

Photo of Vance, Gettysburg, and Robert E. Lee Monuments by Fred Meyer

Dear Deborah,

On April 23, 1865 Colonel Gilliam, leader of Stoneman's Army, came into Asheville by way of Hendersonville. According to the WNC scholar John Insoce, at the end of the some 2,700 soldiers, were 100's of African American's who used the Union army as their only way to safely escape WNC to begin a new life. Insoce termed them, the Army of Liberation.

Fannie Patton, daughter of James Patton who owned the Eagle Hotel, lived on Main St. (now Biltmore Avenue where the current French Broad Coop is). She recorded these notes in her diary about those days:

April 25, 1865

"Well they have passed quietly through 2,700 men and numberless negro's, horses and mules which they have stolen.....a great many Negro's have left town with the Yankee's - crowds of men, women and children just gathered up a bundle of clothes and went with them. None of ours have gone, as we know of yet. John McDowell, a man belonging to me who ran away about two years ago, [now] belongs to the Negro troops who were with them. Our men talked to him and he told them that he had been in the army since he left."

April 26, 1865

The morning that we saw the troops were going to move and also that a great many Negro's were going to leave with the [army]. About 20 of ours went off which, with those that had a gone a few days before, made 29. They left all Mother's things open in the houses so we went down and brought up what we could of our clothes and vessels. When we got back Margaret [a slave] told me that Uncle Joe [a slave] had just brought out our old carriage....and he and Mammy and some of the other old women and children [all slaves] were going off in it....[with the Yankees].

April 30 - May 4 - Union officers occupied the front part of the Patton home.

As soon as they left, all the servants, whom they had hired to wait on them, left the yard except Margaret who said she was too sick to cook; so we had to do that and all the other work in the house. Brother cut the wood and made the fire and Nannie, Lizzie, and I cooked dinner. The next day we could hire no one so we had to cook again. The Negro's were so elated at the idea of freedom that they would do no work at all; but they soon found out that they could no live on air and in a few days we had several applications to hire servants.

On Sunday, April 26, from 5:00 - 6:30 at Pack Square, there will be a commemoration of this liberation. Scholars will be on hand to share what they know of the monuments, space, and events that took place a century and a half ago and still hold sway over much of our downtown landscape as well as the interior landscape of our minds. It is a complicated story for while it was a liberation for the African American community the soldiers, despite promises otherwise, ransacked the community later in the day on April 26. If you notice the historical markers around the region it is not called "The Army of Liberation" but rather, "[Stoneman's Raid](#)". That is the messiness that history, and heritage, require us to face.

I hope to see you there.

Sincerely,

Deborah Miles



Bandana Klezmer sings *Shirele Perele* with Dr. Walter Ziffer for the 70th anniversary commemoration of the liberation of the Concentration Camps on March 25 at UNC Asheville. Photo by Fred Meyer

Reading of the Names on Yom Ha Shoah

[Yom Ha Shoah](#) is a day of remembrance for the victims of the Shoah which numbered some 6 million Jews and 5 million others including Sinti Roma, LGBTQ, people who were differently abled, along with religious and political dissidents. On Thursday, April 16, the UNC Asheville Center for Diversity Education is partnering with Hillel and the local Jewish community to host The Reading of the Names from 8:30 - 5:30 on the steps of Ramsey Library. [Click here to sign up for a 15 minute slot](#)

Monument and Petition in the News

The UNC Asheville Center for Diversity Education is working with several other local organization on a petition drive to recognize, at Pack Square (site of the former Buncombe County Courthouse pre 1865), the contributions of African Americans to WNC. Currently, there are three Confederate Markers and two more one block away at that site.

The on line petition has 1,001 signatures and the paper copy has around 500 - so 1,500 total. [To sign the petition on line clike visit.](#)

Thank you to Beth Walton, Jim Buchanan, Frank Goldsmith, Rob Neufeld and others whose articles and editorials have appeared in the Asheville Citizen-Times.

