remember, like he was a slaveholder who utilized human bodies for his own political and economic gain. But when it become politically inconvenient and he wanted to get in good steads with Abraham Lincoln, then he freed his own slaves and then took these steps. So, I think embracing all of these contradictions that are within our stories is where the good stuff is at.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Yeah.

SPEAKER:

Right. Definitely if you read his later writings, he is definitely not positioning himself as a friend to the black man. He definitely does not believe in shared anything. He is definitely pushing for the working class white environment separate from blacks and not seeing them as equal and really just dismissing them totally.
(OVERLAPPING CONVERSATION)

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Not being really that well versed on Tennesseean history. It occurred to me, though, that a number of the black representatives were from Shelby County and that's Memphis, isn't it?

SPEAKER:

Yes.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Could that be part of the fact that you've got a significant black population there during this era who presumably have economic clout and a critical mass sufficient to translate that into political clout. Is that also an interesting story?

SPEAKER:

It is, because Memphis was also the home of Nathan Bedford Forrest.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

There you go.

SPEAKER:

And Nathan Bedford Forrest was a huge impact on Andrew Johnson. So, for a long time he's one of the wealthiest slave traders. Nathan Bedford Forrest had slave pens in western Kentucky all the way down the river from Memphis to Natchez. So, he's an extremely wealthy, wealthy man and very politically influential, and I'm sure he had an influence on the politics of Tennessee, not just Shelby County, but the state in general.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

And that leads me to the fact that you can make... With Memphis in the critical map, you can make some inroads at the municipal level and maybe even at the state level, but eventually the power brokers are going to increasingly develop mechanisms and constraints to slowly but surely diminish that power. And I think that seems to go hand in hand with reconstruction. While reconstruction is impacting the state and the region writ large, at the local level I think white politicians are also engineering ways to increasingly restrict and constrain black political agitation and aspiration as well.

SPEAKER:

Well, I want us to move on to our next clip, but I definitely think moving forward for scholars looking more at the work of Johnson, especially in a comparison of what we see happening in the country today, might be a worthy scholarly project. So, our last clip is from Geraldine Taylor. This is, again, William's work, an interview. And I'd like for us to hear her shared history of her understanding of emancipation, and then we'll come back and discuss it.

GERALDINE TAYLOR:

My name is Geraldine Taylor. I guess I was...went to the park or when I was about 10...9, 10, 12 years old. Every year my parents would plan for us to go to the... to the Chilhowee Park with a picnic lunch with fried chicken, bologna sandwiches and potato salad that was not on ice. And stayed out all day long and we ate it and nothing happened to us. And then we would go ride on the rides. But my parents or nobody really explained to us the meaning of 8th of August. We just knew it was a day of celebration. And that's how we celebrated. They never actually mentioned why we're celebrating it. They just always said that it was the 8th of August. I suppose I was about...I guess after I got in college, my first year in college, (INAUDIBLE). Maybe in high school, I guess they talk about it in high school. So I'd say in high school. I learned that the 8th of August and the meaning of it. The 8th of August meant to me that there was a struggle and that in the struggle, my people made progress.

They made some progress. And I did have a sense of pride knowing that. And I always thought about other ways that we could kind of make that kind of a struggle and even have more equal rights. Well, I think the reason it's important for us to continue is because our young people don't know, just like I did when I was a kid the importance of this, that they must realize that there is a struggle going on and it will continue to go on even when I'm gone. And their parents are going, it will continue to go on. But they need to know that there are things that they need to learn when they're in school and they need to focus on making contributions, outstanding contributions, not only to their race but to their community and to society, period. I think that that's one of the main reasons that we should teach our children the struggle and the reason they've come through what they've come to...our people have come through. Now, my father was a barber, had the first black business on Central Barbering business.

