

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Historic New England Announces Partnership with Stopping Stones to Expand National Memorial Initiative Honoring Enslaved Americans

BOSTON, MA – [November 14, 2024] – Historic New England (HNE) is proud to announce a transformative partnership with Stopping Stones, a national public art and education initiative memorializing enslaved Americans through place-based micro monuments and community engagement programs. Historic New England will leverage its expertise in history and historic preservation to expand Stopping Stones nationally, broadening its mission to uncover and share diverse histories beyond the New England region.

Stopping Stones are a powerful tool for fostering understanding and dialogue. Inspired by *Stolpersteine*—over one hundred thousand plaques across Europe commemorating victims of the Nazi regime—Stopping Stones are being installed throughout the United States to confront the enduring legacy of slavery and its continued impact on the country today. Each “stone” is a hand-embossed brass plaque engraved with the names and occupations of individuals who were enslaved, placed at or near locations where they were once held. Each stopping stone serves as a “permanent call to awareness,” encouraging reflection on the lives and identities of people who often have no known ancestors or resting place, and whose existence has been previously erased from the historical record.

Since its launch in 2020, Stopping Stones has installed memorials in eight states, creating a network of communities dedicated to honoring the memory and humanity of those who were enslaved in the United States. In Burlington, Vermont, Stopping Stones are embedded in the sidewalk on Main Street, near what was once the home where the daughter of Revolutionary War hero Ethan Allen enslaved Lavinia Parker and her son Francis. Stopping Stones at Log Cabin Village, a living history museum in Fort Worth, Texas, bear the names of Jefferson Walton and Molly, who were enslaved in one of the homes that is now part of the museum’s campus.

Stopping Stones installations include community ceremonies that engage local partners in the process, serving as a platform for continued reflection, education, and action. “Each monument reflects the unique historical and social context of its location, creating a multivocal approach that enriches the stories of enslaved people and underscores the ongoing impact of slavery on contemporary society,” said Paul Growald, the artist and founder of Stopping Stones who has handcrafted each of the forty markers installed to date. “Through this collaboration, HNE and Stopping Stones invite communities and individuals across New England and beyond to join in honoring and remembering enslaved men and women and making lasting change in our communities.” The initiative is designed to offer local Stopping Stones sponsors a tool to engage other local partner organizations in ongoing efforts to identify and honor additional persons enslaved locally, and to install Stopping Stones bearing their names.

HNE's institutional commitment to recovering the histories of enslaved individuals at the organization's historic sites made it a natural choice when Growald decided it was time to find an institutional home for Stopping Stones. Through Recovering New England's Voices (RNEV), HNE challenges standard accounts of the past at our house museums and through our public programs. RNEV combines research, art, storytelling, and technology to create spaces that amplify the voices of marginalized communities and uncover and share important stories that have been overlooked or silenced. Stopping Stones will join RNEV and the two initiatives together will cultivate more inclusive historical narratives that center the experiences and legacies of enslaved individuals in New England and beyond.

HNE aims to add new markers and amplify the stories at each installation site. "Historic New England is honored to support and expand Stopping Stones inspiring work," said Vin Cipolla, President and CEO of Historic New England. "This program resonates deeply with our commitment to preserve and share the untold stories of our region. Through place-based memorials and community-driven installation ceremonies, Stopping Stones offers an educational and healing experience that aligns closely with our mission and existing initiatives like RNEV. Together, we hope to inspire communities to reflect on difficult histories and work toward an equitable future."

For more information on Historic New England's partnership with Stopping Stones or to learn how to participate, please visit the [Historic New England](#) and [Stopping Stones](#) websites, and look for updated information in the weeks ahead. Or contact Laura Sullivan at lsullivan@historicnewengland.org.

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About Historic New England

Historic New England is the oldest, largest, and most comprehensive independent preservation organization in the United States. We share the region's historical stories through our historic properties, collections, publications, archives, gardens, and programs, connecting people to their cultural and architectural heritage. Learn more at www.HistoricNewEngland.org.

About Stopping Stones

Stopping Stones, an initiative of the Engagement Arts Fund, is a nationally branded, locally-based public art project that honors enslaved Americans through permanent markers and community ceremonies. Each installation reflects the initiative's commitment to education, remembrance, and fostering multiracial healing. Through its work with local partners, Stopping Stones inspires communities to confront America's history of slavery, engage in racial healing, and support reparative justice.

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