

REQUESTS FOR STATEMENT OF INTEREST

For the preparation of a Historic Context Study on Violence Against People of African Descent, 1500 -2020

March 2021

Project Title: GLNF-CESU: Historic Context Study on Violence Against People of African Descent, 1500-2020

Responses to this Request for Statement of Interest will be used to identify potential investigators for a project to be funded by the National Park Service (NPS) and coordinated by the NPS regional office for DOI Regions 3, 4, and 5, located in Omaha, Nebraska. The project involves the development of a historic context study that documents violence carried out against persons of African descent within the United States and its territories for the time period 1500 to 2020. The historic context shall explore significant trends, episodes, events, and places in a well-researched, well-documented, broad investigation of racially focused violence that has occurred within the nation's history and responses to that violence.

The NPS formed a national working group in July 2020 composed of historians, archeologists, an architect, historical landscape architect, and community planner to begin examining the nature and scope of racism exhibited in the U.S. and its territories, forms of violence that stem from it, and types of properties that evoke this history. The group started compiling current scholarship and identified historical trends, the nature of racially motivated violence, events, places where they occurred, people who suffered from violent acts, as well as responses from those who stood against it. This effort required a substantial amount of research, which will be shared with the investigator selected to complete this project. Members of the NPS working group will continue to participate in the project by collaborating with the investigator on the development of the historic context study, reviewing research methodology and drafts of the study as it is developed, identifying and discussing nationally significant events and people that represent this history, and accepting the final product. In these ways, the group will remain substantially involved in the development of the historic context study and its application.

This research project will bring substantial public benefit to the fields of history and historic preservation and may enhance a greater understanding of racism in the U.S. and the struggle for civil rights. The historic context study will identify significant events, people, and places associated with racially motivated violence and responses to it. To show how the history of this violence is tied to erasures that have often been dismissed or otherwise gone unrecognized in the fields of historic preservation and public history, this research will seek to identify places not commonly considered. One of the most important public benefits of this project will be compilation of historic context information that may be used for identification of under-represented sites for possible nomination for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or designation as National Historic Landmarks. The information may also suggest other ways to acknowledge and commemorate this history, which continues to shape our present.

Background:

People of African descent have been subjected to racist violence since before their arrival in what would become the United States. This violence, including threats of the same, has been used to subordinate, exclude, and discriminate against people of African descent. It has been pervasive and taken many forms, ranging from the everyday common to the sensational and has infiltrated almost every facet of Black life. The study, national in scope including U.S. territories, will examine this violence within the context of the larger and long history of the struggle for civil rights. Through its work, the NPS working group determined that to understand the experience and impact of this violence a holistic approach is needed that examines not discrete moments in time, but violence as part of an ongoing pattern of racial subjugation that has yet to be resolved.

This study will not only look at how violence has been used to undermine the struggle for racial equality, but how people have resisted this violence. Activism, like the violence itself, has taken a myriad of forms. While historically protest and other responses have been considered an extension of this violence, this context proposes to not define them as such. Furthermore, to avoid making racism an overdetermining force in the lives of people of African descent, this study will only characterize those responses that the actors acknowledge as such. People of African descent should not be viewed only in terms of a response to racism. The study will recognize and distinguish the contributions of individuals and organizations that resisted racist violence. To avoid its celebration or glorification, individuals and organizations that perpetuated racist violence will be identified but not acknowledged in the same manner.

It is also important to identify places associated with this history not only to uncover erasure, but to foster greater understanding of history. While studies about the Civil Rights Movement mention racial violence, they do not discuss the topic in detail nor explore sites associated with this violence. The National Historic Landmark (NHL) Civil Rights Framework, developed by the NPS, refers to the pattern of events leading up to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by saying, “Short of a declaration of war, no other act of Congress had a more violent background—a background of confrontation, official violence, injury, and murder that has few parallels in American history.” Yet sites identified in subsequent NHL theme studies about desegregation in education, public accommodation, and housing include very little discussion about the harsh and sometimes deadly reality of these events and failed to identify sites where racially motivated violence occurred. Studies completed for this NPS effort instead concentrate on the homes of notable activists and historic properties related to desegregation efforts.

The need for a study that focuses on racial violence and intimidation was part of the recommendations made in the 2008 African American NHL Assessment Study. In 2016, the National Historic Landmarks Committee submitted recommendations to the National Park System Advisory Board for “Updating and Improving the National Historic Landmarks Program.” These emphasized the importance of looking at the complexity of issues when evaluating national significance, periods of significance, and historic integrity. Evaluation of sites that illustrate or commemorate under-recognized histories requires a careful, nuanced, and flexible approach.

