

This exhibition is part of Dyckman Farmhouse Museum’s (DFM) ongoing programming in honor of the Inwood Sacred Site. The Inwood Sacred Site is a memorial set to open at 212th Street and 10th Avenue, which was once the location of a burial ground for the enslaved.

The burial ground was located on Dyckman farmland near Lenape shell middens from an earlier period. Starting in 1903, the site was excavated and the remains were discarded unceremoniously.

When Bowery Residents Committee (BRC), a non-profit that serves unhoused New Yorkers, purchased the lot on 212th and 10th Avenue in 2020, we began a partnership to memorialize the significance of that area as both an enslaved burial site and indigenous ceremonial ground. BRC has designated a space for the memorial–The Inwood Sacred Site–which DFM will operate, while the rest of the building will serve as BRC’s newest transitional shelter.

Together, BRC and DFM will serve displaced people across space and time. Our hope is that Inwood Sacred Site will serve as a meaningful place for descendant and indigenous communities to reflect on their history and ancestors, as well as an educational resource for members of the public and present-day Inwood residents.



CHEYNEY MCKNIGHT WE WERE, WE ARE, WE WILL BE.

MONDAY- WEDNESDAY.....	CLOSED
FRIDAY.....	12PM-4PM
SATURDAY.....	10AM-4PM
SUNDAY.....	CLOSED

SEPTEMBER 3RD 2025 - OCTOBER 18TH 2025
DYCKMAN FARMHOUSE MUSEUM



DYCKMAN FARMHOUSE MUSEUM PROGRAMS ARE MADE POSSIBLE BY THE NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR AND THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE. THIS EXHIBITION IS SUPPORTED BY THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SCIENCE OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS, THROUGH THE DUTCH CULTURE USA FUTURE 400 PROGRAM OF THE CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS IN NEW YORK.

Walking In The Shoes of the Ancestors

Displayed inside the glass case are the original shoes Cheyney McKnight wore to interpret the stories of the enslaved ancestors at historic sites across America and the West Indies.

Robert Land, green leather walking boot, circa 1860s reproduction, acquired second hand, 2014.

Robert Land, side lace green wool and black leather boots, circa 1860s reproduction, acquired second hand, 2014.

Unknown designer, leather shoes, 18th century reproduction, acquired at Burnley and Trowbridge, 2016.

American Duchess, Hartfield Regency Leather Boots, 18th century reproduction, acquired at American Duchess, 2017.

Unknown designer, plantation shoes, 19th century reproduction, acquired second hand, 2015.

Exhibiting Work *from left to right*

Cheyney McKnight and Yemimah Davis pouring libations to honor the ancestors, Amy Conolly, 2021.

Cheyney McKnight guiding descendants of those enslaved at Stratford Hall to push the raft onto the Potomac River, Amy Conolly, 2022.

Cheyney McKnight guiding descendants of those enslaved at Stratford Hall to push the raft onto the Potomac River, Amy Conolly, 2021.

Descendants of those enslaved watching the raft on the Potomac River, Amy Conolly, 2022.

Cheyney McKnight, Tanyah Dadze, and Slam Stewart at the *First Africans Day* morning ceremony, Amy Conolly, 2021.

How We Work Da Roots, Giclée print, Elyse Ketura, 2024.

Tanyah Dadze and Slam Stewart drumming at the *First Africans Day* evening ceremony, Amy Conolly, 2021.

Exhibition Description

A fundamental aspect of many African traditions is the belief that the ancestors are continuously linked to us and even those yet to be born. They are the intermediaries between our world and the spiritual world. Throughout the African diaspora, people honor the ancestors and seek them out for guidance, protection, and blessings. Libations is one of the many ways they honor their ancestors.

In *We Were, We Are, We Will Be*, Cheyney McKnight presents a series of photographs and videos from libation ceremonies she led for *First Africans Day* at Stratford Hall Historic Preserve for over the past four years. Stratford Hall Historic Preserve hosts the annual *First Africans Day*, a full day of programming to commemorate the enslaved Africans and African Americans who built, managed, and sustained the estate for generations of the Lee family.

As part of *First Africans Day 2025*, Cheyney McKnight and Tanyah Dadze Cotton led an opening ceremony in the morning on Stratford Hall's burial ground to honor the enslaved ancestors with libations.

In the evening, McKnight led a closing ceremony– one final action to ground the descendents. Everyone was present: descendents of those who were enslaved at Stratford Hall, descendents of the Lee family, local community members, and visitors from all over the world. They called out the names of those who were enslaved at Stratford Hall. They wove those same names written on dissolvable paper into a raft made from locally sourced, biodegradable materials. McKnight then concluded the ceremony with a call for all of the female descendents of those who were enslaved at Stratford Hall to join together and push the raft out into the Potomac River.

We Were, We Are, We Will Be links the past, present, and future of the African diaspora highlighting the reparative work that needs to be done in centering the spiritual and physical healing of descendants of slavery through reparations.