

# Call & Response

## News from the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission

Fall 2008 Volume III, Number 3



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

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### Message from the Chair

Jannie Harriot, Chairperson

This has truly been an exciting and eventful year. The South Carolina African American Heritage Commission celebrated fifteen years of preserving the African American experience in South Carolina. When the Commission was created in 1993 as a Council, only 13 of the state's 46 counties had 39 sites marked with SC Historical Markers. Today, 44 of the counties have more than 200 sites marked with SC Historical Markers and/or are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Three very historical events nationally that occurred this year was the Republican Party's nomination of a woman for Vice-President, the Democratic Party's nomination of an African American for President, and the country's electing the Democratic nominee to the highest office in the land.



In October, Alada Shinault-Small and I traveled to Barbados with about 70 others on an excursion sponsored by the SC National Heritage Corridor to witness the extraordinary connections between the island and the state and to bring the information back to feature at our upcoming annual meeting. Joy Young took this picture of me on the left in front of the Pelican Craft Centre that we visited near Bridgetown, the capital.

On January 22 & 23, 2009, the Commission's annual meeting and awards banquet, "Preserving Our Places in History : the Barbados Link, will be held at the Brookland Baptist Church Banquet & Conference Center in West Columbia. We have sessions planned to explore this aspect of the Carolina/ Caribbean connection, including a silent auction of got-to-have items that provide glimpses of both Bajan and SC history and culture. We also hope to have a Bajan delegation in attendance.

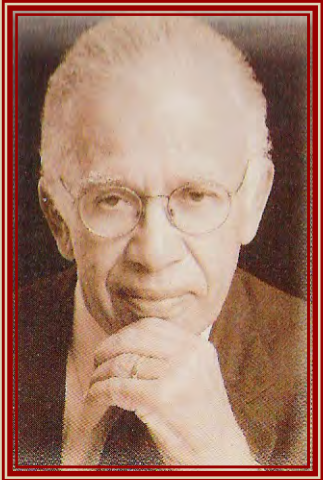
Register today and join us in exploring this rich historical connection! The brochure and registration form are online at:

<http://www.state.sc.us/scdah/afamer/scaahc09annual.pdf> .

*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 Memory of*

**Mr. Herbert Alexander DeCosta, Jr.**  
**March 17, 1923 - December 18, 2008**  
**Charleston**



Herbert DeCosta was born in Charleston and was a 1940 graduate of Avery Institute then received a BS degree in Architectural Engineering from Iowa State University in 1944. He was employed as an architectural engineer with the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, now known as NASA, then joined his father's business, the H.A. DeCosta Company, in Charleston in 1947. Herbert's grandfather had founded the company in 1899.

When his father died in 1960, Herbert became president of the family business and held that position until he sold the business to two associates in 1990. The H.A. DeCosta Co. was one of the most successful African American businesses in SC and was listed among the top 100 black businesses in the US by *Black Enterprise* magazine in 1979. Throughout his career, Herbert was well respected and sought out as a historic restoration consultant, and he continued consulting long after retirement.

Herbert was very active in his community. Many remember his constant trips to the local jail

(known as the Seabreeze Hotel among the Charleston black community) to post bail for residents who were jailed during the struggle for civil rights, and often out of his own pocket. Herbert's calm demeanor and negotiation skills were regularly used as he was often called to mediate between protesters and government officials.

His civic involvement continued through the years, serving on countless boards and committees. In addition, he was a member of several organizations and two fraternities. Herbert began his involvement with the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission in the mid-1990s, and he had been an active and valuable member representing the Lowcountry. Herbert was also very dedicated to his church, St. Mark's Episcopal. There, he was a former senior warden and was most recently a vestry member.

Herbert is survived by his wife Emily Howland Spencer DeCosta, a sister, two daughters, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren, among other relatives and many friends.

We will greatly miss our octogenarian Commission member, but we are at peace that he is now free from earthly trappings and discomfort.



