



**“HONOR ROLL OF THE ABOLITIONISTS” PRESENTED TO
7TH PLYMOUTH DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE**

Researched and Created by Lugenia Gordon, Granddaughter of Slaves

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WHITMAN, MA: On Sunday, August 14th, during a gathering of the South Shore GOP at the Whitman VFW (Post 697), Ms. Lugenia Gordon of Manchester, N.H. presented a scroll known as the "Honor Roll of the Abolitionists" to the State Representative Geoff Diehl. The scroll was awarded to recognize the significant contributions made by past citizens of the 7th Plymouth District (Abington, Whitman & East Bridgewater) for the Abolitionist movement to end slavery.

The scroll, four feet high by two feet wide, was researched and created by Ms. Gordon over a seven year period in the late 1970's and '80's. Ms. Gordon, a life-long Republican, was born in Selma, Alabama, the granddaughter of three former slaves and a Creek Indian in the early 1920's. She moved to Chattanooga, Tennessee, as soon as she was old enough to vote in order to escape the "white supremacy" culture in Alabama at the time. Ms. Gordon spent most of her adult life in the Sunset Park area of Brooklyn, working for the City of New York and later retired to Manchester, New Hampshire.

The "Honor Roll" contains the hand lettered names of more than 700 abolitionists from the period between 1683 and 1875, listed by state and country of origin. The scroll is bordered by African art work and contains at its top a drawing of an American Eagle with outstretched wings and talons. Lettering and art work were done by Ms. Joyce Williams of Glassboro, New Jersey, a cousin of Ms. Gordon.

Abington's Island Grove was a well-known gathering place for orators such as William Lloyd Garrison to address crowds gathered for annual Abolitionist meetings, held from 1846-1865. The historic location was honored in 1909 at the spot where speakers once stood with a bronze plaque containing a line from Garrison reading, in part: "I am in earnest. I will not equivocate. I will not excuse. I will not retreat a single inch – And I will be heard." In 1902, the Civil War Memorial Arch and Bridge were constructed to honor the town's Civil War veterans for the town's bicentennial. In 2002, the park was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

In May of 1861, Captain Harlow of South Abington (now Whitman) led what would become Company K of the Union's 7th Regiment to Boston, becoming the first unit to report for duty in Massachusetts following the call of President Lincoln for volunteers to fight in the Civil War.

During the ceremony, Ms. Gordon was presented with a Massachusetts Senate resolution honoring her for her lifetime work in recognizing those who contributed to the Abolitionist movement. Ms. Gordon also holds an honorary degree from Bridgewater State University, which was presented to her in 2005 by Milton J. Little Jr., then President and CEO of the United Way of Massachusetts

"I am deeply honored to accept for our district this distinct recognition and wish to thank Lugenia for the courage and sacrifice required to make the 'Honor Roll,' said Representative Diehl. "My goal is to turn it into a travelling historical display for all the schools of my towns so that children can search to see if their family name is there, plus learn about an important chapter of American history."

Over the last twenty years, the "Honor Roll" has also been presented to descendants of the Abolitionists in Boston; Bridgewater, Ma. ; Manhattan; Brooklyn; Washington, D.C.; Beaufort, S.C.; and overseas in London and Dublin.

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