



# SEMA HADITHI



*African American Heritage and Culture Foundation*



# SEMA HADITHI AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE FOUNDATION

*(Sema Hadithi Foundation)*

## HISTORY

Sema Hadithi Foundation was founded by Robert S. Burch, Jr. in August 2020. It was founded for the purpose of telling the story of African-ancestored history, heritage, and culture by researching, preserving, and disseminating information throughout the community.

## OUR MISSION

Sema Hadithi Foundation strives to tell the story of African-ancestored history, heritage, and culture by researching, preserving, and disseminating information throughout the community. Our primary goals are to promote scholarly research, provide resources for historical studies, and create a network of persons with similar interests. We seek to assist interested parties to document Black history in Utah and the Mountain West. We wish to ensure that the community receives this important historical information.

## OUR PRINCIPLES

### Our Team

Sema Hadithi Foundation seeks to tell the stories of all the people of Utah and their successes. The essence of historical research is to discover the stories of people, families, and communities. It also explores the positive impact of gifts these families and communities bring to the culture of Utah. We commit to being passionate about ensuring that every member of the community has the opportunity to learn and grow as they discover and share the full story of Utah.

### Our Partners

We embrace the individual distinctiveness of friends, organizations, governmental agencies, and corporate entities who wish to work with us to create a space where we can work and share. With these partners, we hope to foster cohesive communities by promoting unity through historical truth, honesty in truth, cultural acceptance, respect of heritage, and the fostering of safe spaces to share.

### Our Neighborhood

We strive to be good neighbors. We wish to be invited to share the wonderful history we learn. We strive to be a positive force for growth, love, and peace by delivering the solace of understanding and truth to all communities that wish to share and grow with us. By being this positive force, we hope to unite those who have been lost from each other through lack of information or falsehood.

## PROGRAMMING and IMPACT

Our programming will allow us to over the next two years to:

- Research critical topics in Utah's Black History
- Establish critical relationships with partners like Utah State History, University of Utah, Brigham Young University, Brigham City Museum, Union Station Museums, Fort

Douglas Museums, Mormon History Association, and the Utah Cultural Celebration Center

- Create a central touchpoint for community and academic organizations that desire to discover, and share African American history of Utah and the Mountain West
- Provide physical exhibits at the locations of critical partners
- Begin the plans for a permanent Black History institution by establishing a physical and independent museum.

Sema Hadithi Foundation will have the positive impact of making available to all Utahans forgotten and undiscovered history. We will help tell a fuller story of the families, heritage, and culture of Utah. We will also help change the false narratives and folklore surrounding the beliefs, work, thrift, faith, and contributions of African Americans. These types of misunderstandings often lead to disruption and division in communities and between people. The ultimate hope is to bring about unity through historical truth fostered by understanding, acceptance, and respect.

#### LEADERSHIP

##### Executive Committee

Robert Burch, Founder and Executive Director

- Charter board member of Sons and Daughters of the United States Middle Passage
- Utah Chapter President and national board member of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS)

Alana Blumenthal, Director of Institutional Development

- Museum Director, Brigham City Corporation
- Curator, Montgomery County Government
- Curator of Collections and Exhibits, Kodiak Historical Society

Kirk Huffaker, Managing Director, Team Leader – Preservation Working Group

- Principal and Consultant, Preservation Strategies
- Former Executive Director, Preservation Utah / Utah Heritage Foundation

##### Board Members

Doug Misner, State History Liaison

- Library and Collections Coordinator at Utah Division of State History

Elizabeth Hora, State History Coordinator, Team Leader – Buffalo Soldier Working Group

- Public Archaeologist at Utah State Historic Preservation Office

Barnard Silver, Corporate Compliance

- Silver Energy / Silver Foundation

Alice Faulkner Burch, Partnerships Director

- Event Producer and Community Activist

#### RESEARCH AND PRESERVATION

Preservation Working Group

W. Paul Reeve, University of Utah

James Tabery, University of Utah

Robert Burch  
Black Women Working Group  
Sophia Weiss, *Team Leader*  
Adrienne Scott-Ellis, Educator – Davis School District  
Tiffany Greene, Better Days  
Rachel Quist, Independent Historian  
Buffalo Soldier Working Group  
Reilly Jensen, University of Utah  
Fiona Robinson-Hill, Historian & Volunteer – Fort Douglas Military Museum  
The Black Church Working Group  
Jarrett Burch, *Team Leader*  
Ardis Parshall, Independent Historian  
Andrew Holmes, Counselor  
Unattached Members  
Jerome Christophe, Social Worker  
Darlene McDonald, Community Activist  
Dayne Madry, Writer

#### FUTURE PROJECTS / WORKING GROUPS

Arts and Music Working Group  
Blacks in Business Working Group  
Ogden's 25<sup>th</sup> Working Group  
Pullman Porters Working Group  
Civil Rights Working Group  
Educators and Academics Working Group  
Pre-settlement/Settlement Working Group  
Public Health and Safety Working Group (Police, Fire, Hospital, Counseling and Emergency Services)  
Black Enclaves Working Group  
Political Leaders Working Group  
Criminal Justice Working Group

#### COMMUNITY PROJECT

Salt Lake County Community Remembrance Project  
Partners: Ogden NAACP, University of Utah, Preservation Strategies, Utah Multicultural Civic Council, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., Mormon History Association