



TOWN OF HEBRON
observes
**JUNETEENTH &
PETERS FAMILY DAY**

WHEREAS, the United States of America, in declaring its independence on July 4, 1776, proclaimed, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”. Despite this proclamation, millions of individuals of African descent were held in bondage in America, including in Connecticut; and among those enslaved in Hebron were Cesar Peters and his family, whose story opens a gateway of understanding about slavery in the northeast; and

WHEREAS, Cesar Peters and his family were owned by one of the largest landholders in Hebron, the loyalist Rev. Samuel Peters, who was forced to flee Hebron by the Sons of Liberty in 1774, and two years later, Connecticut law confiscated the land of all loyalists, displacing Cesar Peters and his family, and Cesar Peters became self-supporting as a skilled farmer, including restoring Rev. Peters' property; and

WHEREAS, in September 1787, Nathaniel Mann, possessing Rev. Peters' power of attorney, sent 10 armed men to abduct Cesar Peters and his family for sale in the south, so that Mann could repay his personal debt to Rev. Peters; and

WHEREAS, Cesar Peters' neighbors, and other members of the Hebron community, devised an ingenious, dramatic, and successful plan to enable Cesar and his family to return to Hebron; and in January 1789, the Connecticut General Assembly granted Cesar Peters and his family their freedom, based on a series of petitions by Hebron's leading citizens, including the Board of Selectmen; and

WHEREAS, as a free man, Cesar Peters bought a house in Hebron center and lived a long and productive life.... and his sons, Cesar Peters Jr. and Henry Peters, became part of the largest community of free Black people in Tolland County, also working the land in Hebron center; and

WHEREAS, the lives of Cesar Peters, Henry Peters, and Cesar Peters Jr. were researched by RHAM Middle School Students as part of the Witness Stones Project and their Witness Stones are displayed at the Peters House and at St. Peter's Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, the Emancipation Proclamation was signed by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, establishing that all enslaved people in Confederate states in rebellion against the Union “shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.”; and

WHEREAS, federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas on June 19, 1865 to ensure that all enslaved people be freed -- two and a half years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, and on December 6, 1865, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified, formally abolishing slavery in America; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth marks the arrival of the troops in Texas, honoring the end of slavery in the US, and is celebrated in many communities across the state, including in Hebron for the past five years; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Hebron recognizes its responsibility to respect and protect the human rights of all residents, and to promote equity and racial justice -- and has supported the annual Juneteenth Celebrations hosted by the Coalition on Diversity & Equity (CoDE) and The Peters Family.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF HEBRON, CONNECTICUT:

- 1) That the 20th of June 2026 be declared **Juneteenth Celebration Day** in Hebron, and
- 2) That this day also be declared **Peters Family Day** in Hebron, honoring the remarkable history of Cesar Peters and his family and celebrating our lasting relationship with his descendants.

Keith Petit

Jan Lawrence, Vice Chair

Tiffany V. Thiele, Chair

Claudia Riley

Sean Fitzgerald