

Call & Response

News from the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission

Winter 2009 Volume IV, Number 1

Message from the Chair

Leon A. Love, Chairperson



I am pleased to accept the chairmanship of the SCAAHC. I will do all I can to lead this movement through some of its most exciting times. This year we are committed to expanding our base through partnerships and collaborations with individuals, academic centers, faith and community-based organizations committed to the preservation and celebration of the contributions of African Americans who helped build SC and many other parts of these United States.

First may I congratulate those who led this effort for the past 16 years, two of which I have had the pleasure of serving with as fellow commissioners. The Rev. Michael Allen provided a commitment and leadership second to none. His persistent effort to shine the spotlight on the Gullah/Geechee influences on South Carolina and our region is paying off. Recently, he became Coordinator of the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor. Michael remains a great commissioner and I will rely on his wisdom, contacts and experience throughout my tenure as chair.

Past Chairperson and current Vice Chair, Jannie Harriot did so much to raise the bar of the Commission. She has worked full time promoting the preservation and celebration of the contributions of African Americans. We are blessed to have such a committed commission with the time and passion to push this movement forward.

I am committed to expanding our base. We are off to a great start this year. It all started with our annual meeting 's promoting and highlighting our connection with Barbados. We had an international meeting which not only focused on our connection to the past, but discussed with some awesome workshop leaders how we can build on the connection through education and economic trade relationships. We have an archived copy of the presentation on the connection available through the Foundation.

South Carolina is cheating herself if she fails to promote the rich history of African Americans. The history cannot be separated any longer. If we are going to enjoy a glorious future we must understand the creativity, productivity, ingenuity and faith of those who made the way for all of us. We stand ready to join with you in preserving and promoting a true and inclusive history of our great state. I look forward to working with you.

The mission of the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission is to identify and promote the preservation of historic sites, structures, buildings, and culture of the African American experience in South Carolina and to assist and enhance the efforts of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History.



<http://www.state.sc.us/scdah/afamer/hpaahcommission.htm>

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In The News

Annual Meeting & Awards Banquet 2009

Joseph McGill, Jr.

The SCAAHC held its Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet on Thursday and Friday, January 22 - 23 at the Brookland Baptist Church Banquet and Conference Center in West Columbia. The event was titled: *Preserving Our Places in History : The Barbados Link*. The Commission drew attention to a major component of our Palmetto State's rich historical and cultural connections with the Caribbean island of Barbados. The Commission explored many traditions and folkways that have linked South Carolina with Barbados for centuries. The guests of honor at the event were Mrs. Selma Thompson, Tourism Development Officer for the Barbados Ministry of Tourism and secretary of the Barbados/Carolina Connection Committee; and Dr. Karl Watson, Professor of History, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill and Barbados/Carolina Connection Committee Chairman.

The Commission's quarterly meeting on Thursday preceded the annual meeting. Officers were elected and several guest speakers gave presentations, along with reports from the various sub-committees.

The Annual meeting opening session that afternoon concluded with a PowerPoint presentation by Commission member Alada Shinault-Small titled *Welding New Understanding of an Ancient Chain – The South Carolina/Barbados Link*. It was an exploration of the numerous links between SC and Barbados. A question, answer and discussion session followed that included Alada, Selma Thompson, and Dr. Karl Watson.

One highlight on Friday was a panel discussion titled "*The Barbados Link*." Panelists included: Mrs. Joy Barnes, Author; Dr. Walter Edgar, University of South Carolina History Department; Mrs. Rhoda Green, Barbados Honorary Consul to SC; Dr. Daniel Littlefield; University of SC History Department; Dr. Bernard Powers, College of Charleston History Department; and Mrs. Thompson.

The Commission's second *Trailblazer Award*,



Friday panelists left to right: Ms. Thompson, Dr. Powers, Ms. Green (the 2009 Trailblazer Award recipient), Dr. Edgar, Ms. Barnes, & Dr. Littlefield. SCAAHC member Michael Allen (far right) facilitated the session.

that had only been awarded prior in 2007, honors Mrs. Rhoda Green and Mr. Bobby Ginn of the Ginn Company. The Commission honors Charleston resident Rhoda Green for her steadfast diligence in being on the front line in disseminating information and research on the SC/Barbados connection for over 20 years. Bobby Ginn is being honored for his company's success in saving Morris Island (where the Massachusetts 54th made its historic assault on Battery Wagner during the Civil War) from development by purchasing it, then reselling the island to the City of Charleston at a substantially lower price.



