

# Mitchelville Times

August 2019

Newsletter

The Mitchelville Times is the official newsletter of Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park.

## Remembering Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison



Source: The Toni Morrison Society

"Our past is bleak. Our future dim. But I am not reasonable. A reasonable man adjusts to his environment. An unreasonable man does not. All progress, therefore, depends on the unreasonable man. I prefer not to adjust to my environment. I refuse the prison of 'I' and choose the open spaces of 'we.'" —Toni Morrison, *Mouth Full of Blood*, 2019

As the world mourns the lost of Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison, we are reminded by the above words of progress she wrote in her 2019 book of essays, speeches and meditations, *Mouth Full of Blood*. In all that she did, Ms. Morrison's words created worlds and stories in a way that centered souls and provided a safe space for people of color in the world of literature. She possessed a dominate understanding of language that enabled her to captivate audiences around the world and open their eyes to the struggles, experiences, and successes of Americans.

### Save the Dates



**Freedom Day**  
Feb. 1, 2020

**Blues & Barbecue**  
Mar. 28, 2020

**Juneteenth Celebration**  
Jun. 20, 2020


### Upcoming

**October 2019**  
Gullah Geechee Cultural  
Heritage Corridor  
Awareness Month

**November 2, 2019**  
Historic Mitchelville  
Freedom Park  
Anniversary Forum

**December 9, 2019**  
Holiday Lighting in  
Historic Mitchelville  
Freedom Park

Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park preserves, promotes and honors Mitchelville, the first self-governed town of formerly enslaved people in the United States. HMFP is a 501(c)3 organization. All contributions are tax deductible.

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## HMFP Brings Strong Presence to African American Museum Conference

Ahmad Ward spoke on his experience as Executive Director of Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park on the 'Things I Didn't Learn At Hillman: Lessons Learned from First-Time Executive Directors panel discussion at the 2019 Association of African American Museums (AAAM) conference in Jackson, Mississippi. He was joined by three other executive directors from across the nation: Christina Shutt, Mosaic Templars Cultural Center; LaNesha DeBeardeleban, Northwest African American Museum; and Timothy Barber, The Black Archives History & Research Foundation of South Florida. Additionally at the conference, Katherine Seeber, Mitchelville Archaeology field director, presented on the Historic Mitchelville project during The Presence of the Past: the Power of Collaborative Archaeology session. Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park Executive Director, Ahmad Ward was recently named to the AAAM Board of Directors. "Katie's presence at the conference helps to shine a light on the important work in progress at Mitchelville." according to Ward. "Presentations like this help drive support for the Park."



Ahmad Ward (far left) at AAAM Conference on August 9



Katie Seeber (pictured above) at AAAM Conference on August 8

## Mitchelville Bench by the Road Honors the Passing of Beloved Namesake



On April 16, 2013 the Toni Morrison Society placed its 8<sup>th</sup> Bench by the Road in now named, Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park. This bench was placed in honor of the community of formerly enslaved African Americans who fought in the Union army and who escaped slavery in the South during the Civil War.

The Bench by the Road Project is a memorial history and community outreach initiative of the Toni Morrison Society. The Project was launched on February 18, 2006, on the occasion of Toni Morrison's 75th Birthday. The name "Bench by the Road" is taken from Morrison's remarks in a 1989 interview with World Magazine where she spoke of the absences of historical markers that help remember the lives of Africans who were enslaved and of how her fifth novel, *Beloved*, served this symbolic role.

Learn more about the Bench by the Road Project at [tonimorrisonociety.org](http://tonimorrisonociety.org)

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