

Reflections



A Program of the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources



Georgia African American
Historic Preservation Network

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THE DORCHESTER ACADEMY MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

Dorchester Academy is one of Georgia's earliest African American schools established after emancipation. Dorchester was named after Congregational Puritans from England who initially settled in Dorchester, Massachusetts, and migrated to South Carolina in the 18th century. In 1752, they received 32,000 acres of land from the trustees of Georgia. Naming their settlement Dorchester, 280 white settlers and their 536 slaves relocated to Midway, a town in Liberty County that is located approximately halfway between the Altamaha and Savannah rivers. When the Civil War ended, many white residents left the area, but freedmen remained.

Surviving the devastation of war, these freedmen yearned for an education, and opened a one-room school in Midway. By 1868, William A. Golding, one of the first African Americans to serve in the Georgia legislature, sought the assistance of the American Missionary Association (AMA) to provide teachers for the school he envisioned. As the number of students increased, a second school building was constructed in 1879, and it was renamed Dorchester Academy. By 1897, Dorchester Academy offered elementary classes and a Normal (teaching) department. The school had a library, principal's home, boys' and girls' dormitories, laundry, kitchen and an industrial building on the 30-acre campus.

Tuition at Dorchester Academy was kept low due to student labor. Because the campus was located in a farming community, students that could not afford tuition worked on the campus farm. A fire destroyed the teachers' home, girls' dormitory, dining room, kitchen, and laundry room in 1901, but the students, with aid from the AMA, rebuilt these buildings and added a new boys' dormitory.

In 1925, Dorchester Academy hired an African American female principal, Elizabeth B. Moore. During her tenure, the Farmers Cooperative Marketing Association was founded and the curriculum was expanded to include athletics, music and drama. Moore died in 1932, and the boys' dormitory burned that same year. In 1934, architect George Awsumb designed a new boys' dormitory. This brick building included steam heat, a living room and library on the ground floor, and student rooms on the upper level. It was dedicated in 1935, and named in honor of Elizabeth B. Moore.

The Dorchester Cooperative Center (DCC) opened in 1937 with a cooperative store. DCC and the AMA started the Dorchester Federal Credit Union in 1939 to assist community members in business ventures and home purchases, as they were denied credit elsewhere. In 1940, Liberty County constructed public schools for African Americans, and Dorchester Academy closed.



The Dorchester Academy Museum of African American History was the former residence of Claudius Turner, director of the Dorchester Cooperative Center in the 1940s. Inside the museum, Dorchester Academy's evolution from a freedmen's school to a civil rights site is explored in the exhibits. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

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THE DORCHESTER ACADEMY MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

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The boys' dormitory was renamed Elizabeth B. Moore Hall in honor of the first African American female president. This Georgian Revival style brick building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on June 23, 1986. When the school closed in 1940, it became the Dorchester Cooperative Center. In the 1960s, the building provided meeting space and lodging for participants of the Citizenship Education Program. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

DCC continued to provide community services, and Claudius Turner was hired as the director in 1943. He began voter registration drives and organized the Liberty County Citizens Council (LCCC) to educate potential voters. In 1946, due to the efforts of LCCC, Liberty County African Americans voted for the first time in 40 years. By 1953, LCCC started a chapter of the NAACP. These political activities would set the stage for a future role for DCC in the civil rights movement.

One of the most critical challenges that faced African Americans who wanted to vote was illiteracy. Septima Clark, an educator from South Carolina, directed citizenship educational seminars at the Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee. She provided one week of intensive training in adult literacy and voter registration to many emerging leaders, including Rosa Parks. She often invited other civil rights leaders to speak at her seminars, and was recruited for subsequent work with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).