A silent auction complemented this year's annual meeting that

included an array of items representing both Barbadian and SC heritage. It raised approximately \$600.00 for the Commission's SCAAH Foundation. Some of the auction goodies are shown above.



Left: Selma Thompson, representing the Barbados Ministry of Tourism, was one of two international visitors to present at the annual meeting. The other was professor Karl Watson (seen on pg. 5 in the sixth picture, 2nd column on the far left.) There, he is standing with the Friday panelists.

Photos by Abel Bartley

In The News Continued

The SCAAHC extends endless thanks to all 2009 Annual Meeting sponsors and contributors:

Sponsors:

Time Warner Cable
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Contributors:

American Legacy Magazine, New York, NY; Arlington House Museum, Speightstown, Barbados; Avery Research Center, College of Charleston; Barbados Ministry of Tourism; Frames & Things, Columbia; Historic Columbia Foundation; Jeffrey Callaham, The Story Teller-Artist, McCormick; LaToya C. Thompson, "Artist Vision," Nesmith; M. Jeannette Lee, Mt. Pleasant; Medford Craft World, St. Michael, Barbados; Middleton Place Foundation, Charleston; Nikki Island Treasurez, Christ Church, Barbados; Plaque Attack, North Charleston; South Carolina Archives & History Foundation, Columbia; South Carolina Arts Commission; South Carolina National Heritage Corridor, Aiken; The Penn Center, St. Helena Island; Ultimate Gullah, Conway; and Video Records, Inc., Isle of Palms.

Preserving Our Places In History Awards 2009

On January 22nd, the SCAAHC presented its fourth annual *Preserving Our Places in History* awards at a banquet at the Brookland Baptist Church Banquet & Conference Center. The awards recognize individuals, organizations and groups, and projects that have made major contributions to the preservation of African American history and culture in South Carolina during the past year.

This year's winners are (photos by Abel Bartley):



The **Individual Award** goes to **Harlan Greene** of the Avery Research Center at the College of Charleston. Mr. Greene, left, receives his award from state Sen. John Scott.



The **Organization/Group Award** goes to **David Williams & The Williams Muscadine Vineyard & Farm**, Nesmith. Mr. Williams accepts their award from Ms. Mary Anne Jacobs of Time Warner Cable.

Preserving Our Places In History Awards 2009 continued



The **Project Award** goes to the **Carolina Low Country & Atlantic World Program (CLAW)** at the College of Charleston. Dr. Simon Lewis, center, accepts the award from representatives from state Sen. Darrell Jackson's and Rep. Leon Howard's offices.



The **Lifetime Achievement Award** goes to **The Penn Center**, St. Helena Island. Representatives from Penn Center accept their award from SCAAHC Vice Chair Jannie Harriot and Ms. Jacobs.

More Images from the 2009 Annual Meeting



Photos by
Abel Bartley

News from the South Carolina Department of Archives and History

Elizabeth M. Johnson
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Stimulus Funding for Preservation Projects at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act includes \$15 million in federal grant funding for preservation projects at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs.) **The application deadline is April 10, 2009.** The application is on the NPS website :

<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/hpg/hbcu/index.htm>.

The minimum request is \$100,000, the maximum is \$2.5 million, and there is no match requirement. Projects must be completed within three years. As with all federally funded projects with the potential to affect historic properties, the State Historic Preservation Office will review grant-funded projects in the state.

Recent National Register of Historic Places Listings

Three properties in South Carolina associated with African American history were recently listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is a list of places important in our local, state, and national history that are worthy of recognition and preservation.

The ***Hannah Rosenwald School*** in Newberry County was listed in the National Register on January 22, 2009. It is significant for its role in African American education during segregation in SC and as an example of Rosenwald school design. The Julius Rosenwald Fund focused on providing monies for the construction of modern school buildings for rural African American children in the South. Built in 1924-25, the Hannah Rosenwald School replaced the older Free Hannah School. Hannah School closed in the 1960s when it was consolidated with the Newberry and Silverstreet schools. For more information please see :

<http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/newberry/S10817736032/index.htm>.

The ***Pine Grove Rosenwald School***, near Columbia in Richland County, was listed in the National Register on January 29, 2009. It represents the modernization of African American education in a period marked by discriminatory school funding, and is also an important reminder of the educational improvements brought about by the philanthropic efforts of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, which constructed over 5,000 schools in fifteen Southern states from 1917 to 1932. Built in 1923, the school is a wood-frame, one-story rectangular gable-front building with a V-crimp tin metal roof. For more information please see:

<http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/richland/S10817740144/index.htm>.

