



# Heritage Matters

FALL 2010 News of the Nation's Diverse Cultural Heritage

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## Black History in Pennsylvania: Communities in Common

Michael J. O'Malley III / Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

One of the more enduring—as well as exciting—outcomes of “Black History in Pennsylvania: Communities in Common,” the annual theme adopted by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) for 2010, is a historical study that examines more than three centuries of African American life, culture, and experience in the Keystone State. This study examines, in detail, the daily life, work, struggles, and ideals of generations of African Americans in Pennsylvania, beginning in the late 17th century.

Awarded a Preserve America Grant in 2006 to garner knowledge of shared history, PHMC worked closely with the African American Museum in Philadelphia (AAMP) to develop the exhaustive chronicle of African Americans in Pennsylvania and conduct a survey of the history, changing demographics, and built environment of eight geographically and economically distinct black communities in the Commonwealth: Bedford, Bedford County; Coatesville, Chester County; Meadville, Crawford County; Mount Union, Huntingdon County; Stroudsburg, Monroe County; Washington, Washington County; Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County; and Williamsport, Lycoming County. AAMP, the first institution established by a major United States city to explore and interpret the lives of African Americans, partnered with PHMC to research and produce the historical narrative and conduct and summarize the community surveys.

The study delves into social, cultural, economic, industrial, political, and religious history as it probes what makes Pennsylvania's African American historical legacy so rich and varied. In addition to the historical narrative, the surveys of eight featured communities serve as templates for those wishing to investigate their own historical and cultural resources, propose properties for state historical markers, and nominate buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts to the National Register of Historic Places.

The study opens with an extensive discussion of slavery and resistance to it by African Americans. The introductory chapter offers an examination of the beginnings of the slave trade and how it impacted individuals of African descent living in Pennsylvania, followed by an explanation—supplemented with examples—of how they dealt with the “peculiar institution” (a euphemism for slavery that grew to be popular during the second half of the 19th century). Slavery as commerce is explored in-depth. Among the more emotionally charged issues in Chapter One are the examples of resistance and the harrowing experiences of runaway slaves. Nineteenth-century Pennsylvania was a hotbed for abolitionism and early civil rights activities, with formal and informal acts of resistance from organizations and individuals across racial lines. By examining the development and legacy of slavery as an institution, the study also considers the overt actions of slaves who carried out revolts and obstructed work or sabotaged the workplaces where they labored. The study includes a number of advertisements that appeared in the late 18th century in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, published in Philadelphia, for both the sale of slaves and the return of fugitives.

Chapter Two highlights the quest by African Americans for civil and political rights. It provides a broad look at the evolution of African Americans’ rights by examining the practices endorsed or embraced by state government from the 18th through the 20th centuries. The dynamic role of African American laborers in Pennsylvania—as slaves, indentured servants, or free citizens—in the areas of agriculture, iron making, domestic work, steel production, coal mining, brick making, and glass making, are chronicled in Chapters Three and Four. These sections address the changing workforce and workplace and how these places were affected by migration and industrialization.

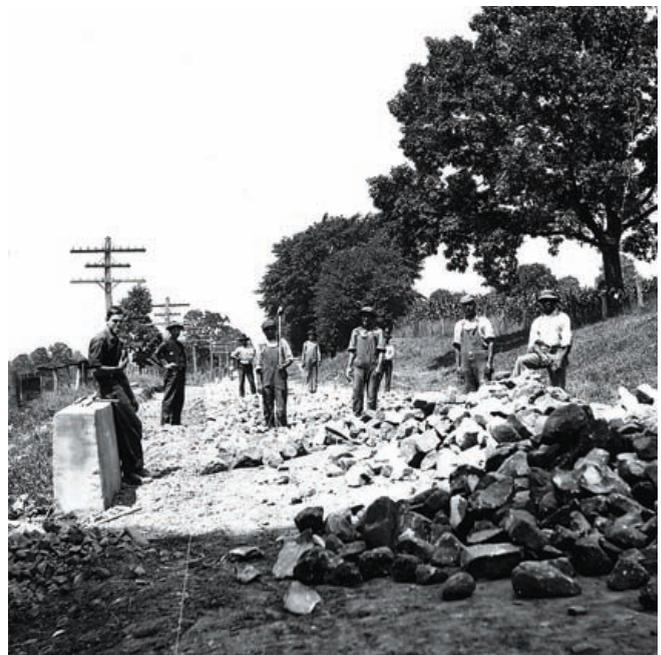
The study profiles the growth and spread of the independent African and African American church in Pennsylvania. The narrative is brought to life by numerous biographies, excerpts from autobiographical sketches, and writings of individuals, many of whom played pivotal roles in the foundation of and development of black churches. The role of the black church in political and social activism is also explored, in addition to significant ecclesiastical and secular documents issued by specific denominations. There is, naturally, a discussion of Philadelphia’s venerable Mother Bethel AME Church, but there is also fair coverage of other churches and congregations in communities across Pennsylvania.

The educational history of Pennsylvania’s African Americans is charted by the evolution of African American

secular, philanthropic, and religious-based educational initiatives and the many attempts of the black community to secure elementary and secondary schools and institutions of higher education. Many of the struggles and triumphs in obtaining a fair and equitable education, such as the laborious and time-consuming desegregation of public schools, are examined in detail. Special emphasis is given to the African American independent school movement and the establishment of the Commonwealth’s historically black colleges and universities, Lincoln University of Pennsylvania and Cheyney University of Pennsylvania.

The study concludes with chapters examining the history and legacy of African American benevolent, mutual aid, and fraternal societies, such as the Masons, Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, Order of the Eastern Star, and Pennsylvania Federation of Negro Women’s Clubs. Case studies of selected organizations include discussion of activities for the betterment of its members and the community at large, such as literary and book groups, scholarships, and financial assistance. The study also broaches the subjects of recreation and sports, illuminating how African American males founded their own baseball teams and created leagues in Pennsylvania. ❖

**i** For individuals interested in reading the study and survey reports, visit [www.phmc.state.pa.us/blackhistory](http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/blackhistory) on the Web and click on “Resources” and then “History Study.”



