

## NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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### LEGACY OF 1808 HONORED AT THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER *Year Long Series Marking 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade*

Philadelphia, PA (February 1, 2008) – On January 1, 1808, the United States Congress prohibited the importation of slaves to America as allowed by Article 1, Section 9 of the United States Constitution. To mark the 200th anniversary of this historic legislation, the National Constitution Center is launching the **Legacy of 1808** speaker series to engage local and national experts in a year long dialogue about the history of the slave trade and its contemporary relevance.

By exploring issues of race, segregation, suffrage, and individual rights, the Center's forums will reveal how slavery cast a dark shadow over the nation's founding and influenced the evolution of American culture and society. The first part of the year long series of programs is as follows:

#### ***The Legacy of 1808: A Historical Perspective***

Monday, February 11, 6:30 p.m.  
FREE

The National Constitution Center welcomes 2008 visiting scholar **Martha S. Jones**, assistant professor in the department of History and Center for Afro-American and African Studies at the University of Michigan; **Howard Ohline**, Emeritus Associate Professor of History at Temple University; and moderator **Stephanie McCurry**, Merriam Associate Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania, for a conversation about the political and cultural climate surrounding the issue of slavery in the early decades of the republic.

#### ***The Legacy of 1808: "Iron Ladies of Liberia"***

Wednesday, February 20, 6:30 p.m.  
FREE

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## ADD ONE/LEGACY OF 1808

The National Constitution Center and The Independent Television Series present the Philadelphia premiere of “Iron Ladies of Liberia”, an intimate documentary that goes behind the scenes with Africa’s first freely elected female head of state, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of Liberia. A discussion about Liberia, its historical connection to the United States, and its current policy to prevent a descent into civil war will immediately follow the screening.

### ***The Legacy of 1808: The Emancipation Proclamation Defined***

Tuesday, February 26, 6:30 p.m.

FREE

In partnership with the Greater Philadelphia Civil War History Consortium, the National Constitution Center will discuss what has established the Emancipation Proclamation in the public memory and its influence and impact upon African Americans. **Harold Holzer**, one of the country’s leading authorities on Lincoln, and **Robert F. Engs**, Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania, will present two unique perspectives on this iconic document. **Matthew Pinsker**, the Pohanka Chair in American Civil War History and Associate Professor of History at Dickinson College, will moderate.

Other upcoming events of the series will include an examination of the modern day slave trade; a conversation about slavery and fiction; a discussion about the historical impact of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments to the U.S. Constitution; a look at the debates that made Abraham Lincoln a national figure; and a frank discussion about race relations with descendants of the largest slave-trading family in U.S. history.

The National Constitution Center, located at 525 Arch St. on Philadelphia’s Independence Mall, is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the ideas and values it represents. The Center serves as a museum, an education center, and a forum for debate on constitutional issues. The museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, “Freedom Rising”. The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education. Also, as a nonpartisan forum for constitutional discourse, the Center presents – without endorsement – programs that contain diverse viewpoints on a broad range of issues. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit [www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org).

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