Wesley Methodist Church, on Gervais Street in downtown Columbia, was also listed in the National Register on January 29th. The church, built in 1910-11, illustrates the impact of segregation in the lives of African Americans during the Jim Crow era in Columbia. Because it is a historically African American church, Wesley helps to explain religious segregation, particularly within the Methodist denomination. This handsome brick building is also significant as a good example of Late Gothic Revival church architecture in Columbia in the early twentieth century, and as an excellent example of the work of Columbia architect Arthur W. Hamby. For more information please see:

<http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/richland/S10817740145/index.htm>

Recent South Carolina Historical Markers

Editor's Note: You will notice that 10 of these recently-approved markers are the result of a very successful collaboration between Historic Columbia Foundation, the City of Columbia and the state Department of Transportation. For more info on this project, see : <http://www.thestate.com/local/story/678034.html> .

The Department of Archives and History has recently approved the text for the following historical markers. Please note that all of these markers may not have been erected yet. After the text is approved, the markers must be manufactured and installed. Contact Tracy Power at (803) 896-6182 or power@scdah.state.sc.us if you want more information about these or other markers. (continued)

SCDAH News continued

Cherry Grove Christian Church, Brunson, Hampton County - this African American church, a congregation of the Disciples of Christ, was founded in 1855 by members of Three Mile Creek Christian Church. A Rev. Ervin was its first pastor, and it met in a brush arbor before building its first sanctuary here. The present brick church was built in 2002. Erected by the Congregation, 2009.

Brutontown, Rutherford Road, Greenville - this historic African American community grew up around the intersection of Paris Mountain and Rutherford Rds. Benjamin Bruton, a mulatto freedman, bought 1.75 acres here in 1874. He built a house and blacksmith shop, labeled "Bruton's Shop" on Kyzer's 1882 map of Greenville County. Other blacks, a few of them tradesmen like Bruton but mostly tenant farmers, soon moved to this area. By 1880, sixty African American families lived here. The community on both sides of Rutherford Rd. was known as "Brutontown" by about 1900. In 1921, farm land was subdivided into town lots, in an area 2 blocks deep and 6 blocks wide. Bruton Temple Baptist Church, the first church here, was founded in 1921. By 1930, Brutontown numbered about 300 residents. The three-acre "Society Burial Ground" on Leo Lewis St., dating from before the Civil War, includes many graves of former slaves, free blacks, and freedmen. Erected by the Greenville County Redevelopment Authority, 2009.

Allen University, Columbia, Richland County
Allen University - chartered in 1880, was founded by the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. It had its origin in Payne Institute, founded in 1870 in Cokesbury, in Greenwood County. In 1880, the SC Conference of the AME Church voted to move Payne Institute to Columbia. It opened in there in 1881 and was renamed in honor of Bishop Richard Allen (1760-1831), founder of the AME Church. The first university building on this site was in use by 1888. The University, founded to educate ministers for the AME Church, also had primary and secondary courses, and college-level liberal arts courses. It also offered courses in the arts and had one of the few black law schools in the South before 1900. Its primary and secondary programs ended in the 1920s

and 1930s. Allen was also a significant center for civil rights activities in Columbia from the 1930s-1960s. Erected by Historic Columbia Foundation, the City of Columbia, and the SC Department of Transportation, 2009.

North Carolina Mutual Building, Columbia, Richland County - built in 1909 by the NC Mutual and Provident Association, a black-owned life insurance company with an office here until the mid-1930s. Built as a two-story commercial building, with a third story added after 1927, it was part of the Washington Street business district, an important part of Columbia's African American community for most of the 20th century. This building had stores on the first floor and offices on the upper floors. First-floor tenants included barbers and beauticians, tailors and dressmakers, and restaurants. Second and third floor tenants included insurance agents, doctors, and lawyers. The Palmetto Grand Lodge owned the building from 1927 to the early 1940s. The building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1995. Erected by Historic Columbia Foundation, the City of Columbia, and the SC Department of Transportation, 2009.

Sidney Park CME Church, Columbia, Richland County - founded in 1886 and has been at this site since 1889. It grew out of a dispute among members of Bethel A.M.E. Church, who left that congregation and applied to join the Colored Methodist Episcopal (now Christian Methodist Episcopal) Church. The congregation acquired this site in 1886 and built its first sanctuary, a frame building, in 1889. That church burned by 1892. This Gothic Revival brick church, built in 1893, was constructed by members who provided materials and labor. In the 1930s many members joined the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the church later hosted many meetings during the Civil Rights Movement. Sidney Park was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1996. Erected by the Historic Columbia Foundation, the City of Columbia, and the SC Department of Transportation, 2009.