African Americans helped build the roads in early 20th-century Pennsylvania, including Ellis Road in Crawford County. Courtesy of the Pennsylvania State Archives.

## NPS Hispanic Outreach in the Southwest

Celinda Peña / National Park Service

As part of the National Park Service's (NPS) effort to expand awareness and relevancy among Hispanics, NPS reached out to two preeminent Hispanic organizations, the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) in July 2010. Our strategy was to bring their summer conference attendees to two national parks, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park and Petroglyph National Monument, so people can see for themselves how the National Park Service is connected to their cultural heritage. NCLR represents millions of Hispanics around the country through their affiliated network of community-based organizations. LULAC is the largest and oldest Hispanic organization in the United States, reaching millions of Hispanics through its 70 councils nationwide.

During the NCLR conference in San Antonio, the NPS sponsored a table at the convention expo, talking to thousands of visitors about NPS and the national parks that preserve and interpret the stories and culture of Hispanics. The highlight was a special evening reception at the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park Visitor Center, hosted by Rep. Ciro Rodriguez, who spoke about his pending legislation to expand and preserve the park, which passed in the U.S. House of Representatives the very next day.

The LULAC convention was held in Albuquerque where the NPS brought 150 members of a youth conference to Petroglyph National Monument for a morning hike. As the group scaled the ancient volcanoes, spotting rattlesnakes and lizards, they also heard from park rangers about how and why they entered the National Park Service and what makes their jobs so interesting and fun.

These outreach efforts are meant to set the stage for increased partnership with both organizations. The vision is for NCLR and LULAC to consider NPS a resource for history, culture, education, recreation, and healthy living. ❖

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Youth attending the LULAC conference took a morning hike at Petroglyph National Monument in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Courtesy of Celinda Peña.



## Traveling Highway 17 in Search of the Soul of the Gullah

Ronald Daise / Brookgreen Gardens

On June 28th, a bus tour along Highway 17, from Charleston to Georgetown, South Carolina, took 43 International Heritage Development Conference attendees (Charleston, from June 27-July 1, 2010) for a “taste” of Gullah/Geechee history, heritage, and culture. The tour was coordinated by Michael Allen, National Park Service (NPS) Community Partnership Specialist, along with South Carolina commissioners and the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission.

The bus tour stopped at several locations that reflected Gullah/Geechee culture. At the Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Pavilion at Memorial Waterfront Park in Mt. Pleasant, Ms. Thomasena Stokes-Marshall, Executive Director, Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Festival, enlightened attendees about the history, heritage, and artistry of the popular Gullah/Geechee sweetgrass craft.

Commissioner Nichole Green of McClellanville offered insight into her home community while attendees toured Bethel AME Church. Commissioner Ronald Daise, a native of St. Helena Island, SC, presented cultural connections of Gullah/Geechee people and their enslaved West African ancestors through songs and recollections of his journeys to two West African countries.

The tour visited Brookgreen Gardens in Murrells Inlet and took “The Lowcountry Trail Audio Tour” walking tour along a trail that overlooks a former rice field,

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MICHAEL ALLEN

containing archeological and sculptural interpretations of the Gullah/Geechee experience. At Friendfield Plantation in Georgetown, participants visited the ancestral home of First Lady Michelle Obama (her great-great grandfather Jim Robinson lived at Friendfield). Vermelle “Bunny” Rodriguez, quilter and co-owner of De Gullah O’oman Museum in Pawleys Island, showcased her story quilt, “The Michelle Obama Quilt, From the Slave Cabin to the White House.”

The intent of the tour was to provide insight into this unique cultural landscape. Allen said, “I knew on the bus tour would be an array of heritage area folks and community members from around the country who may never have visited or had any authentic information about Gullah culture or heritage. I wanted them to see the remnants, residues, and vestiges of the culture, as well as the threats that the culture is facing today.” ❖

## “Preserving Asian Pacific Islander America: Mobilizing Our Communities”: The First National Asian Pacific Islander American Historic Preservation Forum

**Turkiya Lowe** / National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers

**H**eld in San Francisco’s historic Japantown on June 24 to 26, 2010, Asian and Pacific Islander Americans (APIA) working on historic preservation issues across the country shared stories, exchanged ideas, and discussed strategies to preserve their ethnic heritages, cultural practices, and historic places. This was the first national conference of its kind for the Asian and Pacific Islander American community.

Each Asian ethnic group told of their individual struggle within their community and the broader pan-Asian association. Thai American community leaders, for example, recounted their fight to preserve a Buddhist temple in Berkeley, one of the few extant physical representations of their historic presence. Japanese American veterans and the children of former Tule Lake internees shared memories of their families and the country during World War II. Cambodian and Vietnamese Americans revealed their experiences as so-called “boat people” during the 1970s, their resettlement struggles in the United States, and recent triumphs in local neighborhood revitalization efforts. Conference panels and breakout sessions included a wide range of topics: developing preservation partnerships, economic empowerment through heritage tourism, strategies for adaptive reuse, and best practices for cultural heritage preservation.

In addition, Forum participants visited the Chinese Historical Society of America (CHSA) located in the Chinatown YWCA building, and toured the new International Hotel in San Francisco’s historic Filipino community, Manilatown. Founded on January 5, 1963, the CHSA is one of the oldest and largest organizations dedicated to the study, documentation, and dissemination of Chinese American history. Early 20th-century architect Julia Morgan, the first woman to be admitted to the prestigious Ecole des Beaux Arts department of architecture in Paris, originally designed the 1932 building as the city’s first Chinese YWCA. The original I-Hotel, as it is locally known, housed Filipino immigrant male laborers beginning in the 1910s, and became the center of the Filipino community by mid-century.

