



Joe McGill, Founder & Executive Director
The Slave Dwelling Project

PRESS RELEASE

“Slave Dwelling Project” Founder, Joseph McGill, Guest Speaker for Botetourt’s “Juneteenth Freedom Jubilee” Event

Botetourt County citizens are invited to celebrate “Juneteenth Freedom Jubilee 2026” during the weekend of Friday (6/19) and Saturday, (6/20). Officially known as Juneteenth National Independence Day, the federal holiday is observed on June 19 to pay tribute to the end of slavery in the United States.

The past few years, the Historic Greenfield Advisory Council (HGAC) of Botetourt County joined by the County-Wide League have held a one-day event that honors the county’s Black American community with a day of music, telling stories, remembering the enslaved, and enjoying music entertainment and a barbecue dinner. The 2025 event location was “attendee-packed” and needed to find a larger space in anticipation of even more participants the next year.

Renamed the “2026 Juneteenth Freedom Jubilee,” the celebration not only expands to added room but offers two-days of fun and educational activities for all ages. Its purpose is to “...provide an opportunity to raise awareness, honor and celebrate the county’s Black American history, some with ancestral ties to those who were enslaved and lived in slave dwellings at Greenfield Plantation; and to publicize the historical significance of Greenfield’s historic slave quarters and their future restoration efforts.”

Highlighting the weekend festivity is Joseph McGill, Guest Speaker, who returns after visiting the county 10 years ago. He kicks off the holiday Friday, June 19 date with “A Campfire Conversation” held at the Botetourt County Administration Center, outside under the trees, weather-permitting; and, if not, inside on the Lower Level. Founder and Executive Director of “The Slave Dwelling Project,” McGill has slept in approximately 250 slave dwelling sites in 25 states and in The District of Columbia since 2010. He has brought

national attention to the need to preserve historic slave structures and to the history of the resilient people who lived in them.

A first-ever “Run to Freedom” 5K Race will occur Saturday morning 6/20 at the Botetourt County Sports Complex. On Saturday afternoon, participants can return to the county Administration Center for a series of presentations, including McGill’s “Sleeping with the Ancestors.” Other topics include “William Preston’s Greenfield Plantation,” an informative, inspiring video about the history of the plantation and its historic assets, and a brief talk on plans for restoring Greenfield’s historic kitchen and upper slave dwelling, Local music entertainment and a Barbecue Dinner at the Administration Center will conclude the weekend celebration.

All festivities are FREE and open to the public. Registration is required. The Campfire Conversation has a limited attendance of 35, and due to Fire Codes, the Saturday afternoon series of presentations, music entertainment, and barbecue dinner have an attendance capacity of 100. There is no participation limit for the 5K “Run to Freedom” Race. Further details about the weekend and Registration Forms can be accessed, completed, and returned at www.HistoricGreenfield.org.

Donations from individuals and local businesses, if so inclined, would be helpful and appreciated to help sponsor the weekend’s activities and prevent the Historic Greenfield Advisory Council from using funds previously raised for restoring the historic slave quarters and other historic assets. Checks can be made payable to **Botetourt County**, with **“HGAC/Juneteenth Jubilee”** written on the **“Memo/For”** line. Donations to The Historic Greenfield Advisory Council are tax deductible under Section 170(c)(1) of the IRC tax code and will be deposited into the HGAC budget line-item fund.

Event volunteers encourage potential participants to not wait and get their Registration Form(s) in soon for the Campfire Conversation (35 limit) and the Saturday afternoon presentations (100 limit)! Online Registration Forms for the 5K “Run to Freedom” Race must be submitted by Friday, June 12.

For more details and Registration Forms, go to www.HistoricGreenfield.org. Questions can be emailed to HistoricGreenfield@botetourtva.gov.

Submitted by Peggy W. Johnston
2026 Juneteenth Freedom Jubilee Project Contact