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SCDAH News continued

Good Samaritan-Waverly Hospital, Columbia, Richland County - created in 1938 by the merger of two older hospitals, it served the black community of Columbia for 35 years. It merged Good Samaritan Hospital, founded in 1910 by Dr. William S. Rhodes and his wife Lillian, and Waverly Hospital, founded in 1924 by Dr. Norman A. Jenkins and his four brothers. The hospitals competed for the same doctors, nurses, and patients for several years. By the mid-1930s, the Duke Endowment and the Rosenwald Fund recommended a merger of the two hospitals to improve the quality of health care for blacks in Columbia and surrounding counties. This building, the first in Columbia built specifically as a hospital for blacks, opened in 1952. After the new integrated Richland Memorial Hospital opened in 1972, Good Samaritan-Waverly Hospital closed the next year. Erected by Historic Columbia Foundation, the City of Columbia, and the SC Department of Transportation, 2009.

Matilda A. Evans House, Columbia, Richland County - Dr. Matilda A. Evans (1872-1935), black physician, public health advocate, and civil rights advocate, lived here 1928-1935. Evans, a graduate of the Schofield School in Aiken and Oberlin College, received her MD from the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1897. She moved to Columbia that year and founded the first black hospital in the city in 1901, in a house at Taylor St. and Two Notch Rd. Taylor Lane Hospital & Training School for Nurses, described in 1910 as "a monument to her industry and energy," burned in 1914. Evans soon opened St. Luke's Hospital & Training School for Nurses, which closed in 1918. She served in the US Army Sanitary Corps during World War I and later founded the SC. Good Health Association. Evans, elected president of the black Palmetto Medical Association in 1922, was its first woman president. Erected by Historic Columbia Foundation, the City of Columbia, and the SC Department of Transportation, 2009.

Alston House, Columbia, Richland County - a Greek Revival cottage, built ca. 1872, it was the

residence and business of Caroline Alston, a black businesswoman who lived and ran a dry goods store here as early as 1873. She purchased the house in 1888, becoming one of the few black business owners in Columbia during the period. Alston, known for the "esteem and confidence" of her black and white customers, sold the house in 1906. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. Erected by Historic Columbia Foundation, the City of Columbia, and the SC Department of Transportation, 2009.

Waverly, Columbia, Richland County - has been one of Columbia's most significant black communities since the 1930s. The city's first residential suburb, it grew out of a 60-acre parcel bought by Robert Latta in 1855 and probably takes its name from a novel by Sir Walter Scott. Latta's widow and children sold the first lots here in 1863. Shortly after the Civil War banker and textile manufacturer Lysander D. Childs bought several blocks here for development. Waverly grew for the next 50 years. Railroad and streetcar lines encouraged growth here, and the city annexed Waverly in 1913. Two black colleges, Benedict College and Allen University, drew many African Americans to this area as whites moved to other city suburbs. By the 1930s this community was almost entirely black. The Waverly Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1989. Erected by the Historic Columbia Foundation, the City of Columbia, and the SC Department of Transportation, 2009.

Fair-Rutherford House, Columbia, Richland County - a Greek Revival cottage, stood here from ca. 1850 until it was demolished in 2004. Built for Dr. Samuel Fair, it passed through several owners before 1905, when William H. Rutherford (1852-1910) bought and enlarged it. Rutherford, an African American businessman born a slave, taught school, then made lodge regalia and supplies and briefly co-owned a local cigar factory. The Rutherford House was built in 1924-25 for Carrie Rutherford, daughter-in-law of W.H. Rutherford. Her son Dr. Harry B. Rutherford, Jr. (1911-1980) and his wife Dr. Evaretta Rutherford (1910-1978) were prominent

(continued)

SCDAH News continued

educators, he as a teacher and principal and later a dean at Benedict College, and she as a professor and department chair at Benedict College and Howard University. The house was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. Erected by the Historic Columbia Foundation, the City of Columbia, and the SC Department of Transportation, 2009.

