**HOW MARTIN CLIMBED THE MOUNTAIN**

**Video #3 “A FAMILY REVEALED (A Story of History, Courage Hope)**

**Poem: Hold Fast to Dreams by Langston Hughes**

Hold fast to dreams For if dreams die

Life is a broken-winged bird

That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams For when dreams go

Life is a barren field

Frozen with snow.

**Freedom’s Plow (in part)**

A long time ago, but not too long ago,
Ships came from across the sea
Bringing the Pilgrims and prayer-makers,
Adventurers and booty seekers,
Free men and indentured servants,
Slave men and slave masters, all new-
To a new world, America!

With billowing sails the galleons came
Bringing men and dreams, women and dreams.
In little bands together,
Heart reaching out to heart,
Hand reaching out to hand,
They began to build our land.
Some were free hands
Seeking a greater freedom,
Some were indentured hands
Hoping to find their freedom,
Some were slave hands
Guarding in their hearts the seed of freedom,
But the word was there always:
Freedom.

America is often said to be a melting pot. But our national history actually more resembles a tapestry quilt, with our various cultures and ethnic backgrounds mixed and mingled into a multicolored field of life experiences.

Our history, too often unknown, ignored, or denied, is filled with stories of pain, oppression and struggle, with a diversity of possibility sidetracked by ignorance, lies and privilege. But through the lens of awareness and uncovered narratives we can by acknowledging what is true, begin to live into a new sense of relationship that offers new context and solutions to tackle present day issues of race, division and inclusion. We can live into the dream that Dr. Martin Luther king Jr. called us to recognize and that the poet Maya Angelou describes in her poem “On the Pulse of Morning .”

Dr. Maya Angelou Recites “On the Pulse of Morning”

<https://youtu.be/59xGmHzxtZ4>

Find a digitized copy of the poem here:

<https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1993/01/21/427893.html?pageNumber=14>

It is through this lens that Musician / Storyteller Reggie Harris, a descendant of a slave, Bibhanna, and her master, General Williams Carter Wickham provides a unique, entertaining and inspiring look at what we CAN be when we face the truth with open hearts and minds. It’s an engaging American story that started on a plantation in Ashland, VA … Hickory Hill.

Join Reggie Harris on this fascinating journey as he uses his extraordinary gifts to bring his blossoming relationship with his White cousins to life… descendants of the same ancestor… one family… in the context of a nation on the brink of change.

It’s a timely and poignant modern-day story of truth, reconnection and hope. This connection, like the Thomas Jefferson/Sally Hemings, continues to evolve as the cousins involved, Black and White, seek to explore their shared historical connection and apply the lessons learned to their daily lives in their communities.

Reggie Harris, a songwriter wrote a poignant song about visiting the Wickham plantation ground with Lisa Wickham Haskell in November 2012. Here is a link to that song as performed by Reggie and Greg Greenway for their show Deeper Than the Skin. The story has been chronicled in an article in the NY Times and on the CNN podcast “Silence is Not an Option.” Both links are below.

**Reggie Harris & Greg Greenway - "Hickory Hill"**

[**https://youtu.be/yseawez444o**](https://youtu.be/yseawez444o)

 **SONG:** **HICKORY HILL (**Words and music Reggie Harris ©2012 ASCAP)

Barren fields to the horizon

The ghosts of autumn catch the wind

Memories of those saints and sinners

Gather round to haunt us once again.

Now we are finally here together

Standing silent, face to face

Secret family undercover

Born of shame, saved by hope and grace.

Chorus

Hickory Hill ... we’re on hallowed ground

Walkin’ side by side, wondering what we’ve found

Hearts break open wide across the great divide

I can see the questions in your eyes...

Now that we are home again?

Verse

They celebrate the grand illusion

Then they write it up for all to see

But in that mystery of confusion

Lies the truth that might one day set us free.

So now our stories come together

across these fields of broken dreams

And the blood that binds us all together

Is indeed much thicker than it seems.

Chorus

Hickory Hill, we’re on solid ground

Walking side by side, wondering what we’ve found

Hearts break open wide across the great divide

Can you see the questions in my eyes?

now that we are home again?

Chorus

Hickory Hill, we’re on solid ground

Standin’ side by side, wondering what we’ve found

Hearts break open wide across the great divide

Can you hear those demons as they die?

Cuz we are home again?

When the Toppled Statue Is of Your Great-Great-Great-Grandfather

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/25/us/historic-statues-monuments-descendants.html?referringSource=articleShare>

CNN Podcast: Silence is Not an Option

<https://www.cnn.com/audio/podcasts/don-lemon-silence-is-not-an-option?episodeguid=0ed28312-1b4e-43d6-a6a3-abf3002f0c2e>

**Questions for Reflection:**

1. Have your class share their perspectives on how Langston Hughes relates to the Dream of Martin Luther King Jr ?

1. What do student think that Langston Hughes felt the need to write these poems?
2. How does Reggie’s family story connect to the narrative of the poem and what does the Wickham/Hewlett narrative reveal about America?
3. Analyze “On the Pulse of Morning” in light of our current day situations and ask students for reflections.
4. Ask student if they know of stories of “disconnect” in their families.

**Connected Links:**

Reggie Harris Website: [https://reggieharrismusic.com](http://www.apple.com)

Deeper Than the Skin - <https://deeperthantheskin.com>

Reggie joins his friend Greg Greenway in a profoundly moving evening of deep sharing. “It was riveting, poignant, joyful… exquisite timing, careful phrasing, and the stellar musicianship and storytelling; as craft, the evening was remarkable.” The Eighth Step at Proctors

Living Legacy Project: <http://www.uulivinglegacy.org>

The Living Legacy Project offers pilgrimages and outreach programs to raise public awareness of civil rights. Reggie is Co-president and Music Education Director

**For booking or info contact Susan Lounsbury at Loyd Artists (518) 647-5916**

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