

Call & Response

News from the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission

Fall 2009 Volume IV, Number 3



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

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Message from the Chair

Leon A. Love, Chairperson



Happy holidays to our readership and hopes for a prosperous and successful year to all of you. Let us begin 2010 with a membership in the SC African American Heritage Foundation. It's affordable and available, see pg. 13. How can we ask others to preserve and celebrate the contributions of African Americans in South Carolina if we are not contributing to this cause?

The Commission is busy preparing for the **Annual Meeting and Preserving Our Places In History Awards Luncheon** which will be held on Friday, January 29, 2010 at the SC Archives and

History Center. Nominations have been received for the awards, and the program committee has prepared a stirring program. The theme is "African Americans and the Civil War." Dr. Bernard Powers, History professor at the College of Charleston, will explore this topic with us. We must tell the whole story of South Carolina. See pp. 2-3 for more info. Join the Foundation and receive a discounted registration for this exciting event.

The new edition of *African American Historic Places in South Carolina* is fresh off the press. This tenth edition is dedicated to Dr. Barbara Williams Jenkins (see her profile on page 8).

The Commission is partnering with the Gullah/Geechee National Heritage Corridor Commission for a pre-conference workshop on African Americans and the Civil War at the Landmark Conference in historic Georgetown next March. We are committed to the inclusion of African American contributions in any and all discussions of this state's history. At one time, according to Dr. Abel Bartley, fellow commissioner and professor at Clemson, 55% of South Carolina's economy was in the value of enslaved people.

Ethnic tourism can easily return as a giant economic engine for our state. Our history and contributions are an untapped asset that we must develop and market during these poor economic times. There is unprecedented interest in ethnic tourism, and the Commission is actively involved in developing tourism products and services that will ultimately expand this state's economy.

Finally, please remember that much of our history is not documented in publications. It resides in the possession of our families and our churches. I urge each of you to collect, photograph and record your history and the history of your church. Our descendants will appreciate your efforts in years to come.

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.

In The News

Annual Meeting & Preserving Our Places In History Awards Luncheon

Thursday, January 28, 2010
SCAAHC Quarterly Meeting
Residence Inn at 6 pm
2320 LeGrand Road, Columbia

Friday, January 29, 2010
Annual Meeting

Preserving Our Places In History: African Americans & The Civil War

Archives & History Center
9 am - 3 :30 pm
8301 Parklane Road, Columbia

Mistress of Ceremony *Ms. Jannie Harriot,*
Vice Chair, SCAAHC

9:00 am Registration/Continental Breakfast

9:45 Greetings *Dr. Eric Emerson,*
Director, SCDAAH
Mr. Leon Love,
Chair, SCAAHC

10:15 Civil War Sesquicentennial Advisory
Board History & Updates *Ms. Jannie Harriot*

10:30 African American Life -
From the Civil War through Reconstruction
Dr. Bernard Powers,
College of Charleston

11:15 BREAK

11:20 Presentations on Civil War-related
collections housed throughout the state

12:30 pm *Preserving Our Places In History*
Awards Luncheon
Master of Ceremony *Dr. Bobby Donaldson,*
University of SC

2:00 African American Research
Consortium: Next Steps
Dr. Stephanie Mitchem,
University of SC

2:35 The Story of a Free Black Family
Dr. Elsie Taylor Goins

3:20 Wrap-up & Evaluations

Our HERITAGE MARKETPLACE will be located in the lobby, please come check out a wonderful array of unique collectibles, gift items & edibles

Special Guests !!

Company I, Massachusetts 54th Reenactment Regiment will host an Encampment in the Archives & History Center's lobby during the annual meeting

See and hear what life was like for the dedicated men and women who fought and sacrificed to create change



The African American Heritage Foundation's on Facebook !! Click on the link to our web page at the upper left corner of page 1, beneath our logo, then click on the Facebook link. Become a fan and join us there.

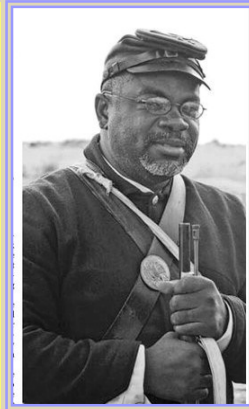
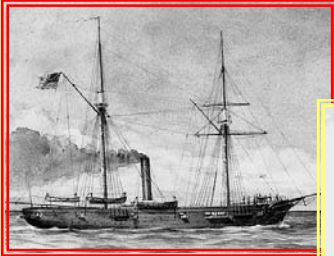
Preserving Our Places In History: African Americans & The Civil War

A few of the faces and names :

First (top): USS Huron, the steam gunboat on which Civil War sailor Henry Benjamin Noisette traveled.