Richard Samuel Roberts House, Columbia, Richland County - Mr. Roberts (1880-1936), a photographer who documented individuals, families, and institutions in Columbia's black community and across SC, lived here from 1920 until his death. Roberts, a self-taught photographer, moved his family from Florida to Columbia and bought this house at 1717 Wayne Street for \$3,000. Roberts and his wife Wilhelmina Williams Roberts (1881-1977) raised their children here. Roberts, who was a full-time custodian at the main Columbia post office, first used an outbuilding here for his photography studio. From 1922 to 1936, his studio was downtown at 1119 Washington Street. Roberts often advertised in the *Palmetto Leader*, the leading black newspaper in SC. Some of Roberts' best photographs were published in 1986 in *A True Likeness: The Black South of Richard Samuel Roberts*. Erected by the Historic Columbia Foundation, the City of Columbia, and the SC Department of Transportation, 2009.

Cooper's Academy / Bethesda Methodist Church, Cades, Williamsburg County - built in 1905-06, was a private boarding school for the black children of this community until 1927, and a public school 1927-1958. Founded by Moses Cooper, H.J. Cooper, and Ada E. Martin, it was first called Cooper's Academy, Normal and Industrial Institute for Colored Youth. The school closed in 1958 when black schools at Battery Park and Cades were consolidated. Bethesda Methodist Church, founded in 1879, was organized in a brush arbor. Its first permanent church, a one-room sanctuary built about 1884, stood 1/4 mi. W. The congregation bought a two-acre site here in 1893, and soon built a one-room frame church.

The church was rebuilt in 1971, during the pastorate of Rev. J.B. Bowen. Erected by the Cooper Academy / Bethesda Methodist Church History Committee, 2009.

Nathaniel J. Frederick House, Columbia, Richland County - Mr. Frederick (1877-1938), educator, lawyer, newspaper editor, and civil rights activist, lived here from 1904 until his death. This house was built in 1903 by Cap J. Carroll, a prominent businessman and city official whose daughter Corrine married Frederick in 1904. Frederick, who was educated at Claflin College and the University of Wisconsin, was admitted to the SC bar in 1913. Frederick argued more cases before the Supreme Court of SC than any black lawyer of his day. He won national attention for defending clients accused of murdering a sheriff in *State v. Lowman* (1926), but his clients were later lynched. Frederick was principal of the Howard School 1902-18 and president of the State Negro Teachers Association. He edited the *Palmetto Leader*, the major black newspaper in S.C., 1925-38. Erected by the Historic Columbia Foundation, the City of Columbia, and the SC Department of Transportation, 2009.

State Library Recognizes Teacher's Guide

On March 16, 2009, the South Carolina State Library recognized *A Teacher's Guide to African American Historic Places in South Carolina* as one of the 10 Notable State Documents for 2008. More information and a link to the online version can be found at <http://www.state.sc.us/scdah/afamer/teacherguide.htm> .



Guest Corner

Historic Marker to Commemorate First High School for African Americans on James Island

Great-Great Granddaughter of Booker T. Washington and Fredrick Douglass to Keynote

**Eleanor Kinlaw Ross, Founder and
Executive Director
*Island Heritage Foundation***

Before 1953, African Americans on James Island could only hope for a school where they could advance their education beyond the 7th grade. There was no high school on this rural sea island, once home to over 13 plantations and generations of the descendants of former slaves. In 1953, a “dream deferred” was realized when W. Gresham Meggett School was built, and on June 13, 2009, a historic marker will be unveiled. Ms. Nettie Washington Douglass, the great-great granddaughter of two former slaves, educator and author Booker T. Washington and abolitionist and orator Fredrick Douglass, will offer the event’s key note address as *Island Heritage Celebration* installs the school as a site on the *James Island History Trail*.

From 1951 to 1955, the state of South Carolina built 28 schools in an aggressive effort to equalize the facilities of black schools with white schools under a plan called the Charleston County Equalization Program. At the heart of the plan was Gov. James F. Byrne’s desire to maintain segregation in response to the national call for school integration and the decision rendered because of the landmark Brown vs. the Board of Education case. W. Gresham Meggett was among the many schools established under the plan, see photo on next page.

In honor of its historic distinction, the site is also eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. W. Gresham Meggett served as an elementary and high school from 1953-1964 and as a high school from 1964-1968 when it closed. In 1994, the Septima P. Clark Corporate Academy, a vocational high school, moved to the campus and remains as the student body of residence today.

