



NEWS

William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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Boston, Massachusetts 02133

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June 18, 2019

SECRETARY GALVIN PRESENTS 2019 PRESERVATION AWARD TO THE FITCH-HOOSE HOUSE IN DALTON

Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, has announced that the Fitch-Hoose House in Dalton has received a 2019 Massachusetts Historical Commission Preservation Award.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is proud to recognize the extraordinary accomplishments of this year’s awardees,” said Secretary Galvin. “The projects the Commission recognizes this year are particularly diverse and represent the many creative ways that significant historic resources are being preserved across the Commonwealth. The restoration of the Fitch-Hoose House and its conversion to a museum to tell the story of African-American families in this part of western Massachusetts is a true success story.”

The Fitch-Hoose House was built around 1846 in an area of the Town of Dalton known as The Gulf, a predominantly African-American neighborhood settled by freed and escaped slaves after the Revolutionary War. After occupation by different African-American families, the house was purchased in 1868 by Charles Hoose, the grandson of Philip Hoose, a freed or fugitive slave (the record is not clear) originally from the Hudson Valley, who settled in the Gulf neighborhood with his wife Hannah around 1830.

The modest house was home to the Hoose family for more than 130 years; aside from the rear leanto, probably constructed by Charles Hoose, and the replacement of the windows in 1991, it remained little altered over time. Shortly after the deaths of the last resident Hoose relations, the house was abandoned; ultimately, it was taken by the Town of Dalton in 2004 through tax foreclosure. In 2005, following acquisition by the town, the select board gave the Dalton Historical Commission permission to explore ways to preserve it.

As the last extant house in The Gulf and the only building still standing associated with that African-American community, its preservation was an important goal for the local historical commission. The house was listed in the National Register of Historic



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Places in 2010 and later received a Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund grant to assist with restoration. Replica windows based on windows seen in historic photographs of the house were installed as part of the restoration. The rest of the house's historic materials were restored, including clapboards and lath-and-plaster walls. The house opened to the public in 2018 as an interpretive museum honoring the families in the area and their history.

This is the 41st year of MHC's Preservation Awards program. Projects are considered annually for awards in the categories of Rehabilitation and Restoration, Adaptive Reuse, Education and Outreach, Archaeology, Stewardship, and Landscape Preservation. Individuals are considered in the categories of Lifetime Achievement and Local Preservationist. Secretary Galvin serves as the chair of the 17-member Massachusetts Historical Commission.



Secretary Galvin is pictured presenting the award for the Fitch-Hoose House at an afternoon ceremony on June 6, 2019, at the Massachusetts Archives Building at 220 Morrissey Blvd., Dorchester (left to right: Mary Walsh, Gail Pinna, Ellen Chiacchiarretto, Joyce White, George White, Secretary Galvin, Mary Jane Caliento, Louisa Horth, Ken



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Walto, Debora Kovacs, Evelyn Cole Smith, and Adelaide Solomon-Jordan. Photo by Goodnough Photography.).

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