

Prince Mortimer Avenue: Honorary Street Name Dedication for Formerly Enslaved Man

Honorary Street Sign unveiling in Middletown, CT in honor of a formerly enslaved man named Prince Mortimer

MIDDLETOWN, CT, UNITED STATES, January 6, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On February 1st at 10am, we will be kicking off Black History Month with the dedication of an Honorary Street Sign in Middletown, CT in honor of a formerly enslaved man named Prince Mortimer. The ceremony will be held at the corner of Rapallo Avenue and Main Street in Middletown, CT... Rapallo Avenue being the former walkway to Prince Mortimer's enslaver's home... a path he walked every day.

Prince was captured off the coast of Guinea in the early 1700's as a boy. He was brought to Middletown where he was enslaved by Philip Mortimer, a rich

Irishman who owned a rope making facility and a mansion off the water. Prince worked at the rope making facility for decades. He was also a servant to many officers during the Revolutionary war, including running errands for George Washington.

On Philip Mortimer's death in 1794, Prince was promised freedom within the will, but Philip Mortimer's son-in-law, George Starr, challenged the will in court and won. At 70 years old, Prince was now enslaved to George Starr. 17 years later (in 1811), George Starr claimed to see arsenic in the morning chocolate served to him by Prince and went to the authorities. At 87 years old, Prince was sentenced to life in prison and sent to Old New-Gate Prison in East Granby, CT, considered the worst prison in America at the time. The prison was closed down in 1827 (now a museum) and Prince was moved to a new prison in Wethersfield, CT, where he would die in 1834



John Mills, President of the Alex Breanne Corporation, standing at the corner of Rapallo Avenue and Main Street in Middletown, CT

at 110 years old, never seeing freedom.

John Mills, President of the Alex Breanne Corporation, a Connecticut-based non-profit, worked with Middletown City Historian, Deborah Shapiro, to get an ordinance passed allowing honorary street names in the city. They then submitted a request for approval of an Honorary Street name for Prince. It was approved, making this the first honorary street name in the city of Middletown, CT.

This effort has also been made possible by a 4 year partnership with Dr. Jesse Nasta, Executive Director of the Middlesex County Historical Society. Dr. Nasta provided the template for an ordinance, as well as a wealth of research and insight into the story of Prince.

As part of the dedication ceremony, a piece of commissioned art work will be presented depicting a reimagined image of Prince standing in the rope making facility. The portrait will hang in Middletown town hall for the full month of February. There will also be a reception after the street sign dedication, held at The Community Health Center, 675 Main Street, which is directly across the street from the corner of Rapallo Avenue and Main Street where the dedication is being held.

You can [register for the event here](#).

Please join us to celebrate the life of Prince Mortimer.

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