



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES

## Narrative

### Sections of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative and other selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the Public Programs application guidelines (Notices of Funding Opportunities) and additional information on grant programs at <https://www.neh.gov/divisions/public>. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Public Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, such as the design document, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: *Cuffee's Trial: A Digital Graphic Novel*

Institution: Historic Hudson Valley

Project Director: Elizabeth L. Bradley

Grant Program: Digital Projects for the Public Discovery

**National Endowment for the Humanities**  
**Digital Projects for the Public—Discovery Grant**  
*Cuffee's Trial: A Digital Graphic Novel*  
**Historic Hudson Valley**  
**Project Period: Jan.–Dec. 2019**

**Project Narrative**

**A. Nature of the Request**

Historic Hudson Valley (HHV) requests Discovery funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to support the exploratory stages of a digital graphic novel, provisionally titled *Cuffee's Trial*. **Funding from the NEH will lay the groundwork for a narrative depiction of the trial of an enslaved man accused of conspiracy in colonial New York, using a digital storytelling format.** Cuffee was the first enslaved individual to stand trial for the 1741 insurrection conspiracy that became known in the 18th and 19th centuries as the “New York Conspiracy” or the “Great Negro Plot.” He was tried without representation, convicted by a jury of white male landowners, and sentenced to execution by burning. Unlike that of most enslaved Africans, Cuffee’s story is well documented: his trial was recorded by Justice Daniel Horsmanden, whose account was published and widely shared, despite its evident bias against the enslaved, and the symptoms of insurrection that led to the trial were the subject of much contemporaneous reporting and speculation.

This historical account has a direct connection to HHV: Cuffee was the property of Adolph Philipse, the proprietor of Philipsburg Manor, a provisioning plantation that HHV now maintains as a National Historic Landmark in Sleepy Hollow, New York. More than 20 years ago, HHV refocused the visitor experience at Philipsburg Manor to relate the under-represented history of enslavement in northern colonial America. The catalytic reinterpretation inspired guided tours and onsite programming that helped hundreds of thousands of visitors consider the lived history of those who were enslaved. To deliver these resources to as broad an audience as possible, for free, and to find engaging ways to deliver material that doesn’t naturally fit the mold of an interpretive, onsite tour, HHV developed a digital content strategy. From a soon-to-launch interactive website, *People as Property: Stories of Northern Colonial Enslavement*, to the *Traders & Raiders* online learning game, our use of digital tools and techniques offers an immersive, transportive on-screen experience that serves many more people while ultimately encouraging them to visit our living history museum in person.

The proposed project represents both HHV’s deep expertise in relating the history of slavery in the colonial North and our commitment to sharing this knowledge widely and dynamically through digital media. Through this Discovery grant, HHV will: 1) convene a select group of humanities scholars, graphic novel specialists, and digital media experts; 2) prioritize our humanities themes and content relating to the presentation of a digital graphic novel about the phenomenon of northern slavery, and the socioeconomic and legal conditions that shaped it; 3) determine how multimodal content will be structured and presented online to appeal to the general public, students, and teachers; 4) articulate the optimal methods for integrating the digital graphic novel with HHV’s existing digital products and platforms; and 5) create a design document that details the fundamental aspects of the narrative and technical end product. HHV requests a \$30,000 Discovery grant, in support of a total project budget of \$68,297.

**B. Humanities Content**

*“Cuffee said, ‘d\_n him, that hang him or burn him, he would set fire to the town.’ Examination of Sawney (Niblet’s negro boy) before the Grand Jury.”*

*—Daniel Horsmanden<sup>1</sup>*

The trial of Cuffee has all the makings of a classic courtroom drama. There are witnesses with startling accusations; there are recriminatory speeches; there is an impoverished defendant forced to perform

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<sup>1</sup> Horsmanden, Daniel. *The New York Conspiracy*. Thomas J. Davis, ed. Beacon Press: Boston, 1971. Originally printed in 1744 and reprinted in 1810.

cross-examinations on his own behalf, and a team of prosecutors who will stop at nothing to win their case. There is, as well, a stark and uncompromising verdict handed down from an unsympathetic judge. What sets Cuffee’s trial apart from these standard cinematic tropes is the simple fact of his status: Cuffee was an enslaved man, and, as such, was not considered a person in the eyes of the law.

Cuffee’s story, like that of the 200 or more enslaved and free individuals who were tried and convicted along with him, takes place during the New York Conspiracy trials, when enslaved and poor white New Yorkers stood accused of plotting to burn the city, and to murder its white inhabitants. Two of the colony’s three Supreme Court judges presided over this immense volume of court cases: Justice Frederick Philipse, II (who was Adolph Philipse’s nephew), and Justice Daniel Horsmanden. Justice Horsmanden carefully preserved and subsequently published the transcripts of the proceedings, an act of historiography that offers an unexpected window into colonial New York and the complex and entrenched nature of the institution of slavery. HHV hopes to share this view into Cuffee’s history with a wider audience, thus making a direct connection between the fundamental moral questions of 1741 and those of today. In order to do so, we will bring our decades of research, scholarship, and interpretation to a new medium, one whose form has inspired numerous writers and artists to bear witness to the human condition: the graphic novel.

Rarely has so much primary documentation been accumulated relating to the actions of enslaved individuals in colonial America. The transcripts are, to considerable degree, “unreliable narrators,” betraying the deep-seated anxieties of white New Yorkers, particularly wealthy slaveholders, around the inhumane institution that enabled their personal success and on which the exponential development of their city depended. Horsmanden, convinced of the guilt of the accused, meticulously lays out a case against the enslaved individuals and working-class white residents suspected of taking part in the conspiracy. At the same time, the trial testimony that Horsmanden preserves is one of the only opportunities historians have to encounter the voices of enslaved New Yorkers, or indeed to confront their agency as human beings. Despite the structural racism that informs its source, the data surrounding the issues, events, and individuals related to the 1741 trials offers HHV educators the means to investigate the lives of enslaved New Yorkers and, as a result, deepen public understanding of the extreme challenges that the enslaved faced on a daily basis. HHV has chosen to focus on Cuffee’s narrative in particular because of his direct connection to the Philipse family, and thus by extension to the larger story of slavery in the colonial North, which HHV has been developing as a primary interpretive and educational theme for decades.

