

## News Release

December 27, 2024

# Coalition of Stratham Partners Offer 3<sup>rd</sup> Year of Community-wide MLK Celebration

*SMS Student Showcase and Lecture Among Event Offerings*

STRATHAM- For the third year, a coalition of Stratham organizations is ensuring a meaningful acknowledgement and celebration of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday in Stratham.

The federal holiday and state observance of Dr. King's birthday is an opportunity to remember King's contributions, including his dedication to the fundamentals of vibrant community connections. Inspiration this year comes from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED Talk, "The Danger of a Single Story," which emphasizes the importance of listening to many stories and how it is through our different stories that we learn more about each other and make our community stronger.

This year's offerings include a Stratham Memorial School Student Showcase kick-off event on January 16<sup>th</sup> followed by film screenings, book discussions for adults and children, and concluding with a January 23<sup>rd</sup> lecture by Dr. Kimberly Alexander Director of Museum Studies and Senior Lecturer in the UNH History Department to be held at the Stratham Community Church.

Dr. Alexander's teaching includes the remarkable story of Ona Judge Staines and the lecture and discussion will include Ms. Staines escape from the Executive Mansion in Philadelphia – home to President George Washington and Martha - to Portsmouth, her years of living in Greenland and her recently learned ties to Stratham.

The inspiring struggle for freedom by Ona Judge is the topic for the latest *Postcard from Stratham* by the Stratham Historical Society.

The programs are sponsored by the following cooperating organizations, Stratham Historical Society, Wiggin Memorial Library, Stratham Memorial School, the Stratham Community Church Mission & Justice Committee and the Racial Unity Team.

The full listing of events and this hyperlinked news release can be found at [www.strathamnh.gov](http://www.strathamnh.gov).

**Full-list of events:**

**Youth Book Discussion - Monday January 13<sup>th</sup> 4 p.m. – [Link for more info.](#)**

***Never Caught: The Story of Ona Judge George and Martha Washington's Courageous Slave Who Dared To Run Away, -Young Readers edition***

Presented by Wiggin Memorial Library

Join us for a discussion of the young readers' account of Ona Judge Staines, who ran away from the household of George Washington. Born a slave in Mount Vernon, Judge escaped to New Hampshire when she was 22 year old. This surprising behind the scenes look at the relationship of slavery to one of America's first families, and the story of a brave woman in the 1700s, echoes through the years to the Civil Rights Movement of the 50s, 60s and even today.

**Zoom Presentation - Monday, January 13 from 7-8 pm**

***African American Soldiers and Sailors of New Hampshire During the Revolution***

Presented by Wiggin Memorial Library and Stratham Historical Society

Prohibited from serving in military units and largely considered "undesirable elements," how is it that African-American soldiers came to fight for the cause of liberty, even when their own personal liberty was not guaranteed? Glenn Knoblock examines the history of African-American soldiers' service during the war, including how and why they enlisted, their interaction with white soldiers, service on the battlefields, how they were perceived by the enemy and the officers under whom they served, and their treatment after the war.

**Adult Book Discussion – Thursday January 16<sup>th</sup> at 1pm.**

***Never Caught, The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge (Erica Armstrong Dunbar, 2017) – [Link for more info.](#)***

Presented by Wiggin Memorial Library

Nearly 50 years after her break for freedom, Ona Judge Staines (1773-1848), a runaway slave from the household of the first president of the United States, shared her harrowing account in the May 1845 issue of the *Granite Freeman*. In "Never Caught", a startling, well-researched slave narrative published in 2017, Erica Armstrong Dunbar shares Judge's story in more detail, including the actions taken by President Washington to retain his slaves in spite of Northern laws. Join us for a lively discussion in which we explore how the story of Ona Judge intersects with the themes of the Civil Rights Movement of the 50s and 60s and today.

**Student Showcase "The Danger of a Single Story" - Thursday January 16<sup>th</sup> 39 Gifford Farm Road, Stratham, NH**

Stratham Memorial School is hosting their second annual MLK Jr. kickoff event with a special student showcase on Thursday, January 16, 2025. This year's exhibition features student presentations inspired by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's powerful TED Talk, "The Danger of a Single Story." Students will share their learning, reflections, and insights. You will be impressed by their creative demonstrations that highlight a deep understanding of how stories shape us and our understanding of the world. The event will celebrate the power of diverse storytelling and encourage empathy and critical thinking.

**Movie showing & Discussion – [Link for more info.](#)**

**Tuesday, January 21st at 1pm**

***Chisholm '72: Unbought and Unbossed (2004)***

Presented by Wiggin Memorial Library

Pioneering politician Shirley Chisholm is the subject of this lauded documentary. The nation's first African-American congresswoman, the passionate Chisholm launches a campaign for the United States presidency in the 1972 election, and wins an impressive amount of support. The film takes a close look at her presidential run, providing interviews with Chisholm and the dedicated individuals who worked on her groundbreaking campaign.

**Ona Judge Staines Lecture and Discussion**

**Thursday January 23 6p.m., at Stratham Community Church – 6 Emery Lane**

Presented by Stratham Historical Society, Mission & Justice Committee of Stratham Community Church, Racial Unity Team

The program will be led by Dr. Kimberly Alexander, Director of Museum Studies and Senior Lecturer in the History Department at University of New Hampshire. Her curriculum at UNH includes the remarkable story of Ona Judge Staines drawn largely from the book by Erica Armstrong Dunbar titled *NEVER CAUGHT, THE WASHINGTONS' RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF THEIR RUNAWAY SLAVE, ONA JUDGE*. Dr. Alexander will touch on Ona Judge's escape from the Executive Mansion in Philadelphia to Portsmouth, her years of living in Greenland and her recently learned ties to Stratham.