

Meeting of the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission July 15, 2024 Director's Report

Prepared by Adrienne Nirdé, Director, NC African American Heritage Commission

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENTS

Reappointments

- Tanzy B. Wallace (Cleveland County) for a term expiring September 30, 2027
- Elder Fondella A. Leigh (Perquimans County) for a term expiring September 30, 2027

ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATES

- One request from NCAAHC is being considered for the 2023-2024 short session budget: funding for the African American Monument on State Capitol Grounds.
- Newly filled NCAAHC staff positions:
 - o Natalie Rodriguez, Associate Director
 - o Miranda Clinton, Rosenwald Program Coordinator
 - o Kennedy Cox, Rosenwald Research Assistant
 - o Vinson Biggs, HBCU/MIHE Summer 2024 Intern
- Currently vacant staff positions:
 - o Education & Interpretation Specialist (currently working with HR to make offer to candidate)

MAJOR PROJECT UPDATES

Juneteenth 2024

Juneteenth 2024 made for a busy season for the AAHC. For the third year, with support from the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, AAHC was able to continue support of events across the state and offer a Juneteenth Speaker's Bureau free to organizations across the state.

Events supported:

- Triangle Cultural Awareness Foundation's NC Juneteenth Celebration (Durham)
- Juneteenth of New Bern (New Bern)
- Triad Cultural Arts's Juneteenth Festival (Winston-Salem)
- Juneteenth Festival of the Carolinas (Charlotte)
- Capitol City Juneteenth (Raleigh)
- Juneteenth: In Song & Word at the NC Museum of History (Raleigh)

Juneteenth Speaker's Bureau Presenters:

- Leesa Jones, Washington Waterfront Underground Railroad Museum

- Beverly Fields Burnette, NC Association of Black Storytellers
- Carolyn Evans, Independent Educator
- Bernard George, Historian
- Adrienne Nirdé, Director, NCAAHC
- Natalie Rodriguez, Associate Director, NCAAHC
- Khadija McNair, NC Freedom Park Manager, NCAAHC

Speaker's Bureau participants presented at 16 programs across the state, including 2 virtual. Locations included:

- NC Zoo (Asheboro)
- NC Aquariums at Ft. Fisher (Kure Beach) and Pine Knoll Shores (Pine Knoll Shores)
- President James K. Polk State Historic Site (Pineville)
- Somerset Place State Historic Site (Creswell)
- NC Office of State Budget Management (Raleigh)
- Hertford County Public Library (Winton)
- Graham Public Library (Graham)
- Ocracoke Public Library (Ocracoke)
- Rolesville Charter School (Rolesville)
- Mt. Sinai Missionary Baptist Church (Fayetteville)
- City of Charlotte Young Professionals Employee Resource Network (Charlotte)
- Burgaw Juneteenth Celebration (Burgaw)
- Stanly County Historical Society (Albemarle)
- EverTude, Inc. (virtual)
- DaVinci Education, Inc. (virtual)

Additionally, AAHC hosted the [2024 Juneteenth Toolkit](#) and 2024 Juneteenth Community Events calendar on the [website](#). The events calendar hosted 2,715 views, 1,132 views for the toolkit (not including email viewership), and 1,247 views for the Juneteenth landing page.

"A Tale of Two Ships: Part Deux" (Institute of Museum and Library Services Grant, Awarded June 2021)

Travel updates, next steps, grant extension

In January and March 2024, the project team traveled internationally to complete the next phase of this project. This travel will included visits to France and Martinique to continue archival research on *La Concorde* to yield academic scholarship, digital content, and expansive interpretation in DNCR institutions. The project team also completed numerous site visits to observe how the transatlantic slave trade is interpreted in other museums and cultural institutions. Key findings included the insurance claim filed following the capture of the ship and additional documentation of the voyages. Research Fellow Jillian Schuler is currently in the process of processing her findings. Following this travel, in collaboration with the *Queen Anne's Revenge* Conservation Lab, a fourth research convening will be hosting in Winter 2025.



Rosenwald Convening

In collaboration with DNCR the NC State Historic Preservation Office, AAHC is currently assembling a convening of Rosenwald Stakeholders to take place at NC State University on November 21-22, 2024. The intention of the gathering is to support stakeholders across North Carolina who are stewarding these sites, share resources, and engage in community. Presentation topics will include historic preservation, grant writing, case studies of successful projects, and more. Speakers are in the midst of being confirmed, but will include Dr. Dudley Flood, Alan Spears of the National Park Conservation Network, Terri White of the Charlotte Museum of History, Dr. Melissa Stuckey of University of South Carolina, and representatives from Fisk University’s Rosenwald Digitization Project. To support the project, two full-time temporary employees have joined the team: Miranda Clinton as Rosenwald Program Coordinator and Kennedy Cox as the Rosenwald Research Assistant.

NC Civil Rights Trail

In the spring of 2020, the AAHC received funding from the William G. Pomeroy Foundation to develop and launch the NC Civil Rights Trail in partnership with Visit NC and the NC Office of Archives & History. The project will identify and mark (digitally and physically) North Carolina sites key to the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, or critical to advancing civil rights in the state. This project has created one interactive, evergreen digital map of North Carolina civil rights sites, and will ultimately yield fifty physical, community-based markers by the end of 2024. Currently 32 markers have been awarded. Round VI of applications is currently in progress and new recipients will be notified this month. Round VII applications are due on November 1, 2024.