

# PROMISED LAND AS PROVING GROUND



## Media Kit

### Exhibition

Promised Land as Proving Ground

Opening September 2023

### Where

Conner Prairie Museum

13400 Allisonville Road, Fishers IN 46038

### FAQs

#### **What is Promised Land as Proving Ground?**

Promised Land as Proving Ground is Conner Prairie's newest permanent exhibition that highlights the African American faith experience in Indiana, exploring the origins of the Black spiritual experience to expressions of the African American faith in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including how African American faith ways are expressed through food, music and dance, and activism.

The experience will encompass centuries of African American history from pre-colonial Africa to the present day, exploring how American values like resiliency, optimism, and spirituality are reflected in African American history and culture.

#### **What does Promised Land as Proving Ground Mean?**

As a free state, Indiana represented a Promised Land for some African American families, who arrived filled with hope for economic opportunities, independence, and freedom from racism, racial violence, and other forms of oppression. It also served as a Proving Ground for this freedom, a place to develop African American faith and challenge American democracy.

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## **When does Promised Land as Proving Ground Open?**

Promised Land as Proving Ground will open in September 2023. Because the immersive experience will be interwoven throughout Prairietown and other areas of Conner Prairie, guests will see a few elements appearing throughout this spring.

## **How is Promised Land as Proving Ground Different from Conner Prairie's Other Exhibits?**

Promised Land as Proving Ground is the first time Conner Prairie has created an experience that tells the more accurate story of Indiana's history.

- It moves away from a first-person narrative told by the "residents" of Prairietown, to encourage present-day dialogue and conversations about the impact of the African American community on Indiana's past and its present.
- In the past, Conner Prairie's exhibit narratives began with enslavement. With Promised Land as Proving Ground, this will change. The experience will begin with pre-colonial Africa and continue through present day.

## **Where is Promised Land as Proving Ground Located?**

The fully immersive experience will be interwoven throughout Prairietown and other areas of Conner Prairie, starting with the Origins Cabin.

## **What will guests experience when they visit Promised Land as Proving Ground?**

Promised Land as Proving Ground will incorporate audio-visual components, experiential, hands-on and augmented reality to fully immerse guests in the experience and to encourage dialogue about the African American experience in Indiana. For more details, visit [connerprairie.org](https://connerprairie.org)

## **Why did Conner Prairie create this experience?**

Promised Land as Proving Ground is the beginning of an intentional evolution to achieve Conner Prairie's mission of inspiring curiosity and fostering learning through engaging and individualized experiences for everyone. Conner Prairie acknowledges that it has not accurately portrayed the entire history of Indiana in the past, specifically the history of African American settlers and other People of Color. We are committed to telling the stories of all Hoosiers in a way that is historically accurate, comprehensive, and inclusive.

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## **Is Conner Prairie telling the stories of other minority and underrepresented populations? How?**

Conner Prairie is working diligently to incorporate the stories of People of Color, indigenous peoples and other communities that were previously overlooked, into its existing exhibits to allow guests to learn about and experience the complete history of Indiana. Immediately following the opening of Promised Land as Proving Ground, Conner Prairie will be creating a new, comprehensive experience focused on telling the story of indigenous peoples in Indiana, including the Lenape people.

## **Who is leading the creation of Promised Land as Proving Ground?**

Charlene J. Fletcher, Ph.D., is spearheading the creation of Promised Land as Proving Ground and is Conner Prairie's Director of Curatorial Affairs. Dr. Fletcher is an Indianapolis native and is also the Emerging Voices Postdoctoral Research Associate in Slavery and Justice at Brown University. She holds a doctorate in United States History from Indiana University, specializing in 19<sup>th</sup> Century American South, African American History and Gender Studies.

## **Where can I find more information about Promised Land as Proving Ground?**

To learn more visit [connerprairie.org](http://connerprairie.org)

## **Community Partnerships**

Asante Art Institute of Indianapolis

Anthony "Baba Tony" Artis

Center for Africana Studies & Culture at IUPUI

Living Word Baptist Church

Green Thumb Garden Patrol

Indianapolis Garden Club

Purdue Extension Master Gardeners

Spirit and Place

Witherspoon Presbyterian Church

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Photo of the Origins Cabin of the Promised Land as Proving Ground exhibition at Conner Prairie Museum. Credit: Conner Prairie

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Photo of inside the Origins Cabin of the Promised Land as Proving Ground exhibition at Conner Prairie Museum. Credit: Conner Prairie

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Photo of Director of Curatorial Affairs at Conner Prairie Dr. Charlene Fletcher. Credit: Conner Prairie

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