

Black History Month Series Overview

Updated February 2, 2015 8:00 AM



New 12 honors Black History Month.

Each week in February, News 12 Long Island features a segment to honor Black History Month. Below are the featured people or topics. All are set to air at 8 a.m.

February 2 - Part 1: Civil Rights Activist Bernice Sims, of Mineola

Bernice Sims talks about her self-published memoir, "Detour Before Midnight," and about her participation and her brush with history. Unable to face her painful past, 50 years passed before she was able to share her story. It was the summer of 1964 when three civil rights workers, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, were abducted and murdered the night after meeting Sims and her family at their Mississippi home.



February, 9 - Part 2: Jean Idelle, first black burlesque dancer, of Coram

Jean Idelle, of Coram, is the first black burlesque exotic fan dancer during a time of segregation. During the 1950s, Idelle was the first black dancer to perform in "whites-only" theaters all over the U.S. and Canada. She's credited with breaking the color barrier as an entertainer in many night clubs across the country. In June 2012, Idelle was inducted into the Burlesque Hall of Fame.

More Info:

Facebook: Jean Idelle

New York School of Burlesque: Jean Idelle at The Burlesque Hall of Fame

YouTube: Jean Idelle at Burlesque Hall of Fame 2012

YouTube: Jean Idelle Burlesque Hall of fame backstage footage



February 16 - Part 3: Slave burial ground at William Floyd estate in Mastic

William Floyd was a Long Island plantation, slave owner and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. On his estate in Mastic Beach is a burial ground with undated wooden crosses bearing generic slave names. These plain wooden crosses put in place sometime in the 1870s are somewhat of a mystery. A Roslyn Heights photographer intrigued by the slave graves photographed them and explains their significance in history.

More Info:

National Park Service: William Floyd Estate

National Park Service: Historic William Floyd Estate Grounds

Interview with Xiomaro

The Oyster Bay Historical Society's Winter Exhibition with guest curator Xiomáro

February 23 - Part 4: Call to Selma

This March 2015 commemorates the 50th Anniversary of "Bloody Sunday," the Selma-to-Montgomery March and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Church members of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Huntington went to Selma in 1965 as social workers for civil rights action. Members demonstrated for civil rights both in Huntington and Selma, Alabama, signed anti-segregation petitions, sponsored the Freedom School, and joined the Congress for Racial Equality. Longtime church members recall their vivid memories of that day & their plans to return 50 years later.