The marker will acknowledge the history of the school and honor the legacy of its namesakes, W. Gresham Meggett and Septima P. Clark. Mr. Meggett was a native James Islander who served on the local school board for 21 years. Mrs. Clark, a renowned activist from Charleston, and referred to as “the grandmother of the Civil Rights Movement,” was a pioneer in education. Her biography is a testament to her life-long fight for the rights of African Americans to receive a quality education. She championed civil rights, taught Rosa Parks the tenets of non-violence at Freedom Schools, and accompanied Dr. Martin Luther King to Norway when he accepted the Nobel Prize for Peace.

Having Nettie Washington Douglass join us for this historic occasion is quite an honor. She embodies the spirit of two of the most iconic figures in African American history and the struggle of freedom, equality and education. Much like the struggle that generations of James Islanders faced without the privilege of education, having Ms. Washington Douglass with us is like having an anointing poured over this historic moment to acknowledge and validate the sacrifice and dedicated hard work of these pioneers.

W. Gresham Meggett School was a major development on James Island that changed and enriched the lives of its African American citizens for generations. Prior to its construction, Charleston had only two state-accredited black high schools; Avery Normal Institute and Immaculate Conception. Both were private and required tuition. For James Islanders who wanted to continue their education, publicly funded Burke Vocational School, across the bridge in the City of Charleston, was the only option. It however, was not accredited by the state. The fortunate few who had the means to travel from the Island to the city, attended Burke. Among those who made the daily journey was author and historian Eugene Frazier who writes about the experience in his book *James Island – Stories of Slave Descendants*.

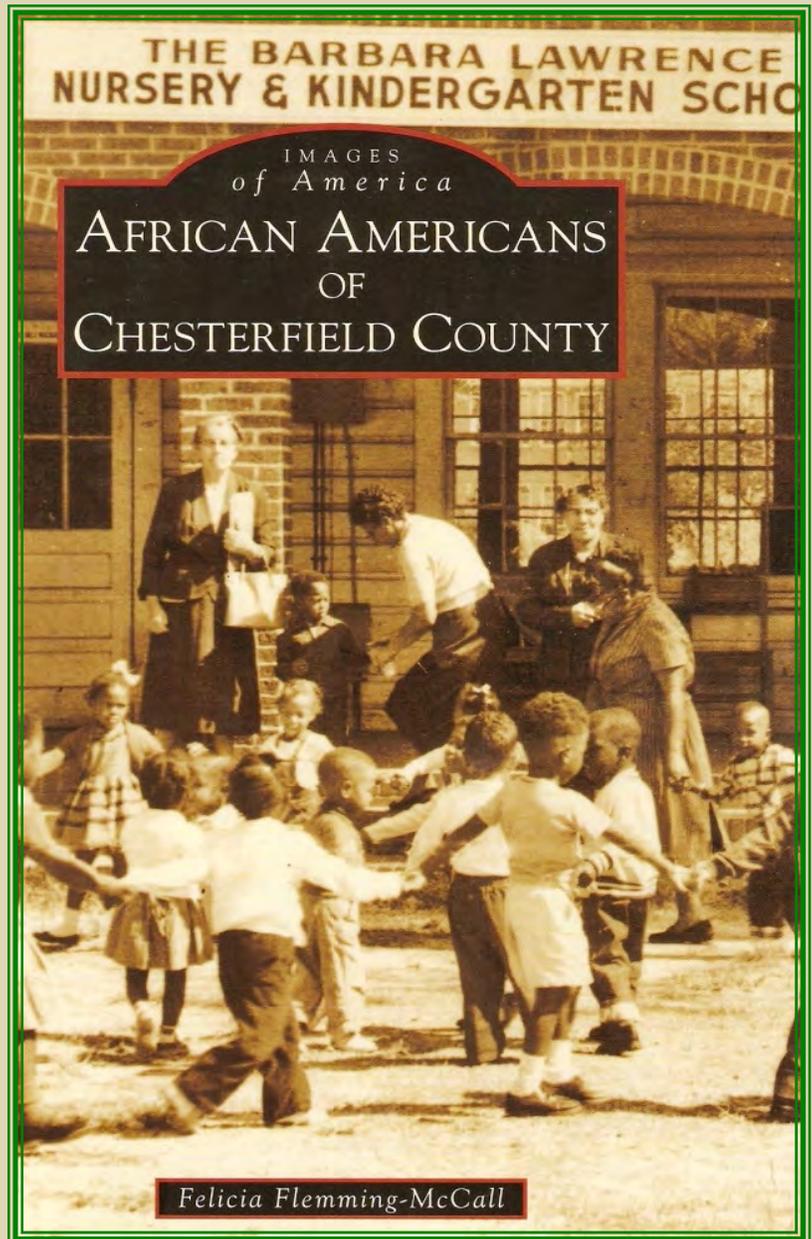
In an extensive report documented by Rebekah Dobrasko during her tenure as a graduate student at the University of South Carolina, she acknowledged that “Black schools were continually underfunded and ignored by both state and local governments. The black community was forced to raise money to support their children’s education and teachers in public schools.” (continued on pg. 12)

