



# STENTON HOUSE - FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

## SUMMARY #2

### 12.17.19-12.18.19

*Stenton is participating in a grant through the Pew Foundation. In accordance with this, the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC) facilitated the second round of focus groups with community members from Germantown, Pennsylvania. The community discussion included the following focus areas: factual vs representative aspects of what people know about Dinah, potential aspects of the Dinah memorial, and ways in which the community envisions a future, authentic partnership between the community and the Stenton staff. The following summary provides key insights from the discussions that align with the needs of the grant.*

#### **Word Activity:**

##### **Words Aligned with Texture:**

Rough - Patterned - Crinkled - Etched - Gritty

Rough - Smooth

Rough - Smooth - Jagged - Chiseled - Flawed

Hard - Smooth - Patterned - Chiseled - Etched

Hard - Smooth - Etched

##### **Words Aligned with Big Ideas:**

Freedom/Bondage - Independence - Courageous - Intelligent - Brave

Honest - Freedom/Bondage - Triumph - Hopeful

Freedom - Independence - Generations - Triumph - Courageous - Intelligent - Grounded

Honest (Factual) - Courageous - Intelligent - Brave - Focused

Freedom/Bondage - Intelligent - Brave - Daring



### **Words Aligned with Emotions:**

Resilient - Vulnerable - Provocative - Relevant

Resilient - Provocative - Relevant - Bold - Persistent

Angry - Resilient - Fear - Bold - Persistent

Resilient - Provocative - Humble - Relevant - Meditative

Resilient - Vulnerable - Relevant - Bold - Persistent

### **Words Aligned with Visuals:**

Grand - Reflective - Striking - Warm - Unassuming

Reflective - Striking

Dark - Grand - Striking - Imposing - Warm

Grand - Reflective (literally see yourself) - Striking - Light (Aura/Presence) - Warm

Imposing - Warm

### **Words Aligned with Materials:**

Organic/Natural - Enclosed Space - Accessible Space - Video

Wooden (Earthy) - Bronze - Open Space - Green Space - Accessible Space

Mosaic - Bronze - Open Space - Green Space - Accessible Space

Natural - Mosaic - Open Space - Green Space - Accessible Space

Natural - Bronze - Enclosed Space - Green Space - Accessible Space



### **Words Aligned with Language:**

Direct/Pithy - Descriptive - Clear - Formal - Strong

Descriptive - Clear - Readable - Strong - Authentic

Direct - Descriptive - Readable - Quotes - Strong

Clear - Succinct - Readable - Eloquent - Strong

Direct - Clear - Succinct - Formal - Readable

### **Supplementary Commentary from Word Activity:**

“Relevant to today’s monument discussions.”

“Grand, but unassuming - living in 2 worlds.”

“Formal to match historical period and house.”

“The selling of beloved people/ partings...unforgivable.”

“Generations - connecting to the present.”

“Green space/ open space - outside”

“Intelligent - clever.”

“Dinah Monument should reflect her as being a salve, but also a mother and caretaker of a plantation/ family in Germantown. She petitioned her freedom multiple times, signifying persistence along with boldness in protecting the property during the Battle of Germantown. The monument should be accessible, inviting, and poignant so that her memory is not forgotten. This historical gaps surrounds Dinah should be reflected in the monument - there should be a symbolic representation of her with facts known with room for new ones to be known. There could be a sculpture and small plaque that makes the monument accessible to all ages, educational levels, and classes of people.”

### **Spectrum Activity:**

The participants were asked, as a group, to determine where they would most like to see the design



lean - on a spectrum of only using facts to influence the design or only using representative ideas to influence the design. Of the five focus groups, four of the five chose to mark the diagram within two lines of the central line. Two of those four chose a range that included the central line while the other two focus groups (of the four) chose to be slightly left of the central line - slightly closer to the factual end of the spectrum. One group, of the overall five focus groups, chose to mark a line extremely close to the right end of the spectrum (closest to the representative end of the spectrum).

### **Supplementary Commentary from Spectrum Activity:**

“Don’t lose sight of Dinah.”

“Don’t get lost.”

“She saved the house.”

“Attachment to the house.”

“Who else lived here?”

“Paid.”

“Was she in charge of other slaves?”

“Maybe create a film as the memorial.”

“Perhaps have an annual art competition to think of other ways to represent Dinah.”

“Representative allows for more history to be told.”

“Visuals for children and/or for people who are illiterate in order to be able to engage with final product.”

“Maybe make similar to Vietnam Memorial.”

“Symbolic form that invokes conversation.”

“Idea to use a mirror in the absence of known facial features.”

“Can we show both her uniqueness and also representative of general enslaved people/women, etc.?”

“Facts/history is important, but she was a real woman. How do we tell a richer story of her life and family?”



“Dinah’s story has personal meaning for participants - what she means to us.”

“Context to today. Reparations.”

“Focus on womanhood - her as a woman. Let us stand and be recognized.”

“Representation being less about appearance and more about representing her qualities.”

“Use parts of character people can understand.”

“Don’t want to misrepresent her.”

“Want to be factual; but, also, knowing we don’t know everything.”

“We can fill in some gaps based on the description of her actions.”

“What can we assume about her personality - certain qualities (ie wisdom)?”

“Use this as a teaching opportunity - show what a person in her position did and went through.”

### **Future Community/Stenton Staff Partnerships:**

- Two worlds opening up. The chain link fence make people feel like they don’t belong.
- Thanks to the staff of today; the dogs just used to chase us on the other side of the fence.
- It must start with this community.
- Want community to feel like its theirs as well, that they are a part of it.
- Before they felt like it was closed off, not for them.
- Welcome.
- Want to talk about the honoring of Black women.
- This is for everyone, not just for this neighborhood.
- This is a journey that we will take together.



- I would like to see black people work here and be walking around here.
- It's the catalyst to model for other neighborhoods in the city; our foundation. Good for our kids to see.
- Want it to be a hub - learning center for African American history; Dinah would be a great genesis to learn our history.
- Want Stenton to be representative of the African American experience.
- Want to see multicultural people come to learn about Dinah; my kids came here first.
- I want to see us come together.
- Go past two years of grant (focus on her connections) through video, activities, etc.
- Build a volunteer/ community board.
- Want more of the community to know what is behind these gates.
- Use Dinah to pull people in.
- My best friend lives around the corner and never knew what this place was/is.
- Anyone's opinion on how to get people to come to functions - what goes on here. No one knows it's here.
- Would be more upfront to tell about the pride of this place and community.
- People just think this is part of the park.
- It would be nice if Stenton were put on the Center City tour. This is where it really went down. We are sort of isolated.
- There is story of a snow globe effect to this place.
- We are very unknown to people two blocks away.
- This is a necessary opportunity to get people to come in here.
- Some like it quiet - the refuge of the place. It's a tough sell because of the neighborhood; the neighborhood is changing.