## Preservation Project Profile

### Bridge dedication honoring Harriet Tubman was held in the Lowcountry in October

#### A. Shinault-Small

A new bridge that spans the Combahee River between Colleton and Beaufort Counties was dedicated one rainy Saturday afternoon this fall. On October 18th, government officials, legislators, history enthusiasts and community members gathered at the Steel Bridge Boat Landing on US Highway 17 to publicly dedicate the two-year, 13 million dollar project in honor of Harriet Ross Tubman (1820 - 1913), also well known as “the Moses of her people.”

The bridge is located south of where historians have determined that Mrs. Tubman lead a very successful Union raid on several area plantations on June 2, 1863, freeing more than 750 enslaved African Americans. State Representative Kenneth Hodges, D-Bennett’s Point, sponsored a bill in 2006 to name the bridge after the Underground Railroad leader, and it was approved by the General Assembly.

Mrs. Tubman is enshrined in the annals of history for her numerous trips to the South to lead expeditions that freed about 200 enslaved African Americans who she safely ushered north to freedom, including her own parents. During the Civil War, the Maryland native was a scout, spy and nurse for the Union Army. Her knowledge of the land coupled with her brilliant ability to plan, organize and execute made her extremely valuable to the Unions for successfully maneuvering around in Confederate territory.

Many view naming the bridge after Harriet Tubman as an important step in acknowledging a chapter of history that has local, regional and national ties.



Above: Harriet Tubman (far left) with family and friends, c. 1885.



Left: Karen Hill, Executive Director of the Harriet Tubman Home in Auburn, NY, gives remarks at the Harriet Tubman Bridge dedication. SCAAHC member Terry James is standing on her left. The bridge is behind them. Photo by Jannie Harriot



## Spotlight on...

**Leon A. Love  
Lexington**



Leon Love is the SCAAHC's vice-chairperson. He retired from SC First Steps to School Readiness as Director of Partnerships and Collaborations. He began with First Steps from its inception in 1999 and was instrumental in building the infrastructure of Local Partnership Boards that operate in each of the 46 counties. Prior to working with First Steps, Leon worked in various capacities at the Department of Social Services for 30 years. After retirement, he founded Connec & Associates, LLC, an education and human services consulting company that provides communities, churches and governments access to high quality, well-trained professionals at affordable pricing. Mr. Love states that South Carolina has many young retired high-quality professionals desiring to collaborate with faith and community-based institutions to make visions a reality.

Leon's civic involvements include the Lexington Medical Center Board of Directors; I. Dequincy Newman Chair Advisory Board at USC; SC Council on Conflict Resolution; Lexington County Juvenile Arbitration; and Columbia College Mediation Study Committee. He is listed in the International *Who's Who of Professionals*, and in 2006, he was named Citizen of the Year by the Columbia, SC chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. Leon is also an active member of Bluff Road United Methodist Church.

As a certified mediator and a Juvenile Arbitrator, Leon has committed his life to building families and promoting high self-esteem. He is a graduate of Claflin College in Orangeburg with a BS degree in Social Science, and did graduate course work at the University of SC and Webster University. He and his wife Faye have two children and two grandchildren.

## News from the South Carolina Department of Archives and History

Elizabeth M. Johnson  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

### Leah Brown Accepts Job in Texas

Leah Brown, our African American Programs Coordinator left the State Historic Preservation Office at the end of September to become a Program Officer with the Southwest Regional Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Fort Worth, Texas. As a Program Officer, Leah will help manage programs and field services for Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. Her enthusiasm, hard work and dedication to excellence are sorely missed, but we wish her well as she returns to her native Texas. Leah accomplished many things during her three years in South Carolina, including:

- Compiling information into the South Carolina's Rosenwald School Building Database <http://www.state.sc.us/scdah/afamer/rosenintro.htm>
- Coordinating development of the Multiple Property Submission for Rosenwald Schools in South Carolina for the National Register of Historic Places
- Writing *Make Your Dream a Reality: A Community Group Guide to a Historic Preservation Project* <http://shpo.sc.gov/forms/dream.htm> and *A Teachers Guide to African American Historic Places in South Carolina* <http://www.state.sc.us/scdah/afamer/teacherguide.htm>
- Developing the African American Heritage section of our website <http://www.state.sc.us/scdah/afamer/hpaaheritage.htm>
- Helping launch *Call & Response*
- Assisting numerous individuals and organizations with questions about historic buildings and historic preservation.

