

Terra Cotta Hayride Tour

Terra Cotta is among the last of the all Black communities left in America where we can trace its history back to its beginnings. As the community ages there is a definite fear of the community being lost to the passage of time. We want to help lighten the burden for those few who still remain and share our rich history with a broader audience. To this end, the *Terra Cotta Heritage Foundation* will launch the *Terra Cotta Hayride Tour* by May 2017. We will bring Terra Cotta's history alive for young people between the ages of 5-15 by creating a living history community similar to Williamsburg in Virginia or Plymouth Town in Massachusetts. The hayride tour will offer a glimpse into rural American life during the mid-1900s. Participants will ride a hay-filled wagon through the Terra Cotta community. They will have the opportunity to see a local garden, a family water well, an outhouse, a chicken coop, and a rabbit pen. They will ride with a minstrel who will entertain them with folklore and songs. Participants will have the opportunity to meet with Terra Cotta residents and hear what life was like during those early years. The hayride will be followed by an interactive walking tour of the *Terra Cotta Heritage Museum* and they will be given an opportunity to make and play with toys of that era. Each participant will be given a bag of popcorn, a hot dog, a soda and a bag of cotton candy to carry home to remember the experience.

This project's relevance lies in its ability to bridge the gap between the past and the present. By exposing youth to the opportunity to gain an understanding of how the past forged the present, they will be able to envision viable solutions for today's problems

We anticipate that the hayride will operate March to November with high season being June to September. The cost of the hayride tour will be \$10 per person. The Hayride wagon will accommodate up to 15 passengers per ride and we plan to run three tours per day. Initially we will operate on Saturdays only, expanding to daily operation during high season. We estimate that we will operate a minimum of 100 days per year.

All of the elements needed to execute our plan are in place. We have received overwhelming community support; however, the community's capacity is limited and we are currently seeking to partner with various churches, colleges, civic groups, and individuals who will provide us with a constant and robust volunteer pool.