African Americans of Chesterfield County
recently hit the bookshelves and is written by SCAAHC commissioner
Felicia Flemming-McCall

*“The images in **African Americans of Chesterfield County** are a testament to the contributions of black families who lived in the county from the 1800s to the mid-1900s including entrepreneurs, educators, entertainers, farmers, ministers and other individuals who assisted in making their county a better place to live.”*

“Author Felicia Flemming-McCall has researched African American history for many years. Upon graduating from Gupton Jones College of Funeral Service, she returned to her local family business, Flemming Funeral Homes, Inc. Through her passion as funeral director, she became keenly aware of the African American history and the plight of black people in Chesterfield County, and found it vital to preserve their legacy in this book.”

--- from the back cover



African Americans of Chesterfield County can be ordered online at:
www.amazon.com, www.booksamillion.com and www.target.com or call 843-623-6528 for
additional information

Events Calendar

The *Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission* encourages you to attend one of its upcoming public meetings in Horry, Georgetown, and northern Charleston Counties. You will learn more about how the Commission has developed since its start in 2006. And you will have the opportunity to provide comments to help guide the future of this important four-state heritage area that is being established throughout coastal communities where Gullah/Geechee people have lived for more than three centuries. Your history is important, and your voice is essential. **PLEASE ATTEND & LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!** The meeting dates, times, and locations are:

- April 7th, 7-8:30 pm
Howard Auditorium, 1610 Hawkins St., Georgetown
- April 27th, 7-8:30 pm
Bethel AME Church, 464 Society Rd., McClellanville
- April 28th, 7-8:30 pm
Bethel AME Church, 1530 Racepath Ave., Conway
- May 5th, 7-8:30 pm
Atlantic Beach Community Center, 1010 32nd Ave. South, Atlantic Beach
- May 14th, 6:30-8 pm
(FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS FROM CHOPPEE, SAMPIT, PLANTERSVILLE, AND ANDREWS)
Bethel AME Church, 417 Broad St., Georgetown

June 2009

5th - *SC African American Heritage Commission Quarterly Meeting*, 11:00 am
Charles Pinckney National Historic Site
1254 Long Pt Rd., Mt. Pleasant, www.nps.gov/chpi

5th - *Sweetgrass Festival*, 3-8 pm
Laing Middle School, 2213 Highway 17 North,
Mt. Pleasant, www.sweetgrassfestival.org

6th - *Sweetgrass Festival*, 12 - 8 pm

Call & Response is the official newsletter of the *South Carolina African American Heritage Commission* and is published three times annually. Views expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH). Information published is at the discretion of the Editorial Board.

The Commission extends its heartfelt gratitude to SCDAH graphic artist, Tim Belshaw, for his ongoing technical and graphics support.

Charleston Carifest 2K9:

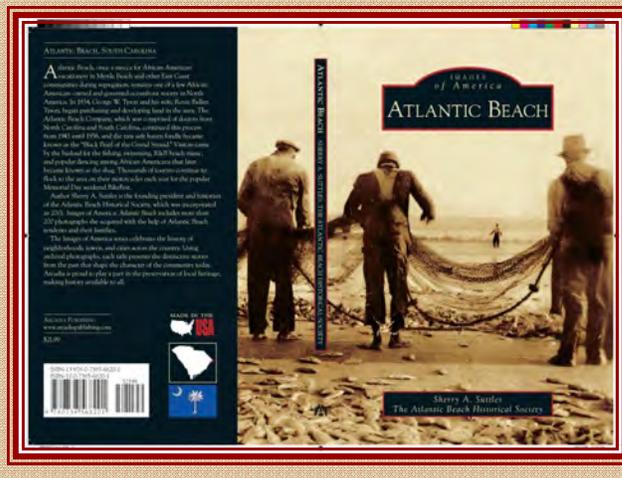
11th - *Symposium on Caribbean Carnival*, a cultural celebration, 6-9 pm, Avery Research Center, 125 Bull St.
12th - *Masquerade Fete*, 8 pm, 493 King St.
13th - *Cultural Festival*, 2-9:30 pm, Brittlebank Park
13th - *Carnival Street Parade*, 4 pm (Start at Meeting and Ann Streets, south on Meeting to Calhoun St. to King St., then north to Carolina St. to Fishburne St. into Brittlebank Park) 843-557-6258 for general info, 843-568-9007 for vendor info. www.charlestoncarifest.com

13th - *Island Heritage Celebration marker unveiling ceremony* honoring *W. Gresham Meggett School*, 10 am, Septima P. Clark Academy, 1929 Grimball Rd., James Island. See article on pg. 9. For info on other *Celebration* events, see www.islandheritagefestival.com.