### State Budget Cuts Hit Agency Hard

The Department of Archives and History has absorbed three budget cuts this year of approximately 3%, 12% and 7%. Because of these cuts, the agency will not be able to fill the vacant African American Programs Coordinator position. Additionally, positions left vacant by retirements have not been filled and all staff must take a mandatory 10-day furlough.

## News from the SCDAH continued

### Nominations Sought for Historic Preservation Awards

Each year the Palmetto Trust, Office of the Governor, and Department of Archives and History present the state historic preservation awards. There are six award categories. The nomination form is online at <http://shpo.sc.gov> under "What's New." **Nominations are due January 16, 2009.** For questions, contact Michael Bedenbaugh, executive director of the Palmetto Trust at 803-896-6234 or [oldhouse@palmettotrust.org](mailto:oldhouse@palmettotrust.org).

### Historic Preservation Grants

#### Federal Historic Preservation Grants

Applications are due January 30, 2009 for these grants, which can assist two types of projects:

- Survey and Planning Projects—eligible projects include surveys of historic properties, National Register nominations, preservation education, and preservation planning.
- Stabilization Projects—eligible projects include stabilizing historic buildings or protecting historic buildings from the adverse effects of the weather.

**In 2009 all projects must be located within cities, towns, and counties that are Certified Local Governments (CLGs).**

A CLG may apply, or any non-profit organization or institution within the incorporated limits of a CLG may apply as long as the chief elected official signs the application. Grant awards generally range from \$1,500 to \$25,000. The 2009 application is online <http://shpo.sc.gov/grants/preservationgrants/>.

#### S.C. Preserve America Initiative Grants

Applications are due March 31, 2009. Eligible projects include: historic property surveys and publications using survey findings, National Register district and multiple property submission nominations, plans for individual historic buildings, structures and archaeological sites, and design guidelines for historic districts. Applications and instructions are online <http://www.state.sc.us/scdah/saveamerica.htm>.

For both grant programs, please contact Brad Sauls for more information or to discuss a potential project at [sauls@scdah.state.sc.us](mailto:sauls@scdah.state.sc.us), 803-896-6172.

### Landmark and Preservation Conference

The third annual combined Landmark and Preservation Conference will be held March 26-27, 2009 in Columbia, South Carolina. Information about the conference is posted on the SHPO workshops and conferences website <http://shpo.sc.gov/conf/>. Sessions will feature several projects involving African American historic buildings, including the Carroll School in York County, the Immanuel School in Aiken, and the Great Branch Teacherage in Orangeburg County.

## Guest Corner

### Making Connections with Barbados

Lisa Randle

From October 22nd–26th, the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor (SCNHC) sponsored a public trip to Barbados to explore the long-standing historical and cultural connection between the island and the Palmetto State. Dating back to the birth of the Carolina colony in 1670, South Carolina and Barbados have shared culture, arts, food, architecture, language, agriculture, government, and African heritage. This trip was the culminating event jointly sponsored by the SCNHC and the Barbados Ministry of Tourism of a traveling art and history exhibit, entitled *The Connection*, comprising more than 70 pieces from South Carolinian and Barbadian artists.

The official opening of the exhibit featured a cultural prelude by Ifie's Mokojumbies; remarks by William Gollop, President of Barbados National Trust; Joy Young, SC Arts Commission; Rhoda Green, Barbados Honorary Consul to SC; Honorable Steven Blackett, MP, Minister of Community Development and Culture; James Goggin, Charges D/Affaires, US Embassy; Andrew Cox, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism; and a steelpan solo performance by John Cole. Then, we were surprised and delighted by an impromptu performance by Anita "Aunt Pearl Sue" Prather Singleton from the Beaufort, SC area.