**In contrast to an abundance of information on slavery in the antebellum American South, there is a dearth of material about slavery in the northern colonies.** In 1997, HHV set out to remedy this imbalance, and in doing so, it became one of the nation’s first historic sites to explore and interpret northern enslavement. We undertook an NEH-funded reinterpretation of Philipsburg Manor, our National Historic Landmark in Sleepy Hollow, New York, to refocus our lens on the lived experience of the 23 enslaved men, women, and children who operated this 18th century provisioning plantation. Extensive research on the history of the site yielded rich resources that informed groundbreaking scholarship, powerful public programming, curriculum-based school programs, and essential ancillary teaching tools—all overseen by the volunteer members of our African American Advisory Board. The board helps HHV ensure an accurate, balanced, sensitive account of the enslaved Africans who lived and worked at Philipsburg Manor and in the Hudson Valley region during the 18th century. They facilitate community partnerships, propose diversity initiatives, and offer guidance on and recommendations for our programs and events.

HHV built on this substantial foundation of research with a spate of new programming, from guided onsite tours to curated online experiences. The adaptation of analog programming to the digital realm—and the creation of unique online products to complement and enhance the onsite experience—is an intentional strategy, one that HHV deployed to enable many more people to have access to our offerings. We also use digital products to capture the attention of those who prefer screen-based experiences, in the hope that they’re inspired to visit the places that they learn about online.

Chief among HHV’s online offerings is a constellation of digital products that we group under the thematic heading of Slavery in the Colonial North on our website. These include instructions on how to use our Runaway Art: Interpreting Colonial Slave Ads arts-integrated curriculum, which has students create original artwork in response to actual 18th century advertisements for runaway slaves, as well as information about the weeklong NEH Teacher’s Institute, which we offered in 2017 and look forward to continuing in future years. Other products are imminent: this summer, HHV will debut *Runaway*, a film-based online curriculum funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and, in February 2019, the interactive website People as Property: Stories of Northern Colonial Enslavement, supported by grants from the NEH, will launch and be made widely available as a resource for teachers, students, and the general public alike.

After more than 20 years, HHV has accrued significant expertise on—and is uniquely positioned to communicate—the history of slavery in the colonial North. We have developed a keen appreciation of how to share this tough topic matter with exceptional empathy and sensitivity. We facilitate conversations about resistance, identity, agency, and justice that our forebears initiated when they were forced into the state of enslavement—or when they enslaved others. We provide the historical context necessary for our audience to begin to comprehend contemporary events and social movements, and to confront the endurance of systemic inequity. Ultimately, we seek to help in the struggle to understand the hard truths of the past so that we can find a way forward.

The digital graphic novel project will become part of our collection of programmatic and educational resources on the topic of northern colonial enslavement. During the course of the Discovery grant, HHV proposes to organize its content research and script planning around three themes:

- *The Structure of American Slavery*
- *The Socio-economics of Colonial New York*
- *Justice and Resistance*

These themes afford HHV the scope to bring the landscape of Cuffee’s New York to life for our diverse audience of culture-seekers, students, and educators, while building on our ongoing mission to deliver the history of northern enslavement through narrative platforms whose sophistication matches the deep emotional and moral complexity of our subject matter.

### *The Structure of American Slavery*

Cuffee’s story lends itself to didactic purposes not only because it is so well-documented, but also because, in its depiction of a brutal misuse of the mechanisms of colonial justice, it functions as a microcosm of the institution of slavery itself. Through Cuffee, HHV has the opportunity to unpack the conditions and circumstances of urban enslavement, which continue to surprise and confound our audiences, and to demonstrate how it was neither rare nor extraordinary for northern city dwellers to own (or to rent, or rent out) slaves.

Onsite at Philipsburg Manor, and in the forthcoming People as Property: Stories of Northern Colonial Enslavement website, HHV strives to lay emphasis on the skills of enslaved individuals in the region, and the economic value they brought to their owners and their communities, while they were unable to earn a wage themselves. HHV does this in order to demonstrate how skills could empower the enslaved to use negotiation as a tool to improve their situation, but the details of *Cuffee’s Trial* will highlight just how limited those negotiating powers ultimately were. Regardless of whether or not enslaved New Yorkers could read and write, as many could, or if they were highly trained artisans, as many were—they were still legally defined as property rather than as people. As the testimonies recorded by Horsmanden show, this legal definition meant that the daily movements of individuals like Cuffee were officially restricted, and their personal lives circumscribed: enslaved New Yorkers were forbidden to gather in groups larger than three, and they could not walk through the city at night without written permission from their masters and a lit lantern, so that they could be seen. Unauthorized visits to family members who were the property of other masters were dangerous undertakings, and enslaved individuals who broke these laws, as Cuffee did, risked severe corporal punishment, the threat of sale, or worse. Even their marriages to other enslaved New Yorkers were not legally recognized.

The gulf between enslaved New Yorkers' humanity and the crippling lack of agency they endured may be easy for an historian to articulate, but it is often hard for the general public to bridge. The spatial constraints and multiplicity of perspectives that are inherent in the graphic novel format will help HHV to convey both the minutiae of existence under slavery and the large-scale human cost exacted by that institution. With the support of the NEH, HHV will look to its team of humanities advisors, which is composed of academic historians, artists, and scholars of graphic novels to assist in the nuances of this depiction. With their guidance, HHV will use the Discovery period to scaffold the harrowing personal narrative that is *Cuffee's Trial* with facts grounded in the historical record.

Because Cuffee belonged to Adolph Philipse, the proprietor of Philipsburg Manor, the project will also offer a case study of northern slave ownership<sup>2</sup>. Philipse, who had served as Speaker of the New York Assembly, was the second son of Frederick Philipse, a New York shipping magnate who grew wealthy from slavery. Both father and son shipped captive Africans across the Atlantic and sold them to sugar planters in the Caribbean. At the same time, they invested in northern provisioning plantations north of New York City to supply food for these sugar plantations, and used enslaved laborers wherever possible to reduce labor costs. They also used enslaved labor in their urban dwellings for the same economic reasons. These practices were commonplace at the time of Cuffee's trial, and the majority of elite New York families engaged in them and created wealth from slavery that would bolster their families, and the cities in which they lived, for centuries to come. In fact, Cuffee's trial took place just a short distance from New York's bustling slave market at the corner of Wall and Water Streets, where enslaved people could be purchased to replace those whom Horsmanden would sentence to death.

