



GEORGIA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION



**Georgia African American
Historic Preservation Network**

Reflections

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MORVEN ROSENWALD ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PRESERVE THE BARNEY COLORED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

*Jeanne Cyriaque, African American Programs Coordinator
Historic Preservation Division*

Barney is a South Georgia town located near the Florida border in Brooks County. Agriculture dominates the local economy today, just as it did during the early part of the 20th century. At that time, many African Americans were sharecroppers and some were landowners. Regardless of their economic station, their children almost without exception attended Rosenwald Schools that dotted the rural landscape. Brooks County was once home to six Rosenwald projects, including the Barney Colored Elementary School. Today, only the Barney, Crossroads and Grooverville Schools survive. Land for this school was donated by Ansel Lawrence in 1908, but it took many years before the Barney Colored Elementary School was constructed in 1932 and opened in 1933, serving grades one through six. Barney was continuously used as a school until 1959. It was a feeder school to the nearby Rosenwald School in Morven.

When the school opened, it was constructed using *Community School Plans* that were issued by the Rosenwald Fund. It was a striking, two-teacher plan, featuring tall banks of windows in two classrooms separated by a moving partition. This flexibility would insure its dual purpose as a community center while adapting to increases in the student population. There were two cloak rooms and heat was provided in the winter by a pot-bellied, wood stove. Additionally, the school

provided an industrial training room so that students could receive home economics and building trades in the curriculum, just as envisioned by Booker T. Washington.

When Barney Colored Elementary School closed in 1959, it remained vacant until 2006, when the Morven Rosenwald Alumni Association (MRAA) acquired it. As former Morven alumni hosted class reunions, they became interested in the fate of their feeder school since they had lost their Rosenwald building. As alumni attended the first Rosenwald School conference sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation at Fisk University in 2004, they continually perused possible funding sources for their project, while examining what other states had achieved to reclaim their Rosenwald Schools.



Barney Colored Elementary School was constructed in 1932 and served this rural community until 1959. It was preserved by the Morven Rosenwald Alumni Association.

Morven alumni were encouraged when the *New York Times* featured a photo of the Barney Colored Elementary School in an article about Rosenwald Schools. Next, MRAA received a Preservation Services Fund grant from the National Trust to conduct a feasibility study on the school's rehabilitation. When the *Rosenwald Initiative*, a National Trust program, partnered with the Lowe's Charitable & Educational Foundation, MRAA was the recipient of a \$40,000 Lowe's grant to aid the preservation of the school. This grant was instrumental in raising the

HPD File Photo

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Jeanne Cyriaque, continued from page 1



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Barney Colored Elementary School had deteriorated significantly when the Morven Rosenwald Alumni Association acquired the building in 2006. Photo by Gloria Gilbert

\$278,000 required to restore the school, and became a stimulus for other fundraisers and partners to aid the project. MRAA alumni shared their progress in rehabilitating the school at the 2012 Rosenwald conference sponsored by the National Trust at Tuskegee University, the alma mater of many MRAA members, including the chairman, Dr. Gerald Golden and his wife, Barbara.

MRAA held numerous fundraisers like fish fries and quilt raffles along with alumni donations to raise matching funds for grants, but they also engaged corporate community support to provide lumber, driveway gravel, paint and paving on the site. MRAA participated in the annual *Peach Festival* in Brooks County, and MRAA sponsored community clean up days to clear the site from debris that had accumulated over time. An additional preservation challenge was installing a bathroom in the school and making it compliant with current ADA standards.



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A tree had grown inside the rear classroom of the Barney School.

Photo by Gloria Gilbert

A grant from the National Trust's Alice Rosenwald Flexible Fund helped MRAA to install a septic tank connecting to the well on the property.



Today, a bathroom was installed in the rear classroom.

Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque



Each classroom in the Barney School features clusters of six banks of nine-over-nine windows. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque



The Barney School's original wood partitions separate the two classrooms, providing more space for community use. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

Many members and donors financed the window campaign. At the base of each window is a gold plate recognizing the donor or individual that is remembered for their contribution to Barney. Raymundo Colohua was the craftsman who replaced the nine-over-nine, double hung windows. He carefully restored or replaced 22 windows in the school, and donated a wood cabinet he constructed to complement the bookshelf that once comprised the school's library.



The Morven Rosenwald Alumni Association spearheaded the effort to save the Barney School. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque



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The Barney School features two entrances that lead into classrooms or the industrial training room. Photo by Gloria Gilbert

MRAA partnered with Brooks County to erect a Georgia Historical Society (GHS) marker in front of the school building. Brooks County commissioners sponsored the marker that was unveiled December 7, 2013. All commissioners attended the dedication, as well as Christy Crisp, director of programs at GHS and former teachers, students and MRAA supporters. Former Brooks County schools superintendent Debra Folsom was in attendance. Jeanne Cyriaque was the guest speaker at the dedication. She provided a history of her continual involvement with MRAA, noting how the alumni had contributed to Rosenwald history in Georgia and how the marker would aid the interpretation of the site for future generations. Christy Crisp thanked Brooks County for sponsoring the marker and supporting the work of the alumni association in preserving the school. The marker will be a visible reminder of the contributions of African Americans to the state's history, she said. Dr. Gerald Golden, chairman of MRAA, commented on why the word "Colored" remained on the marker description of Barney Elementary. He said the alumni wanted it because "people of all colors helped to save this school."



Dr. Marie Butts reads the text on the Georgia Historical Society marker that was erected in front of the two entrances on either side of the industrial training room. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

Dr. Marie Butts, a MRAA member, read the marker text that emphasized the school was built through philanthropy and Progressive-era design. The building's orientation provided maximum sunlight for the students through the abundant windows and interior ventilation through transoms in each classroom. It provided a beautiful school building that reflected the partnership between Julius Rosenwald and Booker T. Washington.

In February 2014, the Barney Colored Elementary School held an open house to dedicate the building and return it to use as a community center. Isaac Johnson, chairman of the Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network (GAAHPN) was the guest speaker. In his message to MRAA, Johnson congratulated the association for their commitment to revitalizing this historic school and its value for interpreting African American rural life in Georgia.

Jerry Gilbert is one of the alumni that attended Barney Colored Elementary School from first through sixth grade. Though the school was segregated, Gilbert said the 60 students and their families all knew each other. When the students needed something, their parents would mobilize and share their resources to raise money for it.



Barbara and Gerald Golden, members of the Morven Rosenwald Alumni Association, partnered with the Brooks County Board of Commissioners to sponsor the Georgia Historical Society marker. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

Ruby Golden and Katie McDonald Jones were two of the teachers who educated Barney students. Ms. Golden received her early education in Brooks County schools, attended a boarding school in Cook County and received her Bachelor of Science at Fort Valley State College. She taught Barney fifth and sixth graders most of her career until the school closed in 1959. Then, she taught at the Morven Rosenwald School until she retired in 1963. Mrs. Jones also received her early education in Brooks County and received her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Albany State College. She was the Barney third and fourth grade teacher until 1959. Like Ms. Golden, she then taught at Morven Elementary School and Morven Primary after integration. Mrs. Jones was a teacher for 34 years. Both teachers and their photos are displayed in the Barney Colored Elementary School classrooms today.

The Morven Rosenwald Alumni Association is appreciative of all the hard work and effort it took to preserve the Barney Colored Elementary School. Now that the building is complete, MRAA will focus on continued partnerships to sustain it as a community center.