Second (bottom): 1st Louisiana Native Guard CSA, Confederate militia formed May 1861 mainly of free Black men. **Third:** Harriet Tubman aka "Black Moses." **Fourth:** Joe McGill, Jr., Civil War re-enactor. **Fifth:** Edmonia Lewis, first African American sculptor to achieve international distinction.

Inset: Ms. Lewis' Bust of Lincoln, 1871.



Registration form (please print)

To attend *Preserving Our Places In History: African Americans & The Civil War*, please detach and return this form by January 22, 2010.

Name _____

Organization or Agency if applicable _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____

Cell Phone _____

E-mail Address _____

- Registration, Foundation members, includes continental breakfast, luncheon, & conference materials \$25.00
- Registration, non-members, includes continental breakfast, luncheon, & conference materials \$30.00
- Preserving Our Places In History* Awards Luncheon only \$15.00
- SC African American Heritage Foundation tax-deductible annual membership dues ~ includes a copy of the 2009 edition of *African American Historic Places in South Carolina*. The Foundation is the support arm of the SCAAHC \$25.00

Method of Payment:

- Check
- Money Order

Total enclosed _____

Make checks and money orders payable to and mail to:
SC African American Heritage Foundation
Post Office Box 1053
Hartsville, SC 29551

For more info please contact Jannie Harriot @ 843-332-3589 or professionaljmh@aol.com

A Sesquicentennial Series: *African Americans during the Civil War - Stony The Road They Trod* Part 1: It Was About Slavery Abel Bartley

Dr. Bartley is Director of the Pan African Studies Program & Associate Professor of African American and Urban History, Clemson University



As Americans prepare to commemorate the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, let's examine this important period. We don't need another celebration of the old south or a nostalgic recounting of Confederate military exploits, but instead a bottom up look at the war and its impact on Black South Carolinians, dispelling some of the myths surrounding the war and opening the floor for some honest discussion of this historical event.

On December 20, 1860, South Carolina became the first state to secede from the United States. At the time of secession, there were 412,320 African Americans and only 291,300 Whites living in the state. Included in that African American number were 402,406 slaves. South Carolina, like the other southern states practiced an extraordinarily cruel form of slavery, which separated the slave from the human family defining him as chattel or property. Chattel slavery was a relatively strange form of slavery exercised in a nation publicly dedicated to the equality of all men. Many people referred to it as "the peculiar institution" because it was a strange phenomenon to exist in a nation dedicated to human liberty. Each slave had a pecuniary value, which made him or her an indispensable part of the state's economic and social fabric. Often, those who study the Civil War have ignored this fact. Secession and slavery worked hand in hand. Being one of two states that were majority African American, it is not

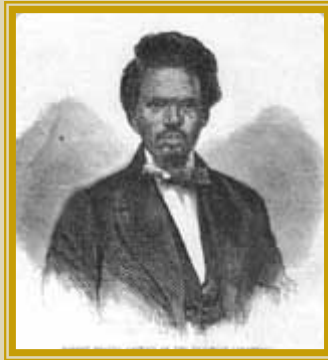
surprising that South Carolina was the first state to secede from the Union.

South Carolinians, probably more than any one else, understood the significance of President Abraham Lincoln's election and the ascendancy of the Republican Party with its emphasis on free land and free people. Since 1790, the number of slaves in the state had increased from 107,094 to well over 400,000. Slavery was a defining issue for most South Carolinians. In *Calculating the Value of the Union: Slavery, Property Rights and Economic Origins of the Civil War*, James L. Huston argues that the total value for all slaves was \$3,000,000,000, which places the average value per slave at \$759. At this rate, the 402,406 slaves in SC were worth roughly \$300,000,000. The total value of all the real estate and personal property in SC was \$548,138,754, which means that about 55% of the total property of the state's population was in the form of slaves. By comparison, the cash value of all the farms in the state was only \$139,652,508.