### ***Socio-economics of Colonial New York***

In many ways, New York City in 1741 looked a lot like the contemporary United States. Colonial Manhattan was a place of tremendous geographic contrasts: the densely settled quarter of a square mile occupied by most of the city's residents was bounded, north of the Collect Pond (now Canal Street), by "bouweries," or farms, dense forests, and impassable swamps. The people who lived cheek-by-jowl below the pond were a study in contrast, too: the estates of wealthy landowning families, which included the Philipses, were in close proximity to the flimsy, fire-prone homes of their poor white neighbors. Many were recent arrivals, or the descendants thereof, some emigrating from Europe and others taken from Africa. New York City was home to the second largest urban slave population in the colonies, and, in a population of 11,000 people, more than 2,000 residents were enslaved. Only Charleston, South Carolina, had a larger urban slave population.

By virtue of its density, and because New York is a much-studied city, historians know a great deal more about the enslaved and free inhabitants of Manhattan than they do about their rural neighbors. In her book *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery, and Conspiracy in Eighteenth Century Manhattan* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), Harvard historian Jill Lepore created a network of data sets that lay out, in exhaustive detail, key characteristics of the city at the time of the New York Conspiracy, from census data to tax rolls to slavery laws. Her research, and that of historians Thomas J. Davis, Leslie Harris, Peter Charles Hoffer, and Graham Russell Hodges, as well as digitized maps and manuscripts, will help HHV to fully render the complex world in which Cuffee lived and worked, and to express the nuances of the shifting socioeconomic conditions in which his trial took place in a multi-faceted and potentially interactive form.

Despite the conflicting testimonies he records, Horsmanden's account also has much to teach contemporary audiences about the complexity of race and class relations in colonial America. The actions and behaviors described in his transcript reveal both the circumscribed lives of the enslaved and the porous nature of a metropolitan environment, where indentured and free whites encountered enslaved people on a daily basis, in all aspects of their lives. For example, contemporary readers learn that while taverns were forbidden from serving alcohol to slaves, some white tavern keepers flouted the law with impunity. The trial transcript also shows how

<sup>2</sup> Patricia Buonomi categorizes the Philipse, Van Cortlandts, Schuylers and DeLanceys as "the four families [that] constituted the leadership of the New York merchant community in the early eighteenth century." (*A Factious People Politics and Society in Colonial New York* (New York: Columbia UP, 1971).

white working-class New Yorkers sometimes labored in concert with enslaved people and demonstrates that acts of covert resistance and interracial socializing were commonplace.<sup>3</sup> The transcripts also unwittingly reveal the nature of social mobility in colonial New York, as readers discover how the status of a young indentured Irish immigrant might improve if her testimony is favorable to the cause of the prosecution, and how political parties could manufacture conspiracies, as Lepore’s book suggests, in a bid for power. Above all, Horsmanden’s document demonstrates how easily paranoia, nurtured by systemic structural injustice, could bring a city to the brink of chaos.

The events preceding Cuffee’s conviction represented a very real threat to the lives of New Yorkers. In the spring of 1741, city residents, battered by a severely cold and snowy winter, were short on food and fuel. It was a time of rumor and unrest: England was at war with Catholic Spain and France, and some residents speculated a Spanish invasion was imminent, while others, their fears stoked by reports of armed slave insurrections in other colonies and the West Indies, saw an enemy much closer to home.<sup>4</sup> When a dozen or so suspicious fires broke out over the course of a few weeks in late March and early April, the white population of New York suspected that their own enslaved community was plotting violent rebellion. New York City had experienced a similar situation in 1712, when several captive Africans set fire to a home. As residents came to extinguish the flames, they were murdered by the enslaved Africans, resulting in the death of nine whites and, shortly thereafter, the brutal execution of 21 slaves. In a city where one person in five was enslaved, even the rumor of another slave insurrection was enough to send the town into a panic. Cuffee was arrested and indicted for “wickedly, voluntarily, feloniously, and maliciously conspiring, combining, and confederating with diverse other negroes, to kill and murder the inhabitants of this city.”<sup>5</sup> His guilt was a foregone conclusion.

The next day, Cuffee was the first enslaved man to be burned at the stake for his involvement in the New York Conspiracy. Throughout the spring and summer of 1741, more than 150 enslaved men and women and about 20 white people were also brought to the Supreme Court on charges of arson and conspiracy to insurrect. These trials, coming on the heels of Cuffee’s, featured lurid accusations by informers and forced confessions by both African and white defendants. Ultimately, 18 enslaved men and four white people (two men, two women) were hanged, and 13—beginning with Cuffee—were burned alive. Seventy more were deported to work on Caribbean plantations—a fate that was a death sentence for any enslaved person.

The fate of Cuffee and others is painful to read about, let alone to imagine depicting in a visual medium. HHV will look to its academic advisors to put the searing events of that spring into meaningful historical context, and advisors such as Hillary Chute and Ben Katchor to inform our estimation of artists who might serve as partners in this extremely sensitive enterprise.

### ***Resistance and Justice***

Insurrections against the ruling elite by an oppressed underclass were not unheard of during the founding of the Colonies. The colonists themselves were guilty of harboring rebellious thoughts and eventually plotting to throw off the yoke of British tyranny. But insurrections carried out by the enslaved were a different matter. The New York Conspiracy is blunt in its overt racism and bloody in its outcome. The slaveholding elites, once convinced that their slaves (and their poorer white neighbors) were mutinous, didn’t stop to examine the conditions that might have led to a conspiracy to overthrow. Instead, they moved swiftly to mete out brutal punishments, reserving their most inhumane sentence—that of being burned alive—for enslaved individuals only. This judgment, meant as a statement of power, was in fact an admission of abject fear. More than anything, the New

<sup>3</sup> “Prosecution of the alleged conspirators had also disclosed the numerous points of contact and mutuality between the city’s slaves and its burgeoning population of poor whites. Witness after witness reported blacks and whites as partners in crime, partners in drink, partners in bed, partners in survival, partners in contempt of the rich and well-born few who dressed in ruffles and ran the town—a vast, restless, interracial underworld.” (Burroughs and Wallace, *Gotham* 164–5).

<sup>4</sup> Although armed insurrections throughout the colonies and West Indies were relatively rare, they generated considerable interest and regularly made it to the front pages of New York’s newspapers. From the Stono rebellion outside Charleston in 1739 to uprisings on Antigua and St. John, not only were white New Yorkers aware of these plots, many in the enslaved community could read, and did read, these accounts as well.

<sup>5</sup> Horsmanden, Daniel. *The New York Conspiracy*. Thomas J. Davis, ed. Beacon Press: Boston, 1971. Originally printed in 1744 and reprinted in 1810.

