



## ***T. Thomas Fortune Project***

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

RED BANK- Council members unanimously passed a resolution at its first working session on January 8, 2014 declaring February as T. Thomas Fortune month in the borough. The resolution was introduced by, Cindy Burnham, who was recently elected to the council. February is nationally designated as Black History Month and the resolution serves as a formal recognition to a great human rights activist.

Born into slavery, Fortune's trailblazing rise as a firestorm journalist, publisher and writer rebuked the government's failed attempt at Reconstruction, which led to the rise of Jim Crow and black code laws. Fortune has been credited with being the bridge to the modern day Civil Rights Movement. In 1880, he formed the "Afro American League," which was a pre-cursor to the NAACP.

From 1901 to 1911, Fortune resided at the home he called, Maple Hill, at 94 West Bergen Avenue. which today is 94 Drs. James Parker Boulevard.

While living there he entertained the likes of black leaders, such as, Booker T. Washington. He edited the works of Marcus Garvey and others of that ilk.

The home is among 55 National Historic Landmarks in the state and only one of two NHLs associated with African American history. In 2007, Councilman Ed Zipprich nominated the TTF home to "Preservation New Jersey" 10 most endangered sites.

"We're hoping someone will come along with a very big wallet and buy it," said Councilman Zipprich, whose involvement with the T. Thomas Fortune Project, along with Burnham, are working to save and preserve the home.

In 2013, the T. Thomas Fortune Project, which consists of a committee of concerned citizens and experts in the field of historic preservation, was formed to raise funds toward the purchase of the home. The committee's nonprofit lead agent is the Red Bank Men's Club Foundation. It has held fundraising campaigns and community forums to bring awareness to the plight of the home and to get the community involved in the cause."

Our concerted effort is to preserve and restore the home to serve as a grand cultural community center,"said Gilda Rogers, who is the chairperson of the programming committee of the T. Thomas Fortune Project. "We'd like to see it become a vibrant showcase of Red Bank history and a destination."

The committee's Project Director, Peter Primavera, is a 30-year veteran in the field of historic preservation, with extensive experience working with National Historic Landmarks . The home is currently owned by the Vacarelli family and the committee is in negotiations with the family. The home has been vacant since 2006.

For additional information contact: [thomasfortunehouse@gmail.com](mailto:thomasfortunehouse@gmail.com).

All donations can be made payable to The Red Bank Men's Club Foundation: P.O. Box 2235 Westside Station, Red Bank, N.J. 07701.



#### **RALLY FOR TTF HOUSE**

**The T. Thomas Fortune Preservation Project consists of a group of educators, architects, writers, attorneys, performance artists, and more who are working to save the T. Thomas Fortune House, a little-known National Historic Landmark in Red Bank, New Jersey.**



**Please don't forget to send in your donation to [Save the home of T. Thomas Fortune](https://rally.org/savettfhouse) located at 94 Drs. James Parker Blvd., Red Bank, New Jersey, <https://rally.org/savettfhouse>**

**We hope you will become a [Fan Supporter](#) and help us Raise money to Save T. Thomas Fortune House. You can Save T. Thomas Fortune House by personalizing your own fundraising page and sharing your story with your friends. <https://rally.org/savettfhouse/start>**

#### **PURCHASE TTF T-SHIRT**

**T. Thomas Fortune T-Shirt  
\$20 Adult Sizes S-2XL**



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rendering of the house by local artist Mike Quon. h  
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