Therefore, when the leaders of SC met to discuss secession, it is not surprising that slavery was the major issue mentioned. "We affirm ... the Government itself has been made destructive of them by the action of the non-slaveholding States... They have denounced as sinful the institution of slavery; they have permitted open establishment among them of societies, whose avowed object is to disturb the peace and to eloign the property of the citizens of other States. They have encouraged and assisted thousands of our slaves to leave their homes; and those who remain, have been incited by emissaries, books and pictures to servile insurrection." Southerners denounced the election of Abraham Lincoln as an affront to everything they believed in. Therefore, the men who made the decision to leave the Union left no doubt about why they were leaving. They wanted to protect and extend the institution of slavery.

For African Americans, the war was also about slavery. Several South Carolina African Americans distinguished themselves during the war. Robert Smalls, an African American slave born on April 5, 1839 in Beaufort, was one of them. Smalls was sent to Charleston as a youth and spent several years working on ships in the Charleston harbor. He taught himself to read and write, mastered the tricky currents of the harbor, eventually becoming the de facto pilot of the Confederate steamer, the *Planter*.

At 3:30 am on May 13, 1862, 23-year old Smalls (seen right) smuggled his wife and three children aboard the *Planter*, and with his 12-person crew, sailed the side-wheel steamer past the other Confederate ships and delivered it to the commanding officer of the Union fleet. The *Planter* was loaded with artillery and explosives intended for Confederate forts along with a valuable codebook revealing the secret signals Confederate ship captains used, along with a map detailing where mines and torpedoes were hidden. He also gave detailed information about the harbor's defenses to Admiral Samuel Dupont, commander of the blockading fleet.



Smalls was wildly celebrated as the *Planter* (shown below) was received as contraband, and Smalls and his black crew were welcomed as heroes. He became famous throughout the North where newspapers ran articles describing his exploits. The government rewarded Smalls and his crewmen with the prize



money for the captured *Planter*. Smalls met President Abraham Lincoln in late May 1862. His deeds were used to argue for the use of African Americans in the Union Army. Smalls served under the Navy until March 1863, when he was transferred to the Army. However, he

was a civilian and never actually enrolled in either branch of service though he served in 17 different engagements during the Civil War. After the war, Smalls served five terms in Congress as the representative from South Carolina. After leaving Congress, Smalls was duty collector for the port of Beaufort and served as a major general in the SC militia. He died on Feb. 22, 1916.

Major-General David Hunter, Union commander at Port Royal, encouraged Smalls to go to Washington, DC., with Mansfield French in Aug. 1862, to persuade President Lincoln and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton to use black soldiers in the Union army. Smalls successfully received an order signed by Stanton permitting up to 5,000 African Americans to enlist in the Un-

ion forces at Port Royal. These men were organized into the 1st and 2nd South Carolina Volunteers. One of the first African American units organized during the war was the First South Carolina Volunteers. General David Hunter first attempted to organize the 1st SC Volunteer Infantry in May 1862. However, this first effort failed, because Hunter had no authorization to form Black Units, and the recruits were improperly inducted. The original Regiment was ordered disbanded. Later, the 1st SC was reorganized under General Rufus B. Saxton. Saxton recruited troops from Hilton Head's Black population with Captain C.T. Trowbridge forming the first company.

The South Carolina First, soldiers more than exceeded Saxton's expectations. After their first engagements it was obvious that former slaves could be good fighters. On Nov. 10, 1862, Col. Thomas Wentworth Higginson assumed command of the 1st S.C. Higginson was a northern abolitionist and minister from Boston, MA, who came south to help fight for African American freedom. He jumped at the opportunity to use Black regiments to demonstrate the equality of African Americans. He believed that a good showing by the SC First could dispel the myths people held about Blacks. Under Higginson, the 1st was whipped into fighting shape. Higginson slowly introduced his men to war by leading them on several small expeditions before they participated in the occupation of Jacksonville, Florida. The 1st S.C. and 2nd S.C. Volunteer Infantry occupied Jacksonville with no resistance on March 10, 1863. Jacksonville was located well within Confederate territory. The 1st and 2nd repulsed several assaults managing to hold onto the town. Although they had once again proved their abilities under fire, Federal forces inexplicably abandoned Jacksonville.