York Conspiracy, and Cuffee’s role in it, revealed the flimsy pretext on which American slavery had been founded, and which would sustain it for decades after America declared its own freedom and independence from the tyranny of England.

From students to seniors, visitors to Philipsburg Manor often express anger at the American system of enslavement and insist that they themselves would have resisted slavery through various acts of rebellion. In fact, the first, most urgent question asked by our onsite visitors is “Why didn’t the slaves fight back or just run away?” To answer this abiding concern, interpreters at our site teach visitors how people owned by the Philipses coped with enslavement in varying ways: through accommodation, negotiation, rebellion, and escape. At least two enslaved individuals at Philipsburg are thought to have successfully run away, an action whose possible repercussions we describe in our Runaway Art curriculum, mentioned above. On the People as Property: Stories of Northern Colonial Enslavement website, HHV focuses on these survival skills, and also shares the methods enslaved communities used to ensure the retention of African cultural forms from one generation to the next.

However, this empowering, deeply personal narrative arc grinds to a halt with Cuffee. How do we understand a “show trial” like Cuffee’s? How can we come to understand his actions, knowing that they were the actions of a person who was not considered one in the eyes of the law? Was insurrection a tool used by Cuffee to resist? Was Horsmanden’s sentence punishment or torture? What could justice really mean, for an enslaved African man? What does his execution tell us about slavery, and slave owners? **The tangle of perspectives and conflicting arguments that makes a courtroom drama such a visceral genre is, in fact, at the core of HHV’s proposal to adapt Cuffee’s trial narrative to a graphic novel format. Such a format will enable the reader to immerse herself or himself in the experience of the colonial courtroom, while providing interactive opportunities to examine how ideas of justice, resistance, and racial bias challenge American society today.** It is a subject of unrelenting urgency, one which HHV is committed to discussing with sensitivity and deep attention in this medium, as we have in other formats and with other methods.

University of Oslo Professor Rebecca Scherr notes that graphic novels require deep attention and emotional investment, too: “In order to process the image-text relationship, readers must draw on various sensory and cognitive modalities that render the reading experience as physically intimate.”<sup>6</sup> We look to our advisors to help us navigate a story of deep and lasting trauma by graphic narrative means. A Discovery grant from the NEH will allow for an examination of how best to present Cuffee’s story in a way that is thoughtful, sensitive, meaningful, and human; it will enable an exploration of how to use a digital-first artistic format to best effect; and it will inform our strategy for marrying academic insight with state-of-the-art technology to achieve a dynamic end result.

### C. Project Format

*Empathy is the whole reason storytellers go interactive: to build a connection with their audience, to open a two-way channel for sharing emotions and stories.*

—Nathan Penlington, “Choose Your Own Documentary”<sup>7</sup>

For nearly 40 years, graphic novels have presented readers with powerful and emotionally moving stories. In 1980, Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* introduced young readers to the Holocaust. *Persepolis* is an autobiographical account of Marjane Satrapi’s life during and after the Iranian Revolution. Since 2007, the American Library Association has published an annual list of great graphic novels for teens. Those recommended for 2018 include *I Am Alfonso Jones*, by Tony Medina, a story about a 15-year-old boy shot by the police while shopping for a suit. Congressman John Lewis’s autobiographical *March* series has been widely recommended for young adult

<sup>6</sup> “Shaking Hands with Other People’s Pain: Joe Sacco’s “Palestine” (Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal, Vol. 46, No. 1 (March 2013)).

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Huguet, Benjamin. “A Short History of Interactivity.” Medium.com, Oct. 28, 2014.

readers. Lewis, in fact, chose to write his civil-rights memoir as a comic, in part because a 1958 comic book about Martin Luther King and the Montgomery bus boycott had “served to inspire him as a young man.”<sup>8</sup>

*Cuffee’s Trial* will employ the relatively new digital format of a digital graphic novel to present humanities content that is substantive, thought-provoking, and impactful for both our current constituencies and potential new audiences of “digital natives” who are accustomed to learning new information in a media-rich environment. By virtue of its innovative platform, the digital graphic novel will signal HHV’s ability to employ cutting-edge narrative modalities to frame and deliver important and sensitive historical information to the public.

HHV hopes that the potentially interactive nature of this project will enable users to connect with the raw materials of history in unexpected and serendipitous ways. With interactive elements, a digital graphic novel adds user choice to this powerful narrative device. In traditional media, such as books, magazines, or printed graphic novels, content is structured with a clear beginning, middle, and end, and the reader is passive, with only their attention and their imagination required. Animation, sound, text, photography, maps, illustration, and social networking can all be incorporated into an interactive graphic novel, enhancing the experience. In this interactive world, the audience controls their path, fostering participation and requiring user input. Because content is easily compartmentalized into smaller bits of information, a storyline can be broken down and reconnected in a non-linear format.

Interactive graphic novels are remarkably adaptive to the needs of a particular audience. A person can choose to read the content front to back, like a book, absorbing the visual and verbal elements in sequence. However, with the hovering of a mouse or a tap of the finger, an interactive graphic novel can bring users into a cityscape, play audio commentary from a scholar, or display photographs of related events. Although the concept of a narrative implies that there is a linear path to follow, the fluid nature of an interactive graphic novel confirms that there are opportunities for presenting content in ways that deviate from that norm. With this Discovery grant, HHV plans to explore the possibility of incorporating interactive elements into the final product. Through the grant, HHV will explore how to relay the historical circumstances and conditions of Cuffee’s arrest, trial, and execution in an impressionistic and fluid way, one that helps the viewer come to terms with the stark injustice of Cuffee’s situation.

A digital graphic novel presenting Cuffee’s ordeal will be designed to build upon HHV’s array of online programs offered to the public, and to interact with them whenever possible as an exemplar of transmedia storytelling. The Slavery in the Colonial North combined projects tell a larger, richer, and more diverse story that manifests HHV’s decades of research and subject expertise while providing viewers with a more immersive experience in line with HHV’s goals and objectives. The digital graphic novel presentation of *Cuffee’s Trial* aligns with the objectives HHV set for its Slavery in the Colonial North products, adhering to the highest standards of excellence established by both HHV and the NEH.

