

## **History and Horticulture in the Hudson Valley Mount Gulian Historic Site Hosts Discussion and New Film**

On Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> at 2 P.M., Mount Gulian Historic Site in Beacon will host a presentation about one of the most interesting people who lived and worked at the site before and during the Civil War, James F. Brown. Dr. Myra Young Armstead, Professor of History at Bard College, and author of the book, "Freedom's Gardener: James F. Brown, Horticulture, and the Hudson Valley in Antebellum America" will present new information about Mr. Brown that she has uncovered since her book's publication.

Born a slave in Maryland in 1793, Brown escaped servitude, made his way north to New York and was introduced to the Verplanck family, the owners of Mount Gulian. The Verplancks became his employers and helped him legally acquire his freedom. Brown lived, worked and recorded his daily life in a remarkable journal, until he died in 1868.

As Mount Gulian's Master Gardener, Brown was engaged in the art of horticulture, had a close relationship with famed horticulturalist Andrew Jackson Downing, and attended many formal horticultural exhibitions of the day. In her presentation, Professor Armstead will provide an overview of his vast horticultural knowledge, and the gardening practices of the time.

Following her presentation, a new short film produced at the site, "Cultivating Freedom: From Slave to Citizen" will be shown. The film, funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, involves two people from Mount Gulian's past --- James F. Brown and Mary Anna Verplanck, his employer and good friend.

There is no charge for this program. For more information call Mount Gulian at 845-831-8172.

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For more information: Elaine Hayes, Executive Director, 845-831-8172  
or [ehayes@mountgulian.org](mailto:ehayes@mountgulian.org)

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