On Central. And he was not an educated man. He went to 8th grade. And it was five of us. And he wanted us to be educated. And he talked a little bit about that. As a matter of fact, he said that the reason he's a barber is because he did not want to take the injustices that were rendered to him when he worked in a big industry because they were very cruel to him. And so he went to the barbering school so that he could escape that. So he said he wanted all of us to go to college so that we would be prepared for the injustices that occur in our society. As far as I know, there were no organization, no teachers, no one explained to us why we were actually celebrating 8th of August. It was just a time for the families to get together and to get to have as many rides as we could on the 8th of August at the park. And it was just anticipation. And they would threaten us, if you don't do this, you won't get to go to the park. They would make those threats to us. And of course, that helped to kind of modify our behavior.

But nobody really explained to us. My parents didn't. And we...we had a music teacher that talked about that an awful lot in high school. Her name was Anita Wallace. But she would sing songs and explain to us the meaning of those songs that oftentimes would reflect the struggle that we were having. But I really don't hear...never heard anybody actually just detail the 8th of August celebration. Never heard of that. Everybody in every community would celebrate that day. The anticipation, like you said, was just there. You talked about it. It was almost like Christmas. For us, we didn't have anything else to do. We had a playground that we would go to every day. And it was sort of like Christmas. Two more days and we'll be ready to go to the park. Oh, I can't wait. And everybody in the community had that same kind of excitement about coming. No one did any shopping to come as far as we're close to where. But our parents, I'm sure, did a lot of shopping about playing in that lot because you know we couldn't go into any establishment to eat at that time.

So they had to have enough food to feed all the people in the family from the picnic basket. And that's my mother would shop for that. Yeah. Sometimes we were lucky enough to get here early enough to get a table. And if we got a table, they would put a tablecloth on there. And my cousins, Mark's mother and my father, like I said, were brothers and sisters. So the cousins would all be together. And they would put the food on the table and they'd give us our money. They'd go buy tickets to ride. And then they'd tell us they'd be back at a certain time for lunch. And then we got back to the picnic table at that time to eat lunch. We got all the food down real quickly and back out, and we went to ride the rides.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Alright. So this is, I have to say, another tradition being kept alive with those hats and that...

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Yes, indeed. Yes, indeed.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

We would...and I'd ask him this before. Was this after church?

WILLIAM ISOM:

They knew that they were going to be interviewed about the 8th of August. And so they came to the park.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

They were on their Sunday dress. The Sunday best. Yes.

WILLIAM ISOM:

They wasn't going to be no junk.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

There you go

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Yes. Yes

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Go. There're all those traditions about how you're supposed to look when you're in public. So...

DR CICERO M FAIN:

That's fantastic.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Yes, wonderful. And I would say if you look at the actual website with the full length of these clips, all the ladies you interviewed came dressed. They all had hats. They all had their Sunday go to meet best on. And I really...I really appreciate that because that's another tradition we could actually even talk about.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Yeah.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

So what part, William, are they speaking of where they were not permitted to go except this one day?

WILLIAM ISOM:

It's Chilhowee Park in Knoxville...in East Knoxville. So at that time, Chilhowee Park was almost like an amusement park. They had like a Ferris wheel and all kinds of rides. And so the 8th of August was the only day that black residents were able to go to the park. And it's not that...it wasn't that unique because I mean, in Newport, Tennessee, it was...that was the day that black folks were allowed to go to the city park and swim in the city pool. It was the 8th of August. So that was the one day. And then they would drain and clean the pool the next day. The interesting thing is Greeneville, Tennessee, was kind of self-contained. The community in Greeneville, Wesley Heights. They had their own...they had their own swimming pool. They had their own park. They had their own spaces. And so they really didn't have to engage with the segregated world to celebrate. And they would parade downtown. That would be the moment where they engaged with the broader community. But a lot of the celebrations could be on Wesley Heights and which I thought was really cool.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

So Greeneville had its own. Do those places still exist?

WILLIAM ISOM:

The pool, gone. The pool is gone, but the infrastructure is still there. The park and the school. And there's five or...like five or six churches up in Greeneville up on the hill. And so they still can't...they still have their block parties and stuff in the day for the kids. But the swimming pool is gone.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

I think it's important to mention here, too, that one of the reasons I think these things were created was, again, to go back to Jasmine's hero Samuel Johnson, who immediately when he had an opportunity to purchase land for schools for black-owned businesses and areas, he did so. And it seems as though he spread that mindset to other African-Americans. So we see now the benefit of that. That African-Americans were independent of relying on a segregated system like Knoxville or Newport. So what about...what about this idea in other areas? Here, it's been referred to in Kentucky as Second Saturday or have there been other names that you know the Emancipation celebrations to be called?