Those standards include presenting stories of enslavement in America not only with sensitivity and respect, but also with a commitment to acknowledging the historiography of the event. Historian James Oliver Horton notes how difficult presenting the story of enslavement can be in a public history setting. “The history of slavery and its role in the formation of the American experience is one of the most sensitive and difficult subjects to present in a public setting. At historic plantation sites and at historic houses, in museum exhibitions, in film, and in historic parks, public historians and historical interpreters are called upon to deal with this critical and uncomfortable topic, under less than ideal teaching conditions. Moreover, they are asked to educate a public generally unprepared and often reluctant to deal with a history which, at times, can seem very personal.”<sup>9</sup>

HHV will make the digital graphic novel freely available to anyone with online access—in essence, it will serve a broad constituency as a public history project. Convening a scholars’ meeting of colonial and African

<sup>8</sup> Rafael Nobao Y Rivera and Peter Hogness. “Comics Come to CUNY: A Subject for Scholarship, a Teaching Tool.” Clarion, May, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Horton, James Oliver. “Presenting slavery: The Perils of Telling America’s Racial Story.” *The Public Historian*. Volume 21, Number 4. Autumn, 1999.



American historians, literary experts in the field of graphic narratives, and interactive design specialists will provide HHV with a much needed venue for frank and open dialogue about how to present complex and sensitive subjects to a broad and often uninformed (or misinformed) public audience. An important aspect that the team of advisors will discuss is how to articulate the issues of bias, perspective, and reliability in our primary source material as the project moves forward.

#### **D. User-Generated Content**

Because HHV cannot judiciously moderate comments and other user-generated content to the standards set by the NEH, the digital graphic novel will not include user-generated content.

#### **E. Audience and Distribution**

Development of the digital graphic novel will be based around a general audience, with the goal of making this resource as interesting and engaging to as broad a population as possible. Anticipating, however, that school audiences will find this resource particularly meaningful and relevant, HHV will work with K–12 educators and appropriate advisors to understand how this digital graphic novel and an accompanying curriculum can be effectively developed for and deployed in the classroom.

Each year, some 60,000 people visit Philipsburg Manor for site tours, school programs, teacher training workshops, and popular cultural events. Another 36,000 people touring Kykuit, the Rockefeller Estate, pass through the shared visitor center at Philipsburg Manor, where they encounter HHV’s orientation exhibit, *Slavery and Resistance in the Hudson Valley*. HHV conducts ongoing formal audience research and analyzes visitation statistics to best meet the needs of our beneficiaries. Our typical visitor group comprises parents ages 35–50 with children under the age of 10, and more than 54% of our digital audience is made up of millennials and Gen Xers. Others are “culture seekers”—older adults traveling without children who are seeking educational content in the context of entertaining experiences. Overall, more than 90% own a mobile device.

HHV has developed an extensive online audience. In 2017, more than 671,000 individual patrons visited our website to plan a visit or enjoy learning through one of our digital experiences. Thousands more engage with us and one another on our social media platforms; our Facebook pages have more than 130,000 followers and our Twitter feed has more than 8,000 followers. These fans and followers have become ambassadors for our organization, sharing HHV news, events, and other information. HHV has also cultivated important relationships with digital-media influencers and like-minded organizations to help spread our message. In addition, we have an opt-in email list of nearly (b) (4) ticket buyers, members, and e-newsletter subscribers. HHV’s open rate of (b) (4) on our email campaigns demonstrates how well HHV has leveraged its digital and direct marketing strategies.

Through the digital graphic novel, HHV will better serve the needs and interests of our constituencies by delivering relevant, educational content in a way that takes maximum advantage of current trends in digital media and communications. The proposed project, once linked to our *People as Property: Stories of Northern Colonial Enslavement* website, will be available to users around the globe. Individuals will be able to access the product through the website, which itself will be linked on HHV’s main, newly redesigned, mobile-responsive website. To reach educators and students, HHV will provide a link to the digital graphic novel on heavily trafficked portals, such as the National Council for the Social Studies and other sites used by teachers and homeschooling parents. We hope to also have the product and its accompanying curriculum featured as a rich resource on the NEH’s EDSITEment website when completed.

As part of our overall web-optimization strategy, HHV employs sophisticated SEO (search engine optimization) techniques to capture relevant traffic and accompanying metrics. These techniques will help us ascertain consumption rates of the digital graphic novel in relation to the website’s other layered content. We hope to explore the possibility of integrated, spin-off content related to the creation of the digital graphic novel, such as conversations with artists, key project members, and advisors. Also, because HHV’s initiatives dovetail with those of institutions such as Colonial Williamsburg, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the New York Public Library, and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, HHV will

work with their communications teams to promote the digital graphic novel on their webpages and social media channels. We will target audiences via Google AdWords and Facebook and promote the project to major news outlets. HHV's in-house Marketing Department comprises three full-time staff members augmented by key outside vendors.

#### **F. Rights, Permissions, and Licensing**

*Cuffee's Trial* will represent a valuable trove of primary sources, the result of decades of NEH-funded, institutional research into the lives of the enslaved, both onsite and off. HHV's research library houses these resources, which will inform our understanding of Cuffee's circumstances, Adolph Philipse's business in New York City, and the environment in which northern slavery thrived. The library collection contains the Philipse Family Papers, including receipts, letters, bonds, leases, legal papers, rent rolls, maps, deeds, and wills. A number of these documents contain vital clues to understanding enslavement at Philipsburg and in the region, as well as references to acts of resistance and the conditions that motivated such actions. Extensive materials exist in HHV corporate records, including research reports, memos, and letters regarding American and European research surveys for Philipsburg and the Philipse family, augmented by research reports conducted for the reinterpretation. These documents act as the foundational material for this project.

Documents and historic images will be gathered from the New-York Historical Society, the New York Public Library, Columbia University, the Library of Congress, and other institutions, with appropriate permissions obtained. Microfilm versions of illustrations, newspaper reports of slave insurrections, and other primary sources for this project can be found in the collections of the organizations listed above. Although many newspaper texts and, critically, the 1744 printing of Horsmanden's *Journal of the Proceedings* are in the public domain, permissions will be obtained for images of original source material.

The design document created at the end of the Discovery period will outline all technology-related rights, permissions, and licensing issues and how they will be handled during the project's lifecycle.