BETHEL AME CHURCH FUNDRAISER: SHARING THE HERITAGE AND PRESERVING A NATIONAL TREASURE

*Danielle Ross, African American Programs Assistant
Historic Preservation Division*

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Acworth celebrated their second annual *Sharing the Heritage and Preserving a National Treasure* event in March 2014 with a performance and reception. The event was geared toward raising awareness for the history of the church and funds for its preservation and restoration. Rev. Leela Waller, who serves as the pastor of Bethel, warmly welcomed everyone to Bethel AME on a Saturday afternoon for the event. Rev. Waller came to Bethel AME from Turner Chapel AME Church in Marietta and is the spirit behind the movement for restoration.



Rev. Leela Waller, pastor of Bethel AME Church, welcomes guests to the youth performance.

Photo by Danielle Ross

The presentation portion of the fundraiser began with prayer from Reverend Tim Houston, an Alderman with the City of Acworth; and, included greetings from the Tommy Allegood, Mayor of Acworth and Nancy Gadberry, Executive Director of Cobb Landmarks and Historical Society. The presentation portion of the event was by the Young Voices United youth group. The group retold African American history through song and skits.



Young Voices United entertained the participants with their historical performance linking Bethel AME Church with significant events in Acworth history from Reconstruction through the twentieth century.

Photo by Danielle Ross

Bethel AME Church, located in Acworth, Georgia just north of Atlanta, was founded in 1864 by former slaves in the Acworth area. After its inception, Bethel shared a building with Zion Hill Baptist Church and alternated Sunday services. By 1871, Bethel's church trustees purchased an acre of land and added another parcel in 1882. Much of the church is believed to have been built around the period that the land was acquired between 1871 and 1882. The



One of the architectural elements that is present at Bethel AME Church are its asymmetrical towers. One tower includes a cast iron bell that was rung as guests arrived.

Photo by Danielle Ross

church vestibule and asymmetrical towers were added to the structure in 1895. Inside one of the towers is a cast iron bell manufactured by the York Bell Foundry of Hillsboro, Ohio, who also manufactured artillery during the Civil War. Inside of the sanctuary is the patterned beadboard ceiling and tongue and groove wainscoting. Most of the church's windows are still comprised of their historic wood elements. Today, the church is a community landmark building within the African American neighborhood on the corner of Bell and School Streets.

Architecturally, Bethel AME is a central-aisle plan church with 18 pews on each side. The pulpit and the balustrade at the end of the aisle are original to the church and date to 1882. The windows on the church are round-arch, four-over-four, and double-hung. In addition to the beadboard ceiling, the existing wainscoting and wood floors in the structure are all original to the building.

The reception for the event was held in the Acworth Rosenwald School. The original, two-teacher school was built in 1924-25 for a total of \$3,250 with funds gathered from the African



The Acworth Rosenwald School is located on Cherokee Street, just below Bethel AME Church. It is adaptively reused today as a community center and is a local destination for special events. The building is owned by the City of Acworth, a major partner and steward for the building. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

American community, Cobb County, and the Rosenwald Fund. The school was used as an African American public school until 1948-49 when the Board of Education voted on demolition to make way for a new school. The school was ultimately donated to the African American community in 1949, where the timbers, nails, and shingles of the building were all meticulously accounted for during the dismantling process. After it was dismantled, the structure was stored until 1953 when it was rebuilt by members of the African American community and used as a local community center, two blocks away from its original site. The center has been the location of many community parties, family gatherings, reunions, and church meetings. Today, the City of Acworth operates the school as a rental facility and provides landscaping, maintenance and operational support for its sustainability.

In 2008, the Cobb Landmarks and Historical Society helped to secure a \$50,000 grant from the Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation to renovate the Acworth Rosenwald School. The Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation set aside \$2 million to go towards the preservation of Rosenwald Schools across the South. These monies, administered through the National Trust for Historic Preservation, gave out 17 grants that year including Acworth Rosenwald School. The grant allowed for repairs to be made to the roof, siding, and windows. In addition to the repairs made to the building, Catherine Lewis and Jennifer Dickey, faculty from Kennesaw State University (KSU), created a history panel



The exhibit on display inside the Acworth Rosenwald School interprets the history of Bethel AME Church and the Acworth School in the African American community. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

installation to hang inside of the school. Dickey is a member of the Georgia National Register Review Board and coordinates the Public History Program at KSU.



