



# THE VINE

News from Wistariahurst Museum

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## Creating Holyoke: Immigrants' and Migrants' Search for Community



In Spring 2007, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) awarded a \$44,900 grant to the City of Holyoke and Wistariahurst Museum, in partnership with Holyoke Heritage State Park, the Children's Museum at Holyoke, the Holyoke History Room of the Holyoke Public Library and Enchanted Circle Theater. The prestigious grant will allow these partner organizations to develop a city-wide exhibit on immigration and migration to Holyoke. The final project entitled *Creating Holyoke: Immigrants' and Migrants' Search for Community*, will explore the urban and industrial history of Holyoke through the voices and stories of her immigrants and migrants. Based on the themes of Industry & Opportunity, Family &

Children, and Leisure & Cultural Life the exhibits will tell the story of the people who came to Holyoke and created a new life and community. The city-wide exhibit will draw audiences to Holyoke from across the region to learn about the city's rich past and take part in associated programming. Project goals include exploring the historical complexity of the American Dream, particularly as conditions changed over time and placing an emphasis on the notion that while immigrants and migrants were being shaped by their new lives in Holyoke, they were active agents in changing the opportunities and cultural life of the city.

With the NEH grant, \$25,000 in in-kind services already committed, and a cash match of \$15,000, partners in the project will have the resources to conduct market research, to finalize exhibit planning documents and programming concepts, to develop fundraising plans, and to formalize partner relationships for final project implementation. With all of this in place, the City of Holyoke will be in a position to return to the National Endowment for Humanities for up to \$300,000 for project implementation.

The lead component of the final project includes historical exhibits at three sites:

- 1) Holyoke Heritage State Park will provide an exhibit on opportunity, industry and labor;
- 2) The Children's Museum at Holyoke will provide a hands-on exhibit and activities on families and children;
- 3) Wistariahurst Museum will explore immigrants' and migrants' recreational, cultural, and religious activities

Accompanying programs will include theatrical productions, lectures, concerts, walking and driving tours of the city, professional development workshops for teachers, adult and youth programs, and outdoor ethnic festivals. In addition, exhibit panels will be placed at significant historical sites throughout the city. *Creating Holyoke* will engage the community on both the shared experiences and the differences that make up the mosaic of today's Holyoke. This project has very real potential to draw visibility and tourism to the City of Holyoke and we need your help! If you are interested in discussing the project further, or have questions about matching donations, please call the museum or email Kate Thibodeau at [kate@wistariahurst.org](mailto:kate@wistariahurst.org). Thank you so much for your support!

**Wistariahurst Museum**

238 Cabot Street, Holyoke, MA 01040

413-322-5660 [www.wistariahurst.org](http://www.wistariahurst.org)

# Celebrating the History of Puerto Ricans in Holyoke

## An Exhibit by YouthBuild Holyoke Students



YouthBuild Holyoke students developed this project logo as part of their research on the history of Puerto Ricans in Holyoke.

The journey of exploring Puerto Rican history in Holyoke began for YouthBuild students and Wistariahurst in the summer of 2006, when we received a \$9,788 grant from The History Channel as part of the national *Save Our History* program. The culmination of this project began with the opening of “Celebrating the History of Puerto Ricans in Holyoke” on June 2, 2007. The students and community unveiled their research in the form of an interactive and multi-media exhibit in Wistariahurst’s music room.

YouthBuild Holyoke students researched the history of Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans, interviewed families, friends and locals about their experiences, and prepared documentaries on various topics of importance to Puerto Ricans in Holyoke.

The opening of the exhibit was in conjunction with a maskmaking workshop with Angel Sanchez Ortiz, a forum on Latino Race issues in Holyoke and a Block Party & Potluck with Conjunto de Bomba. “Celebrating the History of Puerto Ricans in Holyoke” not only created an exhibit that can be displayed throughout the Pioneer Valley, but it also built a permanent alliance between Wistariahurst Museum and a number of historical and educational organizations in the City of Holyoke and the surrounding community! This exhibit is designed to travel; if your organization is interested in hosting the exhibit, please contact the museum. Special thanks to our project sponsors: Save Our History, The History Channel, Comcast, Lowes, American Express, GetSet Printing and TigerPress!



