

My name is Amelia Ortiz and I would like to welcome you to our ceremony honoring Peg. The Witness Stones Project is a project where we dive deeper into an enslaved person's life. This is the second annual project that has been at Holy Child and in New York as well. We take information about these people's lives and turn them into a place where others can learn more about them. This year's Witness Stones Project will be focused around Peg Lyon's life.

Peg Lyon was a woman who was enslaved by the Lyons and the Merritt family. She was born around 1770, and had 7 children while being enslaved. All of them were boys: Plato, Anthony Jr., Charles, Solomon, Allen, Henry and Jack. Jack was sold away from Peg around 1796, when he was around three years old. Peg was emancipated in the year 1800.

Many enslaved people went through what Peg did. It must have been so hard for them to go through this all their life, while most of them were not emancipated like Peg was. I can't imagine how it must have been for all the enslaved people of the United States and those around the world who are still enslaved. I can't think how cruel someone had to have been to treat someone this way. I can't even imagine how this was so close to, or where I live, in Rye & Portchester. It's such a peaceful area that it's hard to imagine such cruelty existing here. Today we remember Peg through this ceremony and the reflections of my classmates.

My name is Sophia Cantwell and my poem is called "Invisible"

I feel invisible

People see me, but they don't talk

I work as hard as I can, but it's not enough

I can't figure out what's going on, you and I know that this isn't fair

I will work this out

I will have faith

I can do this

I feel invisible

No one can see or hear me

Can you hear me, God?

Are you there?

Help me

I will get through this.

I let him go today

So sad

So bad

I want him back, My boy

I won't see him for a while

I miss him already

In my dreams

All in my imagination

My heart

It's cruel

My boy

My broken heart

It can be fixed

But I want him back soon

He's mine.

Not yours

Give him back to me

I want him back

I feel invisible

No one sees me

But I can see him

He might not be with me

But I see him all the time

He will forever be mine

I feel invisible

My name is Kathryn Harrington and my poem is called *What Life Would Be Like*

Imagine what life would be like

If every day

You had to go through hard, physical labor,

Too much for you to handle.

Imagine what life would be like

If your child was born

And then sold away from you

At such a young age

And forced to do work.

Imagine that feeling of despair

When you realize,

You'll probably never see that child again.

Imagine what life would be like

Not being treated as a human being

But as property

That people could toss around to whoever they want,

Whenever they want,

Wherever they want.

And you have absolutely no say

Whatever.

Getting sold to others

From others

Like a piece of furniture,

Not a human that has feelings.

Imagine what life would be like

If you had no rights

And couldn't make decisions for yourself

But others could.

You are controlled.

Trapped.

Confined.

Imagine what life would be like

Living like this every day.

Being forced to work,

Do whatever your master says,

Whether it is easy work

Or hard.

Imagine what life would be like

As a slave.

My name is Carina Lopez and this is my poem about Peg

Conceived

Spawned

brought up upon this world.

Thrown and trapped into this place of evil

Surrounded by people blinded by hands of their own

Misled into thinking their actions were okay

Thinking "*it's for their own good*"

It wasn't.

It caused us trauma.

Grief

Pain

Suffering

But not for you

No,

Your people are unable to understand our pain.

Unable to comprehend what you made us go through

Because it gave you every benefit you could imagine.

Sold and used like objects

I am not an object.

But still, I am thrown around.

Still their item

Theirs to be walked over and stepped on

To be broken and to be thrown away

You can't change what you are.

No matter how much you try

I already was what I was.

I had a role to play.

To be detained into chains by a life I never knew

But my suffering hadn't reached an end.

No

It had hardly just begun.

July 7, 1790

There I was.

Sold again

20 years of suffering

I guess it hadn't been enough.

Seven children

All abducted from my grasp

My children know your mother loves you.

She holds you dear in her heart.

Forever and always

Henry and Solomon, please forgive me

I never got the chance to see your face one last time.

But please know

I have not forgotten you

There is never a day when you fail to cross my mind.

I can not help but feel this feeling of sorrow and guilt.

I remember you as I did my other children.

Never forget that

because you are just as special

always remember, your mother loves you.

My name is Olivia Michael and this is my poem called "To Know"

To know what It's like to work all day and night

To know what It's like to not be rewarded

To know what It's like to not be able to put up a fight

I don't want to know what it's like

They were forced to know what it's like

To know what It's like to not have a voice

To know what it's like to work for no price

She knew what it was like

They knew what it was like

To know what It's like to have a "master"

To know what It's like to try as hard as you can, but you're still not going faster

To know what it's like to work ten times harder to get a home

To know what it's like to have other people decide if you're free

To know what it's like thinking you're all alone

No one wants to know what it's like

They were forced to know what it's like

To know what it's like to not be able to provide for your child

The whole system was wild

I don't want to know what it's like

They had to know what it's like

My name is Tami Ojo-Carons and this is my poem “Here”

Why am I here?

Stuck in an unfamiliar place

No friends...no family... no one

Why am I here in a place where I'm not a human but an object?

Where no one values me

Where I am unseen

Why am I here being sold to someone else?

Someone I do not even know

Why am I here watching my child being taken away from me?

One by one going to work for someone unknown

Even though I'm free I still work just as hard

Hard enough just to live a normal life

Even though it could never be normal

Why am I here in my final life able to see my children but one?

Why?... why is my child not here?

Finally, I'm free but am

I truly free

With the burden I have to carry

Of all the hard work and suffering

Why am I here?

Why me?

My name is Ali Scala and this is my reflection about Peg

Peg

One name

Three letters

One amazing story that should be remembered

P — Perseverance

Perseverance is the ability to achieve something despite struggles that you might face, and to have the courage to stand up for what you believe in. Peg overcame many challenges throughout her life including her three year old son, only THREE years old being sold and having to work until his twenty fifth birthday. Peg was one of the many enslaved people around the New York/ Connecticut area at this time, and was bought and sold just like a piece of property. Despite this, and many other struggles as well, Peg wanted freedom and was emancipated on April 12, 1800.

E — Empowerment

When we tell Peg's story, we are empowered to learn the hard history of the past, and to build a better and brighter future. When we tell her story, we gain a deeper understanding about the unfairness and cruelty of slavery. We also get the opportunity to pass on these stories and knowledge, so that people don't avoid the parts of history that are hard to imagine, rather accept and acknowledge them.

G — Gumption

Gumption means to be determined and full of courage. Peg was pretty much the definition of this word, working hard to afford land for her and her seven sons. In conclusion, Peg's story is one that should be passed on, so we as a community can remember and honor the important people and stories of the past.

My name is Ryleigh Wright and these are my poems about Peg

The enslaver worked the life out of the enslaved

Earning the reward for their labor

Slaves tossed to shrivel into bits

While they preached “Thou shall love thy neighbor”...?

Neighbor can not be defined by skin

So let this new era begin

Where we uplift and applaud

For our differences and flaws

But not just to find a resolution

But because at the end of the day

We’re all human

And let not the enslaved of the past be forgotten

For we are the past, and without it, we are nothing

Words are helium

Every pin that she takes

Is strategically placed

By the enslavers trying to deflate her

Hoping that she will surrender

The roof kept her from rising up

But she rose

The trees kept her

But she rose

And up she will go

Because we can not forget her soul

The way she was sold

Working in the freezing cold

She rose

Continue she will rise

As we give her the gas

Knowing that she'll pass

Distance between us? lightyears

As we tell her story

Knowing that she lived right here

Rising...

Suffering

Lots of

Ages

Viewed and

Endured which

Robbed

Years