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The Acworth Rosenwald Community Center hosted a board development workshop for Rosenwald School stewards in July 2012. Staff from the National Trust for Historic Preservation conducted the training with support from the 1772 Foundation. Photo courtesy of the City of Acworth

In 2012, Bethel AME partnered with the City of Acworth, Cobb County Historic Preservation Commission, Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network, Turner Chapel AME, and Cobb Landmarks to work toward compiling a restoration plan for the church. This plan aims to protect the structure by taking necessary steps to prevent water damage, maintaining and preserving existing windows and doors, and preserving the historic interior.



The Bethel AME Church pulpit is surrounded by a nineteenth century balustrade where worshipers can kneel to pray and receive communion. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

One project necessary for the creation of the restoration plan, a conditions assessment, was conducted on the church in 2013 by Atlanta Preservation & Planning Services LLC to document and analyze the structure. The document highlighted areas of concern within the structure and also provided a list of recommended treatment plans. In addition to the treatment plans, a general maintenance plan was outlined to help with the long term restoration plans for the structure.

Bethel AME Church was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on May 9, 2002. The nomination materials and Historic Structure Report for Bethel AME Church are available at the Historic Preservation Division. ■

JEANNE CYRIAQUE AND CHARLES PINCKNEY HONORED AT THE GEORGIA MUSEUM OF ART *PATTERNS OF CULTURE* EVENT

*Danielle Ross, African American Programs Assistant
Historic Preservation Division*

In February 2014, Jeanne Cyriaque and Charles Pinckney were honored at the Georgia Museum of Art's *Patterns of Culture* Black History Month dinner for their significant contributions to African American cultural education and the arts. Jeanne was honored with the Lillian C. Lynch Citation while Pinckney was honored with the Larry D. and Brenda A. Thompson Award.



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Jeanne Cyriaque and her assistant Danielle Ross celebrate the Lillian C. Lynch Citation. Ross received her MHP from Georgia State University in May, 2014.
Photo by Pratt Cassity

The Georgia Museum of Art (GMOA), located on The University of Georgia (UGA) campus in Athens, serves as the university art museum and the official state art museum since 1982. The museum organizes and curates its own in-house exhibitions and hosts traveling exhibits for museums across the country and



*Over 150 Friends of the Georgia Museum of Art attended the *Patterns of Culture* Black History Month dinner.*

Photo by Danielle Ross

worldwide. The honorary event began with gallery talks given by William Underwood Eiland, museum director; Carissa DiCindio, curator of education; and Dale Couch, curator of decorative arts.

One of the artists featured during the gallery talk was Jacob Lawrence, whose watercolor piece, *Harlem*, was featured as the image for the invitation and program of the event. Lawrence was an African American painter who was famous for his portrayal of the African American experience through use of black and brown colors painted against a bright, colored background. Born in New Jersey, Lawrence began painting at 13 and ultimately became known for his series of work known as *The Migration of the Negro*, completed in 1941. Lawrence served as a professor at the University of Washington while simultaneously taking on commissions for major projects across the country. Some of his major works include a 72-ft. mural painted inside of New York City's Times Square Station and a mural for the Harold Washington Center in Chicago.

After the gallery talk guests were ushered to a seated dinner. Among the guests was Jamil Zainaldin, president of the Georgia Humanities Council (GHC) and his wife, Ingrid Kelly. Jeanne Cyriaque's associates on the GHC board of directors Mary Adams and Alan Rothschild were participants as well as Pratt Cassity, director of the Center for Community Design and Preservation in the College of Environment and Design at UGA.



