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**THE MISSING CHAPTER:
UNTOLD STORIES OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE HUDSON VALLEY**

Highland, NY (February 20, 2008)—A new online exhibit, *The Missing Chapter: Untold Stories of the African American Presence in the Mid-Hudson Valley* (www.hrvh.org/exhibit/aa07/) brings history to light through a collaboration between the Southeastern NY Library Resources Council and Historic Huguenot Street.

This exhibit is the culmination of several years of research to document the presence and contributions of African Americans in the Mid-Hudson Valley. Research at Historic Huguenot Street in New Paltz, NY has identified countless historic manuscripts relating to African-American history, such as photographs, bills of sale, wills, inventories, runaway slave notices, journals, ledgers, and correspondences. Newly discovered documents enabled Susan Stessin-Cohn, project developer, to piece together stories of individual people, such as that of James Wesley Sampson and his Caucasian wife, Carrie M. Plant, who covered her face in burnt cork in order to fool a disapproving white reverend into marrying them. James Murphy, born into slavery and freed at the age of 21, went on to become a minister and lived within local “white” society until his true heritage was discovered. Civil War soldier, Richard Oliver, enlisted in the 20th United States Colored Infantry, leaving his wife and children in New Paltz. Tragically he died of malarial fever shortly after completing his tour of duty.

Visitors to *The Missing Chapter* can view the exhibit and then link to digitized images of original materials. They can browse categories such as Slavery, Court Cases & Laws, Manumission, People, Attitudes & Stereotypes, Civil War Service, and Schools. Online visitors can search over 170 primary sources by keyword. Teachers will find a wealth of documents with accompanying lesson plans to support curricula from elementary school through college level. Documents of local interest continue to be added to the site.

The Missing Chapter is incorporated in the Hudson River Valley Heritage (HRVH) digital repository.

This exhibit was supported by Federal Library Services and Technology Act funds, awarded to the New York State Library by the Federal Institute of Museum and Library Services.

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The Hudson River Valley Heritage (HRVH) is an award-winning collaborative initiative between the Southeastern NY Library Resource Council (SENYLRC) and libraries, historical societies, museums and other cultural organizations of the Hudson Valley Region – Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Ulster, Sullivan, Rockland, Orange and Putnam Counties of New York State. At www.hrvh.org, researchers, students, instructors and website voyagers have free, 24/7 access to the online collections of digitized historic materials – photos, postcards, letters, newspapers, diaries, scrapbooks, manuscripts, memorabilia, maps, ephemera, and audio and video clips – about the Hudson River Valley region. The digital repository is administered and hosted by SENYLRC. HRVH funding comes from federal funds, New York State funding for library systems, special grants and annual membership dues.

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The Southeastern NY Library Resources Council (SENYLRC), chartered by the NY State Board of Regents in 1967, is one of nine state-funded regional library consortia. SENYLRC's mission is to support its members in the Mid Hudson Valley in order to enrich their services and enhance access to information for their users. Located in Highland, NY, SENYLRC services target over 100 member institutions, including all types of libraries and cultural heritage organizations. Through recent initiatives like HRVH, SENYLRC now reaches many more non-member institutions. Visit SENYLRC at www.senylrc.org.