



# Reflections



Georgia African American  
Historic Preservation Network

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## BEULAH RUCKER: OTHERS BEFORE SELF

*Kayla Morris, African American Programs Assistant  
Historic Preservation Division*

Beulah Rucker is often recognized for her great will to educate African Americans in Hall County, Georgia. Rucker was born in 1888, in Banks County, Georgia, the daughter of sharecroppers who recognized quickly how intelligent their daughter was, and pushed for her education. Often times Rucker’s family did not have the funds needed to pay for her tuition so she would have to work in order to attend school. At the beginning of school one year, Rucker did not have the money for her tuition. She stood before the principal and stated, “Here are my hands; they can work.” Rucker completed her work at the Knox Institute, located in Athens, Georgia, for African Americans in 1909.



*Tailoring Class, The Industrial School in Gainesville,  
The GainesvilleTimes*

After completing her education at Knox, Rucker desired to open her own school as no schools in the area of Banks County served African Americans; she worked various jobs to fund this dream.

*“Dreams or visions that I would have to establish a school for my race...I had to build a school for my people and the bible must be taught therein.”*

- Beulah Rucker, *The Rugged Pathway*

During a time when it was believed that an African American woman could not run a school, Rucker opened her school in 1911 in Banks County. She later created a School for servicemen which was based at the Rosenwald grant opened in Gainesville, first African American. She intended to educate African Americans in her about hygiene, to help uplift the race, both professional and



*Beulah Rucker,  
The Gainesville  
Times*

run a school, Rucker received for a school she becoming the woman to do so. Veterans Night of World War II, Industrial School. educate African community cultural values and preparation for industrial work.

Rucker fought for the education of African American students, who without her may have not gained the basic right to read, while living in an area that failed to provide adequate educational facilities for African American children. The Industrial School still stands today in Gainesville, Georgia; where it operates as a meeting space and museum recognizing the efforts of Beulah Rucker, a trailblazer in the education of black Americans.

*“I have sacrificed both night and day to light a torch of instruction for my race”*

- Beulah Rucker, in *The Rugged Pathway*



## FREEDOM SCHOOLS: FOSTERING LEADERSHIP

Kayla Morris, African American Programs Assistant  
Historic Preservation Division

In 1964 Freedom Schools were created throughout the Deep South to fight against political, social, economic, and educational oppression. Many organizations that were a part of the Civil Rights Movement helped to create the Freedom Schools such as Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).



*Freedom Summer participants canvassing to help register black voters, Ted Polunbaum, Newseum Collections*

Freedom Schools were often used to educate students in rural areas who were attending classes only three months out of the year due to the farm schedule. These schools also sought to teach students leadership skills; and in them, students were given the opportunity to explore topics of the Civil Rights Movement.

*“To bring about a kind of ‘mental revolution’, reading, writing and speaking skills were taught through the discussion of black history, the power structure and building a Movement to struggle against it. Everyone took this basic ‘civics’ course and then chose from more academic subjects, like algebra and chemistry.”*

-A volunteer’s explanation of the Freedom School curriculum

The Freedom School programs succeeded as a summer project in rural Mississippi, and soon spread throughout the Deep South, in order to fill a void in rural communities whose schools did not serve African American students.

Freedom Schools helped mold students, and allowed them to express their thoughts on community and culture. Students were given the opportunity to discuss freely their thoughts on the current political climate, not only in their community, but nationwide. It is important to remember programs such as the Freedom Schools helped bring about change in our nation. By giving rural African American communities the ability to question the status quo and to rise up and fight against the oppression of their communities, these

schools allowed people to create a future they could have pride in.

Georgia’s Freedom School is located in Taliaferro county; it is called the Log Schoolhouse. This school was created to combat the county’s choice to not integrate its public schools; many of the students who attended this Freedom School would go on to protest the segregation of local public schools.

Researchers can access a video clip of the 1965 protest against segregation of Taliaferro public schools in Crawfordville. The video is offered through the Civil Rights Digital Library at <http://crdl.usg.edu>.



*Young protesters led to jail in Birmingham, AL  
Newsweek/The Daily Beast*

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) is seeking any information regarding the Log Schoolhouse freedom school, or any such freedom schools located in Georgia. Please contact HPD’s African American Programs coordinator.