Lisa Randle (left) and Joy Young take a moment to pose for a picture while touring St. James Parish Church. Photo by Jannie Harriot

## ***Making Connections with Barbados continued***

The trip included tours, speakers, traveling workshops, and rich local cuisine. During the International Heritage Symposium hosted by the Ministry of Tourism at the Sherbourne Conference Centre, we were treated to remarks by Dr. Karl Watson, Chairman of the Barbados/Carolina Connection Committee and Professor of History at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, as well as remarks by the Minister of Tourism, Honorable Richard L. Sealy, MP. Doctoral candidate Michael Stoner presented "The Historical Connections between Barbados and South Carolina," which nicely accompanied the SCNHC's interpretive exhibit highlighting the rich historical and cultural connection still present between the island and the Palmetto State today.

Participants chose traveling workshops based on personal interests – art & culture, agriculture, genealogy, or architecture. I chose architecture and had the opportunity to visit places not open to the public such as Brighton Plantation, Drax Hall Plantation, as well as Tyrol Cot Heritage Village - home to a number of attractive chattel houses, each of which displays the work of traditional craftsmen and artists. As a group, we visited the George Washington House, the Barbados Museum, St. James Parish Church, the Gallery of Caribbean Art, Arlington House, St. Nicholas Abbey, and the Andromeda Botanical Gardens. We enjoyed lots of Barbados' two national dishes: coucou and flying fish. And, of course, we imbibed much rum punch!

Here are a few of my visual treasures on the right. Up top is St. Nicholas Abbey. The center photo shows SCNHC Executive Director Michelle McCollum and Barbados Minister of Tourism Honorable Richard L. Sealy, MP (seated) listening to Dr. Karl Watson. At the bottom is the Emancipation Statue.





## In The News

# Preserving Our Places In History: The Barbados Link Awards Banquet & Annual Meeting, January 22-23, 2009

Brookland Baptist Church Banquet & Conference Center 1066 Sunset Blvd., West Columbia

### Thursday, January 22

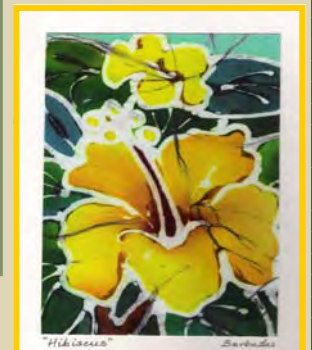
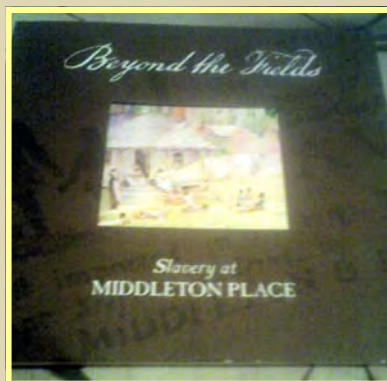
10:30 am - 1:00 pm	SCAAHC Quarterly Meeting
2:00 - 3:00 pm	Registration
3:00 - 3:45 pm	Opening Session
3:45 - 4:00 pm	Video - "Barbados Story"
4:00 - 4:45 pm	Keynote Address - (invited) The Honorable Steven Blackett, Minister of Community Development & Culture, Barbados
4:45 - 6:00 pm	Presentation - "Welding New Understanding of an Ancient Chain - The Barbados Link"
6:00 - 6:30 pm	Networking, Exhibit Viewing & Silent Bidding
6:30 - 8:30 pm	Awards Banquet - "Preserving Our Places In History"

### Friday, January 23

8:45 - 9:30 am	Registration & Continental Breakfast
9:30 - 10:00 am	Welcome & Performance - Logan Leopard Steel Band, Columbia
10:00 am - 12 noon	Panel Discussion - "The Carolina/Barbados Link"
12:00 - 12:30 pm	Networking, Exhibit Viewing & Silent Bidding
12:30 - 2:00 pm	Trailblazer Luncheon & Auction
2:00 - 2:45 pm	Session - "Tools of the Trade"
2:45 - 3:15 pm	Wrap-Up & Evaluation



The SCAAHC is sponsoring a silent auction during the annual meeting. We have an assortment of goodies that provide glimpses of both Barbadian and SC history and culture. Here's a look at a few items that are ready to go home with or to the office of the highest bidder. See the schedule above for the auction timetable.