## *‘Timeless Inscapes’*

### Exhibition by Vitek Kruta

Vitek J. P. Kruta, born in Prague, is a professional artist, muralist, art restorer, designer and teacher. Mr. Kruta was trained in the old-world techniques of fine and decorative arts in Czech Republic and Germany, where he attended schools and worked as restorer of historical buildings, castles and churches before coming to the United States in 1991. His work has been featured in exhibitions in the Czech Republic, France, Germany, the United States and Canada. Vitek Kruta will be showing a series of paintings entitled ‘Timeless Inscapes’ at Wistariahurst from September 1 to October 29, 2007. Inscapes’ are one of a kind, hand built of wood and wood composite. They are finished with acrylic paints and varnishes, and sometimes with gold or silver leaf. The artist explains, “*Inscapes’ express the ‘inner world’ I live in and explore. They represent peace, solitude, contemplation, meditation, relaxation, and healing. Their doors are wide and open, inviting the viewer into images of places and landscapes drawn from my memory, molded by the feelings and thoughts I experience.*” Mr. Kruta’s exhibit also feature works in collaboration with artists Jeff Margolin and John Brickles. An opening reception will be held on Sunday, September 9 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. The reception will provide an opportunity to meet Mr. Kruta and view his works. This event is part of an exciting line-up of fall programs sponsored by the Massachusetts Festival of the Arts (MIFA) included in the Fall Festival. Since his arrival to United States, Mr. Kruta continues his carrier as freelance artist, designer and art restorer, teacher, instructor and consultant for various public and not for profit organizations and groups, schools and business associates.

# “Connection... and Isolation”:

## Cultural Identities in Holyoke



Photograph courtesy of the Morrison Family.

Holyoke’s history holds an even more powerful story than the development of a mill town. It is a story of cultural identities that began with the first wave of immigrants to our fair city. The impact of immigrants and migrants on the city of Holyoke and our continuing identities remains particularly strong today. Many Americans who come from immigrant ancestors no longer identify with a particular ethnic group. Others strongly identify with their ethnic heritage. This exhibit will examine the identity of Holyoke’s past, present and future as well as reflect on what cultural identities remain in today’s Holyoke. Come explore *your* identity and the identity of Holyoke in the upcoming exhibit, “*Connection.... and Isolation*”: *Cultural Identities in Holyoke*, opening on November 3 from 12 - 4 p.m. The exhibit will remain on display through the end of December. This is Wistariahurst Museum’s final installation of a four-part exhibit series on immigration and migration to Holyoke, Massachusetts.



*The exhibit on immigration and migration to Holyoke was funded in part by the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities. Please see our list of upcoming events for more information on the exhibit and programming.*

## Updates:

As you may know, Executive Director Carol Constant left Wistariahurst in June after 5 years of excellent leadership. Today, the organization is strong, the staff is focused and Wistariahurst is fully operational during the transition period. A search committee has been working throughout the summer and we expect to hire a vibrant, new Executive Director this fall.



This Historic House: The dining room at Wistariahurst underwent restoration work this summer. Due to termite damage, the parquet floor was removed to address the damage and relaid with the help of A.R. Green Contractors. Additionally, the Friends of Wistariahurst sponsored the refurbishing of the silk wall covering. Janet Lyon Interiors installed new silk to grace the walls for a final touch. Additionally, the original breakfront from the Skinner family has been restored and placed back in the dining room. Furnishings from the collection have contributed to the overall restoration of the dining room.

Wistariahurst will host a grand re-opening of the dining room on Sunday, September 16 at 3 p.m. with a brief presentation and small reception. We welcome you to join us for this event. New additions have been re-introduced throughout the Skinner family home. As an enhancement to the historic house tour, visitors will be pleased to see new furnishings in the house.



**WISTARIAHURST MUSEUM**

238 Cabot Street  
Holyoke, MA 01040

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U.S. Postage  
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Holyoke, MA

**Wistariahurst Museum Staff**

Interim Director / Event &  
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Melissa Boisselle

Curator  
Kate Navarra Thibodeau

Weekend Supervisor  
Julie Bullock

Maintenance Supervisor  
Jerry Deschenes

Maintenance Associate  
Thomas Wilhelmi

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## **Destination Holyoke: *Ticket to Holyoke's History***

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Support History Programming by Purchasing a HISTORY TICKET

**\$30 – Single    \$40 – Dual    \$50 – Family**

A HISTORY TICKET allows you free admission to all History Talks and History Exhibits (the starred listings on the calendar of events). In addition you will receive a \$3.00 discount on hands-on history workshops scheduled this Spring. Most of all it entitles you to the exquisite feeling that you are directly supporting history programming at Wistariahurst! Corporate sponsors receive additional benefits. Please call the museum for details. Make checks payable to “Wistariahurst Museum” and send to: 238 Cabot Street, Holyoke, MA 01040. Indicate what level of support you would like, along with a phone number.

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### **I support History Programming at Wistariahurst!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number/ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I would like a

single ticket (\$30 or \$20 seniors)

dual ticket (\$40 or \$30 seniors)

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I am enclosing a check of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in additional benefits through corporate sponsorship