DR CICERO M FAIN:

I don't. Yeah, I will say...Go ahead, William

WILLIAM ISOM:

No, no, no, I just know it is the 8th August.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

I think one of the really interesting things to me about her commentary, besides the fact that she reminds me of my dear 95-year-old grandmother who still wears high heels and wears her hats when she goes to church. Yes, indeed. Yes, indeed.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

That's the way you do it.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Yes. I love my nanny. But it's...to me, it's the...she made allusion to it about the political aspect of the Emancipation Day celebration. And that, to me, is what I want to...if I might talk a little bit more about the

Huntington and the uniqueness of the black...the Tri-State area, which Huntington resides. Because there was also not only Huntington, which is growing exponentially throughout the late 19th, early 20th century. And because of its...the growth of industry affiliated with the railroad and manufacturing. And so the influx of black migrants into Huntington from Virginia, but as well as drawing from Ashland, Kentucky, which is just down the road, as well as Arlington, Ohio, which is just down the road. So you've got this critical mass of black folks within this region, which in large measure are still constrained. Not so much, of course, in Ohio and Ashland, but constrained significantly by what we call benevolent segregation in West Virginia. But because of the fact you've got these discrete but unified black communities, they are coming together and on mass celebrating Emancipation Day by the early 20th century.

And what they're doing is they're coming to Huntington and they are claiming their right...asserting their right to use, you know, historically white space, the public arena to celebrate. They have...at one point, they have so many people. They have 5,000 people in the 1902 celebration. Now, this might be a little bit of an exaggeration by the newspaper, but the newspaper recounts 5,000 people showing up at Cliffside Park. And the reason why Cliffside is important is because in Huntington there was Laurel Park, there is Laurel Park, which was designated as a white-only park. And so blacks then in conjunction with the establishment of Laurel park, established Cliffside Park, which is in Ashland, Kentucky. And that then becomes their space. And there is a tram. I wouldn't say line that...ride that travels from Huntington to Ashland to Arlington. And so blacks are able to ride on this and congregate, celebrate and also assert that, you know, their history, their culture and their political aspirations by claiming in some...to some degree, their space.

Affiliated with that is that seven years later, in 1909, blacks from Charleston, which is a 45-mile up the road from Huntington, which is...Charleston has the largest black population of any city in est Virginia at the time. Huntington was second. But they...black Charlestonians come down to Huntington and bring a 15 piece band in which they parade through Downtown Huntington to celebrate and commemorate Emancipation Day. So this is...unquestionably this is a seminal event for many people. But I...and I also want to shift the lens a little bit as well. We've got this vast area between Eastern Tennessee and Huntington. This vast area of coal fields and coal mines and black residential populations. I don't...in my research and I just finished a 328-page memoir by a friend. Honestly, and I want to, you know, in which he recounts his life and his experiences in growing up in the eastern Kentucky coalfields. Nowhere does he mention any type of celebration or recognition. And I think, you know, it's really important to understand that perhaps people, you know, they're working.

They are celebrating their community and their religious aspects in that regard. But I don't get a sense that they're celebrating...that they are either, number one, recognizing and or celebrating Emancipation Day or Juneteenth.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Wow. Well, certainly here in Kentucky, there's a lot going on in Eastern Kentucky when coal mining strikes happen and people are being driven. African-Americans are being used as strikebreakers and they're being driven from Eastern Kentucky and they're going west. They're going on the river. So here in Kentucky, probably the longest-running Emancipation Day celebrations are in Western Kentucky, not Western Kentucky. So...

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Yeah.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

If you are traveling from Paducah, down through Hopkinsville, down through all the other counties along the river. Celebrations, in fact, this would have been a week-long celebration with thousands of people coming from all over the country, as many as 20,000 people.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Wow. Wow.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Showing up in Western Kentucky. It is a huge week-long celebration with each city taking a turn. But I'm willing to bet if you were to do some oral history interviews of where these families originated and ended up in Western Kentucky, there's probably an Appalachian connection there.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Sure. And I will say...