In 1977, elderly Filipino residents were evicted from the building to make way for Bay Area urban renewal projects, which had already destroyed several of the city’s historic ethnic neighborhoods. The building was demolished in 1981. Decades of APIA community advocacy resulted in a replacement building that became low-income senior

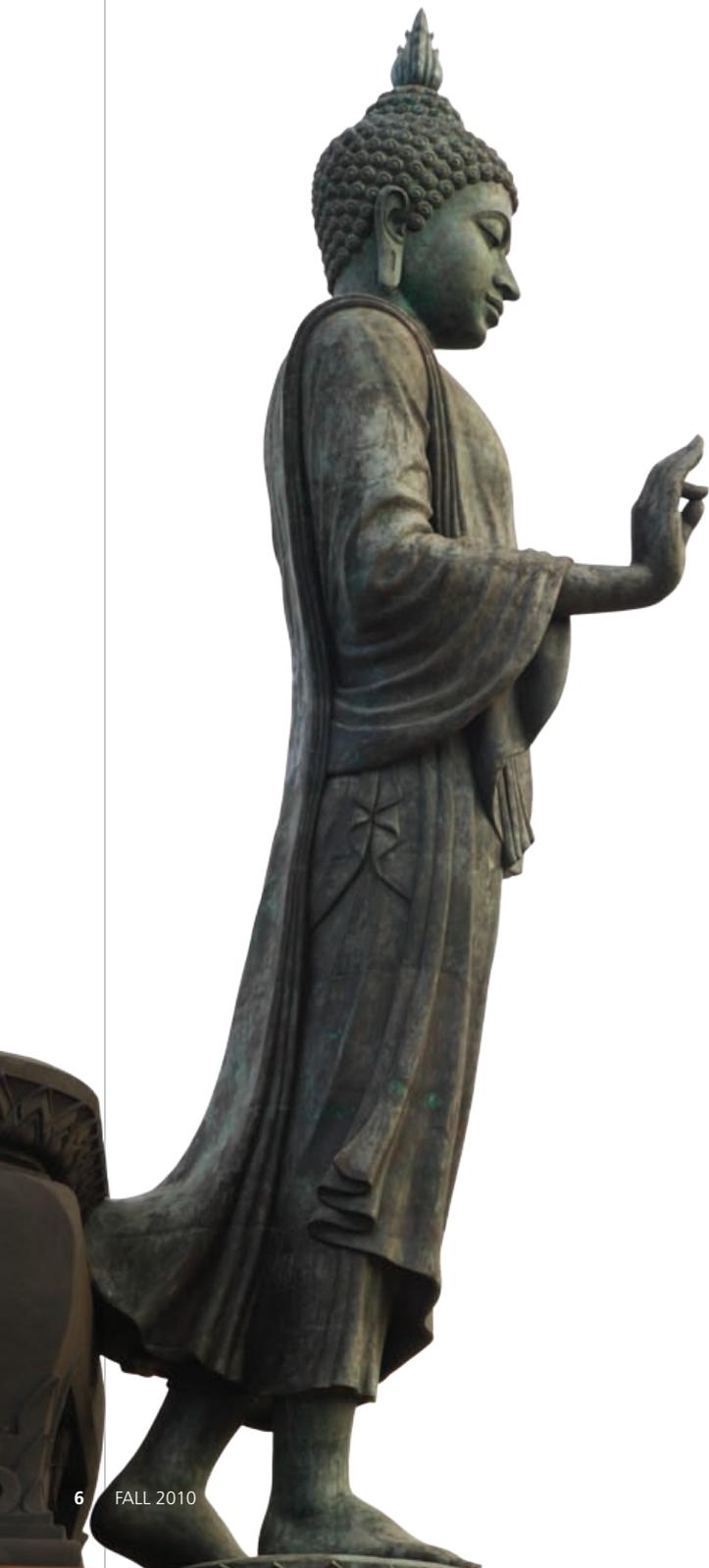


housing in 2005 with priority given to former residents of the original I-Hotel. The new I-Hotel also contains the Manilatown Center—a vibrant community space that hosts cultural events, sponsors art exhibitions and performances—and an archive dedicated to preserving materials documenting the legacy of the city’s Filipino community. The I-Hotel provides a rare and exciting story for the preservation of Asian American heritage in the United States.

Dozens of organizations representing the Chamorro (Guam), Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, and Southeast Asian American communities partnered with the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) and the National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office to sponsor the Forum. Sue Fawn Chung, a professor of history and art at the University of Las Vegas and preservationist, and Irene Hirano Inouye, President of the US-Japan Council and former President of the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, offered inspiring keynote addresses urging Forum participants to become active advocates for preservation of APIA cultural heritage. Assistant Secretary for Insular Affairs Anthony (Tony) M. Babauta, a self-described son of Guam, pledged the Department of the Interior’s support in identifying and preserving APIA resources for the enjoyment of future generations of Americans.

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Thai American community leaders, for example, recounted their fight to preserve a Buddhist temple in Berkeley, one of the few extant physical representations of their historic presence.



“Preserving Asian Pacific Islander America: Mobilizing Our Communities”  
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The Forum emphasized several longstanding themes that have defined APIA preservation efforts. First, the entrance of ethnic and racial minorities, such as African Americans and Native Americans, into the historic preservation field has expanded the field by acknowledging the seminal importance of diverse cultural heritage in United States History. The transformation of the historic preservation field, however, has only recently emerged within Asian American communities in the last decade. Second, APIA communities generally prioritized the continuity of cultural practices and establishment of commemorative space more than preservation of the physical sites where these cultural practices have occurred. This practice often clashed with the field of historic preservation, which emphasizes the protection of buildings and sites. A disconnect between APIA community values and professional preservation contributes to fewer official designations associated with Asian American resources. However, the Forum demonstrated that Asian American communities have significant and growing interest in seeking local, state, and federal designations as a tool for APIA cultural heritage preservation.

In addition, the Asian American experience in the United States is frequently filtered through the lens of the African American experience. The unique transnational nature of the APIA experience as both citizens and immigrants provides an obvious admonition to this tendency. Forum participants affirmed that any national APIA historic preservation agenda must define the Asian American experience, both within and separate from the history of other U.S. minority groups.