On Feb. 8, 1864, the regiment was redesignated the 33rd US Colored Troops. They joined two other regiments in the first assault on a fortification at Battery Gregg on James Island, near Charleston. On July 2, 1864 the combined forces attacked and captured the fort. In Dec. 1864, the 33rd joined with the 55th Massachusetts in fighting the Battle of Honey Hill, a costly defeat for federal forces. In the final year of their service, the 1st SC was part of the union garrison of Savannah and Charleston. They were mustered out of service on Feb. 9, 1866 at Fort Wagner, near the graves of Col. Robert Gould Shaw and the men of the 54th Massachusetts. They had proven that Blacks would and could fight for their freedom and played a leading role in defending the Union.

Preservation Project Profile

*Rock Hill High School's
Hunter Templeton is named the
SCAAHC 2009 History Day
award recipient*



Photo by Joseph McGill, Jr.

Hunter Templeton of Rock Hill won the Commission's competition for a History Day project focusing on African American history. She entitled her exhibit "George Washington Carver: Working for Peanuts."

Hunter attended the Commission's quarterly meeting in September at Archives & History and presented her research. In the photo above, SCAAHC Chair Leon Love presents her with a check for \$250. Hunter's display can be seen in the background. Ms. Haley Whyte and Ms. Katie Jenkinson were her faculty advisors.

Preservation Project Profile

*Bethesda United Methodist &
Cooper's Academy unveil
historical markers in October*

Barbara Williams Jenkins

On October 3rd, several hundred persons gathered on a beautiful autumn day for the dedication and unveiling of the SC historical markers for Bethesda United Methodist Church and Cooper's Academy in Cades. This event, held at Bethesda UMC, marked a committee project spearheaded by Mr. Theodus Cooper, a former student at Cooper's Academy and a member of Bethesda, that began more than ten years ago. Determination and dedication were the hallmarks of Mr. Cooper's efforts in preserving the rich African American history of this northeastern community in Williamsburg County.

Moses Cooper, H.J. Cooper and Ada E. Martin founded the Academy to provide an education for the youth in that section of the county. The school was built in 1905-06 as a Normal and Industrial Institute with boarding facilities. It was in operation for years until it became publicly supported and merged with another school.

In most African American rural communities, the church and the school were near each other, and the same applied to Bethesda church and the Academy. Bethesda (initially a Methodist Episcopal church) was founded in 1879 as a brush arbor. It has witnessed several buildings; the present structure was built in 1971. The church has provided a religious foundation for the Cades community for 130 years.

At the dedication, local dignitaries, church, and preservation officials brought greetings. The speaker for the occasion was The Honorable Maggie Glover, former state senator from Florence, now with Morris College in Sumter.

Preservation Project Profile

Bethesda United Methodist and Cooper's Academy continued

Descendants and relatives of Cooper's Academy's founders, former students, teachers, and descendants of former students were acknowledged and recognized. Senior church members and officials, members of historical societies, and public officials from surrounding communities were also recognized.

The Bethesda choir rendered beautiful musical selections. A reception followed in the church's fellowship hall.



Above - Bethesda United Methodist Church members, supporters, and I (third from the right on the front line) surround their newly-dedicated historical marker. Below - Nearby, friends and supporters of Cooper's Academy proudly stand in front of the marker documenting the school's history and its role in the Cades community. Photos by Terry James



Preservation Project Profile

November Program honors a Forgotten Charleston Civil War Sailor & Reconstruction Hero

Lex Musta

African American Historical Alliance

On Veteran's Day, the African American Historical Alliance honored Henry Benjamin Noisette (1841-1911) as a hero representing the full range of the Alliance's mission: "The main goal of the Alliance is to be a leading resource for education and the celebration of African-American Civil War and Reconstruction history in South Carolina."

Civil War Sailor Noisette escaped Charleston and enslavement via the Underground Railroad. After enlisting in the Navy, he ended up serving in some of the harrowing action testing the defenses of Charleston, within which his family remained enslaved. After his military discharge, he inspired his younger brother who then joined the 33rd USCT while Henry went on to become active in the Charleston community during Reconstruction. He co-founded the Friendly Charitable Association, which purchased land for a cemetery in 1878, and he also pioneered the building of Freedman's cottages.

Inclement weather interrupted the planned graveside program, but an appreciative crowd of about 50 people gathered at the AKA Sorority meeting hall to hear about H.B. Noisette's Civil War service. The graveside program will be rescheduled, and a headstone will be dedicated.



This bench near the cemetery entrance bears the inscription "Friendly Charitable Association Cemetery, Founded January 24, 1878." Photo by A. Shinault-Small

Spotlight on...