*“The presence of a Freedom School helped to loosen the hard knot of fear and to organize the Negro community”*

-Staughton Lynd, Historian and Director of Freedom Schools

The Freedom School movement left behind a legacy that continues to inspire today’s generations through programs:

The Akwesasne Freedom School in New York State (located on a Mohawk Indian Reservation)

The Children’s Defense Fund’s Freedom Schools at The Emmaus House of Atlanta (also located in 24 states)

Philadelphia Freedom Schools and the William Still and Fannie Lou Hamer Trainers serve the Philadelphia, PA region.

Freedom Schools also exist in St. Louis, MO, Tuscon, AZ, and St. Paul, MN.

Here are some resources on Freedom Schools and the Freedom Summer of 1964:

“Freedom School: Writers of the Plays” curriculum guide.  
<http://courses.education.illinois.edu/ci407ss/freedomschools.html>

“Exploring the History of Freedom Schools” overview  
<http://civilrightsteaching.org/resource/freedom-schools-questioning-and-changing-the-world/>

## JUNETEENTH: WHEN DID FREEDOM COME?

Kayla Morris, African American Programs Assistant  
Historic Preservation Division

On June 19, 1865 in Galveston, Texas, news that the Civil War ended and enslaved African Americans were free was received. This day on which slaves in Galveston learned of their newfound freedom is now known as Juneteenth. Though the Emancipation Proclamation was signed by Abraham Lincoln in 1863, two and a half years passed before slavery was officially ended with the surrender of the Confederacy. In 1862 after the Union captured the city of New Orleans, many slaveholders and slaves from Mississippi, Louisiana, and many other areas in the East, migrated to the West to escape the Union's reach. Dr. Henry Louis Gates Jr., describes this movement as the reenactment of the Middle Passage because over 150,000 slaves had made the journey to west.



*Juneteenth Celebration in Georgia, Library of Congress*

*“The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor. The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages. They are informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts and that they will not be supported in idleness either there or elsewhere.”*

– General Orders, Number 3; Headquarters District of Texas, Galveston, June 19, 1865

In Elizabeth Hayes Turner's "Juneteenth: Emancipation and Memory," she discusses how slaveholders and the government decided to announce that slaves were free in the state. Many of the slaveholders did not inform the slaves of their freedom until after the harvest, and the former Confederate mayor of Galveston ignored the orders of the Union Army by putting the slaves back to work. Those African Americans, who decided to act on their new found freedom, were often abused or killed. One former slave recalled the lynching of African Americans who decided to leave their masters after hearing of their emancipation. And in the case of some African Americans, such as Katie Darling, who remained enslaved by her mistress for another six years after the announcement of the general order, freedom may have appeared a distant dream.

*“(She) whip me after the war jist like she did ‘fore,”* former slave Katie Darling.

Stories such as Katie Darling's show that through all of the delays and violence the newly freed men had endured, they defied their former lives of captivity and formed holidays where they would celebrate that history. Celebrating Juneteenth did bring its own challenges in the Jim Crow state of Texas, where African American leaders had to push against the supporters, who during and after Reconstruction, viewed the Antebellum period as a time where both African Americans and whites got along well, and was a time of glory not cruelty, as many former slaves remembered it to be. Juneteenth was used as a day to gather lost relatives, uplift the race, and instill the values of the former slaves into the rising generations.

Prior to the spread of knowledge about Juneteenth, Emancipation Day, widely promoted by Frederick Douglass, was often celebrated on the first of January or on the birthday of Abraham Lincoln. During the height of the Civil Rights Movement, African Americans began to realize that celebrating the Independence Day of the United States, which did not offer them equal rights, no longer made sense. African American leaders then went on to their communities to educate others on Juneteenth celebrations. Once Juneteenth became known as the African American Independence Day, communities began to celebrate the emancipation of slaves on June 19th. Today, many celebrations have been held for Juneteenth; an event in Atlanta included workshops, a parade focused on African American achievements and history, and community vendors. The fifth annual event was held at Morris Brown College, June 17-19, 2016.

*“The 19th of June wasn't the exact day the Negro was freed. But that's the day they told them that they was free ... And my daddy told me that they whooped and hollered and bored holes in trees with augers and stopped it up with [gun] powder and light and that would be their blast for the celebration.”*

-A Descendant of a Former Slave (Elizabeth Hayes Turner's "Juneteenth: Emancipation and Memory")

## THE SEGREGATION OF GEORGIA STATE PARKS: THE NEGRO STATE PARKS

Kayla Morris, African American Programs Assistant  
Historic Preservation Division

In 1927 Georgia began to create state parks to meet the tourist demand created by the growing automobile industry. The state Senate passed a resolution to help create a reserve in Butts County protecting a spring and surrounding land under the State Board of Forestry. The Georgia State Parks System was created in 1931 with two parks--one in Butts County and another in Union County. The state created five more parks over the next six years. The federal New Deal also helped grow the number of state parks in Georgia.