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Yeah.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

No. Go ahead.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Beginning in the 1900s, 1920s and 1930s, when people are beginning to move out of Appalachia to find jobs.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Right.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

I'm thinking they're taking their celebration with them.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Sure. I was...in conjunction with that, it's important to remember that the coal mine, these were controlled by companies.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Right.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Who designated policies and in large measure, any cultural observation, religious observation, well, I would say cultural that...that in any way upset the status quo was, I would say outlawed. And especially, you know, the companies are controlling the store towns, they've been in the churches, they've been in the schools. They don't want any type of observation like that, that calls attention to the black cultural observances, that upsets whites...the white workers and the white residents of thataaof those particular coal towns.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

I did grow up in a company town in Hazard, the Blue Diamond Coal Company owned everything. The school, the store, the housing, the permission for you to have a holiday. So I do exactly understand what you're saying. So and it would not take very long, I think, for people to forget about the holiday and maybe replace it with something in that it's more acceptable to the company.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Yes.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

That is a very real thing and wonderful information to have. Jasmine, you're from Hampton?

JASMINE HENDERSON :

Hampton, Virginia. Yes, ma'am.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Did they celebrate in Hampton? Not at all?

JASMINE HENDERSON :

Not Emancipation Saturday. We definitely knew about Juneteenth, but I can't even truly say that even that was celebrated, to be honest. I will say that we have Watchnight service. I grew up in a black Baptist church of Christian Baptist. We have Watchnight service. And similar to the people being interviewed today and the clips, I didn't know why we were going to church. We just knew that on New Year's Eve, we went to church. And to later find out that that is even in connection to the end of slavery. Slaves stood up or, you know, stayed up. December 31st, 1862 because Abraham Lincoln was signing the final copy of Emancipation Proclamation on the 1st. So it was a tradition to get together. Well, in fact, they got together and they celebrated it and they waited up all night. And so that kind of turned into a Watchnight service that I thought was just to hear people testify about their year and eat their breakfast. So, you know.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

That's what it...that's what it turned into Jasmine. Because people don't understand what they were watching for.

JASMINE HENDERSON :

Exactly. And could you imagine how many of those situations that we as African-Americans have? Till this day, we do these things and we don't know why. So I'm really grateful for a storyteller center. And you all and your work for making those stories come alive and giving some kind of definition to, you know, these practices that we have. Because, of course, you all know, you're right. You're intentional in your research. But for those everyday folks who, you know, maybe they're not passionate about it, but it's still necessary that they know of this, like this can kind of create that definition to these events. And we have to figure out ways to keep, like I said, everyday folks aware of what we're doing. Our contributions, our stories. And I was telling someone I grew up in Hampton, Virginia, one of my favorite movies, Hidden Figures. Right. Based in Hampton, Virginia. Right? I had no idea. I have no idea. You hear about NASA going to the moon and going to space. But you don't hear about the Katherine Johnsons and the Dorothy Vaughans, who were directly contributing to that thing.

And it was in my hometown. So that's why it's important for us to know. It gives us definition. It gives these situations definition. And so we're not just celebrating. Right. We have a reason to celebrate. We know why we're celebrating. Why we're doing what we're doing.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Well, said. Yeah.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Yeah. It is wonderful that somehow we have managed to keep the traditions alive and long enough for the information to catch up. Right. For us to be able to say this is why we are doing these things. And I was like you. Watchnight was a ritual. My family still does it. And you're right, it was all about thanking how you got over, which I'm sure was part of the Emancipation event, too. But mainly it was to make sure Lincoln signed that proclamation because if he had not signed it, black evangelicals already had a plan for what was going to happen next, if we were to rely on signing the proclamation, we don't talk about that either. Because African...if you talk about radical blacks, they were going to arm themselves to enforce the proclamation. So the civil war was gonna start either way.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Wow.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

And I do know there are churches who still celebrate Emancipation on January 1st in certain communities. They...that's the date that people use. We had mentioned September 22nd as the day people celebrate because that's when it was written. So we have all these variables in here for Emancipation. William, I was trying to save this for the last, but I can't and I didn't know if I was going to bring it up. But I'm going to jump right in. When we're talking about Johnson and Dolly. Can we bring up the fact that Dolly claims all of her children were by William, Samuel Johnson son, Robert?