[Beth Walton](#)

[Frank Goldsmith](#)

[Rob Neufeld](#)

[Jim Buchanan](#)

[Asheville Citizen Times Editorial](#)

YWCA Stand Against Racism

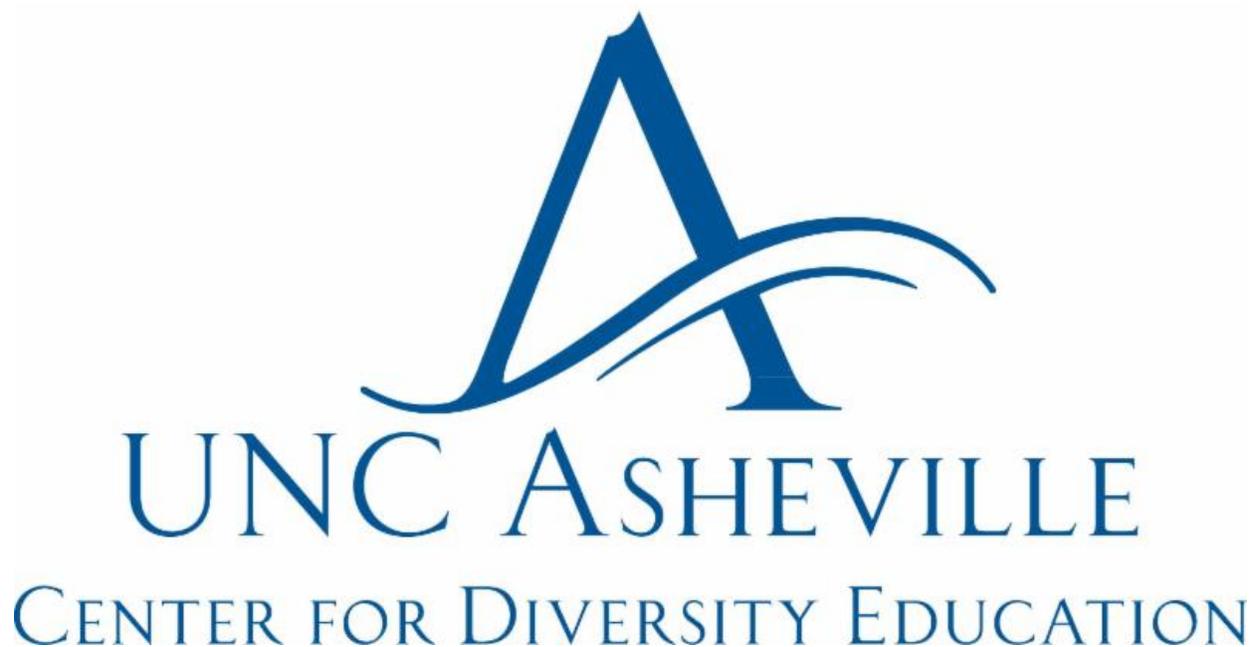
The 2015 [YWCA Stand Against Racism](#) will take place on or around Friday, April 24. Organizations, Businesses, Houses of Worship and neighborhoods will be creatively working to eliminate bias in our community with book groups, walk-a-thons, exhibits, speakers, conversation circles, advocacy, and more. To learn more about the [local initiative at the YW.](#)

UNC Asheville Queer Studies Conference

The Biennial [Queer Studies Conference](#) will take place Thursday - Saturday, April 2-4, at UNC Asheville mostly in Highsmith Student Union and Karpen Hall. Keynote speakers include Kate Clinton and Urvashi Vaid.

UNC Asheville Eminent Scholar in Education

On April 21, [Dr. Pedro Noguera](#), Professor of Education at New York University, will be delivering a keynote address at the Sherrill Center from 4:30 - 7:30 (CEU's will be offered to educators). His address will focus on the research from [Schooling for Resilience: Improving the Life Trajectories of African American and Latino Males](#). Previous scholars have included Dr. Gloria Billings-Ladson, Dr. James Loewen, and Dr. Lisa Delpit.



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