#### **G. Humanities Advisors**

HHV has secured the commitment of a distinguished group of historians, museum professionals, education consultants, and digital media experts, who will:

- Respond to HHV's stated outcomes for the digital graphic novel, including the intention to present it as a teaching instrument with an associated curriculum
- Advise on how to present the end product and integrate it into HHV's Slavery in the Colonial North constellation of digital products
- Examine our ideas of relevant interactivity concepts, digital models, and external resources to emulate and/or include in the project plan
- Help to define the artistic scope in light of pedagogical and accessibility needs
- Consider the careful conduct required to convey America's hard and painful history of slavery, foremost, in addition to using a creative medium in telling traumatic stories

In assembling this group of advisors, HHV sought balance along the following dimensions:

- Content expertise in: slavery in America, African American history, public history, instructional technology, interactive and digital media, and pedagogical expertise in the humanities
- Racial and gender makeup
- Geographical awareness
- Access and credibility

**Hillary Chute, Ph.D.**, is a professor of English, and art and design at Northeastern University, and has also taught at the University of Chicago and Harvard. She focuses on comics and graphic novels, contemporary fiction, visual studies, American literature, gender and sexuality studies, literature and the arts, critical theory, and media studies. Her publications include *Graphic Women: Life Narrative and Contemporary Comics* (Columbia University Press, 2010), *Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form* (Harvard

University Press, 2016), and, most recently, *Why Comics?: From Underground to Everywhere* (HarperCollins, December 2017). In early 2018, she was named a regular columnist for comics and graphic novels at the New York Times Book Review. Dr. Chute’s substantial scholarship on the uses of graphic novels to explicate traumatic events will significantly inform HHV’s approach to the comic form and support the structure of the *Cuffee’s Trial* narrative.

**Leslie M. Harris, Ph.D.**, is a professor in the Department of History at Northwestern University. She specializes in pre–Civil War African American labor and social history and in the historiography of U.S. slavery. Dr. Harris has worked with HHV as a consultant and advisor to the NEH-funded People as Property: Stories of Northern Colonial Enslavement website and as academic director of the NEH Summer Institute for teachers, hosted by HHV in 2017 on the topic of northern colonial enslavement. Her career as a historian and teacher has focused on complicating the ideas commonly held about the history of African Americans in the U.S. Her first book, *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626–1863* (University of Chicago Press, 2003), examines issues of race and class through two centuries of slavery in the U.S. She will offer scholarly expertise in demonstrating the ways in which northern slavery, northern emancipation, and racial identity influenced definitions of citizenship, class, and community for blacks and whites in the pre–Civil War nation. Dr. Harris’s expert knowledge of slavery in New York, combined with her experience dealing with sensitive topics, will help HHV strategize how to present this material in an engaging, yet appropriate, format.

**Ben Katchor** is Associate Professor of Illustration at Parsons School of Design, The New School. His illustrated works include *Julius Knipl, Real-Estate Photographer*, *The Jew of New York*, *The Cardboard Valise*, *Hotel & Farm* and *Shoehorn Technique*. He has been honored with a MacArthur Fellowship and a Guggenheim Fellowship, and guest-edited the 2017 edition of *Best American Comics*. He will bring his illustrative eye and expertise in the comic format to the Discovery process for this project. In addition, his own use of the animated graphic novel form to illustrate musical theater productions will inform HHV’s exploration of transmedia storytelling.

**Jill Lepore, Ph.D.**, is the David Woods Kemper '41 Professor of American History and Harvard University, where she teaches about evidence, historical methods, humanistic inquiry, and American history. She writes essays and reviews about history, politics, law, and literature—most recently in the forthcoming *These Truths: A History of the United States*, scheduled for publication in September 2018, and in publications such as *The New Yorker*, *the New York Times*, *the Times Literary Supplement*, *the Journal of American History*, *Foreign Affairs*, *the Yale Law Journal*, *American Scholar*, and *the American Quarterly*. Her book *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan* (Knopf, 2005), in which she documents the New York Conspiracy and for which she relied on research conducted on HHV collections, was winner of the Anisfield-Wolf Award for the best nonfiction book on race and a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. Dr. Lepore’s profound expertise in the events and circumstances surrounding the New York Conspiracy and her career focus on modes of historical interpretation make her an ideal source of counsel for HHV’s endeavor.

**Jacqueline A. Simmons, Ed.D.**, is a faculty member at Teachers College, Columbia University. She has been an educator and curriculum developer for 20 years and worked with HHV previously to create the curriculum for the Runaway Art: Interpreting Colonial Slave Ads program and as director of the 2017 NEH Summer Institute. Dr. Simmons is particularly adept at teaching about difficult knowledge and considering context when teaching about the past. Her combined expertise as a college professor, former middle school teacher, curriculum developer, and program designer makes her uniquely qualified to advise on this project. Her focus on inspiring social change will encourage the team’s deep inquiry, self-reflection, and critical analysis to guide the creation of purposeful and effective instructional materials.

Since 1999, HHV has been guided by the experience and judgement of our 12 member **African American Advisory Board (AAAB)**. In consultation with the board, the reinterpretation of Philipsburg Manor’s daily tours, school programs, and onsite workshops were designed to set the standard for interpreting the story of northern colonial enslavement. The AAAB is elemental to the development of HHV’s Slavery in the Colonial North digital programs, encouraging debate and ever mindful of the humanity that is central to our story.

## H. Digital Media Team

The team responsible for considering how to transpose the humanities themes and raw content into a digital graphic novel format comprises several HHV staff members and external vendors—all of whom have extensive experience with digital-first projects. The individuals listed below will be responsible for researching users and interactive formats; scouting illustrators and digital creators; conducting technical discovery; identifying and prioritizing content objectives, with guidance from the advisors; and outlining the product narrative using mood boards and structural diagrams.

Digital Consultant:

**C&G Partners** is an award-winning, multi-specialty design studio with expertise in branding, exhibits, infographics, interactives, motion, print, strategy, wayfinding and web. From past work with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, The King Center, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the firm has acquired extensive experience interpreting sensitive issues from the past and making history understandable, relatable, and motivational to a variety of audiences, including culture-seekers, educators, and students. Recent projects for these institutions include the *Some Were Neighbors* website (<http://somewereneighbors.ushmm.org>), which tells the stories at the periphery of the main Holocaust narrative, with the goal of examining the forces that cause people to break with their ethical and social commitments to fellow human beings; and the website for the King Center ([www.thekingcenter.org](http://www.thekingcenter.org)), which is based on a new digital archive created by the King Center Imaging Project that makes thousands of documents—letters, speeches, drafts, notes, photos and more—available for free to the general public for the first time.

**Leslie Dann** is C&G Partners’s Associate Partner, Experience Design. She was the experience design lead and project manager on multiple phases of HHV’s *People as Property: Stories of Northern Colonial Enslavement* website, and will serve as lead designer for the digital graphic novel *Discovery* project. Dann has been a user-experience designer at the forefront of digital media for more than 20 years. An early pioneer in the field of information architecture, she spent many years at Nicholson, New York, creating editorial CD-ROMs, interactive museum kiosks, and many of the firm’s early websites, which established its reputation for online user-interface design.