WILLIAM ISOM:

Yeah, we can certainly talk about that. Yeah, I think that that's...it's assumed even by both sides of the family that...that that was the case. That I guess there would have been William Johnson was one of Andrew Johnson's son. Right. Right. Andrew Johnson's son had children by...

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Dolly.

WILLIAM ISOM:

Dolly, yeah. And so it would be Andrew Johnson's grandchildren.

ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Right. His grandchildren are mixed race. So his lineal old behavior toward Samuel Johnson may have had to do with the fact his grandkids were also black and...

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Dolly never married, correct? I don't think she ever married. So she had three children, two two girls and a boy, William. So, you know, how would this have gone over post presidential politics? I think. yeah.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Oh, Yeah, that's a nice starter.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

But even that story, if I had not seen your documentary, William, I would not have known. That's not anything I've ever heard mentioned. We've talked about Thomas Jefferson, of course, and Sally Hemings. But here we also have Andrew Johnson and I with DNA now, I'm sure we could probably...

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Hello. Hello. Yeah.

WILLIAM ISOM:

I don't think that it was unique. I don't think it was unique at all. We were...

JASMINE HENDERSON :

Exactly.

WILLIAM ISOM:

1500 over 1500 enslaved people in Greene County in 1860. I mean, it's this is not a unique story that your body belonged to another person.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

The owners.

WILLIAM ISOM:

Yeah. And that everything associated with your body belonged to this slaveholder.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Sure.

WILLIAM ISOM:

And...

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

But William goes on to have a fairly Greenville. We are talking about ownership of park, ownership of land, having all these assets. And so I'm just wondering if some of that could have been that Johnson is really rewarding his family. This is his family. So, we can think about it that way, too.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Sure.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

And how how, you know, Eastern Kentucky has a rate of one of our public discussions, we're going to talk about mixed race in Appalachia, which is probably more prevalent in central Appalachia than it is anywhere else in the country from the very beginning. You wouldn't believe you wouldn't believe that now, but that is the history of the region.

WILLIAM ISOM:

There's an interesting book, and the title is the title is going to sound one way, but it's not that kind of a book. It's called Afro Yankees and Black Confederates. And it's not what you think, it's actually a really good book, but they talk about the surprise of the union troops that come through southwest Virginia when they saw this slave come to the slave auction blocks and there were slaves being sold with blond hair and blue eyes and a blonde curly hair and blue eyes. How obviously, the slave owners were selling their own children and grandchildren up and down the river.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Yeah.

WILLIAM ISOM:

So...

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Wow, that makes a big slide. We'll talk a little bit about that on September 5th, that slave market and the mixed race children that are really worth quite a bit of money. There they are... in today's equivalency would be roughly \$ 30, 40,000 for one of these mixed race children who are kind of seen as er an oddity, a collector's item. So I want to encourage our viewers. Now is the time for you to join in the conversation if you want to go ahead and text your message to the Facebook page, and we'll do our best to answer them for you. There's a question about Tennessee. Does Tennessee have any African-American communities that began during reconstruction? I think they were here way before reconstruction, wouldn't you say?

WILLIAM ISOM:

There was a historically black community in east Tennessee called Hoop Creek, and in Claiborne County, Tennessee, right on the border of Claiborne County and Hawkins Hancock County, Tennessee. And it's pretty everybody's pretty much dead and gone now. But that was a community that was. People either pulled their money and bought land and had farming communities or were given land by their own ex slaveholder. In this region anyway, and so that was one community. (UNKNOWN) your way out, Cicero up in. In the Tri-State area, right?

DR CICERO M FAIN:

I'm sorry.

WILLIAM ISOM:

There there were several of those communities up that way, right?