Dr. Barbara Williams Jenkins Manning



Photo by Tim Belshaw

Dr. Barbara Williams Jenkins, a native of Union, SC, is a graduate of Orangeburg's Wilkinson High School, Bennett College (BA), University of Illinois (MSLS) and Rutgers University (Ph.D.)

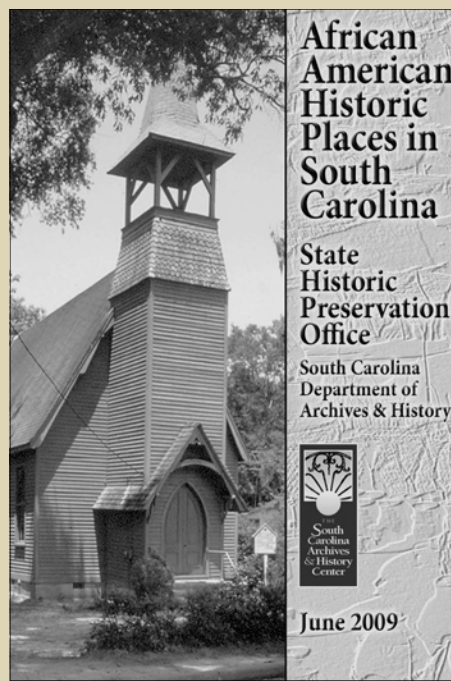
While serving as Dean of Library and Information Services at SC University, she was active on numerous committees. Preservation work includes her working along with state Archives & History to secure National Register status for Hodge Hall, Dukes Gym, and Lowman Hall on campus. Later, she was instrumental in securing a Historic District and marker for the university. In addition, Barbara initiated a SC State College Historical Trail, complete with brochure and permanent bronze markers. When she retired from SC State after many years of service, she was designated Dean Emeritus, an honor bestowed upon her by the university and her peers.

Presently, Dr. Jenkins is very actively involved on the front line of the SCAAHC's Criteria Committee. Other civic involvement includes: board member, Elloree Heritage Museum and the Harvin Clarendon County Library; member, Clarendon County Historical Society, Sumter County Genealogical Society, National Trust for Historic Preservation, NCNW, The Links, Inc., and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

Dr. Jenkins is the daughter of the late Ernest Nesbitt and Johncie Sartor Williams of Orangeburg. She is the widow of the late Robert A. "Bobby" Jenkins of Manning. Her family includes Ronald and Pamela, five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



Above - Dr. Barbara Williams Jenkins was very surprised to learn that the 2009 edition of *African American Historic Places in South Carolina* has been dedicated in her honor (see close-up of cover below.) SCAAHC Chair Leon Love presented her with a copy of the booklet at a recent Commission meeting in Elloree in November. Photo by Jannie Harriot



News from the South Carolina Department of Archives and History

Elizabeth M. Johnson
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

South Carolina Historical Markers on the Web

The texts of more than 1,250 South Carolina Historical Markers are now online at <http://www.scaet.org/markers/>. The website is a joint effort of the SC Department of Education, the SC Association for Educational Technology, and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The database, created on a volunteer basis by Don Cantrell of the Office of Internal Technology at the Dept. of Education, is the most complete and accurate record of markers to date. It is searchable by keyword or by county, and also includes location information for many markers. New marker texts will be added as soon as they are approved, and other information will be updated as necessary when markers are damaged, need repainting, or are replaced. Staff contact: J. Tracy Power (803) 896-6182 or power@scdah.state.sc.us.

Applications Available for 2010 Federal Historic Preservation Grants

Administered by the SHPO, these matching grants can assist two types of projects:

(1) Survey and Planning Projects – eligible projects include surveys of historic properties, National Register nominations, preservation education, and preservation planning; (2) Stabilization Projects – eligible projects include stabilizing historic buildings or protecting historic buildings from the adverse effects of the weather. In 2010, all projects must be located within cities, towns, and counties that are Certified Local Governments (CLGs). (For a list of South Carolina's 28 CLG go to <http://shpo.sc.gov/programs/localgovt/certified.htm>.) Grant awards range from \$1,500 to \$25,000. The 2010 application is online at <http://shpo.sc.gov/grants/preservationgrants/> and the deadline is **January 29, 2010**. Staff contact: Brad Sauls (803) 896-6172 or sauls@scdah.state.sc.us.

