

News Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: August 22, 2022
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**Original 158 historic Aberdeen Gardens residents celebrated in
documentary**

--Tickets to premiere and public showings now on sale--

Hampton, VA – The Historical Foundation of Aberdeen Gardens, Inc. will host two viewings of the newly-created documentary entitled, “The Aberdeen 158: Built For Us, By Us” on September 16 and 17. The film chronicles how proud blue-collar workers (some first-time homeowners and some wanting to elevate their level of living) came to Aberdeen Gardens in 1937 and created an invaluable working-class community. From this modest beginning grew a vibrant community with generations of the original 158 families still calling Aberdeen Gardens home.

The foundation will hold a [premiere viewing fundraiser](#) as well as a public matinee viewing at The American Theatre, located at 125 East Mellen Street, Hampton, Va 23663. Proceeds will benefit the Aberdeen Gardens Historic Museum and The Historic Foundation of Aberdeen Gardens, Inc., whose mission is to preserve, restore, protect, and promote the history and culture of the Aberdeen Gardens Historic District. The Documentary Premiere will be held on Friday, September 16, 2022, at 6 p.m. Guests will enjoy a wine and cheese reception and keepsake documentary on disk. On Saturday, September 17, 2022 at 2 p.m., [a matinee public viewing](#) will be held. The premiere viewing requires a minimum donation of \$50 and tickets to the matinee viewing cost \$20 (plus fees).

Aberdeen Gardens began as the first New Deal Planned Resettlement Community for African Americans under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s Subsistence Homestead Project during the early 1930s, following the Great Depression. Its development was initiated by Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) in 1934. It was the only New Deal community designed by a Black architect, Hillyard R. Robertson from Howard University, overseen by a Black supervisor, and built by Black laborers. Charles Duke, a Black architect, was named architect-in-charge to design and manage the construction of 158 brick houses on large lots and the Aberdeen Elementary School.

Out of the 55 New Deal communities proposed and constructed at the time, Aberdeen Gardens was the only Resettlement Administration community for African Americans in Virginia. Additionally, Aberdeen Gardens is the only African American New Deal resettlement community that is still intact. An original neighborhood structure, the

Aberdeen Gardens Historic Museum building was purchased, renovated and repaired in 2002 and opened to the public for touring. The museum has recently been closed for physical improvements and will soon reopen. Visitors interested in touring the museum should call 757-722-2345 for a museum tour.

To purchase tickets for the premiere viewing and reception, visit Tinyurl.com/Aberdeen-Gardens or click [here](#). Tickets for the Saturday, September 17 viewing may be purchased in person at The American Theatre Box Office or Hampton Coliseum Box Office. Tickets for the Saturday viewing may also be ordered online at theamericantheatre.org or by phone at 1-800-745-3000. Tickets for The American Theatre are also available for purchase in person at the Hampton Coliseum Box Office.

Premiere Viewing Fundraiser

Friday, September 16, 6 p.m. \$50
The Aberdeen Gardens 158 Built for Us, By Us
Premiere screening, wine and cheese reception, keepsake documentary disk
The American Theatre
125 East Mellen Street

Public Matinee Viewing

Saturday, September 17, 2 p.m. \$20 (plus fees)
The Aberdeen Gardens 158 Built for Us, By Us
Public matinee screening
The American Theatre
125 East Mellen Street

Box Office Locations and Hours:

The American Theatre

125 East Mellen Street
Operating hours:
August 22 – September 17
Wednesday and Friday from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
(Closed for Lunch 1 p.m. - 2 p.m.)

Hampton Coliseum

1000 Coliseum Drive
Operating hours: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., Monday through Friday

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***Editor's note: Please contact Mahogany Waldon
(mahogany.waldon@hamptoncvb.com) for images and other visual/digital
collateral or for any questions.***

[Photo Library](#)

Image descriptions:

Aberdeen Gardens 1: African American workers during construction of the Newport News Homesteads, later known as Aberdeen Gardens, in 1936. (Paul Carter/Library of Congress)

Aberdeen Gardens 2: The Original Aberdeen Elementary School- Class of 1944
[Reprinted with permission from Aberdeen Gardens, by Aberdeen Gardens Heritage Committee].

Aberdeen Gardens 3: Robert A. and Wilhelmina Finnley with their three daughters
[Reprinted with permission from Aberdeen Gardens, by Aberdeen Gardens Heritage Committee.]

Partially bordered by the Hampton Roads harbor and Chesapeake Bay, Hampton, with the 344,000 sq. ft. Hampton Roads Convention Center and the award-winning Hampton Coliseum, is located in the center of Coastal Virginia and the Hampton Roads metropolitan area. Hampton is the site of America's first continuous English-speaking settlement, the site of the first arrival of Africans in English North America, and is home to such visitor attractions as the Virginia Air & Space Science Center, Fort Monroe National Monument, Hampton History Museum, Hampton University Museum, The American Theatre, among others.