Historic Hudson Valley Staff:

**Elizabeth L. Bradley, Ph.D.**, Senior Director of Programs and Engagement, designs and implements a wide range of public programs based on HHV’s historic sites and collections. As project director for the digital graphic novel, she will apply her expertise in team management to help guide the project’s activities as they relate to the overall goals of the Education Department. In particular, she will manage the allocation of HHV resources to support the *Discovery* project. In general, her work as a scholar and author writing on the authenticity of New York City history and its notable denizens will inform the presentation of humanities themes to a wide public audience.

**Michael A. Lord**, Director of Content Development, came to HHV in 1998 to help lead the reinterpretation of Philipsburg Manor by creating and implementing a new interpretive plan for the historic site. He has since served in other administrative and research capacities, including as site manager of Sunnyside, Washington Irving’s home. Prior to HHV, Mr. Lord worked in the African American Programs department of Colonial Williamsburg, where he interpreted the “Slave Quarters” at Carter’s Grove, led tours focusing on enslavement in colonial Virginia, managed and acted in museum theater programs, and trained interpreters in African American history. Mr. Lord draws on 20 years of experience with museum education, interpretive program development, and strategic planning. He researched, authored, and produced *The Fire This Time: Cuffee’s Trial*.

**Margaret Hughes**, Associate Director of Education, manages the development and delivery of school programs and special educational endeavors at HHV, such as the 2017 NEH Summer Institute for school teachers on the topic of slavery in the colonial North. For this project, she will guide the conversation on developing an integrative curriculum suitable for use of the planned digital product in educational settings.

**Jessa Krick**, Associate Director of Collections, acts as head of the curatorial and library department and as such is responsible for the entirety of HHV’s collections. She also serves on the Digital Programs team. In this capacity, she spearheaded the development and production of HHV’s Traders & Raiders digital suite, comprising a digital learning game, a mobile treasure hunt, and educational web pages. She will advise on the cultivation of internal and external documentation, rights and permissions, and representation of primary sources in the context of the digital environment.

### **I. State of the Project**

HHV’s proposal for *Cuffee’s Trial* takes its initial inspiration from a full-length museum theater production, *The Fire This Time: Cuffee’s Trial*, which was written by Director of Content Development Michael A. Lord in 1999 for HHV. It was performed to considerable acclaim for audiences at venues including Philipsburg Manor, the New-York Historical Society, and St. Paul’s Church, a National Historic Site. The museum theater piece was scripted in consultation with HHV’s African American Advisory Board, which supervised its content and gave notes on its staging.

As a museum theater performance, *The Fire This Time* was designed to be entertaining, educational, and interactive. The audience acted as jury, deciding Cuffee’s innocence or guilt based on the evidence presented, and ample time was given to answering questions from the audience about the trial and discussing what was presented. The production was also designed with a set of learning objectives that included educating the audience about the existence and prevalence of slavery in New York City and illustrating slavery’s paradox: that American slaves were considered property, and yet American courts could still put them on trial and hold them—not their owners—responsible for their actions.

Because Cuffee’s story is so compelling, and deserves a broader audience than that which can be gathered for the intimacy of an onsite, live performance, HHV will build upon essential elements of *The Fire This Time* and reimagine the story for a different medium. During the Prototyping phase of the People as Property: Stories of Northern Colonial Enslavement website, HHV staff and designers discovered that a traditional video narrative, such as a filmed piece of museum theater or reenactment, has a tendency to “lock” viewers into its depiction, making it hard for them to see past any particular association that a specific interpreter, actor, or set may have for them. “If a reenactor looks like their uncle,” as Leslie Dann of C&G Partners put it, “the viewer will be distracted by that, and subsequently unable to process the difficult content” that the reenactor is sharing.

Alternative formats, such as graphic novels, by their very format, have the capacity to do the opposite: to put their audience at a remove from their content, thus creating the conditions whereby a narrative can be compartmentalized and multiple points of view presented in contiguous frames. In this way, the seemingly artificial comic book structure can encourage a more authentic interaction with painful truths. Graphic novelists from Art Spiegelman to Alison Bechdel have shown us how the limitations of the genre can, in fact, liberate the story; as UCLA Professor Michael Rothberg noted of Spiegelman’s *Maus*, “only the caricatured quality of comic art is equal to the seeming unreality of an experience beyond all reason.”<sup>10</sup> It was this rationale that led our team to consider the broad applications of rendering Cuffee’s story as a graphic novel, and the compelling audience-building potential that a digital manifestation of the novel would allow.

In recent years, numerous universities have begun to focus on the forms of American slavery. These institutions, including Brown, Yale, and Cornell, join the Lapidus Center for the Historical Analysis of Transatlantic Slavery at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture in taking an interdisciplinary approach to the ways in which slavery and its legacy shaped the contemporary United States and many of its most venerable institutions. As a network of historic house museums with a rapidly expanding digital presence, HHV has always interpreted colonial enslavement at the intersection of history and society, and our proposed digital graphic narrative format continues our transmedia approach to this critical subject.

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<sup>10</sup> Chute, Hillary, “History and Graphic Representations in *Maus*.” In *A Comics Studies Reader*. Heer, Jeet and Kent Worcester, eds. U. Miss press, 2008.

## J. Work Plan

Together with our consulting humanities and digital-media advisors, HHV will analyze platform options, review content presentation methods, and identify the technologies needed to best convey the project’s humanities themes and enable user-friendly interaction.

A strong supporting curriculum will enhance the application of this product in the classroom, so we will host a focus group for K–12 teachers, drawn from our strong group of teacher supporters and advocates, and led by Dr. Jaqueline Simmons, who will also serve as a humanities adviser to the project. The teachers will be drawn from among the following groups: teachers who regularly bring students to Philipsburg Manor; social studies and English/language arts “lead teachers” from regional BOCES (Boards of Cooperative Educational Services, an important part of the public school system in New York); previous participants in HHV’s NEH-funded Summer Institute; and teachers who have participated in HHV’s Runaway Art program.

This group, led by Dr. Simmons, will help HHV address questions about both subject matter content as well as the medium itself. In addition to investigating the ways in which this curriculum could connect with contemporary issues that students encounter outside the classroom, teachers will be asked to consider how the curriculum can help guide them to the dynamic learning opportunities made available through the digital graphic novel format. The focus group will also provide HHV with insight about the emotionally and politically charged climate of contemporary classrooms, and help us to build curricular materials that make *Cuffee’s Trial* a useful tool for a substantive and sensitive conversation about the legacy of slavery, as well as questions of justice and resistance at the present day. The curriculum, informed by this focus group, can help teachers feel more prepared in discussing a historic encounter with direct connections to modern issues.