Historic Preservation Awards Nominations Due January 15th

Nominations for the 2010 state historic preservation awards are due January 15, 2010. Awards are given in six categories: Governor's Award (for lifetime achievement), Honor Awards (for outstanding projects), Heritage Tourism, Corporate Stewardship, Elected Official, and Archaeological Stewardship. More information and the nomination form are online at:

<http://shpo.sc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/AABC5194-0342-48DB-A9DC-A2F2B62D661C/0/hnrawrd2k10.pdf>.

The Palmetto Trust for Historic Preservation, the SC Department of Archives and History, and the Office of the Governor sponsor the awards. Contact: Michael Bedenbaugh, Palmetto Trust for Historic Preservation, (803) 896-6234 or oldhouse@palmettotrust.org.

Recent South Carolina Historical Markers

SCDAH recently approved the text for the following historical markers associated with African American history. 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. Staff contact: Tracy Power (803) 896-6182 or power@scdah.state.sc.us.

Fort Jackson Elementary School/ Hood Street Elementary School, Richland County

(Front) Fort Jackson Elementary School was one of the first public schools in SC to desegregate when classes began on September 3, 1963. The first school on post and one of the first permanent buildings at Fort Jackson, it was built in only three months. A new federal policy required all schools on military bases to admit African-American students instead of sending them to separate schools off-base. (Reverse) This school opened under Principal Thomas Silvester with nine civilian teachers and 245 students in Grades 1-6. A newspaper article described it as "operated without regard to race, creed or color." Fort Jackson Elementary School, later renamed Hood Street Elementary School after additional schools opened on post, has served the families of Fort Jackson servicemen and servicewomen for more than 45 years. Erected by Fort Jackson, United States Army, 2009.

Ridge Hill School/Faith Cabin Library, Ridge Spring, Saluda County

(Front) This school, built in 1934, replaced the Ridge Hill Rosenwald School, a six-classroom frame school

News from the South Carolina Department of Archives and History continued

by the Julius Rosenwald Foundation, building more than 500 African-American schools in S.C. 1917-1932. It burned in 1934, but the new school was built on the same plan, at a cost of about \$8000. Grades 1-11 attended this school until grade 12 was added in 1947. Ridge Hill School closed in 1957. (Reverse) This building has been the Ridge Spring Star Community Center since 1978. The chimney nearby is all that remains of a Faith Cabin Library, part of a program founded in 1932 by Willie Lee Buffington (1908-1988) to help give small-town and rural African-Americans better access to books. The library built here in 1934 was the second Faith Cabin Library in the state. More than 100 were built in S.C. and Ga. from 1932 to 1960. Erected by the Ridge Spring Star Community Center, 2009.

St. Anne's Parochial School, Rock Hill, York County
(Front) St. Anne's Church, the first Catholic church in York County, was founded in 1919 by the Rev. William A. Tobin of Columbia. The first church, built on Saluda Street in 1920, closed in 1961. St. Anne's opened its first parochial school in the church rectory in 1951, with 17 pupils in the kindergarten and first grade. A second grade was added in 1952. A new St. Anne's School opened here in 1956. (Reverse) In 1954 St. Anne's became the first school in S.C. to integrate, when it enrolled 5 students from St. Mary's, the predominantly African-American Catholic church in Rock Hill. The school included grades 1-8 by 1957, and by 1961 had 15 black students enrolled. Worship services for St. Anne's Church were held in the school auditorium 1982-1994. In 1998, St. Anne School moved to a new facility on Bird Street. Erected by Culture & Heritage Museums of York County, St. Anne School, and The Hands of Mercy, Inc., 2009.

Recent National Register of Historic Places Listing
The **Florence C. Benson Elementary School**, in Columbia, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 7, 2009. It is significant

for its association with the system of racial segregation, as both an example of the state government's efforts during the early 1950s to maintain "separate but equal" school systems for black and white children, and one of the last remnants of a segregated black residential area. The school opened as the Wheeler Hill School in 1955 for 270 African American students in the first through sixth grades. The Wheeler Hill School replaced the Celia Dial Saxon Negro Elementary School, which was overcrowded and needed rehabilitation. In 1958, it was renamed in honor of Florence Corinne Benson, a former teacher at the school. Architect James B. Urquhart designed the one-story brick building with three wings. With its rows of interior and exterior windows, the building was a typical equalization school, and typical of new school construction in the post-World War II era, reflecting influences of the Modern and International styles. It served the Wheeler Hill community until 1975, when it closed its doors due to declining enrollment. <http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/richland/S10817740148/index.htm>.

