



**COUNTY OF CUMBERLAND**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY AFFAIRS**  
164 WEST BROAD STREET, BRIDGETON, NEW JERSEY 08302

*Matthew E. Pisarski, AICP, PP, Department Head & Planning Director*

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25 September 2020

Jeffrey Small  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC  
Via Email: [Jeffrey\\_small@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Jeffrey_small@ios.doi.gov)

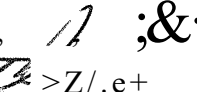
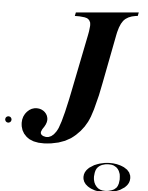
**Re: National Garden of American Heroes**

Dear Mr. Small:

The letter is in response to correspondence received by the County of Cumberland, New Jersey regarding questions relating to the establishment of a National Garden of American Heroes. In answer to your questions, specifically:

1. While Cumberland County is a wealth of natural beauty, there are no specific locales which would readily lend themselves to the garden itself, as defined in the Executive Order.
2. Again, while Cumberland County does include monuments and statues memorializing its role in American history, none of them would be readily available for loan or donation to the garden.
3. Following are four biographies of individuals from Cumberland County, New Jersey who deserve recognition in the Garden of American Heroes. While there are assuredly others, our county historian identified these four initially for inclusion.

We understand that while we are responding past the requested due date for comments, we only received your inquiry letter seven working days prior to the deadline. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,  ;& ·   
Matthew E. Pisarski, AICP, PP  
Planning Director

C: Board of County Commissioners  
Kimberly Wood, County Administrator  
Penny Watson, County Historian  
County Cultural & Heritage Commission

**Phillip Vickers Fithian** (1747-1776) was born in Greenwich to a farming family, but aspired to a life of intellectual pursuits. He pursued an education first at the Presbyterian academy in nearby Deerfield, and then at Princeton University (then the College of New Jersey), from which he graduated in 1772. Due to the death of both his parents his senior year, he returned to Greenwich to see to the welfare of his six younger siblings. A year later, he accepted a position as tutor to the family of Robert Carter III at the Nomini Hall plantation on the Northern Neck of Virginia and after that toured the Shenandoah Valley as a missionary to the Scots-Irish Presbyterian settlements there.

Back in Cumberland County, he is believed to have participated in the Greenwich Tea Party on December 22, 1774, during which a group of young men in disguise stole a shipload of tea enroute from England to Philadelphia and burned it in the market square, though because of the illegality of the act the names of the participants were not recorded at the time. At the start of the Revolution, he joined a New Jersey militia unit as chaplain, and witnessed the Battle of Long Island and the Battle of Harlem Heights before he died of camp fever near Fort Washington at the age of 29.

Throughout his adult life, he kept a daily journal, which has proved invaluable to historians in the details he provided of daily life, particularly during his years in Virginia, which he observed as if he were visiting a foreign land. Among other customs he recorded, he noted his dismay at the harsh treatment of African-American slaves by Virginia plantation owners.

#### Bibliography:

John Fea, *The Way of Improvement Leads Home: Philip Vickers Fithian and the Rural Enlightenment in Early America* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008 (<http://www.upenn.edu/pennpress/book/I4442.html>)

Hunter Dickinson Farish, ed., *Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion, 1773-1774* Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1947

Robert A. Peterson, *Patriots, Pirates, and Pineys Sixty Who Shaped New Jersey* Medford, NJ: Plexus Publishing, Inc., 1998

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**Samuel Ringgold Ward** (1817 - 1866) was brought to Cumberland County at the age of three in 1820 by his parents when they escaped from slavery in Maryland. They settled in Greenwich along the Cohansey, where Samuel attended school run by the Quakers, but the frequent presence of slave catchers in the neighborhood necessitated someone in the household having to sit up at night armed with a shotgun to protect against kidnapping. After six years, they moved on to New York in futile hope of greater security, but all his life Ward retained his attachment to Greenwich and considered it with nostalgia his true home.

He went on to a celebrated career as an abolitionist and writer. He became a Congregational minister, and served an all-white church in New York State for two years. He became involved in politics and at the 1848 convention of the National Liberty Party he was nominated for Vice President of the United States on a slate with presidential nominee Gerrit Smith, a white abolitionist. He thus became the first African-American to be nominated for national office.

Ward became editor and part owner of two newspapers, the *Farmer and Northern Star* in New York State and Boston's *Impartial Citizen*. His concern about freedom of the press inspired him to begin the study of law. However, in October 1851 he participated in the famous "Jerry Rescue" of William "Jerry" Henry, and the next month emigrated to Canada to escape arrest.

The Anti-Slavery Society of Canada arranged for him to travel to Britain on a speaking tour to raise funds for activities of the society. He travelled throughout England and Scotland for several months for a highly-successful series of lectures, and while in England wrote his autobiography. Following his time in England he retired to Jamaica, where he served as a minister and farmed for the final eleven years of his life.