In 1961, the Marshall Field Foundation provided leadership training funding to the AMA Division of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries. Reverend Andrew Young, a Congregationalist minister,

was chosen to administer the program. He looked for sites where Septima Clark could teach the citizenship classes. Because of the continued partnership with DCC and the AMA, Dorchester Academy was chosen as the site. Dorothy Cotton, then SCLC director of education, recruited potential students for Clark's classes at Dorchester. By February 1964, this team trained more than 1,000 persons in the Citizenship Education Program. These students shared their knowledge with neighbors in 11 southern states. When they returned home, their efforts resulted in 27,993 new African American registered voters. The Citizenship Education Program was a critical element in the successful strategy that led to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.



Georgia Representative Tyrone Brooks and Dorothy Cotton view the legacy of Dorchester Academy at the museum dedication. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

While the DCC was a site for citizenship schools, it also became a safe haven for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference staff. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Wyatt T. Walker, Ralph Abernathy and Dorothy Cotton often retreated to Dorchester to hold strategy sessions. "Change in the South could not have happened without Dorchester," Walker said in a recent interview with William Austin, president of the Dorchester Improvement Association (formerly DCC). Walker, who was Dr. King's chief of staff, credits Dorchester as a significant place, as "... it provided meeting and dormitory space for the entire staff where we stayed overnight, we could relax and play softball, and we were not under the watchful eye of the major media networks. This was necessary for what we were trying to accomplish."

The Dorchester Academy Museum of African American History exhibits educate the public about the significance of this mission school in Georgia history. From its early days as Dorchester Academy to its role as a cooperative center, Dorchester emerged as a significant site that helped future civil rights leaders. Tyrone Brooks, Georgia state representative and president of the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials (GABEO) was the keynote speaker at the dedication of the museum. "Dorchester is responsible for the modern civil rights movement as much as any other institution." The Dorchester Improvement Association is the steward for both the museum and Elizabeth B. Moore Hall. For more information about Dorchester Academy, visit the website at www.dorchesteracademy.com.



Dorothy Cotton leads a freedom song at the museum dedication.

Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

APEX MUSEUM UNVEILS *BLACKS IN GEORGIA POLITICS* EXHIBIT

*Dr. Clarissa Myrick-Harris, Curator, APEX Exhibit
Co-Chair, Georgia National Register Review Board*

Atlanta's APEX Museum has a new exhibit. *Blacks in Georgia Politics* chronicles the ongoing quest for African American political empowerment in state government through historical photographs, posters, and excerpts of documents from the Reconstruction era (1865-1877) to the present. The exhibit opened at the APEX in Atlanta on June 2, 2004.

The highlight of the opening program for *Blacks in Georgia Politics* was an oral history interview with Leroy Johnson, the first African American state senator in the 20th century. Senator Johnson was elected in 1962 and served until 1974. He entered politics after years of civil rights activism and a stint as the first African American investigator in the Fulton County District Attorney's office. During his 12 year tenure in the State Senate, he became known as "the single most powerful Black politician in Dixie."



Former Georgia Senator Leroy Johnson was interviewed by current Georgia Senator Vincent Fort at the opening of Blacks in Georgia Politics. The exhibit is currently featured at Atlanta's APEX Museum.

Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

Georgia state Senator Vincent Fort conducted the candid interview that was videotaped at the APEX before a small audience. Senator Johnson vividly recalled that during his first 30 days in the Georgia General Assembly, no one spoke to him. He responded by studying the rules of politics and breaking the rules of segregation. "In politics, you don't get what you deserve, you get what you can negotiate," Johnson said. He desegregated the state cafeteria without fanfare and worked to have the "colored" and "white" signs removed from restrooms, water fountains and waiting areas in the state capitol. These acts, along with a consistent record of championing progressive legislation, helped open the door for a stream of African American local, state and national elected officials over the last quarter of the 20th century. Today, there are 49 African American Georgia state legislators, four African Americans from Georgia in Congress, and hundreds of African American elected officials in cities and counties across the state. Excerpts from the

interview with Senator Johnson are included on the multimedia CD-ROM that accompanies the exhibit. The exhibit and program were made possible, in part, by a grant from the Georgia Humanities Council.