**James DeWolf Perry and Katrina Browne** are the co-founders of the **Tracing Center**, an organization that helps cultural institutions, educators, and the general public have fruitful and honest conversations about the legacies of slavery in the United States. HHV will contract with the Tracing Center to facilitate a discussion about the subject matter of *Cuffee’s Trial* and help staff develop best practices for this challenging historical material, and an acute understanding of how to approach the emotionally complex themes that it addresses.

Research and evaluation have been key components of HHV’s institutional culture for decades, and we have gained a significant amount of insight from these important undertakings. As HHV expands into a new digital medium to tell stories of American enslavement and resistance, we will retain our commitment to studying audience engagement. The external evaluation for the project will be led by evaluator **Kate Livingston, Founder and Principal of ExposeYourMuseum LLC**, a consultancy that specializes in comprehensive audience research and evaluation, trend analysis, strategic planning, facilitation, organizational strategy, and decision-making. She will employ a “critical friend” approach, blending audience advocacy with evaluation capacity-building, as she has done for our forthcoming, NEH-funded People as Property: Stories of Northern Colonial Enslavement website. Rigorous, high-quality evaluation embedded within the Discovery stage will help ensure that the resulting design document includes concrete, measurable outcomes to inform and focus subsequent project phases. Through attendance at and observation of the convening of humanities advisors (summer 2019), conference calls at key project intervals, ongoing email communication, and assessment of the completed design document, Ms. Livingston will produce a final report that synthesizes key arguments and themes, outlines actionable next steps, and guides the project team toward answering essential questions.

### JANUARY 2019

- Create list of all New York Conspiracy–related documents, objects, etc. in HHV’s collection –J. Krick
- Begin script revision – Project Team led by M. Lord
- Kick-off meeting with C&G Partners – Project Team

### FEBRUARY 2019

- Explore humanities themes and Desired Learner Outcomes (DLOs) – Project Team led by E. Bradley

- Create inventory of New York Conspiracy–related resources to source from other collections, including Dr. Lepore’s dataverse – J. Krick

#### MARCH 2019

- Consultation with The Tracing Center on Histories and Legacies of Slavery on the content of finalized script
- Finalize script – Project Team led by E. Bradley
- Illustrator scouting meeting with C&G Partners – Project Team

#### APRIL 2019

- Finalize itinerary for Humanities Advisors’ visit in early June – Project Team
- Conference call with Evaluator (Kate Livingston, ExposeYourMuseum) – Project Team

#### MAY 2019

- Prepare materials to be shared with and commented upon by Humanities Advisors – Project Team
- Analyze technical recommendations, UX guiding principles and user interaction options from C&G Partners – Project Team led by E. Bradley

#### JUNE 2019

- Humanities Advisors visit Philipsburg Manor with Project Team, C&G Partners, and Evaluator – All
- Conference call with Evaluator – Project Team
- Finalize target audiences based on feedback from Humanities Advisors and Evaluator – Project Team
- Finalize themes and DLOs based on feedback from Advisors and Evaluator – Project Team

#### JULY 2019

- Review samples provided by C&G Partners and provide feedback – Project Team led by E. Bradley
- Present DLOs to select audience of area teachers – M. Hughes

#### AUGUST 2019

- Contact other collections re: rights – J. Krick

#### SEPTEMBER 2019

- Conference call with Evaluator – Project Team
- Announce RFP for illustrators – Project Team led by E. Bradley

#### OCTOBER 2019

- Formal proposal produced – C&G Partners
- Report and Audience Engagement Plan produced – Evaluator
- Begin compiling Design Document – Project Team

#### NOVEMBER 2019

- Draft Design Document produced – Project Team
- Assessment of draft Design Document – Evaluator
- Choose Illustrator – Project Team

#### DECEMBER 2019

- Finalize Design Document – Project Team

### **K. Organization Profile**

Historic Hudson Valley was founded by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. in 1951, employing many of the principles he had applied in the preceding years while establishing Colonial Williamsburg. Today, HHV welcomes more than 300,000 visitors a year at five National Historic Landmarks: Philipsburg Manor, Washington Irving’s Sunnyside, Van Cortlandt Manor, the Union Church of Pocantico Hills, and Kykuit, the Rockefeller Estate. As visitation to these and so many other historic sites nationwide has waned, HHV has embraced digital means to bring impactful historical lessons to broader audiences, with greater relevance and interactivity than the historic site tour can. This focus on multi-media, integrative content has driven HHV’s scholarship and programmatic work ever since.

In 1997, with support from the NEH, HHV reinterpreted Philipsburg Manor, drawing on the rich primary source materials uncovered about the lives of the 23 enslaved men, women, and children who had lived and labored on the provisioning plantation in the mid-18th century. That core content has served as the basis for a constellation of digital products under the banner Slavery in the Colonial North. These resources—digital learning games, dynamic web pages, educational films, online curricula, and a forthcoming interactive website—utilize HHV’s learning about delivering sensitive content that developed from years of onsite interpretation.

The Board of Trustees, African American Advisory Board, and staff of HHV are passionate about presenting the history of slavery in the colonial North, and careful to honor its human legacy. HHV's groundbreaking efforts have received support from private donors, prominent foundations, large corporations, and government agencies including the NEH and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Our work in the field has been profiled in such publications as *Interpreting Slavery at Museums and Historic Sites* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2015). And HHV takes enormous pride in the fact that an image of a dancer at its Pinkster festival—an African American celebration recreated each spring at Philipsburg Manor—is featured at the National Museum of African American History and Culture on the National Mall, one of three images that inspired David Adjaye and Philip Freelon in their award-winning design for the museum.

#### **L. Fundraising Plan**

Because bringing the history and human experience of northern colonial slavery to the digital realm is a major institutional priority, HHV will cover the \$38,297 in budgeted Discovery expenses above an NEH grant amount as cost share in HHV's 2019 operating budget. To fund the subsequent two phases of this project, HHV will approach a select group of our major donors who live in the greater New York City region and have an interest in the history of slavery. We will explore fundraising opportunities through foundation and corporate donors who have provided past support for our educational programs, including Newman's Own Foundation, the Hearst Foundation, Consolidated Edison, and the Wells Fargo Foundation.