In 1933, President F.D. Roosevelt's New Deal policies created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which provided labor to restore and preserve state land and resources. The CCC constructed trails, helped to plant trees, and built dams. They also fought wild fires. In the 1930s, with the labor of the CCC, the state parks in Georgia expanded from about 500 acres to 5,000 acres. In the 1940s the National Park Service became available to assist.



Advertisement, Photo by Bartow County Gen Web

The state parks operated under the “separate but equal” practice that resulted from the Plessy v. Ferguson decision. During the 1950s four state parks were designated for African American use in Georgia: George Washington Carver (Bartow Co.), Yam Grande (Emanuel Co.), Lincoln (Jenkins Co.), and Veteran’s Memorial (Crisp Co.).

George Washington Carver State Park was led by the first black superintendent of a state park in Georgia, John Atkinson, a former Tuskegee Airman.

“...a black recreational Mecca and attracted visitors from throughout the southeast. Several well-known entertainers such as Ray Charles and Little Richard performed at the park...The park also served as the summer home of the St. John’s Ski Bees, a black ski club, which was headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida.”

– Georgia Chief Justice Robert Benham

State Parks system allotted 345 acres that made up George Washington Carver State Park that was settled on Lake Allatoona. Carver State Park was eventually consolidated with Red Top Mountain State Park, and the last superintendent of the park, Samuel Nathan, was transferred to Richmond Hill State Park (now Fort McAllister) to become the first black superintendent of a formerly white state park in Georgia.

In order to maintain segregation, Vogel and Roosevelt state parks were leased to private vendors and run by private organizations. Other parks in the state created separate areas for African Americans in order to keep the races from interacting.



Parks Brochure, Contributed by Charles Atkinson via Atlanta Time Machine

Today the Georgia State Parks System operates within the Department of Natural Resources, and boasts over 85,000 acres of land and natural resources in its more than 60 state parks and historic sites. Surveys and visitor data have been used to develop more activities catered to a diverse group of visitors as these areas of recreation are being used less by minority populations.\*

The study, “Monitoring Visitation in Georgia State Parks Using SOPARC+”, attempts to help park managers understand their visitors of various racial and ethnic backgrounds, to examine what type of recreational activities motivate minority visitors, and what limitations were perceived by those visitors. In a time when minority populations (Hispanics and African Americans) are increasing in the state, the study shows a decrease in recreational use of state parks among these groups.

\* Source: Whiting, “GEORGIA STATE PARK STAKEHOLDERS’ OUTDOOR RECREATION PREFERENCES, MOTIVATIONS, BENEFITS, AND PERCEIVED CONSTRAINTS BY SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEMOGRAPHICS”

[https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/whiting\\_jason\\_201208\\_phd.pdf](https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/whiting_jason_201208_phd.pdf)

+ SOPARC stands for System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities

## ROBERT S. ABBOTT: REVOLUTIONARY OF BLACK JOURNALISM

Kayla Morris, African American Programs Assistant  
Historic Preservation Division



Robert Sengstacke Abbott,  
Wikipedia.org

Robert Sengstacke Abbott, born in St. Simons Island, Georgia to freed slaves in 1870, became the editor of the country's first black weekly newspaper, *The Chicago Defender*. Abbott was educated at Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) where he studied printing, and Kent College in Chicago, where he earned his law degree. After receiving his law degree, Abbott moved to

Gary, Indiana, in hopes of working as a lawyer; he would soon learn that the current racial dynamics would keep him from practicing law. In 1905 Abbott founded *The Chicago Defender* which claimed itself to be "The World's Greatest Weekly." Abbott decided to focus his newspaper on events that he believed were not covered well, if at all, in majority of white-led journalism. Abbott's goal was to highlight African American success, significant activities, and to discuss goals of the African American community.

*The Chicago Defender* set itself apart in how it identified African Americans in its articles. Instead of referencing African Americans as "negro," they were called "the Race". The purpose of identifying an African American man as a "Race" man was to evaluate the issues at-hand in the interests of the whole Race. According to Abbott, the term "negro" had become a derogatory term and he believed that since *The Chicago Defender's* purpose was to reach African Americans nationwide, his terminology was justified.