The Forum also demonstrated the diversity within the APIA community and highlighted the challenges that this diversity brings in defining a national APIA preservation agenda. For example, a visit to the Southeast Asian Community Center in San Francisco’s Little Saigon highlighted the unique meaning and consequences of arriving in the United States as a *refugee*, rather than as an immigrant, and the ways this experience contributed to community development and cultural preservation. Several Forum organizers expressed dismay at the small representation of Southeast Asian communities compared to other APIA groups and vowed to increase their representation at future meetings.

Forum participants pledged to harness the energy generated by the Forum to create a national APIA preservation organization. The National Trust will produce a video documenting the conference that will be posted on the Forum’s and NTHP’s websites. The footage will include a portion of the conference speeches, a snapshot of the “Next Steps” discussion, and exit interviews with Forum members. The caucus voted to meet biennially to report progress and establish a national APIA preservation agenda, with the next conference scheduled for 2012. Participants also determined to hold a yearly APIA Affinity Session during annual NTHP National Preservation Conferences.<sup>(1)</sup> ❖

**i** For more information on the National APIA Historic Preservation Forum, visit [www.apinhpforum.org](http://www.apinhpforum.org).

<sup>1</sup> The 2010 NTHP Conference is in Austin, Texas from October 27th to 30th.

# National Register Nominations

Rustin Quaide / National Park Service / Christine H. Messing / National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers

## 1 Topeka Council of Colored Women's Clubs Building

For more than a century, African American women have relied on "Colored Women's Clubs" in their effort to "Lift as they climb." African American women began organizing in the 1880s and 1890s, during a time of escalating discrimination and segregation. African American women's clubs fought for basic civil rights for African Americans and worked to establish child care and kindergartens to help working women. In the 1910s, the members of the Kansas colored women's clubs joined the national effort to put a stop to lynching.

The property that would house the Topeka Council of Colored Women's Clubs (TCCWC) was originally constructed as a single-family residence in 1901 by William Warren, a Topeka dairyman and grocer. For its first 30 years, the black clubwomen met in homes and churches. In 1931, Emma Gaines, the widow of African American mortician Ben Gaines, loaned money to the TCCWC to purchase the Warren home for a clubhouse.

The Topeka Council of Colored Women's Clubs building is located at 1149 SW Lincoln Street in Topeka in the heart of Tennessee Town, one of Topeka's traditionally African American neighborhoods. The building itself is a vernacular 1-1/2-story balloon-framed T-plan house with applied Queen Anne details. The Topeka Council of Colored Women's Clubs Building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on December 30, 2009.



The Topeka Council of Colored Women's Clubs originated after African American women began organizing in the 1880s and 1890s, during a time of escalating discrimination and segregation, and members were active through the Civil Rights struggle. TCCWC occupied the home from 1931 until present. Courtesy of Christy Davis, the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office.

## 2 Fitch-Hoose House

Located in Dalton, Massachusetts, the Fitch-Hoose House is significant as an early 19th-century home built for and occupied by African Americans in an area settled primarily by former enslaved African Americans who had either been freed or fled from the Hudson Valley area of New York shortly after the American Revolution. The small timber-framed house was built in 1846 by William H. Bogart, a local cotton manufacturer, then sold to an African American man from Connecticut, Henry Fitch, and subsequently occupied by different black families. Charles Hoose bought the house and its original one-acre lot in 1868. Charles was the grandson of Philip Hoose, who is listed in the 1820 census in the nearby town of Cheshire, having moved with his family

to Dalton by 1830. Like many of the African American residents of the area, the Hoose family name was likely derived from the Dutch surname of a previous Hudson Valley master. Hoose's descendants would continue to live in the house until 2001.

Few examples survive of small laborer's dwellings such as this 1-1/2-story home, particularly with so few structural changes—even the original front door and frame remain intact. The Fitch-Hoose House is significant as a representation of the development of an African American enclave in Berkshire County during a time when blacks were marginalized.

The Fitch-Hoose House was added to the National Register of Historic Places on June 24, 2010.

### 3 Ernesto Memorial Chapel

The Ernesto Memorial Chapel, built in 1912, is located in the rural ward of Abra Honda, in the municipality of Camuy, Puerto Rico. The Ernesto Memorial Chapel represents the establishment of Protestant ideals, concepts, and values within the local social network during the early 20th century and the religious openness promoted by the change of regime in the formerly Catholic island after the Spanish-American War of 1898.

The Spanish-American War transformed the island from a Spanish colony into an American territory. The Protestant missionaries followed the footsteps of U.S. soldiers into Puerto Rico after the ratification of the Treaty of Paris ended the war. By March 1889, representatives from the Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Disciples of Christ convened in New York to establish the procedures, boundaries, and rules in the "Protestant colonization" of Puerto Rico. The Baptists and Methodists claimed the major urban centers; Camuy was claimed by the Methodists. The Foraker Act of 1900 created a local civil administration and established the total separation of church and state, eroding 400 years of the Catholic Church's power.

After using a meeting-house for the services, the Methodist Church acquired a lot to build the chapel in 1906. Opened in 1912, the building plan of the church broke with traditional Catholic architectural patterns and served to create an intimate, accessible space for the congregation and clergy. The 80-square-meter (approximately 861 square feet), hipped

roof building is made from limestone rocks, with mortar. Built under the guidance of architect Albert Munson, the method of construction exemplifies the Arts & Craft movement and its architectural derivation, the Craftsman style. The Ernesto Memorial Chapel was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on July 8, 2010.



The Ernesto Memorial Chapel is emblematic of the break between the state and the Catholic Church and the rise of Protestantism in Puerto Rico. Photo courtesy of Juan Llanes Santos, the Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office.