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Oh, yeah, yeah. Sure, sure. I mean, all along the railroad lines, you know, black communities, Keystone would be one Beckley. You know, Bluefield. Those are the bigger ones, Hinton. I mean, I mean, yeah. As soon as you crossed over into West Virginia you had that just dots of of of small black communities, villages, even, you know. And that's one of the that's one of the shame, one of the sad developments of of today's, I guess, or economics situation is that folks had to leave. They had to get jobs disappeared and dried up and folks had to relocate. And those towns have of many of them have really fallen on hard times.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Well, we certainly know that in eastern Kentucky, we have these a little alcoves hidden away. It's still difficult to get to them today. So one of the benefits, I think, for African-Americans in the mountain are there places in eastern Kentucky now along the Appalachian Trail, you still unless somebody guides you in, you can get in and may never be able to get out. So for African-Americans that we know that beginning in the late 1790s as people are pushing west. A lot of these little what what's now been called Melungeon communities existed in the mountains. And again, going back to DNA. You've seen the latest that says that was primarily African-American and European blood mixes that were living as Melungeons in the mountains. And as long as they could claim another nationality, they were not enslaved. So they were able to pretty much remain independent in the mountains.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Sure.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

So, again, another shout out for the benefit of being an eastern Kentucky.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

It's it's getting back to a couple of things. Know, getting back to Jasmine's response on, you know, not knowing about Katherine Johnson and this and NASA. Well, I did research in White Sulphur Springs affiliated with the slave circumstance at White Sulphur Springs, which is now green, the Greenbrier. And no one ever mentioned anything about Katherine Johnson or this illustrious family. And also about this this whole thing of the mixed race children. One of the things I was going to do in my book that I didn't get around to was actually examine the number of mulatto children and compare it within Greenbrier County vs I think the account the the adjacent county in Virginia was the Augusta County. And I was going to try to figure out some way to to, you know, document, if at all possible statistically, the the number of mulatto children produced at a certain point within a certain chronological area in White Sulphur Springs, which was what utilized, hired. They hired free blacks as well as slaves in the region.

But if you don't know why summer springs was the summer retreat for rich white southerners in the antebellum era. And so unquestionably there was a residential population, a long term staff there, as well as new staff coming through that if you had the wherewithal or the the desire to as a as a white man staying there, you could probably impose your will or maybe even entice monitor your other methods, you know. Relationships, consensual and or coerced.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Right.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

With with the resident black working and...

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Working population.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Working population and (UNKNOWN).

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

There's a question from one of our viewers who says, should white people participate in Emancipation Day celebrations? Or should it just be reserved for black people?

WILLIAM ISOM:

Well, if you've ever been to emancipation celebration in Greenville or a Mojito celebration in Johnson City or Newport or Knoxville, it's it's ah, it's already too late. White folks are already they already got in. Yeah. So it's it's a it's a very it's not a homogeneous celebration. I think, that it's already the cat's out of the bag.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Yeah...

JASMINE HENDERSON :

We we outlets that we as a country. Right. This is it. I mean, it's a black issue for sure. But I mean, why not? We celebrate the things that we probably shouldn't be celebrating. We won't go there. But I mean, this is something we actually got right. As a country. Right. So absolutely. This is not just a celebration for black people. This is something that we do as a country and we're still working it out. I'm not never perfect, but I mean, like if we're going to celebrate all this other stuff, why not celebrate as a whole country the something that we actually got, right?

DR CICERO M FAIN:

I agree.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Go ahead, Dr Fein.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

No, I agree. You know, I don't I don't think there's any reason to to exclude. This is this is this is a an important recognition that whites have been can be and hopefully will be in the future allies in the quest for recognition for equal justice, social justice, equal rights, economic opportunity, so forth and so on.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Well, and if you look at the early records of the emancipation celebration, they were mixed race events. You know, Johnson brought people, African-Americans from all over. So it was I think when it began. So when you have a cat is definitely out of the bag. Folks have been (CROSSTALK)

WILLIAM ISOM:

I would say and in talking to some some elders there during the height of Jim Crow, segregation was not good.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Oh, yeah.

