

# \$90K DONATED TO BURYING GROUND

■ *Utility company's foundation  
boosts Port City memorial effort*

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**P**ORTSMOUTH — On the eve of the 10th anniversary of the discovery of African remains under Chestnut Street, the African Burying Ground Memorial Committee announced Friday it has received a \$90,000 donation toward a memorial at the site.

The Northeast Utilities Foundation donated the money, bringing the total amount raised to \$760,000. A planned memorial park to those interred in the city's African Burying Ground is expected to cost \$1.2 million.

The committee also announced Friday a major fund-raising effort during Portsmouth Restaurant

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# DONATION: For memorial

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Week in November, and it is hoping to raise an additional \$100,000 during that time.

On Oct. 7, 2003, during routine excavation work on Chestnut Street, the remains of 13 people were discovered. Subsequent DNA testing confirmed they were Africans buried in the 18th century at a burying ground extending across Court Street that likely has the remains of 200 people — many of them probably slaves.

The Northeast Utilities Foundation donation is a significant step toward creating the planned memorial, committee leader Vernis Jackson said.

“We thank the Northeast Utilities Foundation for its support of the African Burying Ground Memorial Park in Portsmouth, both for its gener-

osity and for its demonstration of leadership,” Jackson said. “We hope the foundation’s adoption of this project encourages additional foundations, businesses and individuals to become involved in the collaborative community process dedicated to creating this memorial.”

Rich Chagnon, Public Service Company of New Hampshire division manager, spoke on behalf of the foundation. PSNH is owned by Northeast Utilities.

“The African Burying Ground Memorial Park is a model of public and private investment in a project that underscores the quality of life in the community,” he said. “As one of only two authenticated 18th-century burying grounds in the nation, the African Burying Ground is historically

significant and central to the unique, 400-year history of Portsmouth and of New Hampshire.”

Chagnon said the foundation is “proud to support the memorial and encourages others to ‘stand in honor of those forgotten’ and properly recognize and commemorate this historic burying ground.”

To leverage the foundation donation into momentum to complete the fund-raising phase of the project, the committee is joining with Portsmouth Restaurant Week on a \$100,000 challenge.

Diners at the 47 participating restaurants will be handed a postcard that explains the goals of the burying ground memorial with a QR code that diners can scan into their cell phones.

The code connects to an online donation method for the African Burying Ground at [www.africanburyingground.nh.org](http://www.africanburyingground.nh.org).

Other businesses, from banks to hotels to retail stores, will post counter cards encouraging their customers to do the same.

“If each of the estimated 35,000 diners who enjoy Portsmouth Restaurant Week made a \$3 donation, that would raise more than \$100,000 and move us that much closer to achieving the goal,” said Portsmouth Restaurant Week Co-chairman John Akar, owner of Cava restaurant.

Restaurant Week will be held from Nov. 7 to 16.

In addition, on Nov. 19, Mark McNabb, owner of Martingale Wharf, will host a reception to solicit large donations from members of the community who may not yet be aware of the memorial project.

All donations are welcome and may be mailed to African Burying Ground Trust, c/o 1 Junkins Ave., Portsmouth, NH 03801, or via the new online, secure donation Web site.