### 4 Tupapa Site

The Tupapa Site, located in American Samoa, is an archeological site within an actively cultivated agricultural area. Much of the site's valuable artifacts and features are intact deep below the surface. From data gathered so far, the site may yield information on at least three occupational periods in ancestral Samoan culture (Polynesian Plain Ware Period, Late Prehistoric Period, and Historic Period), thus helping to draw a more complete timeline of Samoan society.

Ceramics found at the Tupapa Site indicate that the highland regions were occupied earlier than previously thought, although more work needs to be done to determine if this particular site was intended for temporary

or permanent use. The large number of artifacts found and associated with original context features will also help to explain the patterns of production, use, and circulation of raw materials and man-made objects, providing valuable information about the manufacture and exchange of goods during these periods.

The artifacts at the Tupapa Site related to stone tool use are also central for understanding this time period in Samoan culture. The evidence suggests that stone tools used there were brought in from elsewhere in finished or nearly finished form, as the primary basalt stone was not available in the immediate vicinity of the site. The Tupapa Site was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 30, 2009.

## 5 The Parkway Theatre

The Parkway Theatre at 1768 St. John's Place in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn was constructed in 1928 as a Yiddish vaudeville and dramatic theater. The Parkway Theatre is significant for its association with the history of Yiddish theater in New York City. The ornate Moorish-inspired building is an example of early 20th-century theater architecture. It was designed by theater architect Harrison Wiseman. The theater was originally known as the Rolland Theatre, named after its builder, the theatrical producer William Rolland. By the mid-1930s the theater became known as the Parkway Theatre. It was converted to a church when the current owner, the Holy House of Prayer for All People, acquired the building. The theater became an important part of the immigrant experience in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn. Jewish immigrants from the Lower East Side began moving here as transit improved by the late 19th century.

The Parkway Theatre has a tall rectangular-plan auditorium block and stage fly loft block, with a triangular-shaped lobby block at the front northwest corner and a long and lower three-story block fronting St. John's Place. The lobby and auditorium retain a high degree of integrity of materials, design, and craftsmanship. The lobby is noted for its highly ornate walls with elaborate Byzantine-inspired relief ornamentation. The Parkway Theatre was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on March 31, 2010.

Constructed in 1928 at 1768 St. John's Place in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, the Parkway Theatre was a Yiddish vaudeville and dramatic theatre. Photo courtesy Kathy Howe, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.



## 6 Daughters of Zion Cemetery

The Daughters of Zion Cemetery in Charlottesville, Albemarle County, Virginia, was established in 1873 when the organization purchased almost two acres adjacent to the Oakwood Cemetery. Although Oakwood Cemetery was considered a public burying ground because it was established by the local government a decade earlier, it remained segregated with only a very small portion allotted for the "colored" burials. A private Jewish cemetery was also established nearby but separate. The Daughters of Zion likely chose the site of their cemetery because of its proximity to an existing, although segregated, municipal cemetery, as this was a common practice in Reconstruction-era Virginia. The name "Daughters of Zion" was not uncommon among mutual aid societies of the time, but there was no particular uniformity among the different groups or overarching mother organization. The Charlottesville group appears to have been thriving and well-organized, owning a meeting hall used by other local benevolent societies, in addition to managing the cemetery.

The successful establishment of the Daughters of Zion Society, along with the meeting hall and private urban cemetery established by and for their underserved community, is an important milestone in the development of the African American community in Charlottesville. The park-like cemetery contains approximately 300 burials, about half of which have surviving grave markers. The division of the burials primarily into family groups demonstrates the importance of the family structure to African American communities during Reconstruction and into the 20th century. Data regarding the size, structure, and status of these families can be gained from engravings on the headstones. The majority of burials date between 1885 and 1934, by which time the society had become extinct with the passing of the last known members.

The cemetery was basically abandoned until 1971, when the city of Charlottesville took ownership through eminent domain. Burials continued until 1995, presumably arranged through local African American churches as the cemetery continued to be exclusively for the African American community. The condition of the cemetery remains good, with most headstones intact or repairable, and the overall landscape remaining largely unchanged. As the meeting hall no longer exists, this cemetery is the only site connected to Charlottesville's Daughters of Zion. The cemetery was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on June 24, 2010.

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## 7 First Battalion Virginia Volunteers Armory

The First Battalion Virginia Volunteers Armory was constructed in 1895, in the Jackson Ward neighborhood of Richmond, Virginia. It served the surrounding African American community for nearly a century. The armory's construction was funded by the Richmond City Council, due in large part to the persistence of John Mitchell, Jr., editor of the African American newspaper *The Richmond Planet* and Richmond City Council member from 1888 to 1896. The two-story brick building has towers and crenellations in the classic American armory building style of the time. It included numerous windows on three sides of the building, demonstrating the movement away from armories used strictly as military fortification, toward more general use as a social gathering space and educational facility for the surrounding neighborhood.

Believed to be the only armory in Virginia specifically built for use by black military personnel, the First Battalion Virginia Volunteers Armory is also the oldest remaining

armory building in the state. The building has undergone interior alterations over the years, related to its evolving use. Shortly after the First Battalion disbanded in 1899, the building was used as an elementary school for the African American children in the surrounding Jackson Ward community for the next four decades. The building returned to military use during World War II as a reception center for thousands of African American servicemen. Following the war, the building was again used as a school building and as a storage facility for the city. Most recently, the armory temporarily housed The Black History Museum of Richmond until it moved to a permanent location. In 1988 the armory was declared surplus by the city of Richmond. The building has since been stabilized using a 2002 "Save America's Treasures" grant, and a protective easement was placed in 2003 to ensure preservation of the building's exterior. The First Battalion Virginia Volunteers Armory was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on December 23, 2009.

## 8 Brook Chapel

Brook Chapel was built in Hillburn, New York at the end of the 19th century. One of two churches built at that time, Brook Chapel was built for the Ramapo Lenape Indian Nation, who were long associated with the Ramapo Mountain region of New York and New Jersey. Hillburn developed as a working-class community in the late 19th century with the nearby Ramapo Iron Works as an economic focal point. Among the early iron workers were several Ramapo Indians, including Samuel De Freese, Sr., the primary force behind the establishment of a Presbyterian community among the Ramapo people of the area. As more members of the regional native population were drawn to Hillburn by employment opportunities, the church community also grew. Brook Chapel was built to replace an earlier simple log structure used as a gathering and worship space by the Ramapo, which they had outgrown.

