



Historic  
*London Town*  
and *Gardens*

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**MEDIA ALERT – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**UNESCO Designates Historic London Town & Gardens as a “Site of Memory Associated with the Slave Route”**

*March 11, 2019 – Edgewater, Maryland* – Historic London Town and Gardens (London Town) was recently designated a “Site of Memory Associated with the Slave Route” by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). London Town joins thirty other sites nationally in this important designation, which commemorates the nearly 12 million African people forced into the Middle Passage of the transatlantic human trade.

Historic London Town and Gardens shares the history of the colonial port town of London, Maryland, located on the South River. We know of at least 8 slave ships that called into London between 1708 – 1760 and are continually learning of additional ones. These ships brought enslaved people from Sierra Leone through Angola along the West African coast. We are aware of over 600 enslaved Africans held aboard those ships, who died before ever reaching Maryland. Of those who survived the difficult 2-3 month voyage from Africa to Maryland, hundreds - and perhaps thousands - were sold at London.

“Our history cannot be told without slavery,” says Kyle Dalton, public programs administrator. Dalton has spearheaded research into London Town’s connections with the slave route. “Four hundred years ago, the first enslaved Africans were sold in British America at Jamestown, Virginia. Enslaved people became essential to the tobacco economy throughout the Chesapeake. This designation is a way for us to remember all of those people who were forced to come to America and perform the brutal manual labor that began this country. It is also an opportunity to honor those who did not survive the Middle Passage.”

Dalton worked with the Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Markers Project (MPCPMP) on acquiring London Town’s designation from UNESCO. Started in 2011, the MPCPMP seeks to honor the two million captive Africans who perished during the Middle Passage and the ten million who survived to build the Americas. They are working with additional sites in the area on achieving a similar designation.

London Town has begun sharing its designation through an interpretive panel in its Visitor Center and on its website at [www.historiclondontown.org/unesco](http://www.historiclondontown.org/unesco). We are working with MPCPMP on developing future ceremonies and commemorations.



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### **About The UNESCO Slave Route Project: Resistance, Liberty, Heritage**

Launched in 1994, the international and inter-regional project 'The Slave Route: Resistance, Liberty, Heritage' addresses the history of the slave trade and slavery through the prism of intercultural dialogue, a culture of peace and reconciliation. It thereby endeavours to improve the understanding and transmission of this human tragedy by making better known its deep-seated causes, its consequences for societies today and the cultural interactions born of this history. The project is structured around five key fields of activity: scientific research, development of educational materials, preservation of written archives and oral traditions, promotion of living cultures and contributions by the African diaspora and, lastly, preservation of sites of memory.

The promotion of the memorial heritage related to the slave trade and slavery plays a decisive role not only in educating the general public, and young people in particular, but also in facilitating national reconciliation and social cohesion processes in societies.

It is in this perspective that The Slave Route project has created a label to encourage the preservation of sites of memories and the establishment of itineraries that can tell this story and ensure that this heritage receives due attention at the national, regional and international levels.

Of London Town, UNESCO writes, "This site fulfills the quality criteria set by the UNESCO Slave Route Project in conjunction with the International Network of Managers of Sites and Itineraries of Memory."

### **About Historic London Town and Gardens**

Historic London Town and Gardens is a twenty-three acre park featuring history, archaeology, and horticulture on the South River in Edgewater, Maryland. The park is owned by Anne Arundel County and managed by the London Town Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (EIN: 52-1396159). Created in 1993, the Foundation manages the site under a formal operating agreement with the Anne Arundel County government. The Foundation is responsible for developing and conducting interpretive, recreational, and educational programs that allow visitors to learn about our historical, archaeological, and horticultural offerings.

Our mission is "To inspire a deeper understanding of our region's history, environment, culture, and arts through living history, historical artifacts, experiential public gardens, and collaborative cultural & arts programs."

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