

CITY OF PORT ORANGE
1000 CITY CENTER CIRCLE
PORT ORANGE, FLORIDA 32129

Contact: *Christine Martindale*
Telephone: 386-506-5522
Email: cmartindale@port-orange.org
Website: www.port-orange.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Port Orange Hosts 15th Annual Freemanville Day Ceremony

Port Orange, FL – The community is invited to attend the 15th Annual Freemanville Day Ceremony on Tuesday, February 13th. The ceremony will be held at the Mt. Moriah Baptist Church, 941 N. Orange Avenue, beginning at 4:00 p.m.

Each year, the City of Port Orange honors its African-American heritage, and hosts the ceremony in partnership with the Mt. Moriah Baptist Church.

Students from Daytona State College will perform, accompanied on the piano by Dr. Jean Hickman, Associate Professor of Choral/Vocal Music. The performers are: Ashia Barnes, Soprano, (freshman Music major) and Lorenz Smith, Tenor (sophomore Musical Theater major)

Port Orange was officially recognized as a community at 12 noon on April 26, 1867, by the U.S. Postal Service. Dr. John Milton Hawks, a Union Army surgeon, and his fellow Union Army officers established Port Orange after the U.S. Civil War. Initially, 500 former slaves settled near the shores of the Halifax River on public lands secured with the help of the U.S. Freedman Bureau in 1866. They came to Port Orange to work for the Florida Land & Lumber Company, which Dr. Hawks and his partners formed. An additional 1,000 freed slaves made Port Orange their home six months later.

Falling on hard times, the settlement, the company, and the integrated school disbanded in 1869. A majority of the settlers returned to their home states or headed for area citrus groves looking for work. Over time, the few families and individuals who stayed made up the pioneering African-American neighborhood of Port Orange known as Freemanville.

For information on the ceremony, call (386) 506-5522.

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