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*Everett Long, who chaired the *Patterns of Culture* event for the Friends of the Georgia Museum of Art and Jenna Jackson, Miss UGA of 2013, were among the UGA students who participated in the program. Long received his PhD in Public Health in May and Jackson is a JD candidate in 2014.*

Photo courtesy of the Georgia Museum of Art

During dinner the chair, Everett Long, provided opening remarks on the history of the celebratory event. Other speakers included Jenna Jackson, Miss University of Georgia 2013, and William U. Eiland, GMOA director.

Presentation of awards began with the recognition of Jeanne Cyriaque and her work with African American preservation in Georgia. Cyriaque coordinates African American programs in the Historic Preservation Division of the Department of Natural Resources where she is the staff liaison to members of the Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network (GAAHPN). She is lead writer and editor of *Reflections*, the award-winning GAAHPN publication.

The Lillian C. Lynch Citation presented to Jeanne Cyriaque was named after a charter member of the Athens chapter of The Links, Incorporated who was an advocate for cultural education and the arts. The Lillian C. Lynch Citation is awarded to an African American leader who has made a significant contribution to African American cultural education and service. Cyriaque received the award "for her extraordinary commitment to education and scholarship on the African American experience and culture."



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Jeanne Cyriaque receives the Lillian C. Lynch Citation from Yvonne Studevan, president of the Athens chapter of The Links, Incorporated and William U. Eiland, director of the Georgia Museum of Art.

Photo courtesy of the Georgia Museum of Art

The second award recognized Charles Pinckney and his artistic jewelry and sculpture. Pinckney is a self-taught artist who began working with materials as early as the age of nine. Pinckney creates his pieces primarily from bone, metal, stones, and wood; he manipulates each material in order to craft his pieces of art. His pieces are made for both men and women and are highly inspired from his childhood. Pinckney was filmed working in his studio by HGTV and has been featured in *Southern Living* and *Ornament* magazines. In addition to working in his Athens studio to create pieces, Pinckney teaches, lectures, and exhibits his artwork across the country.



Brenda A. Thompson presents the award to Charles Pinckney in recognition of his designs as a metalsmith. Photo by Danielle Ross

Charles Pinckney was presented with the Larry D. and Brenda A. Thompson Award that recognizes African American artists and the work that they do.



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*Charles Pinckney, recipient of the Larry D. and Brenda A. Thompson Award for his contributions to the arts, discusses his inspiration for the pieces that were on display at *Patterns of Culture*. Photo courtesy of the Georgia Museum of Art*

During the entire event, student artists' works were showcased throughout the atrium. The student artists explained and sold a few of their pieces to attendees throughout the night; and Arvin Scott, professor in the UGA Hodgson School of Music, performed a drum solo. For more information about Charles Pinckney, visit his website at www.charlespinckney.com.

Throughout the *Patterns of Culture* event, *Art Interrupted: Advancing American Art and the Politics of Cultural Diplomacy* was being exhibited and was included in the art talk. The exhibit, sponsored by the Henry Luce Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts, visually represents the period in American history where foreign relations were strained leading up to the Cold War. In 1946, the Department of State began the *Advancing American Art* program which brought together modernist paintings by American artists. The goal of the 1946 program was to exhibit American art across the world with the intention of showing the freedom of expression enjoyed by American artists. Ultimately, the traveling exhibit was opposed by Congress for being seen as largely un-American and the paintings were all sold at auction. The coordinators of this exhibit reunited all but 10 paintings from for the original 1948 exhibit for a total of 107 oil and watercolor paintings. The exhibit was on display at the Georgia Museum of Art through April 2014.

The Georgia Museum of Art received two awards at the Georgia Association of Museums and Galleries 2014 annual conference. The museum was recognized for the Kress Project that enlarged the museum's audience and advocacy of the arts by Bill Prokasy, a member of their board of advisors. To find out more information about the Georgia Museum of Art please see their website at www.georgiamuseum.org. To find out about *Art Interrupted: Advancing American Art and Politics of Cultural Diplomacy* please refer to www.artinterrupted.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. 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



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ABOUT GAAHPN



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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. 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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