Plans are underway to make the *Blacks in Georgia Politics* exhibit available for traveling. For more information on the exhibit, contact APEX Museum director Dan Moore at 404/523-2739 or visit the museum website at www.apexmuseum.org.

THREE SURVIVING ROSENWALD SCHOOLS: THE GEORGIA INVENTORY

*Jennifer Eaton, Graduate Student, Historic Preservation Department
University of Kentucky, School of Architecture*

To the casual observer, these structures would not be grand pieces of architecture, but to many who know about the significance of Rosenwald schools, the buildings are far more than common structures. Some of the buildings are outside the city limits, while some exist in the midst of African American communities. In rural communities, a number of these schools were the only access to education for African Americans in the segregated south.

Julius Rosenwald, Chicago philanthropist and president of Sears, Roebuck, and Company, developed a foundation that aided the construction of over 5,000 buildings in 15 southern states for African American youth in the early 1900s. This project began in Lee County, Alabama, when Booker T. Washington received the first Rosenwald Fund grant to build rural African American schools near Tuskegee Institute. It was considered one of the largest and most dramatic rural school construction programs of the era. With grants from the Rosenwald Fund, Georgia constructed 242 schools, 12 teacher homes, and seven shops. Georgia received \$1,378,859 from the Rosenwald Fund.



Jennifer Eaton



This teacher's home in Forsyth, Monroe County, was built with the assistance of the Julius Rosenwald Fund. The women's dormitory and teacher's home of the Hubbard School were listed in the National Register of Historic Places on May 30, 2003.

Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

THREE SURVIVING ROSENWALD SCHOOLS: THE GEORGIA INVENTORY

Jennifer Eaton, continued from page 3



Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

Verna Spencer Frazier, a Rosenwald School alumna, helped the research team to find the Cross Roads school in Dixie, Brooks County.

For the past three years, Jeanne Cyriaque, African American programs coordinator for the Historic Preservation Division, has been on a scavenger hunt for Georgia Rosenwald schools. Beginning her research at Fisk University, she located the list of Georgia schools in the Julius Rosenwald Fund archives. The list did not provide detailed location information other than county, school name and funding amounts. Locating extant schools can be a challenge. Besides publishing articles in *Reflections* and working with staff to identify existing buildings, we contacted county school systems, local

preservation societies, and researched county histories in efforts to find any documented information about these schools. Another invaluable source of information are alumni associations and former teachers. To date, Cyriaque has located 37 schools.

To assist with managing the school inventory data, Cyriaque received technical assistance from SPARE LLC, a Virginia consulting firm. Helen Aikman and Kathleen Galvin developed the Rosenwald Schools Survey Questionnaire. It establishes a framework for analyzing preservation challenges for each school. African American programs staff tested the questionnaire on four schools with excellent results.



Elizabeth Lyon, former Georgia state historic preservation officer, and Jennifer Eaton discuss the Rosenwald Schools she documented for the inventory. Eaton was the 2004 fellow for the Elizabeth Lyon Fund. Her fellowship was sponsored by the Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network, a program of the Historic Preservation Division. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

The next step in the Georgia Rosenwald study will be to prepare a multiple property nomination for eligible buildings to the National Register of Historic Places. This designation will provide national recognition and will assist the listed schools in preservation efforts.

A true grassroots preservation project, the Kinlaw School in Woodbine is a treasure to this rural community. Kinlaw community residents are deeply invested in the preservation of their Rosenwald school. The building is located off of U.S. Hwy. 17 on Kinlaw Road. It is a three-teacher type plan, wood plank structure. The building is supported by a brick foundation that is in good condition, and has all original windows and some original hardware in the interior. It has the original wood plank floor and one bathroom and kitchen.