WILLIAM ISOM:

People. It wasn't a multiracial...

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Event.

DR CICERO M FAIN:
(UNKNOWN)

WILLIAM ISOM:
It was there was...

DR CICERO M FAIN:
Yeah.

WILLIAM ISOM:
It was during the part of Jim Crow. It was in lots of places predominantly black and there was very few white people. I had heard, though, that white people would come to the dances that were held at the tobacco warehouses in Greenville so that they could learn the new dances. So that was something that I was told.

DR CICERO M FAIN:
OK.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:
Always happening.

JASMINE HENDERSON :
Take this out of my house.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:
So so we've got about ten minutes. I want to get your take on the plan to make Juneteenth the national celebration. How do you think that will impact our emancipation celebrations in central Appalachia? Jasmine you said that you've already got had a blended event where it's Juneteenth in August. How how should we be thinking of it? Should we keep this tradition alive? Should you just blend in with what's happening for June 19th in Texas? What's everybody's take on that?

DR CICERO M FAIN:
I think every community deserves to do to do what they want to do. I think it's it's important. I mean, it's one holiday for the for the nation as a celebration. But I do think there are real compelling reasons for those those communities that have always observed it. But can continue to to re-engage it and re-energize it. And because we talked about earlier about the younger people, and I think it's one thing, you know, it's part of it's local people, local communities. These are the folks that need to be engaged. And so any way that you can bring that home is not just some kind of abstract. We're going to go, you know, now this is our people were part of this process. This community was part of this process. And I think there's no there's that's important to continue to pass down through the generations.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:
William, what are you thinking?

WILLIAM ISOM:
I think that I'm kind of I think there's a couple of things I'm kind of excited to kind of see, like this consolidation of Juneteenth across the country, because it kind of gives us this kind of more national unification of, OK, like this is Emancipation Day. I don't think that you're ever going to I think Gallup Police is still going to do September 22nd.

DR CICERO M FAIN:
Yeah. Right.

WILLIAM ISOM:

And like, you know, East Tennessee is still going to do like Johnson City, like (UNKNOWN) Hill, still going to do Juneteenth on 8th of August like its... These things are still going to happen locally. But I think that you don't it doesn't have to be either or I think particularly it just creates more opportunities for us to talk about why we're celebrating emancipation. When why are we celebrating emancipation through reconstruction, Jim Crow, right now, the current fight for justice in the streets like we're continuing to celebrate the idea of freedom when like that freedom has never, you know, it's piecemeal. We're always just almost there. Just get just a little bit further reconsider. But we're still celebrating freedom through, you know, over 150 years. The idea of freedom.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

And I think it's important for us to know that even though we talk about Emancipation Proclamation, as though once Lincoln signed it, all slaves were free. But obviously, freedom did not roll out smoothly. You know, different regions celebrated or freed at different times. And Texas being the last of the states to free their slaves. And there is, what, the year after the war, they find out they're free. I mean, that in and of itself is a story. But Jasmine, now that you're working with the combined group. How do you think you can take what you now know? And add to what what's been happening.

JASMINE HENDERSON :

So I'm going to be honest, I'm very and I'm a I'm an event planner, so my attendants are up, but I just can't help but to fill that Greenville, Tennessee deserves this region's attention when it comes to Emancipation Saturday. I think and that to discredit any other event, but to say that Greenville, Tennessee, is the birth place. Right. Is the origin of emancipation Saturday. I think that it's now our responsibility to get behind Greenville. Right. To figure out how to get into Greenville. And I'm sure that they have activities that I don't know about. But, hey, I mean, to keep that direct connection and to celebrate and celebrate Greenville in that manner, I think would be amazing. I'm inspired to get in contact with some Greenville officials and figure out how to make Greenville the Mecca of Emancipation Saturday, because I mean, why not?

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Is there.

JASMINE HENDERSON :

Why not?

DR CICERO M FAIN:

The elements are there.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Exactly.

