



ReImagine Lefferts

Prospect Park Alliance presents ReImagine Lefferts, an initiative to re-envision the mission and programming of Lefferts Historic House to explore the lives, resistance and resilience of the Indigenous people of Lenapehoking, whose unceded ancestral lands the park and house rests upon, and the Africans enslaved by the Lefferts family.

By focusing on stories of resistance, resilience and joy, while also recognizing the legacies of dispossession, enslavement and oppression, the Alliance seeks to create a safe space for engaging with our collective past as well as contemporary issues affecting our communities today.

Free Admission

Open April – November Weekends + School Holidays
Please check our website for hours

Directions via Public Transportation:

Subway: Prospect Park Station B, Q, S trains
Buses: B16, B41, B43 + B48 to Flatbush/Ocean Avenue

Learn more about upcoming programs, exhibits and community collaborations at Lefferts Historic House: prospectpark.org/lefferts.

ReImagine Lefferts is funded through a Humanities in Place grant from the Mellon Foundation.



Lefferts Historic House

Lefferts Historic House is an 18th-century farmhouse museum that features a working garden, historic artifacts, and indoor and outdoor exhibits. Prospect Park Alliance and the Historic House Trust of New York City jointly operate and preserve this important piece of New York City history.

As part of ReImagine Lefferts, the Alliance is conducting new research on the Indigenous people of Lenapehoking (Lenape) in Brooklyn and the Africans enslaved by the Lefferts family to inform new interpretations and programs at the museum.

To accomplish this work, the Alliance is soliciting guidance from descendant and neighboring communities, culture bearers, scholars, artists, civic leaders and museum professionals.

The History of Flatbush

What is now Flatbush has long been a hub of commerce and culture. For centuries, the Indigenous people of Lenapehoking (Lenape) have grown the Three Sisters (corn, beans and squash) on this land and produced prized wampum beads traded across the continent from the rich shellfish to be found in what is today called Jamaica Bay.

European settlers under the direction of the Dutch West India Company seized what became Flatbush by force in 1645 without compensating its Lenape owners. Despite fierce resistance, European settlers then slowly forced most Lenape further east to Long Island and west into New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and eventually even as far away as Oklahoma, Wisconsin and Canada. Those who remained, and others now returning to their ancestral land, continue to steward this region, leading the struggles to preserve the region's ecosystems and confront climate change.

The forced labor of enslaved Africans enabled Dutch colonists like the Lefferts family to cultivate the lands seized from the Lenape. These Africans produced the food and trade goods that built the New York economy. The Africans enslaved by the Lefferts family and others resisted their oppression and built fulfilling lives for themselves as best they could. They participated in uprisings and protests that challenged the slave system and preserved ancestral traditions.

Enslaved Africans and their descendants shaped New York culture and politics. They created religious organizations and musical traditions to sustain themselves that continue to sooth and entertain and they fought to end slavery and discrimination in New York and nationally. Commemorating and celebrating this important history can help us build a better future.

Slavery at Lefferts Historic House

At least 25 people were enslaved at Lefferts Historic House between its construction in 1783 and 1827, when New York State abolished slavery.

Anna, Ben, Betty, Bram, Cesar, Cato, Dick, Dyna, Flora, Harry, and Issack were enslaved by the Lefferts family when Lefferts Historic House was built and they probably helped build it. **Flora** ran the farm's industrial kitchen.

Cato, Grace, Isabella, Jack, Mary, Mercy, Nan, Samuel, Susan, and Tom were born into slavery at Lefferts Historic House. **Grace** was sold when she was 12.

Isaac, Jenny, Nero, and Yaft were purchased by the Lefferts family to work at Lefferts Historic House. **Isaac** escaped with his wife and children, who were enslaved across the street.