The Kinlaw Rosenwald School, located seven miles south of Woodbine, is the last surviving school of three that were built in Camden County. It began as a church school, and has been preserved by the African American community since 1921. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

The history of education in the Kinlaw community predates the construction of this school. Before there was a Kinlaw school, the community children attended school at the local church. In 1896, Camden County purchased an acre of land to build a one-room school. This one-room school did not satisfy the residents of Kinlaw. In 1911, the community decided they wanted a school that would model the "Hampton-Tuskegee Plan." They purchased a 100-acre tract of land from C.M. Sheffield and began plans to construct a school that would be called the South Georgia Normal and Industrial School, but money was needed for the construction. Matilda Harris, then supervisor of the black schools in the county, heard about the school building program for construction of African American schools. The community raised \$909 for construction of the building, the white community contributed \$150, public funds totaled \$800 and the Julius Rosenwald fund provided \$1,000 towards the total cost of \$2,859. The building opened for classes in the fall of 1921 and this building still stands today.

The South Georgia Normal and Industrial Institute, Inc. currently owns the Kinlaw School, whose members are alumni and their descendants. Besides the school, this non-profit organization owns over 100 acres of land that surround it. The organization holds various events at the building and rents it for family reunions and receptions.

The South Georgia Normal and Industrial Institute, Inc. maintains the property through numerous donations and help from the community, but their preservation efforts are just beginning. For questions or information about the Kinlaw School, contact Dollie Maynor at 912/729-4461 or email her at: dollieg@eagnet.com.

THREE SURVIVING ROSENWALD SCHOOLS: THE GEORGIA INVENTORY

In Blackshear, The Marian Anderson Library Rosenwald School is located at 646 Lee Street in Pierce County. The school was constructed between 1925 and 1926. It is a three-teacher type plan with a kitchen addition (date of construction unknown). The building is a wood plank structure resting on a brick foundation. It has a tin roof and nine-over-nine windows. The building is in fair condition and is currently being used as storage for a local business.

The building was once a library. It was named in honor of African American opera singer Marian Anderson. The Consolidated Men's Club owns the building, along with the Lee Street Resource Center, a circa 1950s school that replaced it. Historical information about the formation of the school is limited. There is a 1931 Sanborn Map that indicates the school's location on Lee St. The Consolidated Men's Club is eager to begin the preservation of this building. To assist in the preservation efforts of the Blackshear School, please contact Paul Tuggle at 912/449-5439.



The Marian Anderson Library Rosenwald School in Blackshear, Pierce County, features brick columns at the entrance that were donated by alumni. The Blackshear Consolidated Men's Club operates youth mentoring programs at the Lee Street Resource Center, and is interested in preserving the library for community programs. The building was identified by the Okefenokee African American Heritage Society. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

The Dock Kemp School is located in Wrightsville, Johnson County. Dock Kemp presents the most preservation challenges of the three schools that are the focus of this article. It is located in a residential neighborhood. It is a one story, four-teacher type Rosenwald structure. It rest on brick piers and most of the windows are either boarded up or removed. It is wood plank with a tin roof. Though extensive preservation is needed, the building is surprisingly structurally sound.

W.H. Roberts, an African American builder, constructed Dock Kemp in 1921. The school was named after the man who donated the most money. This is the first of three Dock Kemp schools that were built in Johnson County. This building is the only one that was documented as receiving Rosenwald Funds. To help with the preservation efforts of Dock Kemp please contact Mary Slaughter at 912/864-2869.



The Dock Kemp School was the only Rosenwald School built in Wrightsville, Johnson County. The building will require extensive preservation. It was identified by the Washington County Historical Society.

Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

These schools are good examples of the surviving Rosenwald Schools in rural communities throughout Georgia. They represent the grassroots efforts of alumni groups and the African American community to preserve their schools. Blackshear School in Pierce County, Kinlaw School in Camden County, and Dock Kemp in Johnson County are three schools that are attempting to persevere their structures. Kinlaw and Blackshear are in good condition, but Dock Kemp is in desperate need of preservation.

A table is enclosed that identifies the existing Georgia Rosenwald Schools. If you have any information on these schools, or know of others that still exist, contact Jeanne Cyriaque at 404/656-4768 or jeanne_cyriaque@dnr.state.ga.us.