SAVE THE DATE !!

On June 1st, *Atlantic Beach* will be hot off the press, chronicling the history of this historic coastal community that was born in response to segregation and became a premier vacation and day trip location for African Americans throughout the east coast.

Written by *Sherry A. Suttles*, former *Atlantic Beach City Councilwoman* and founder of the *Atlantic Beach Historical Society*



Call & Response Editorial Board:
Joseph McGill, Jr., SCAAHC board member, Ladson
Alada Shinault-Small, SCAAHC board member, North Charleston

Guest Corner continued

“Parents in Charleston County relied on missionary societies and churches for educational purposes. In rural areas (like James Island) the school board crowded black students into small one-and-two-teacher schools while white children attended larger schools,” she documented.

In spite of the adverse conditions African Americans on James and other barrier Islands were forced to endure, by the time W. Gresham Meggett closed in 1968 it had prepared several generations who entered some of the top colleges and universities in America. These graduates now enjoy successful careers as doctors, lawyers, engineers, educators, television journalists, writers, nurses, military officers, politicians, and business owners, as well as other notable career professionals. Their successes speak volumes for the UNCF slogan “a mind is a terrible thing to waste.”

The *James Island History Trail* was inaugurated during the *2008 Island Heritage Celebration* and is being developed to identify sites of historical significance on James Island. The addition of W. Gresham Meggett School to the History Trail represents a significant landmark that acknowledges the importance of the African American experience in South Carolina. Ms. Washington Douglass’ roots also extend to the first site installed on the James Island History Trail in 2006 commemorating the Civil War Battle of Sol-Legare Island fought by the Massachusetts 54th Regiment and highlighted in the movie *Glory*. Fredrick Douglass’ son was a member of the Mass. 54th, and Ms. Washington Douglass will also take part in a wreath laying ceremony at the marker as a part of the Celebration’s history trail exploration.

This barrier island is home to a Gullah/Geechee community that is in transition like many others along the coast that are threatened by development. The History Trail is being installed to ensure that the rich historic treasures of the island are not lost to development, as well as to highlight James Island’s historic and cultural tourism profile.

Ms. Washington Douglass will also be the special guest at a “Heroes in History Hour” and

reception. For more information visit www.islandheritagefestival.com or call 843-628-1129.



W. Gresham Meggett School on James Island has housed Septima P. Clark Corporate Academy since 1994. The lettering for the former school, seen above the door, remains. *Photo provided by the Island Heritage Foundation*

South Carolina African American Heritage Foundation

The South Carolina African American Heritage Foundation supports the efforts of the South Carolina African Heritage Commission to identify and promote the preservation of historic sites, structures buildings, and culture of the African American experience and to assist and enhance the efforts of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

Please consider supporting these efforts by becoming a member of the SCAAH Foundation. Members receive:

- ◆ Invitations to all Commission meetings
- ◆ A copy of *African American Historic Places in South Carolina*
- ◆ A subscription to *Call & Response*, the Commission's quarterly newsletter
- ◆ A subscription to *News and Notes*, a monthly online newsletter from the Historic Preservation Division of the SC Department of Archives & History
- ◆ Notification of special workshops and meetings
- ◆ Discount registrations for workshops and meetings



Membership Form

Please complete and return to: South Carolina African American Heritage Foundation ◆
P O Box 22454 ◆ Charleston, SC 29413 or contact: Jannie Harriot, Commission Vice
Chairperson, at 843-332-3589 or e-mail professionaljmh@aol.com

- I would like to become member of the South Carolina African American Heritage Foundation. Enclosed is my \$25 annual membership.
- Our organization would like to become member of the South Carolina African American Heritage Foundation. Enclosed is my \$75 annual membership which allows 4 of our members to get discounted registrations.
- Enclosed is a contribution to the South Carolina African American Heritage Foundation.

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