Although Abbott supported leaders such as Booker T. Washington, he did not believe that African Americans should become accommodating to the dominate culture. Instead, Abbott promoted equality between African Americans and whites in the United States. At a time when in a city such as Chicago, where African Americans could attend integrated schools, run for office, vote, and ride the same streetcars as whites, he desired legal equality nationwide to end racial discrimination in the workplace and in public spaces.

*"This government, as we understand it, is not only bound in its own defense to protect the poor working people, but a poor down-trodden race of people. Have not the horrible crimes perpetrated on the Negro sufficiently aroused the better element of them [whites] to a realization of the fact that something must be done and done quickly if they would remove the blood stains from their hands?"* – Writer of *The Chicago Defender*, April 20, 1912

Robert Abbott was often viewed as a representative for the black voice; he was able to reach out to blacks not only in Chicago, but nationwide, who were able to see the news written through their own perspective. It was believed that a single copy of the paper was shared among multiple households within a community; a minister in one town in the South would purchase 150 copies of the paper and distribute them throughout the African American community. In 1919 *The Chicago Defender* reported that it circulated 120,000 papers; estimating that each copy circulated at least five more times, reaching and influencing at least 600,000 people nationwide. Discussing the injustices placed upon the black race was inspiring to many who read *The Chicago Defender*, which covered everything from demonstrating the tactics of segregation to representing the plight of the Pullman porters. Abbott's weekly helped inspire the oppressed in the early 20th century. The Great Migration of African Americans out of the South was bolstered, in part, by circulars like *The Chicago Defender* that reported on the alternative northern African American experience to those experience abject poverty and violence in the South.

*"I bought a Chicago Defender... and after reading it and seeing the golden opportunity I decided to leave this place at once."*  
- Reader from Memphis

Though Abbott was a progressive concerned with the treatment of African Americans, he was also fairly conservative when it came to matters such as family life. Despite his support of the hiring of African American policewomen, he did believe that the destruction of the African American family would come with the working woman. Abbott did intend to educate the African American community of unsanitary conditions, and offered a health column that was written by a Northwestern graduate, Dr. A. Wilberforce Williams. The health column discussed diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhea; the descriptions of these diseases were often very detailed and may have been viewed as unfit for a newspaper to produce. But both Williams and Abbott insisted that the African American community needed to be educated to prevent the spread of disease among them. Abbott and Williams also promoted abstaining from alcohol and certain habit forming drugs, and being educated on infant care, and nutrition. Abbott supported prohibition and believed that if gambling and alcohol were to exit the African American communities, the morality of young African American men would greatly improve.

In 1919, the Governor of Illinois, Frank Lowden, named Abbott a part of the state's Race Relations Commission. This commission studied the changes that occurred in the North as a result of the Great Migration. Robert Abbott died in 1940, and left *The Chicago Defender* to be run by his nephew, John Sengstacke of Savannah.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Gullah Geechee Heritage Highlighted in Nation's Capitol this Fall**

The McIntosh County Shouters perform September 24th at the opening of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) in Washington DC.



Photo credit: <http://www.afropop.org/artist/mcintosh-county-shouters/>

### **Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum Celebrating the 20th Anniversary in Savannah**

Come experience the story of the modern Civil Rights Movement in Georgia's first city!

Please call (912) 777-6099 for tickets.



Photo credit: Bina Design/ [www.bina-design.com/](http://www.bina-design.com/)

### **Flat Rock Archives Hosts Reunion, Receives Donation**

Crescent Moon Foundation Inc. awards \$5,000 to Flat Rock Archives to support youth/educational programming. This award was presented at the 10th annual Flat Rock Community Reunion this month. <http://www.flatrockarchives.com/>



Photo credit: Melissa Jest/ Georgia HPD

### **Friends of Fairview School to screen Rosenwald Documentary this Fall**

The Fairview Brown Heritage Corporation celebrates 92nd anniversary of the Fairview Rosenwald school with a screening of the award-winning film *Rosenwald* on November 12th, 6 pm at the Historic De Soto Theatre, Downtown Rome. Tickets: 706-232-0975 / [heritageweekend@yahoo.com](mailto:heritageweekend@yahoo.com)



Photo credit: <http://www.fairviewbrown.org>

## HAPPENINGS!



### The Art and Soul of Timothy Hedden

Known as one of Middle Georgia's most talented & prolific artists, Timothy Hedden is a self-taught talent whose work is in a state of perpetual evolution.

Image: The Tubman Museum

The artwork of this Georgia native will be exhibited at the Tubman Museum through this September.

**The Tubman Museum, 310 Cherry Street  
Macon, Georgia 31201 | 478.743.8544  
<http://www.tubmanmuseum.com/>**

### Civil Rights and the Arts : An Exhibit

Through his music, James Brown inspired a generation to be "... Proud!"