Therefore, this study seeks to bring fresh perspective to the identification and consideration of property types and historically significant resources within this context that may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or designation as National Historic Landmarks. It will necessitate evaluation of sites and places that may be absent from the landscape or properties that no longer retain historic integrity as typically defined in the field of historic preservation. Sites associated with the history of racial violence are rare in National Register and National Historic Landmark listings because typically they don't meet the criteria or challenge considerations of integrity. The history of racism and violence is conveyed not only in existing resources but is evident in the stark absence of other resources in the landscape. This study seeks to make both more visible by bringing attention to the history of racism and the less traditionally considered resources associated with it.

Brief Description of Anticipated Work:

The overarching goal of this study is to educate the public and historic preservation professionals about the history of racially motivated violence, its pervasiveness, responses to that violence, and how evidence of it has been overlooked in the American landscape. We seek the completion of a multi-chapter monograph, including all research, writing, photograph selection, and layout and design, that defines and contextualizes the history of race-based violence and responses to it. The study should further identify resources and sites associated with this history.

The historic context study will have three components; 1) racism and the use of violence against people of African descent; 2) responses to this targeted violence; and 3) types of resources associated with both and examples of existing resources that may possess historical significance. Objectives and Outcomes: How will this research be applied?

The research and analysis provided in the historic context study will inform historians, preservation practitioners, and the public about the pervasiveness of violence against people of African descent throughout U.S. history and demonstrate that physical evidence of it remains. Information provided by this context may inform the development of an NHL theme study on this topic. More immediately, the study will assist public historians and preservationists in the identification and evaluation of historic resources that have been overlooked. Evaluation of these resources should result in more properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places and designated as National Historic Landmarks.

Request for Proposals / Statements of Interest:

The candidate selected will be required to prepare a Statement of Work regarding the approach and research to be conducted. Status updates will be required each year of the agreement to demonstrate progress toward meeting project goals and objectives.

Period of Performance. The period of performance for this Cooperative Agreement will be determined when the final proposal selected. It is expected to extend 24 months.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Sought

- Ph.D. in one of the following or a related field: African American Studies; U.S. History; American Studies; Public History
- Knowledge of U.S. history, particularly African American history

- Possess an understanding of the dynamics of racism in the U.S. and its territories from the colonial period to the present
- Knowledge of historic preservation practices and evaluation criteria used by the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks program
- Strong oral and written communications skills.

Materials Requested for Statement of Interest/Qualifications:

(Maximum length: 6 pages, single-spaced 12 pt. font)

Please provide the following via e-mail attachment to:

Rachel Franklin-Weekley
Manager, Historic Preservation Program
National Park Service
Omaha, Nebraska
rachel_franklin-weekley@nps.gov
402-415-6275

1. Name, affiliation and contact information
2. Brief Statement of Qualifications including: a) Biographical Sketch; b) Relevant past projects and clients with brief descriptions of these projects - demonstrated results including published works; c) Staff, faculty or students available to work on this project and their areas of expertise.
3. Project proposal that summarizes strategy, approach, and special capabilities, timelines, roles and responsibilities of personnel, specific tasks to be conducted, and deliverables. Please be as specific as possible.
4. Cost estimate of the proposed work to include a breakdown of all labor, materials and travel (see attached budget worksheet).

Funding: We intend to use fiscal year 2021 funds for this project, possibly up to \$180,000. A detailed study proposal and cost estimate is requested at this time. Project award will be subject to the availability of funds.

Review of Statements Received: Proposals will be evaluated based on the factors listed below and include the credentials of personnel, approach, and reasonableness of cost. Based on review of the Statements of Interest received, a principal investigator will be invited to prepare a full application including the required federal forms (SF424 series).

Proposals will be reviewed by selected members of the NPS working group, the Lead Grants Management Specialist with the NPS Midwest Federal Financial Assistance program, and the NPS Great Lakes-Northern Forest CESU Coordinator.

Timeline for Review of Statements of Interest: Review of Statements of Interest will begin after this RSOI has been posted for 30 days.

Evaluation Factors:**Factor 1 - Credentials of Personnel**

Principal Investigator or Project Manager. This individual must have experience that supports successful implementation of the effort. The Offeror shall include a brief Statement of Qualifications (including):

- a. Biographical Sketch,
- b. Relevant past projects and clients with brief descriptions of these projects,
- c. Staff, faculty or students available to work on this project and their areas of expertise,
- d. Any brief description of capabilities to successfully complete the project you may wish to add.

Factor 2 – Approach

The Offeror shall develop a proposal addressing the effort to develop a historic context study. The Offeror shall discuss their proposed approach and techniques to accomplish the objectives. Offeror's proposals will be evaluated by a team from NPS. Proposals will be evaluated on methodology and soundness of the overall approach to accomplish the goals of the project.

Factor 3 – Reasonableness of Cost

Proposals shall be evaluated to determine whether they are balanced with respect to cost and fair and reasonable pricing. Evaluations will include an analysis to determine the Offeror's understanding of the requirements of the solicitation, credentials, and scholarly approach.