JASMINE HENDERSON :

And so and like I said, not to discredit anyone else. But I definitely think that we can get behind Greenville for sure to make this a regional, you know, something recognized regionally. I'm excited, I have all kind of ideas that I think to myself, but I am really excited and inspired to into and to make that connection, to keep that connection and to give Gringo their due credit. I mean, this I mean, they that's not a little deal.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Yes, it's not a little deal.

JASMINE HENDERSON :

They had that title, right? They deserved that.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Is Daniel Johnson buried in Greenville, William? Where exactly...

WILLIAM ISOM:

Oh, old. You would ask me that. Oh, I think I think Samuel Johnson. Yeah. I don't want to answer. I don't I'm not sure I assume.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

OK. So there you go, Jasmine. Just to make his location. I mean, we should note where he is, right. And his and his family. We should know. I know William was in Knoxville or Newport. William Johnson. I thought...

WILLIAM ISOM:

William Johnson was in Knoxville. He's buried, they're, buried at the Friedmann Cemetery. And some of Dolly children are buried at Knoxville College Cemetery.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Oh, wow. OK, so but see, that's it. I don't know if Samuel stayed in Greenville or he said his dad was born there main author said so. I think Samuel probably is there in Greenville, but it would be nice for us to know for sure and to really celebrate if he doesn't have an appropriate monument maybe this is something that needs to happen. Any closing thoughts? We're are we're close to our time. I want to thank everybody for participating. This is great. I've learned a great deal and I'm excited. I've never been to Greenville, Jasmine, let me know when you're getting ready to pull this off. I definitely want to be there to enjoy that environment. Dr Fain, tell us what's happening with you.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Well, I mean, again, let me just reiterate. Thank you so much for this opportunity, thanks to International Storytellers Center. Good to see (UNKNOWN) again. It's nice to meet you, Jasmine. And I'm working on I guess my my next big project is is expanding a story of a gentleman by the name of Charles Ringo, who was a Buffalo soldier, deserto deserter and criminal between about his real, he'd make his mark between about 1895 and eight and 1905. He's accused of two desserts. He comes to Huntington, he's from eastern Kentucky, comes to Huntington around 1895. And I'll give you the quick down and dirty. He's accused of a drowning's of his two stepchildren. He's acquitted of murder. He then goes out to Kankakee, Illinois, where he's accused of a brutal murder of a prominent white couple with an axe by the way, he's acquitted of that murder at the line at the 11th hour when a sheriff from an adjacent county, shows up and says that he couldn't have committed the crime because he was in my jail drunk.

But and he actually ends up in Memphis in 1905 as a restaurant cook. I'm just giving you this the sketching of his of his remarkable life. And so that's what I'm working on now. Hope to have that perhaps done by next year. And...

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Beautiful, well...

DR CICERO M FAIN:

And also one one other thing. So honestly, we also I'm a co-editor with Dr Dan Waters, Dr Bill Turner, Dr Wilburn Wilburn Hayden on the blogs, an anthology, Volume two. We are looking for submissions still. You can find the link for the (UNKNOWN) papers and the it was an epilogue with the African Studies Association website, as well as a (UNKNOWN) website, or if anyone is interested, they just send me an email and I'll forward you the information. We hope to have that published. This is due to Washington University Press. And if folks don't know, Bill Turner and Ed Campbell were the co editors of Blacks in Appalachia from 1985, the seminal work on blacks in Appalachia. We're hoping to follow this up and make this an encyclopedic anthology. And so we would appreciate any and all interest.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Thank you. And believe it or not, we are out of time. So we're beginning our. Third public discussion on September 5th, talking about slavery in Appalachia. Thank our listeners, thank our panelists for this wonderful, wonderful discussion. We're going to be following Jasmine to Greenville. Well,

JASMINE HENDERSON :

Yeah,

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY:

Everybody will be watching you on YouTube and on your Website. So thank you for joining us. And I look forward to bringing everyone back on September 5th to talk about slavery in Appalachia. Thank you.

DR CICERO M FAIN:

Thank you.

SPEAKER:

Thank you for participating in today's community conversation. For more information on this and other freedom stories events, please contact us at the Web address or email below. And join us again Saturday, September 5th for the public discussion, Slavery in Appalachia.