

## Contact Paul

If you know anyone or are from one of these groups, you can reach out to Paul here:

▶ Scan the QR Code:



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### Cover Photo:

*Mrs. Rachel Stevenson christens the liberty ship Marine Eagle, the first all-African American conceived and constructed ship at Sun Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company in Chester, Pennsylvania. Mrs. Stevenson was the sponsor of the ship and served as an employee and Office Matron of the company for almost twenty years. She is among the many untold stories of the Black presence on the Delaware River.*

*Photo courtesy of John W. Mosley Photograph Collection, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia, PA. history of Black Presence along the Delaware River.*



# Independence Seaport Museum

*Major funding for **Breaking Uncommon Ground** on the Delaware River has been provided by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage with additional support from the William Penn Foundation.*



*WILLIAM PENN*  
FOUNDATION



## We are uplifting Black stories of the Delaware River. Share yours!



In 2013, the Independence Seaport Museum unveiled a new flagship exhibition, *Tides of Freedom: The African Presence on the Delaware River (Tides of Freedom)*. We are now planning to expand this experience by undertaking a new, multi-year oral history project, *Breaking Uncommon Ground on the Delaware River (Breaking Uncommon Ground)*.

## Meet Paul D. Best, Director, Oral History Project



Paul's experience in youth work, education, and the visual & folk arts have forged a unique path, allowing him to impact communities worldwide through education, photography, and storytelling.

He has served two terms as president of Keepers of the Culture, Inc., Philadelphia's Afrocentric Storytelling group. He currently serves as a Museum Educator at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Through workshops, tours, and community outreach, he engages visitors of all ages to see their own connection to humans of the past and stay curious. These two roles strongly align with his passions, for he believes that the entire world is a museum – a space filled with stories and wonder.

Paul firmly believes that true liberation for all people can only occur when we honor our ancestors and respect and consult our elders.

## FAQs



### What is *Breaking Uncommon Ground*?

Our current exhibition, *Tides of Freedom*, tells of Black history along the Delaware River from the 1800s-1920s. *Breaking Uncommon Ground* is the project to expand this exhibit to cover the years 1950-2015.

### What will the expansion cover?

We are sharing the untold stories of:

1. Black people who worked in labor unions along the Delaware River.
  - A. Examples: Employees of shipyards, boats, dock workers, etc.
2. Black women who did work connected to the Delaware River.
  - A. Examples: Sold food or other items, babysat river workers' children, worked in offices that operated on or were located near the Delaware River.
3. Anyone who lost their home or business when the I-95 highway was built in Philadelphia.
  - A. Examples: People who protested demolition; businesses that were closed or families who were forced to relocate.

**I didn't work on the Delaware River or live on the waterfront. I know people from this group, but they have passed away.**

Their stories are still out there, and you can help us share them by spreading the word. Here are some places you can bring it up:

- Your place of worship
- Social Clubs or Organizations
- Your family, friends, and neighbors
- Any senior citizens you know

**By using word-of-mouth communication, you can help make *Breaking Uncommon Ground* a lasting contribution to Philadelphia's history.**