Laudie Hall Wright and Wade Fullard are stewards who are working to preserve the Tallahassee Hazlehurst Rosenwald School in Jeff Davis County. This school was identified by Dr. Bettye Brown, an alumna of the school. Dr. Brown contacted the Rosenwald Initiative in the southern office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

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**GULLAH/GEECHEE CULTURE
LISTED IN 2004 NATIONAL TRUST
11 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC RESOURCES**

EXISTING GEORGIA ROSENWALD SCHOOLS

COUNTY	SCHOOL NAME
Banks	First African Baptist Church, Homer
Bartow	Noble Hill, Cassville (Noble Hill-Wheeler Memorial Center)
Ben Hill	County Training School, Fitzgerald
Bleckley	Cochran
Brooks	Cross Roads, Dixie
Brooks	Grooverville
Camden	Kinlaw, Woodbine
Chattahoochee	Cusseta
Chattahoochee	Friendship
Cobb	Acworth
Coweta	Walter B. Hill Industrial School, Turin
Dooly	Vienna High & Industrial School
Emanuel	Summertown
Emanuel	Swainsboro
Emanuel	Summit
Glynn	County Training School (Risley High School)
Hancock	Sparta Agricultural & Industrial Institute
Hancock	East End, Sparta
Henry	County Training School, Hampton (recently demolished)
Jeff Davis	Tallahassee Community, Hazlehurst
Jefferson	County Training School, Louisville
Johnson	Dock Kemp, Wrightsville
Lamar	Sugar Hill, Barnesville
Lowndes	Dasher High, Valdosta
Lowndes	Mt. Zion, Valdosta
McIntosh	Sapelo Island Hog Hammock Historic District
Meriwether	Eleanor Roosevelt School, Warm Springs
Mitchell	Old Rockdale School, Camilla
Monroe	Forsyth Normal and Industrial School Teachers' Home (The Hubbard School)
Montgomery	Ailey
Paulding	Hiram Colored School
Peach	Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church
Peach	Fort Valley High and Industrial School (Founders Hall, Fort Valley State College Historic District)
Pierce	Blackshear
Pike	Concord
Randolph	Howard Normal and Industrial School Cuthbert
Washington	T.J. Elder High and Industrial School Sandersville

The schools and teacher's home in bold typeface are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation listed the Gullah/Geechee culture on its 2004 annual list of 11 Most Endangered Historic Places. Each year, preservation organizations nominate national historic resources that are threatened. Inclusion on the National Trust's endangered list raises awareness of the importance of these resources to our nation's heritage and encourages fundraising efforts and preservation collaborations to save these treasures. The Gullah/Geechee announcement was made at a press conference at the Penn Center on St. Helena Island in South Carolina. Gullah/Geechee organizations from South Carolina and Georgia participated in a heritage development institute sponsored by Middle Tennessee State University's Center for Historic Preservation following the announcement.

The National Park Service (NPS) recently completed a special resource study of this living culture that was mandated by Congress. The Gullah/Geechee study area included coastal regions 30 miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean in the states of North and South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, encompassing 79 barrier islands. These areas were once home to captured Africans who were enslaved in America because of their skills in production of indigo and rice. Living in relative isolation, this population maintained African influenced folklore, farming and fishing traditions, and a creolized language known as Gullah. Today, the largest enclaves of Gullah/Geechee descendants reside in South Carolina and Georgia.



Cynthia Porcher and Althea Sumpter discuss the implications of the endangered status of the Gullah/Geechee culture at the Penn Center. Porcher was the lead researcher for the National Park Service special resource study. Sumpter is a native of St. Helena Island. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

In Georgia, the places where the Gullah/Geechee people live today are beset with a variety of challenges that threaten their survival. Throughout antebellum and post-Civil War periods, Sapelo Island Gullah/Geechee people maintained farming settlements in relative isolation, as this island to the present day is only accessible by boat or ferry. Today, their descendants live in

the Hog Hammock Historic District. The Sapelo Island Cultural and Revitalization Society (SICARS) administers a number of preservation initiatives including the annual cultural day. In October 2004, over 1,000 visitors came to Sapelo Island to hear music, sample food, and view demonstrations of Gullah/Geechee crafts such as net making and sweetgrass basketry.