Frederick Douglass said of him "As an orator and thinker [he] was vastly superior to any of us" and "the splendors of his intellect went directly to the glory of race."

#### Bibliography:

Ward, Samuel Ringgold (1855; reprinted 1970 and 1996) *Alltobiography of a Fugitive Negro: His Anti-slavery labours in the United States. Canada. & England.* 1st edn. Toronto: John Snow.

Burke, Ronald K. (1995). *Samuel Ringgold Ward: Christian Abolitionist.* New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1995.

Price, Monique. (2004). *Samuel Ringgold Ward.*

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**Portia Kellogg Gage** (1813 - 1903) was born in Manlius, NY, and went to work at the age of twelve. At seventeen, she married John Gage (1802 - 1890) who made a fortune in the flour mill business in Chicago. They moved with their eleven children to the brand new City of Vineland in 1864, attracted by Charles Landis's vision for an agrarian utopia and the liberal community that was developing there. Immediately following a talk by suffragist Lucy Stone in December 1866, the attendees founded an Equal Rights Association. The following August, the first state meeting on Impartial Suffrage was held in Vineland "to consider the best means of bringing the question of impartial suffrage in-espective of sex or color, more fully before the people of New Jersey." Portia became active in the suffrage movement on a statewide basis, attending the first convention of the New Jersey Woman Suffrage Association in 1867 and serving as its president from 1868-1871.

Gage attempted to vote in a local election in March 1868 but was refused on the grounds that she was not a registered voter, an action that drew national attention, including note by the *New York Times*. Over the course of the next few months, she rallied the women of Vineland, and during the presidential election in November, Gage and another 171 women mi-ived at the polls to cast their votes. They were told they could not use the official ballot box because they were not registered, but they had brought their own box, constructed of balsa wood and covered with fabric (still in the possession of the Vineland Historical and Antiquarian League). Though their votes did not count in the election, their protest was publicized throughout the United States, and helped fuel the growing national suffragist movement.

#### Bibliography:

Martinelli, Patricia A. NJ Suffragists - Portia Kellogg Gage (1813-1903).  
<https://discovermhistory.org/njsuffragists-portia-kellogg-gage/> retrieved 06 September 2020.

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**Daniel Drayton** (1802-1857) was born and raised in Newport, Cumberland County, NJ. He was the son of a farmer, but pursued a career as captain of a coasting schooner, operating for years from St. John's, New Brunswick to the north to Savannah to the south. He was illiterate for most of his life and was not part of the abolition movement, but through his inner reflections as a devout Methodist, he became convinced that slavery was evil, and that it was his responsibility to do whatever he could on his capacity as a schooner captain to help slaves escape.

His first efforts failed, but in 1847 he successfully transported a family from Washington, DC to Frenchtown, MD (near present day Elkton). The next year, he attempted a similar undertaking but on a massive scale; it would have been the largest slave escape in the history of the country if it had succeeded. In 1848, he developed a plan to transport 77 slaves from Washington DC to freedom on a schooner Drayton chartered from Captain Edward Sayers, called the *Pearl*. The slaves were the property of wealthy Washingtonians, including Dolley Madison. The escapees made their way to the schooner at the 7<sup>th</sup> Street wharf in small groups. Once all were aboard the schooner made its way down the Potomac to the Chesapeake Bay. A slave who was not part of the group but knew of the plan raised the alarm, and the owners had an armed posse follow the Pearl by steamboat. The wind was against the sail up the Chesapeake, and the Pearl could not move forward for hours, allowing the steamboat to catch up and take the sailboat prisoner.

Once returned to the capital, most of the enslaved escapees were sold south, where the expanding cotton fields required a constant replenishment of workers. Drayton, Sayers and the young cook on the schooner were captured and arrested. The cook was released, but Captain Sayers and Drayton were tried and found guilty, though they were represented by leading attorney Horace Mann.

Drayton and Sayers were sentenced to twenty years in prison. While incarcerated, Drayton learned to read and write, and managed to write or dictate his memoir. In 1852, President Millard Fillmore granted the men a pardon, and they were released after serving four years.

Drayton spent most of the rest of his life traveling and speaking for abolitionist societies, but prison has broken him physically and mentally. While on a speaking tour in New Bedford in 1857 he committed suicide.

## Bibliography

Drayton, Daniel. *Personal Memoir of Daniel Drayton: For Four Years and Four Months, A Prisoner (For Charity's Sake) in Washington Jail*. Boston, MA: B. Marsh, 1853.

Ricks, Mary Kay. *Escape on the Pearl: The Heroic Bid for Freedom on the Underground Railroad*. New York: William Morrow, 2007.