



# T. Thomas Fortune Project

## TTF Community Fundraising Outreach

Thomas Fortune Project  
c/o Red Bank Men's Club Foundation  
PO Box 2235, Westside Station, Red Bank, NJ 07701

Dear Potential Fortune Patron:

We are a group of concerned citizens who have come together to share the legacy of T. Thomas Fortune, an outstanding figure in American history, for the benefit of all. We are working to save the T. Thomas Fortune House, a National Historic Landmark in Red Bank, New Jersey.

The Thomas Fortune House is one of the most historically significant properties in the United States. It is located at 94 Drs. James Parker Blvd., on the west side of Red Bank, NJ. There are 57 National Historic Landmarks (NHL) in New Jersey, and only 2,500 in the entire USA.

The second empire style building is one of only two National Historic Landmarks in the state related to African American history. After Fortune's time, it came into the hands of the Vaccarelli brothers who opened a bakery on the premises and raised families there.

Timothy Thomas Fortune was born on October 3, 1856 in Marianna, Florida. Fortune was a nationally known critic of the rise of Jim Crow and the failure of reconstruction in the wake of the Civil War. Fortune edited and published three Afro American (a term he popularized) newspapers with a national circulation during his career. Fortune was virtually unparalleled in his time for his agitation, education, and organization over a span of roughly 50 years (1880-1928). Fortune organized the first convention of the Afro-American League, considered to be a precursor to the NAACP. At his passing, he was eulogized as the Dean of Black Journalism. His work remains relevant today:

The T. Thomas Fortune Project, with the sponsorship of the non-profit Red Bank Men's Club Foundation, and the leadership of the National Landmarks Alliance and Garden State Legacy, plans to acquire, stabilize, and secure the house so that it can be restored and developed into a cultural center which honors and gives continuity to Fortune's life's work.

This project is endorsed by the NAACP (NJ), the National Association of Black Journalists, the Borough of Red Bank and State Senator Jennifer Beck and is being done in consultation with the National Park Service (National Historic Landmarks Program), the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (State Historic Preservation Office), the Monmouth County Parks System and the National Trust for Historic Preservation (African American History Initiative).

Our Vision: To engage local schools as well as the community at large, near and far, in appreciating Fortune's legacy, through interactive exhibits, formal classes and community programs related to history, culture and journalism. Educational programming will also include other Red Bank luminaries such as William "Count" Basie and Drs. James Parker. Other potential elements include arts classes and galleries and programs that support local food and energy resilience.

Our Business Model: The funding required to maintain the T. Thomas Fortune Cultural Center will most likely consist of multiple streams, including foundation support for history and civil rights education, and arts and sustainability programming. In preparation for this, we are forging relationships with the Red Bank Schools and other local institutions. We also anticipate that members of the business community

will have an ongoing relationship with the house, through sponsorship of programs. Finally, we will seek ongoing support from organizations and individuals, locally and nationally, who value Fortune's contribution to American history.

**Past Efforts:** The preservation committee has already held several events to raise awareness and funds for the project. On October 3rd, Fortune's birthday, about 60 members of the community gathered to hear speakers in his honor (including a historian who addressed Fortune in her doctoral dissertation) and to contribute to the preservation effort. In December, an event at the Red Bank library featured a dramatic reading of one of Fortune's editorials and a discussion about the plans for the house.

We hope you will join Preservation Red Bank, Friends of Senator Jennifer Beck, the Red Bank Men's Club Foundation and many individuals in contributing to the restoration and rebirth of Fortune's house.

Thank you  
T. Thomas Fortune Project  
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Peter Primavera, Project Director  
Gilda Rogers & Lorraine Stone, Co-chairs, Programming Committee  
Sarah Klepner & Mark Fitzsimmons, Co-chairs, Fundraising Committee

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On July 3, 2013-A group of concerned citizens met at the Pilgrim Baptist Church to discuss preservation matters of T. Thomas Fortune House.

Those in attendance are pictured below

Front left to right: Charles Hughes, Sarah Klepner, Gilda Rogers, Lorraine Stone, Cindy Burnham, and Linda Shockley.  
Back, left to right: Randall Gabrielan, Rodney O'Neal, Lynn Humphrey, Ed Zipprich, Peter Primavera, Mel O'Neal, and Al James.





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