Landmark and Preservation Conference in March

The Landmark and Preservation Conference will be March 3-6, 2010 in Georgetown. See <http://www.shpo.sc.gov/conf/landpconference/>. Staff contact: Jennifer Satterthwaite 803-896-6171 or jsatt@scdah.state.sc.us.

Equalization Schools Website

A new website created by SHPO staff member Rebekah Dobrasko highlights the history of South Carolina's Equalization Schools 1951-1960 <http://scequalization.schools.officelive.com>. The "equalization" program was an attempt to circumvent a potential desegregation ruling by the Supreme Court. The multi-million dollar school building campaign funded by the state's first general sales tax utilized modern school design, materials, and architecture to build new rural, urban, black, and white schools in communities throughout the state. The schools constructed as part of South Carolina's school "equalization" program represent the intersection of modern, national architectural trends and the postwar baby boom with South Carolina's fight to maintain racially-segregated public schools. Staff contact: Rebekah Dobrasko (803) 896-6183 or Dobrasko@scdah.state.sc.us.

Guest Corner

The Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Festival Association preserves ancient artisanship in new park

SCAFA Mission: *To preserve the history, heritage and traditions of the Gullah/Geechee people's culture; To protect their "ancient" sweetgrass basket making art form and its natural habitats from being destroyed by increasing residential and commercial development in Mt. Pleasant and along the eastern coast lines of SC.*

Thomasena Stokes-Marshall
Project Director

In July, the Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Festival Association (SCAFA) witnessed years of planning and preparation finally come to fruition. The *Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Pavilion* was dedicated at the Town of Mount Pleasant Waterfront Memorial Park. The park, complete with a visitor center, war memorial, café and fishing pier sets along Wingo Way just under the US Highway 17 approach to the Arthur Ravenel Bridge. The Pavilion, an open air structure with sliding barn-like doors and shaded porches, offers an exhibit of sweetgrass basket making history as well as serving as a venue for basket makers to sew and market their creations.

Exhibit planner Carol Poplin, senior project manager of the History Workshop, created three

movable kiosks trimmed with wood panels and tin roofs to resemble basket stands. The Pavilion acknowledges the sacrifices and contributions of sweetgrass basket makers to the domestic, social, economic and political development of our country over the last three centuries.

The Town of Mount Pleasant is the first municipality to have a physical structure along the Gullah/Geechee National Heritage Corridor (GGNHC). The corridor spans from Wilmington, NC to Jacksonville, FL in recognition of Gullah/Geechee culture. In 2006, the Town and Charleston County implemented an overlay district that allows basket makers to keep their basket stands along Highway 17 from Long Point to Porcher Bluff Roads. The Pavilion serves as a monument to the growing relationship between the basket making community, the Town of Mt. Pleasant and surrounding areas. The Pavilion also serves as a model for how other communities can preserve and promote Gullah/Geechee culture along the GGNHC.

Basket makers are permitted to set up and sell their baskets from the Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Pavilion from 9 am to 5 pm daily on a rotating schedule. SCAFA leases the Pavilion from the Town and utilizes a lottery drawing system that determines which basket makers are selected to sell their merchandise from the site. Basket makers who have supported SCAFA during the past six years through their donations and volunteer services are given preference. SCAFA's two Pavilion managers implement the lottery and are responsible for overseeing day-to-day operations.

At the ribbon cutting for the Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Pavilion, former Mt. Pleasant mayor Kruger Smith is seen below standing in the center (white shirt and khaki pants.) I'm to his immediate right along with two of my fellow Town Council members. SCAAHC member Michael Allen is next to them along with Gullah/Geechee National Heritage Corridor Commission Chair Emory Campbell. We join many local basket makers and SCAFA members.



SOUTH CAROLINA
AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE
FOUNDATION



*WISHES SEASONS GREETINGS, PEACE, COMFORT & PROSPERITY
to our membership*
WE APPRECIATE YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT !!!

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Joyce Beasley
Andrew Billingsley
J. T. Brayboy
George Bryant
Lisa Buckley
Doris Byrd
Emory Campbell
John R. Carter
Kenneth Childs
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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*
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- ◆ Notification of special workshops and meetings
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Membership Form

Please complete and return to: South Carolina African American Heritage Foundation ◆
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