The separation of the Hillburn Presbyterian community along racial lines was echoed in the segregation of school children. While all the local children attended a single high school in a neighboring town, there were separate elementary schools for the white and Ramapo children

of Hillburn—the white school being larger and with modern amenities, while the school for the Ramapo was overcrowded and antiquated. The issue came to a head in 1943 with the establishment of a local chapter of the NAACP, and a visit from Thurgood Marshall to organize a protest. The State Commissioner of Education, Dr. George Stoddard, issued a decision that closed the Ramapo (described as "colored" in the nomination and transcripts) school and allowed those children to attend the main elementary school.

Brook Chapel served as the center for all social gatherings of the community. The congregation successfully petitioned the presbytery for its independence in 1952. Despite efforts in the 1960s to merge the two churches in Hillburn with another in a neighboring town, the Indian community rejected these efforts in order to maintain its own traditions. Brook Chapel remains the center of the religious and social community of the Ramapo Indian population of Hillburn. The original building is much the same as it was in 1893, with only minor additions and alterations. Brook Chapel was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on February 1, 2010.

## 9 The Rialto Hotel

The Rialto Hotel is located on the southwest corner of Main and Croy streets in Hailey, Idaho. The building is the first Basque American owned business in Hailey, and is an example of commercial development during the Great Depression. Cattle and sheep ranching grew and dominated the rural areas of Blaine County. Newly arrived immigrants often took arduous and lonely jobs as herders. Men from the Basque region, an area located along the mountainous border of Spain and France, often worked as herders when they came to the United States. As the sheep industry grew, Basques in the United States encouraged relatives in their homeland to come work as herders. In 1900, there were roughly 270 people of Basque descent living in southern Idaho; by 1920, the number had grown to 1,800. One such immigrant was Julio Astorquia, who came to Hailey in 1913.

Astorquia worked as a herder and married another Basque immigrant, Maria Aspitarte, in 1918. In 1934, Julio and Maria Astorquia invested their money in a new venture in Hailey, buying two lots on its Main Street for construction of a hotel (also known as a boardinghouse). Basques were not always welcomed by the established Idaho communities. These boardinghouses were important cultural centers for the Basque community, as they frequently were the only

places of lodging, and offered social interactions and a taste of home life during the winter months when the herds were brought down from the mountains.

The Hailey newspaper closely followed the Rialto Hotel's construction in 1934, emphasizing that the hotel would have a "beer parlor without seats and gaming of any kind," to dispel stereotypical notions of Basque patrons as loiters, heavy drinkers, and gamblers. The Hotel's opening included a reception and dancing, with music provided by a Basque band from Boise. The Astorquia family owned the Rialto Hotel until 1973, making it the longest-operated Basque boardinghouse in Blaine County. The Rialto Hotel, in the heart of the community's commercial core, is a two-story, brick-masonry building. It is an example of a two-part commercial block, exhibiting elements of the Art Deco style on a modest scale. The Rialto Hotel was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on December 30, 2009.

The Rialto Hotel, located on the southwest corner of Main and Croy streets in Hailey, Idaho, was the first Basque owned business in Hailey. A family owned hotel, it was built during the Great Depression and was a focal point for the local Basque community. Courtesy of Madeline Buckendorf, Idaho State Historic Preservation Office.



**i** For more information about the National Register visit <http://www.nps.gov/nr>

## The Southwest Georgia Civil Rights Movement: The Historical Impact and the Celebration of its 50th Anniversary

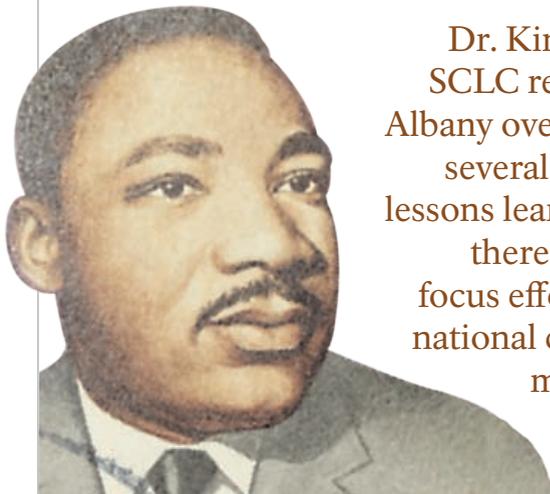
Daaiyah N. Salaam / Southwest Georgia Project

Freedom Riders, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) were some of the prominent organizations in Albany, Georgia, in 1961. These groups came for a common goal, to ensure that the Interstate Commerce Commission ruling to desegregate interstate bus and train terminals was upheld. However, these groups did not come to start a movement; they came to join a movement already taking place in Southwest Georgia. Beginning in 1955, African American citizens of Albany had grown tired of the mistreatment and inequities, and they spelled out their grievances on such things as voting poll taxes and school segregation in letters to the City Council. Mass meetings were already taking place within the churches and meetings were being held with the City's leaders demanding change within the political and socio-economic structure in Southwest Georgia.

In the Fall of 1962, Dr. William Anderson, the only African American doctor in the city and later known as the Albany Civil Rights Movement Leader, asked his former Morehouse College classmate, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to provide a short sermon to the people in Albany in support of the Albany Movement. In turn, the singing, the passion, and the courage of the Albany people invigorated Dr. King.

Marches, sit-ins, and mass meetings were held all over Southwest Georgia, and all were lead by song. The Albany Movement became known as the "Singing Movement"

Dr. King and the SCLC returned to Albany over the next several years and lessons learned from there helped to focus efforts in the national civil rights movement.