# Events Calendar

## January 2009

**SC African American Heritage Commission**  
**Quarterly Meeting, 10:30 AM**  
**Thursday, January 22, 2009**  
**Brookland Baptist Church Banquet & Conference Center,**  
**1066 Sunset Blvd., West Columbia, SC**

**Preserving Our Places In History Awards Banquet**  
**6:30 pm, Thursday, January 22, 2009**  
**Brookland Baptist Banquet & Conference Center**

**Annual Meeting**  
**Thursday & Friday, January 22-23, 2009**  
**Brookland Baptist Banquet & Conference Center**

**National Trust for Historic Preservation**  
**Preservation Leadership Training (PLT)**  
January 10 - 17, Birmingham, AL  
Contact Alison Hinchman at 202-588-6067  
<http://www.PreservationNation.org/plt>

**The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)**  
Museum Grants for African American History and Culture are due on the 15th or 29th. For more details:  
<http://www.imls.gov/applicants/grants/AfricanAmerican.shtm>

**From Slave to Sharecropper: African Americans in the Lowcountry after the Civil War**  
Through February 28, 2009  
The Charleston Museum, Charleston, SC  
Contact: 843-722-2996 [www.charlestonmuseum.org](http://www.charlestonmuseum.org)

## February 2009

**The African-American Experience**  
February 7, 10:00 – Noon  
Redcliffe Plantation SHS  
181 Redcliffe Rd., Beech Island, SC  
Contact: 803-827-1473 [www.SouthCarolinaParks.com](http://www.SouthCarolinaParks.com)

**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.

### **Gullah Heritage: Saturday Series**

February 7: Carolyn “Jabulile” White, Sea Island storyteller and Vera Manigault, sweetgrass baskets  
February 14: Anita Singleton-Prather, “Aunt Pearlie Sue” Gullah Tales and Vera Manigault, sweetgrass basketry demonstration  
February 21: Sharon and Frank Murray, rice production and Paul and Loretta Hromoga, indigo dyeing  
February 28: Ann Caldwell and the Magnolia Singers, spirituals and Jeannette Lee, sweetgrass basketry demonstration  
Charles Pinckney National Historic Site, 1254 Long Point Road, Mount Pleasant, SC Contact: 843-881-5516  
<http://www.nps.gov/chpi>

### **The African-American Experience**

February 28 10:00 – Noon  
Redcliffe Plantation SHS, Beech Island, SC  
Contact: 803-827-1473 [www.SouthCarolinaParks.com](http://www.SouthCarolinaParks.com)

## March 2009

### **Gullah Heritage: Saturday Series**

March 7: Veronica Gerald and Jesse Gant, Gullah cooking demonstration, Alada “Muima” Shinault-Small, African tales, and NIA Productions, African drumming and dance  
March 14: The Brotherhood Singers, spirituals & gospel, Dorothy Montgomery, quilting, and Elijah Ford, sweetgrass baskets  
March 21: Vermelle and Andrew Rodrigues, quilting and toys, Vera Manigault, sweetgrass baskets and Charles C. Williams, castnet making and woodwork  
March 28: Ann Caldwell and the Magnolia Singers, spirituals and William Rouse, sweetgrass basket demonstration  
Charles Pinckney National Historic Site, 1254 Long Point Road, Mount Pleasant, SC Contact: 843-881-5516  
<http://www.nps.gov/chpi>

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