

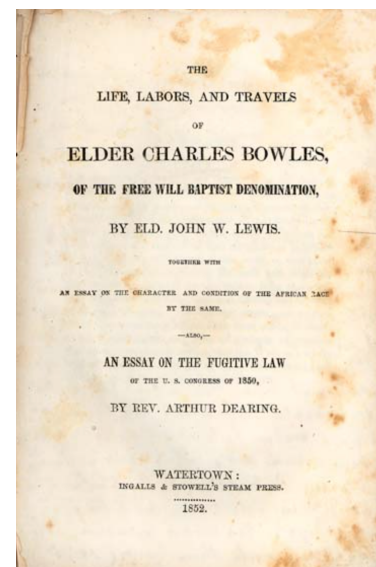
Invitation from Huntington Historical and Community Trust!
October 4th Lecture:

**Fire, Brimstone, and Sacred Groves:
The Life and Legacy of Charles Bowles, Huntington's
Early 19th Century Black Preacher**



As religious fervor spread across New England communities between 1790 and 1840, thousands of Vermonters experienced evangelical conversion under the preaching ministry of Charles Bowles, an African American itinerant Baptist minister, a Revolutionary War veteran, and an early landowner in Huntington. Who was Charles Bowles? What was his North Country geographic influence? How do we understand this notable figure in our town's history? What does Charles Bowles' story teach us about race, religion, and rural life?

Sometime in the late summer of 1816, a young, black Revolutionary War veteran arrived on horseback in Huntington, Vermont. Charles Bowles served from the early Battle of Bunkerhill (MA) and to the end of the war on battlefields of present-day New England and the Mid-Atlantic. In Huntington and across the North Country, he navigated many identities: an indentured Massachusetts childhood; a Revolutionary war veteran, a farm and ship laborer in New Hampshire, an intrepid traveler, a close friend to early state leaders such as Judge Butler of Vermont, an early landowner in the newly formed town of Huntington, a believer in a promising evangelical Christianity, a powerful orator and preacher who converted thousands across the region and North Country in the Free Will Baptist tradition during the early nineteenth century, and a lover of the Huntington landscape, which he called his "grove" for prayer and reflection.



Families converted under Bowles' ministry would build the town's first church building, shared by both Free Will and Standing Baptist groups. Historical records describe how the life of this building began

with the humble sourcing of neighboring timber and the raising of funds through the sale of goose eggs. As the thriving religious community eventually changed, the building served as the town of Huntington's first town hall and then its first volunteer fire department. The "Old Firehouse" remains Huntington's oldest town building today and speaks to a storied history of service to the town.



Join the exciting lecture from Dr. Amy Howe, PhD, on October 4th to learn more about what we know of the life of an early Huntington Free Will Baptist minister and settler, Charles Bowles, the evangelical awakening moments he shared and influenced, and the ways he might have shaped our religious and political lives in town, across the North Country. Come learn about the history of the Old Firehouse and current active preservation efforts.

Date: October 4th 7:30pm at Huntington Town Hall

Join us for a light reception at the Old Firehouse building beginning at 6:30pm, our HHCT Business meeting at 7:00pm and keynote lecture by Dr. Howe beginning at 7:30

This lecture is provided by Amy Howe. Amy holds her Ph.D. in the Study of Religion from Harvard University and specializes in American religious history, culture studies, and race and gender studies. She is a Huntington resident, member of the Old Firehouse committee, Huntington Racial Equity Committee, and board member of Huntington Historical and Community Trust. She currently teaches at Champlain College and Smith College. The work of this project is supported by the Huntington Historical and Community Trust and Champlain College.