Martin Luther King, Jr. and the SCLC participated in the Albany Movement over the course of 3 years, 1962-1965.

and the SNCC Freedom Singers emerged from the events. The power of the song captivated and carried the people through the toughest hours. Students, professors, and doctors risked their own well-being in order to provide a better way of living. Students who were expelled from Albany State included Annette White, who had her Miss ASU Homecoming crown taken for participating in the movement; Dr. Bernice Johnson [Reagon], who later founded the renowned group Sweet Honey in the Rock; Ola Mae Quartimon, who was sentenced to 33 years in the Milledgeville mental institution, and; Charles Sherrod, a SNCC member and founder of the Southwest Georgia Project for Community Education.

The constant external pressures, as well as conflicting tactics from the different organizations within the movement, prohibited it from being completely cohesive. Dr. King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference returned to Albany over the next several years and lessons learned from there helped to focus efforts in the national civil rights movement.

The concerted efforts within the Southwest Georgia region continued beyond Dr. King and the SCLC's involvement. School desegregation was enforced; voter registration drives continued to increase the African American vote in the area; and African American leaders began to run for elected offices.

Andrew Young wrote: "I admired their achievement. No matter what the press said about Albany, I knew how difficult and dangerous it was to be organizing for civil rights in southwest Georgia. By mobilizing black people in Albany to express their discontent, the students had accomplished a great deal."<sup>(1)</sup>

On June 2-4, 2011, the Southwest Georgia Project will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the events surrounding the Southwest Georgia Civil Rights Movement. This celebration will bring civil rights activists, professors, authors, and contributors to reflect on the events of the past, the current reality, and where we are headed in the future. ❖

**i** For more information contact the Southwest Georgia Project at 229.430.9870, email: salaam.d@swgaproject.com

<sup>1</sup>Andrew Young, *An Easy Burden: The Civil Rights Movement and the Transformation of America* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1996), 172.



## The Franklin School and Sumner School: DC's Sentinels at a Time of Change

Lucinda Janke

**A**dolf Cluss, one of Washington, DC's most prolific and influential architects of the 19th century, designed a series of large new school buildings of Second Empire design for the city, a stark contrast to the one- and two-room public schoolhouses then in use. Cluss brought to Washington architecture worthy of a modern capital and designed accommodations that all of its citizens could partake of equally. Two of the buildings still remain: The Benjamin Franklin School and the Charles Sumner School. Both buildings are listed in the National Register of Historic Places (the Franklin School was also designated a National Historic Landmark in 1996) and are valued assets in the city's cultural history. Their paths run parallel tracks through the educational and social history of Washington, DC, from Reconstruction to the landmark desegregation case *Brown v. Board of Education*. Now, in a twist of fate, one building's future hangs in the balance as city officials and concerned citizens consider possible uses for the building.

Opened in 1869, the Franklin School was built as a showpiece and model school. Built for white students, located on a rise in a fashionable neighborhood, the site was chosen to give prominence to public schools, which were once regarded as charity or "pauper" schools. The Franklin School served as a pioneering laboratory for new programs including vocational training, high school curriculum, and professional teacher training. In 1873 a "normal school" was established at Franklin and continued for forty years. From 1925 to 1968, Franklin School was the administrative headquarters for the DC public schools. The Franklin School quickly became an object of pride and a tourist attraction, generating images in prints and stereographs, and inclusion in guidebooks. Its exuberant, elegant design

succeeded immediately in raising the reputation of the city's public school system.

Cluss also designed a school for African American students, named for Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner. Until 1862 there had been no public schools for African Americans in Washington, DC. The Sumner School, completed in 1872, served as the headquarters of the separate African American school system, the equivalent of the Franklin, until desegregation in 1954. The building's design featured the latest in heating and ventilation systems, as well as innovative use of individual student desks and large wall-mounted blackboards. Classrooms had windows on two sides and raised platforms for the teachers that enhanced visibility and acoustics. Classes were divided by grades and the curricula were grade-specific, now taken for granted but unusual at the time. Cluss' architectural designs for schools won a design award at the Vienna International Exposition in 1873, an award at the 1876 Centennial in Philadelphia, and honors at the International Exposition in Paris in 1878.

Disparities between the dual school systems, evident throughout the second half of the 19th century and early 20th century increased after the Second World War. The black schools became overcrowded while the white schools were underutilized. Some black schools were at nearly double their capacity and classes were held in shifts. Schools from the white system were transferred to the black one, often with great controversy. As the administrative headquarters for the white school system, Franklin was at ground zero for the issues arising. The ensuing years saw *Bolling v. Sharpe* (president of the DC Board of Education) decided alongside the historic *Brown v. Board of Education*

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case that outlawed school segregation in May 1954. Integrated public schools opened in Washington in September 1954.

By 1968, Franklin was replaced as the administrative headquarters of the DC schools and Sumner was largely vacant. Concerns arose for the long-term preservation of these landmarks. 1972 saw a flurry of preservation activity in the city. Both Franklin and Sumner, by then the only surviving school buildings designed by Cluss, received attention in the press. In 1977, the Board of Education voted to preserve the Franklin and Sumner Schools. Since then, Sumner was meticulously restored via a public-private partnership. It reopened in 1986 as a museum, conference center, and the repository for the archives of the public school system. Franklin School was an adult education center, which closed in 1989, and briefly served as a shelter for homeless men. Lack of maintenance is taking a toll inside and out.

The future of the historic building emerged again in late 2009 when the city issued a Request for Proposals to Redevelop the historic Franklin School building. The city's plan included commercial, residential, mixed-use, hotel, or retail use but nothing related to its former function and history. In response, concerned citizens formed the Coalition for Franklin School in November 2009. The goals of this ad hoc group include retaining public control of the historic school, completing its restoration, and finding an appropriate use for it. The Coalition established a steering committee, a website, and a newsletter.

In March 2010, the Coalition sponsored a public community forum to discuss possible uses for the Franklin School. There were several proposals presented, including a model open enrollment high school and a charter school. The overwhelming consensus of the audience was that Franklin School be used for educational and/or cultural purposes.