This three-month exhibit covers various genres and mediums include concerts, panel discussions, and film showings.

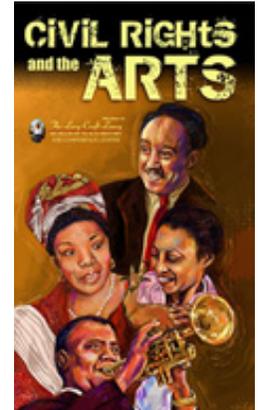


Image: The Lucy Craft Laney Museum

**Lucy Craft Laney Museum of Black History, 1116 Phillips Street  
Augusta, Georgia 30901 | 706.724.3576  
<http://www.lucycraftlaneymuseum.com/>**

### Come Home: Sapelo Island's Culture Day 2016

Save the date for the 21st annual Culture Day Festival on Sapelo Island, Georgia -- October 15th!

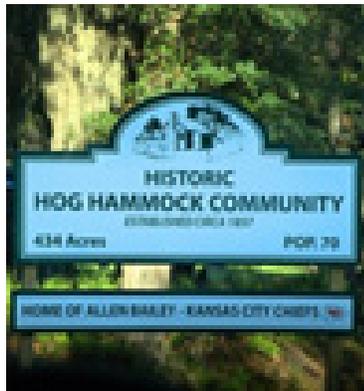


Image: SICARS

**Sapelo Island Cultural and Revitalization Society (SICARS), P.O. BOX 6  
Sapelo Island, Georgia 31327 | 912.485.2197  
<http://www.sapeloislandga.org/>**



Image: The National Center for Civil and Human Rights

### Voice to the Voiceless

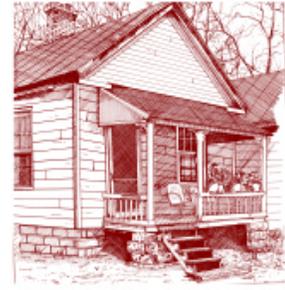
Artwork created by the late Dr. King lines the entrance to the current exhibit from the Morehouse College Martin Luther King, Jr. Collection now on display at the Center for Civil and Human Rights through September 12th.

The theme is "love".

**National Ctr for Civil and Human Rights  
100 Ivan Allen Jr. Blvd.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30313 | 678.999.8990  
<https://www.civilandhumanrights.org/>**

## ABOUT REFLECTIONS

Since its first issue appeared in December 2000, *Reflections* has documented hundreds of Georgia's African American historic resources. Now all of these articles are available on the Historic Preservation Division website [www.georgiashpo.org](http://www.georgiashpo.org). Search for links to your topic by categories: cemeteries, churches, districts, farms, lodges, medical, people, places, schools, and theatres. You can now subscribe to *Reflections* from the homepage. *Reflections* is a recipient of a *Leadership in History Award* from the American Association for State and Local History.



Georgia African American  
Historic Preservation Network

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## STAFF



Melissa Jest  
African American  
Programs Coordinator  
Reflections Editor  
Voice 770/389-7870  
Fax 770/389-7878  
[melissa.jest@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:melissa.jest@dnr.ga.gov)



Kayla Morris  
African American  
Programs Assistant  
Voice 770/389-7879  
Fax 770/389-7878  
[kayla.morris@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:kayla.morris@dnr.ga.gov)

## ABOUT GAAHPN



Georgia African American  
Historic Preservation Network

The Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network (GAAHPN) was established in January 1989. It is composed of representatives from neighborhood organizations and preservation groups. GAAHPN was formed in response to a growing interest in preserving the cultural and built diversity of Georgia's African American heritage. This interest has translated into a number of efforts which emphasize greater recognition of African American culture and contributions to Georgia's history. The GAAHPN Steering Committee plans and implements ways to develop programs that will foster heritage education, neighborhood revitalization, and support community and economic development.

The Network is an informal group of over 3,000 people who have an interest in preservation. Members are briefed on the status of current and planned projects and are encouraged to offer ideas, comments and suggestions. The meetings provide an opportunity to share and learn from the preservation experience of others and to receive technical information through workshops. Members receive a newsletter, *Reflections*, produced by the Network. Visit the Historic Preservation Division website at [www.georgiashpo.org](http://www.georgiashpo.org). Preservation information and previous issues of *Reflections* are available online. Membership in the Network is free and open to all.

## Reflections

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Dr. David Crass, Division Director  
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