Other Gullah/Geechee residents on the mainland adjacent to Sapelo include the McIntosh County Shouters, who live in Bolden. The shouters practice the coastal ring shout, a Gullah/Geechee musical tradition that has survived since enslavement. Descendants of Harris Neck, a small Gullah/Geechee community of 75 families, were displaced from their McIntosh County home when the community became an airbase during World War II. Today their former home is a national wildlife refuge, but McIntosh SEED provides tours to educate the public on the multicultural heritage of McIntosh County.

On St. Simons Island, enslaved Africans operated rice and Sea Island cotton plantations beginning in the late 18th century. Like the Gullah/Geechee people on Sapelo Island, they lived in isolation on these plantations, and preserved African languages and customs. When the Civil War ended, they remained on St. Simons Island. In 1924, when the Torras causeway provided automobile access to St. Simons, newcomers flocked to the island.

The Gullah/Geechee population on St. Simons Island live in three communities: Jewtown, South End and Harrington. All of these communities are threatened by development. Access to historic burial grounds at Retreat Plantation is presently through a golf course.



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Photograph Not Available

The logo for the 2004 Georgia Sea Island Festival was designed by John Demery.

Million dollar homes and condominiums are constructed literally next door to modest cottages, and increased property values are forcing the elderly population to leave the island. A group of concerned citizens formed the St. Simons African American Heritage Coalition in 2000. The coalition and these communities were a learning laboratory for Preservation Leadership Training sponsored by the National Trust in 2002. They have implemented a "Don't Ask, Won't Sell" campaign to educate the community about the value of their property, and assist residents with heirs' land management issues. The coalition recently hosted the Georgia Sea Island Festival. The festival featured traditional Gullah/Geechee arts and crafts, food, and musical performances, including the Georgia Sea Island Singers.



The Georgia Sea Island Singers performed at the 2004 Georgia Sea Island Festival. They organized the first Gullah/Geechee Georgia festivals held in the 1980s.

Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

In July 2004, Congressman James E. Clyburn of South Carolina introduced the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Act to Congress. He is the vice chair of the House Democratic Caucus. The bill passed the House of Representatives, and is currently in the Senate. If enacted, the Gullah/Geechee Heritage Act will establish a Gullah/Geechee Heritage Corridor and a commission to administer a management plan for the corridor. Coastal heritage centers would be established in the corridor to serve as interpretive centers and gateways to Gullah/Geechee heritage sites. The Gullah/Geechee Heritage Corridor Commission, with nine members including three from Georgia, would assist the development of federal, state and local partnerships to implement the management plan. The recommended appropriation for the Gullah/Geechee Heritage corridor is \$10 million over a ten-year period.



**Georgia African American
Historic Preservation Network**

STEERING COMMITTEE



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706/738-1901

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M.M. (Peggy) Harper
Atlanta, 404/522-3231

Linda Wilkes
Atlanta, 678/686-6243

Thomas Williams
Kennesaw, 678/445-5124

STAFF



Jeanne Cyriaque
African American
Programs Coordinator
Reflections Editor
Voice 404/656-4768
Fax 404/657-1040

jeanne_cyriaque@dnr.state.ga.us

Reflections

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 ethnic 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 meets regularly to plan and implement 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 1,825 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.gashpo.org. Preservation information and previous issues of *Reflections* are available online. Membership in the Network is free and open to all.

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W. Ray Luce, Division Director &
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Jeanne Cyriaque, Editor

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Georgia African American
Historic Preservation Network

A Program of the
Historic Preservation Division
Georgia Department of Natural Resources
47 Trinity Avenue, S.W.
Suite 414-H
Atlanta, GA 30334-9006