The city is fortunate in having preserved for nearly a century and a half this unique pair of flagship schools from its dual system. They reflect Washington's cultural diversity, its public school history, and architectural heritage. A traveling exhibition about the Franklin School debuted at the Historical Society of Washington, D.C., in July 2010. ❖

**i** For more information on the Franklin School and the Coalition for Franklin School, see [www.franklinschooldc.org](http://www.franklinschooldc.org). To learn more about its architect, see [www.adolf-cluss.org](http://www.adolf-cluss.org).

**Preservation: 1968 - Present**

**Franklin School Preservation Timeline**

- 1964 Listed on the District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites
- 1973 Listed on the National Register of Historic Places
- 1977 Board of Education votes to restore Sumner and Franklin Schools
- 1986 Sumner School restored and opened to public
- 1992 Exterior of Franklin School restored
- 1996 The Franklin designated a National Historic Landmark
- 2002 DC historic designation amended to include interiors
- 2003 City advertises for tenant for the Franklin
- 2004 Franklin School used as a homeless shelter. DC Preservation League lists Franklin as endangered due to lack of care and maintenance, threatening historic interior
- 2005 City issues Request for Proposal to develop Franklin School
- 2009 City issues another Request for Proposal to develop Franklin School

**The battle for preservation...**

By the turn of the century, Washington's red brick schoolhouses were in disfavor, and many of these buildings fell victim to the wrecking ball in subsequent decades.

But by the 1960s, when the School Administration labeled Franklin School the public had developed a new appreciation of the city's architectural heritage. The Franklin had been included in a 1964 inventory of historic sites in the District of Columbia. In 1968 Congress passed the first national law that offered some protection for landmarks and established the National Register of Historic Places.

Despite these developments at the federal level, the District of Columbia had no local law that could prevent demolition of Franklin School. In 1971 the threat of demolition of a number of historic buildings sparked the creation of a citizen's action group called Don't Tear It Down, which became the DC Preservation League. Their first objectives were to prevent the demolition of the Old Post Office, Old City Hall, and Franklin School. Of these, only the preservation of the Franklin remains unfulfilled.

**Sumner School barely escapes demolition**

Sumner School underwent renovation, 1984 - 86

Closed in 1978 and with a partially collapsed roof, the Sumner School survived demolition by the narrowest of margins. It was ultimately restored through a public-private partnership in the 1980s.

**The Adult Education Center at Franklin School, transformed with fluorescent lighting and modern furniture.**

*"...chances are that the Franklin School will be gone by the time we celebrate the Bicentennial in 1976."*

**WASHINGTON POST, 1972**

This banner illustrates the preservation efforts for the Franklin School how the Sumner School was nearly lost. Courtesy of Lucinda Janke.

# Conferences and Events

## Conferences

### October 2010

#### National Trust for Historic Preservation, Austin, TX

The theme of the National Trust's National Preservation Conference in 2010 is "Next American City, Next American Landscape." The conference will take place in Austin, Texas. Sessions will focus on smart growth and diversity.

For more information visit the National Trust's conference website, <http://www.preservationnation.org/resources/training/npc/>.

### March 2011

#### Organization of American Historians, Houston, TX

Houston, Texas will host the 103rd annual meeting of OAH March 17–20, 2011. This year's theme is "Americans Divided and United: Multiple and Shifting Solidarities."

For more information on the conference, visit <http://annualmeeting.oah.org/>.

### April 2011

#### National Conference of Public Historians, Pensacola, FL

The theme of 2011's annual meeting is "Crossing Borders/Building Communities—Real and Imagined." It will take place in Pensacola, Florida on April 6–10, 2011 at the Historic Pensacola Village and Crowne Plaza Pensacola Grand Hotel. NCPH invites proposals for the Poster Session at the annual meeting. The deadline for submissions is December 1, 2010.

For more information, visit <http://ncph.org/cms/conferences/2011-annual-meeting/>.

### September 2011

#### American Association of State and Local History, Richmond, VA

AASLH's 2011 annual meeting will take place September 14–17, 2011 in Richmond, VA.

For more information, visit the AASLH Meeting webpage, <http://www.aaslh.org/anmeeting.htm>.

## Events

Hispanic Heritage Month / September/October

African American Heritage Month / February

Asian American/Pacific Islander Heritage Month / April

Historic Preservation Month / May

## Mission of the National Park Service

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and the values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service also cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

*Heritage Matters*, sponsored by the Cultural Resources Programs of the National Park Service, is published twice a year, and is free of charge. Readers are invited to submit short articles and notices for inclusion. (Limit submissions to fewer than 600 words and include author's name and affiliation. Photographs or digital images are welcome.) Please submit newsletter items in writing or electronically to: Brian D. Joyner, Editor, *Heritage Matters*, DOI/National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW (2280), Washington, DC 20240. Phone: 202.354.2276, e-mail: [brian\\_joyner@nps.gov](mailto:brian_joyner@nps.gov).

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FALL 2010

# Heritage Matters

News of the Nation's Diverse Cultural Heritage



## About Heritage Matters

*Heritage Matters* highlights the many diverse cultural resources/historic preservation projects that are underway in the National Park System, the National Park Foundation, the National Parks Conservation Association, state and local governments, and other partnership organizations. This newsletter also showcases preservation activities occurring within diverse communities. It is distributed to major preservation partnership organizations, including federal agencies, State Historic Preservation Offices, Tribal Preservation Offices, private preservation organizations, as well as diverse organizations and schools.

Black History in Pennsylvania: Communities in Common

NPS Hispanic Outreach in the Southwest

Traveling Highway 17 in Search of the Soul of the Gullah

"Preserving Asian Pacific Islander America: Mobilizing Our Communities": The First National Asian Pacific Islander American Historic Preservation Forum

National Register Nominations

The Southwest Georgia Civil Rights Movement: The Historical Impact and the Celebration of its 50th Anniversary

The Franklin School and Sumner School: DC's Sentinels at a Time of Change

